“We, rough architects of state”: The Constitutional Imagination in late-Victorian New Zealand

By PG McHugh∗

In 1888 an American lawyer and socialist Edward Bellamy published Looking Backward, a utopian novel set in the year 2000 which anticipated land nationalisation, co-operative societies, and the credit card. The young hero Julian West is hypnotised into a long, deep sleep and, like Rip Van Winkle, wakes in the future. More than a century later, a Doctor Leete guides him around this transformed world, explaining all its advances, often through protracted question-and-answer dialogue. Its features include reduced working hours, easy consumerism and retirement at the age of 45 on full benefits.

The book was an immediate success. In Australia, drovers, bushmen, navvies and stevedores read it aloud around campfire and on wharfside. It quickly sold out in New Zealand. Tens of thousands of antipodeans read it, we are told.1 Bellamy had evidently drawn on his compatriot Henry George’s Poverty and Progress (1879). Just a few years before and with identical themes, George’s book had also been a huge hit. Certainly it was known to colonial politicians interested in land reform, not least for its advocacy of a land nationalisation and the ‘single tax’ which sought to recover for the state what George held to be the unearned increment accruing to landowners from the increase in the value of their land owing to the presence and activity of the surrounding community.2 However Bellamy’s literary imagination and popularism gave those ideas a new, attention-grabbing twist. Down Under not least, George’s ideas had a shot of adrenaline that refreshed and intensified their circulation as well as injecting a new accessibility.

Bellamy’s novel in turn spawned a legion of imitative works. This explosion into a sub-genre was so marked that the historian of Anglophone utopian literature, Lyman Sargent,

∗ Reader in Law at the University of Cambridge. I am grateful to the Honourable Margaret Wilson for discussions that led to this essay, particularly her suggestion of a closer look at William Pember Reeves. Shaunnagh Dorsett and Damen Ward have also commented, though all blame is mine. At date of presentation, this remains a work in progress. All comments appreciated!

1 William Pember Reeves State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand (2 vols, London: Grant Richards, 1902) at 68.
insists that the nineteenth century must be divided into periods before and after Bellamy.\textsuperscript{3} Indeed, Sargent notes that the second half of the nineteenth century was itself an extremely and unusually rich period in the production of utopian literature not least in Australasia where Bellamy’s work boosted considerably a trend that was already well in train. Even before, but especially after Bellamy, settler societies and the broader imperial culture of the late Victorian period had particular interest in utopianism. Its constitutional blueprinting, often very detailed, and endorsement of legislative agency (muscle the self-governing colonies were then newly flexing) were particularly attractive to colonial politicians and lawyers of that era. The utopian imagination was on fertile ground Down Under. Two antipodean Prime Ministers of the late-Victorian era, Alfred Deakin (as a piece of juvenilia only attributed after his death) and Julius Vogel, wrote and published utopian tracts. There were also numerous published works by politicians, lawyers, journalists and public officials, writing on and around the utopian theme. Figures of all political hues – capitalists, liberals and socialists – daubed and dabbled in an idealising dreamland. In the popularity and centrality, not to say variety, of the ideal-society trope, the thinking of these colonial figures meshed with their doing.

It is on the eastern side of the Tasman Sea that this essay dwells, aware also that the themes invoked by kiwi protagonists were also playing out in Australia. The impact of utopian literature on Australian constitutional thought has been noted, particularly in the debate leading up to federation (1901).\textsuperscript{4} Australian legal historians have been less interested in - perhaps because they are rightfully shamed by? – the heavily racialised thread of that literature. That racial flavour, with its extreme anxiety about the ‘yellow peril’ also runs through the New Zealand literature but less prominently (though, for the modern eye, no less objectionably).

