

CHAPTER X.

INDIA AND THE COLONIES—IMPERIAL FEDERATION—
CONCLUSION.

WHEN the nineteenth century opened, the British flag was already planted in most of the regions where it now waves, but in almost every quarter our possessions were mere streaks along the coast-line, or islands of moderate extent. The empire which the elder Pitt, Clive, and Warren Hastings had won for us, was but in an early stage of development. Beyond the Atlantic, the West Indies, with their rich sugar and coffee plantations, were by far our most important possession. Canada was still mainly French in population, and not really settled beyond Toronto and Kingston; inland and westward there was nothing but wastes of forest and prairie, the "great lone land," which was not to be taken under cultivation till the second half of the century. Then the British claim to the North-Western Territory as far as the Arctic Circle was only marked by a score of forts belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company, to which the scanty Indian population came to barter their furs and skins. A fort on Nootka Sound by Vancouver's Island was then the sole sign that British colonization was about to extend as far as the Pacific. Across that ocean Australia was already counted as a British possession, but the only settlement that it contained was the convict colony of Botany Bay. It had been founded so recently as 1788, and Sydney was in

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Australia.