In the New Zealand setting, and even before the impact of Bellamy, the early association of the islands with a utopian paradise has been linked to the Immigration and Public Works Act 1870, which created the post of Agent-General in London.\textsuperscript{5} The office was established to promote the colony in Britain, not least capital investment by the City and its commercial interests at large. Before transformation (1905) into the more diplomatic High Commission (which continues today), there were five office-holders all of whom had close experience of colonial politics.\textsuperscript{6} As will be seen, two of the Agents-General, Julius Vogel and William Pember Reeves, read and wrote after Bellamy, the former adopting fictional style and the latter by way of a series of newspaper articles soon

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\textsuperscript{3} Lyman Tower Sargent “Themes in Utopian Fiction in English Before Wells” (1976) 3 \textit{Science Fiction Studies} 10.
\textsuperscript{4} Helen Irving \textit{To Constitute a Nation} FULL REFERENCE
\textsuperscript{6} The five were Dr Isaac Featherston (1871-1876); Sir Julius Vogel (1876-1880); Sir Francis Dillon Bell (1880-1891); Sir Westby Brook Perceval (1891-1895) and William Pember Reeves (1895-1905). The office soon became regarded the virtual peak of colonial office. Reeves’ incumbency was affected by constant rumours that Prime Minister Richard ‘King Dick’ Seddon coveted the office himself and that the premier was about to exit Wellington politics for London. The rumour was not curbed by Seddon’s refusal to renew Reeve’s office other than on a year-to-year basis until it was transformed into the High Commission shortly before his death (1906).
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republished as a 49-page six-penny pamphlet. Of the Agents-General these two exerted very considerable influence on the cut of New Zealand politics in the late nineteenth century.

It has been said that the utopian trope has five available modes or variants. In his classic study *Utopia and the Ideal Society* (1981), Colin Davis juxtaposes utopia against four alternate types of ideal society. These are "not in practice mutually exclusive, although their premises make them logically inconsistent one with another." There is the Land of Cockayne, where "there are satisfactions enough to satiate the grossest appetite." Arcadia is a bountiful place where an abundance of satisfactions is balanced by desires moderated or simplified to a "natural" level. In the "perfect moral commonwealth,” the collective problem is solved not by increasing the satisfactions available, but by the citizen's willingness to limit his own appetites (a solution common in English humanist thought). Fourthly there is the millennium, an imminent earthly cataclysm predicted by many seventeenth-century religious sects, whereby and through which human problems are solved, as it were, by visitation of a *deus ex machina*. The utopian does not inhabit any of those modes. Rather he is more “realistic” and accepts the basic problem as it is, seeking a solution "not by wishing the problem away nor by tampering with the equation." He does not seek drastic changes in nature or man. Human nature being essentially recalcitrant and sinful, the utopian solution involves discipline. It is a “holding operation, a set of strategies to maintain social order and perfection in the face of the deficiencies not to say hostility, of nature and the wilfulness of man.” Thus the institutions of utopia have an inbuilt totalitarian tendency. So arises the paradox of the utopian vision. Its “cardinal characteristics’ are totality, order and perfection. “Almost by definition, then, the perfection of utopias must be ordered and perfect: the totality, ordered and perfect.” Thus a radical attempt to escape the nightmare world of injustice and conflict, ends by denying the autonomy of the human personality and the possibility of participation in decisions that could mitigate bad conditions.

In the *Ideal Society and its Enemies* (1989) Miles Fairburn argues that in the years before 1900 the dominant variety of idealising of New Zealand was primarily Arcadian. That is, the rhetoric promoted the islands as places of natural abundance where men without capital or of humble origins could become proprietors after only a few years in the colony. Further, Fairburn argues, the material independence of the working-man was portrayed as occurring outside a social framework. It did not depend upon working-class collective action or the mobilisation of any class power. Trade unions were superfluous:

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8 Ibid at 21.
9 Ibid at 22.
10 Ibid at 27.
11 Ibid at 37.
12 Ibid at 37.
13 Ibid at 38.
14 Ibid at 39.
“In Arcadia natural abundance had largely abolished the need for associational groups.”

This rhetoric not only appealed to the working-class but it chimed with the middle-class as well, who brought capital to the colony. It promised them a land without the stresses of class antagonism and social anxiety. Fairburn unpicks this mythology, acknowledging the traction it had in the actual state of the colony where social and political life was in this period atomised. He writes of also of the underbelly of this sunny countenance.

But Fairburn notes also, and particularly from the 1890s, the rise of the centralised New Zealand state and the growing dependence of kiwis upon beneficent governmental action ostensibly to maintain the enduring Arcadian myth of individualist rural smallholding that the long Liberal Government championed. He does not discuss Bellamy’s book nor attempts to gauge its impact, although he notes that the rhetoric and language shifted during the 1890s towards the perfect moral commonwealth and, most of all, utopian forms. In that period and as its population, transportation networks and economic prosperity (and evident socio-economic imbalances) grow, the Arcadian paradise becomes utopian, dependent upon state intervention to perpetuate that self-depiction. In an urbanising country that self-depiction is also transposed into the towns and workplace, where, essentially, the themes of individualism, property ownership, social harmony and egalitarianism are suburbanised. Necessarily the reach of the state is extended and so Arcadianism, rural and urban, has by the beginning of the twentieth century segued into utopianism, but one keeping those motifs of its earlier form.

With regard to the emergence of the New Zealand state, this observation of André Siegfried is often used. Siegfried, an eminent French philosopher and geographer of socialist disposition, entitled his book *Democracy in New Zealand* (1914), a title with clear aspirations towards being the country’s de Tocqueville. It was published at a time when the country was receiving attention and visits from international thinkers and writers on the leftish intellectuals’ celebrity-circuit. He said:

“… in the early days of a colony there is usually little co-operation between the immigrants; the government is usually the only bond which unites them, and some time is necessary before natural groupings are formed. The government is thus brought by the force of circumstances to perform functions, which in the old countries would lie within the province of private initiative.”

Many writers wrote in that vein, acknowledging the extensive role that the state had come to take in New Zealand society by the early twentieth-century. For example Cowie wrote (1937)

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17 *Ibid* at 27.


19 A Siegfried *Democracy in New Zealand*. (London: Bell, 1914) at 54.

20 G Cowie *New Zealand from Within* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1937) at 166.
“… the Government of New Zealand today has its share in every second economic enterprise from usury to dentistry. These paternal rulers look after the railways of the country, make sure that other means of transport do not expand too rapidly and provide an organization to attract tours from overseas. On the West Coast of the South island they have a state coal line and in every centre they have state coal offices. To provide against emergencies they have a state Fire Insurance Office; they have a share in a general insurance organization . . . the rulers of New Zealand have a forestry department which controls large scale conservation, regeneration and afforestation; a health department which invades every branch of medicine; a Public Works Department which, in a country where private contractors cannot afford to operate on a large scale, builds most of the railways, bridges, roads and hydro-electric schemes.”

This essay is not minded to dispute Fairburn’s argument that New Zealand society was highly atomised and nourished on such Arcadian-into-utopian idealising. It takes seriously the belief that social and cultural thought of this period must be regarded more closely in any effort to explain the trajectory of the Pakeha nation-state in the twentieth century.21 It accepts that the period of the long Liberal Government (1891-1912) was formative for it was then that the modern centralised and legislating Pakeha state essentially emerged. Besides absorbing the Arcadian-utopian theme, this thought was simultaneously proto-national as well as displaying imperial loyalty (reflected in the ‘Better Britain’ rhetoric22), and those dispositions were not regarded as inherently contradictory.

This essay is an enquiry into the constitutional imagination that accompanied – indeed, facilitated – those processes of state formation as they were occurring mostly in the period coterminous with the long Liberal Government. It will be suggested that there are several recurrent and interwoven themes running through that thought that have had a lasting impact upon the Pakeha constitutional imagination so much as one is able to talk of such a thing. There is a very thin tradition of deep rumination on the nature of public authority inside their polity, making generalisation from the few examples inherently fragile. Pakeha politics have not generated the rich outpourings of Florentine humanism in the late renaissance, England in the mid-seventeenth century or colonial and rebellious America in the next. However, there are some revealing tracts from that period, written by the few figures whose reflection was both serious and committed to print. Although political rather than specifically constitutional in character, these tracts necessarily carry such connotation and they are as close as we may come to any articulation that might be seen as the very slim semblance of a kiwi tradition.

21 Fairburn at 265; Alessio at 37: “New Zealand was a community of the fantastic imagination, with a panoply of influential political, literary and artistic figures … who having made the dangerous and long sea crossing to New Zealand, were inclined towards a utopian dream … As such the relationship between New Zealand and its utopias, in all their different forms, deserves more attention than has been received thus far.” Also Frank Roger, supra.

22 Jamie Belich FULL REFERENCE
In so far as this was a matter of intellectual deliberation, however occasional and disjointed, then, how was the nature of the political and constitutional authority of the Anglo-settler state articulated? What have been the justifications for its claim to and exercise of constitutional authority not over the indigenous Maori tribes – which has always been problematic – but over the Pakeha population? What were the dominant features or themes of that deliberation? For example, a distinctive and dominant form of common-law constitutionalism has involved its claims to historical legitimacy. In the constitutional sphere, governmental institutions acquire legitimacy through their endurance in time and continuity with a glorious, indeed mythologised, past. Because a system has an enduring uninterrupted past, that sense of itself as an historical thing is itself legitimating. This device is not unique to the common-law imagination, of course, with its metaphors of the Argonaut’s ship, but a deep-rooted belief in the presumptive legitimacy of its own unbroken past has been central to its way of thinking from at least the early-seventeenth century. This means of validating present constitutional form by reference to the past also projects into the future. It facilitates what Popper famously called ‘historicism.’ “I mean by ‘historicism’,” he said, “an approach to the social sciences which assumes that historical prediction is their principal aim, and which assumes that this aim is attainable by discovering the ‘rhythms’ or the ‘patterns’, the ‘laws’ or the ‘trends’ that underlie the evolution of history.” The past, in short, is leading inexorably into a certain future. An historicist approach supposes that the past has a plot, a structure, its own Destiny. To what extent, if at all, and, if it is there, what end does historicism serve in late-Victorian kiwi (ie Pakeha) constitutionalism?

Of those key recurrent themes, the Arcadian and utopian have already been identified as important. To this, indeed one can see it coming from kiwi Arcadianism’s early and lasting portrayal of manly and rugged individualism, has been a belief that the New Zealand constitution is a place where things are done rather than a site or product of deliberative activity. Self-effacingly, the New Zealand constitution has never generated much intellectual excitement or argumentation, at least until perhaps recently (and even then those of us who regard ourselves as participants in an intellectual enterprise may be deluded). Indeed, there has consistently been an anti-intellectual tendency surrounding kiwi conceptualisation of the rightful sphere of public authority and its constitutional form (a disposition demonstrated by the rarity of that activity). This pragmatism services an idealism that is rustic and folkish, incremental and issue-led rather than programmatic and comprehensive. In that sense idealism and pragmatism are mutually

23 Latterly, in the reform programme of the British Labour Government (1997-), it has been argued that this historical consciousness has leached from constitutional thought: JWF Allison The English Historical Constitution: Continuity, Change and European Effects (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
26 I realise that this term is not unproblematic and that it presents all kinds of issues, particularly about the reception and impact of German thought in Anglophonic political discourse but this is a field in which my own experience is too slight, other than to signal my awareness that those issues are there.
reinforcing rather than contrasting qualities. Both have been oiled by a belief in Benthamite legal instrumentalism that saw (and still sees) law as the instrument of social, economic and other ends. Legal positivism, ascendant in the Liberal era, with its inherent endorsement of legislative agency has had a strong grip on national legal practice and education and it has promoted those tendencies. There is a strong kiwi belief in the legislating state and wariness in the legal profession – to which one can add the ignorance in the wider community – of the common law foundations of the constitution. New Zealand lawyers have never been comfortable talking about the common law, except perhaps through case-crunching mastication. Throughout their nationhood, the idea of the common law as an *episteme* rather than an analytical problem-solving tool has never made strenuous demands upon their intellectual resources. Political theory, constitutional theory, legal theory? There is not much of a pattern of that inhabiting the Pakeha polity. All this has facilitated systemic ahistoricism. The Pakeha polity and its constitution have never been conceived or legitimated in the language of history. If those who never learn the lessons of the past are doomed to repeat it, how easier it has been never to have had one at all.

It is time to look at those themes a little more closely as they occur in the slim body of writings of the Liberal era and at the work of two notable figures of this era, William Pember Reeves and Julius Vogel.

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The early twentieth-century publicists of New Zealand Robert Irvine and Oscar Alpers made this observation (1902):\(^{28}\)

> “There seems to have existed in New Zealand at one time a taste for books depicting ‘ideal commonwealths’. The same taste exists today … but finds expression in utopian legislation rather than in utopian literature.”

Although they collapsed two distinct idealising modes, their association of utopian literature and utopian legislation was well-founded. The hypercritical William Pember Reeves endorsed their book, writing appreciatively to the authors that “one of the great wants of the colonial democracy is criticism from educated yet sympathetic men”.\(^{29}\) This was a gap that he also addressed at various stages through his life. Moreover, it was a link that other important and deep-thinking politicians of the late-Victorian era had also and already drawn.

Pember Reeves was hardly the colony’s first man-of-books, though he qualifies as one of its earliest native-born. He is particularly remembered as the young Minister who, only in his mid-thirties, steered through important reforming legislation early in the life of the long Liberal Government, most especially in the fields of labour relations and land tenure

\(^{27}\) An exception is the work of Professor Brookfield.

\(^{28}\) RF Irvine and OT Alpers *The Progress of New Zealand in the Century* (London: W & R Chambers, 1902) at 391.

\(^{29}\) Sinclair *William Pember Reeves* at 236.
The preceding generation of colonial politicians that had taken the reins of self-government certainly had an intellectual component, Stout perhaps most pre-eminently. However, Pember Reeves was the first and still one of the few wholehearted apostles of the centralised state. Rather than statism being a position he came to later in his career, as with Stout and Vogel, he took his position from the outset well after the divisive politics of abolition of the provinces (1876) and as the effects of Vogel’s massive infrastructure investment were kicking in. The generation that preceded him and whose Parliamentary twilight coincided with his comparatively brief but dramatic period in the Cabinet of the 1890s – the wily and venerable Sir George Grey, the affable Ballance, the high-minded Stout, the small-farmers’ hero M’Kenzie, and the displaced Whig Rolleston as well as many of the numerous Knights of Labour spread throughout the country – had plainly read their John Stuart Mill and Henry George. But more than those figures and from the start, Pember Reeves’ political agenda was ideologically spurred. That gave his political performance an uncompromising as well as arrogant edge. It was on those grounds that his political adversaries attacked him as an ideologue. Pember Reeves coped the anti-intellectualism typical then (and ever thus) of New Zealand politics.

In 1890 the young Pember Reeves MP authored a series of newspaper articles that he immediately consolidated into a six-penny pamphlet entitled Some Historical Articles on Communism and Socialism. These newspaper outings had been occasioned by the publication and ran alongside the serialisation of Bellamy’s novel in the Canterbury Times and the Lyttleton Times. Penned pseudonymously as ‘Pharos’ the articles appeared in papers associated with his father William, who also ran a review of the young Reeves’ effort by Sir Robert Stout (a good acquaintance of his father who had been let in on the identity of the author but preserved the anonymity). Whereas Pember Reeves had quickly dropped a career at the Canterbury Bar for the Press Gallery in Wellington and, soon after, the House itself, Stout had been both eminent politician as well as legal practitioner and, eventually and famously, Chief Justice. Indeed he had recently left politics, or rather politics had dumped him, after the fall of the second Stout-Vogel Ministry (1884-1887) and the loss of his seat in the ensuing General Election. By the time he read young Reeves’ effort, and influenced no doubt by his experience in office and dealings with Vogel, Stout was moving from extreme laissez-faire and individualism to support of trade unions and state intervention in economic life to protect the poor and weak.

Some Historical Articles is divided into three parts with a short conclusion. The first part discusses the writers on communism and socialism, including the utopian ‘Socialist visionaries’. The second looks at examples in practice of this form of social and political organisation or ‘experiments’, as he terms them (and titles his later book). Part III is specifically concerned with drawing the lessons for New Zealand from that material, combining the theoretical and experimental by reference – and glowing tribute – to

30 Rogers “The influence of political theory” supra esp at 154-9. The Knights of Labour were assemblies of reform minded individuals of which there were some 60 or so through the country in the 1880s and 1890s, modelled on the American organisation in which Henry George was prominent.
31 Sinclair William Pember Reeves at 100-101.
figures such as Robert Owen, Jean Godin and Ferdinand Lassalles\textsuperscript{32} who by Pharos’s account managed successfully to integrate both. Although he opens avowing an intention not “to make converts but attract students” and to keep his sympathies “[h]owever strong and pronounced” \textsuperscript{33} to himself, Pharos’s support for state enterprise and interventionism is plain and his terse, pointed conclusion, as indeed his text almost from the start, has shed such opening pretence.

Part I of \textit{Some Historical Articles} opens with a quote from Henry George. Pharos then summarises the “more famous Ideal States” of Plato’s \textit{Republic}, More’s \textit{Utopia}, Campanella’s \textit{Civitas Solis}, passing reference to Bacon’s \textit{New Atlantis}, and “the book of the day” Bellamy’s \textit{Looking Backward}. He particularly praises Bellamy’s book and its staggering popularity, estimating “something approaching two million people” to have read it.\textsuperscript{34}

Pharos spends Part II considering past experiments in the ideal state. Presenting his compilation chronologically, in the manner of the common-lawyer his accounts are exemplary, not a quality of his historical anthropology. His aim is to highlight the presence through time of ‘communistic’ communities, and to show that these have not necessarily been sporadic or isolated phenomena. He is demonstrating that the ideal society has not only been the subject of elevated human thought, but it has also been the object behind actual social organisation. He ranges through the Spartans and Cretans on to the early Christians and the Essenes, insisting that although no system of socialism “is to be found defined or commended in the Gospels” its underlying principles are the same. Christian socialists (presumably, one asks by way of cynical aside, like the devil?) can cite scripture for their purpose claiming Jesus “as the greatest of their allies” unlike the Individualists who “as a rule, fight shy of the Gospels”.\textsuperscript{35} Pharos progresses to commend Inca society (“…a despotic kingdom managed on the principles of an original, scientific, benevolent system of State socialism”).\textsuperscript{36} Then he describes the missionary communes in Paraguay, followed by the Russian Mir\textsuperscript{37} and eight communistic societies of the United States, all of the latter “deeply tinctured with some sincere, if eccentric, religious belief and enthusiasm.”\textsuperscript{38}

Part III is entitled “Socialism” and it is where Pharos moves more evidently into the modern era attempting to tie the theoretical with the practical, the historical with the

\textsuperscript{32} Pharos \textit{Some Historical Articles on Communism and Socialism. Their Dream, their Experiments, their Aims, their Influence} (Christchurch: Lyttleton Times Office, 1890) at 1. London School of Economics Hutchinson Collection #1058 (copy sent by the author to ‘Sydney [sic] at p 47] Webb’) on Owen at 31: “Such men are rare nowadays. But eighty or ninety years ago such a man was a prodigy indeed. Factory Acts had not been heard of. England had no social conscience.” Godin at 36-7 (“a brilliant and unalloyed success”). On the “astonishing genius” of Lassalles at 41-2.

\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Ibid} at 1.

\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Ibid} at 2 and 8.

\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Ibid} at 16-7.

\textsuperscript{36} \textit{Ibid} at 19.

\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Ibid} at 25: “Out of this the Russian peasant, boorish in looks and tastes though he be, has emerged one of the kindest, gentlest creatures on earth, full of capabilities for improvement and a higher civilisation”. Of course there is no suggestion of Bolshevism.

\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Ibid} at 25-26.
contemporary. His discussion focuses on England and Germany and the lessons that New Zealand can take from state enterprise in those countries. Robert Owen’s initiatives with the co-operative shop and factory are commended. Godin’s models of profit-sharing and industrial partnership, which elsewhere have “failed only too often,” reveal him to be “one of the very few students and disciples of pure Communism who have managed to adapt some of the more practical proposals of the construction of Utopias to the circumstances of daily life and work in the world.”

Extracts from the balance sheet of Godin’s community are given. Pharos then distinguishes socialism from communism, articulating the credo that will become recur more powerfully in State Experiments. Communism requires a self-sufficing community that shuts itself off from the outside world and exerts total command and control over its members. They require men to undergo a “utter change, … violent revolution” but it “cannot deal with the masses of mankind as they are.” Communists “start with a fixed, settled, perfect order and arrangement” and it is into that system their disciples must fit. But there is no such thing as a perfect society “nor anything like it is ever reached by either society or an individual at a bound.” And such systems are static and inorganic. “Some system is wanted”, he concludes, “which can be worked in the city and the country, which can take imperfect men and their imperfect institutions, and without any volcanic convulsion, evolve gradually a rational and fair society.”

Socialism, with its gradualist step-by-step approach accomplishes this, he insists:

“Socialism will resist, not with the barricade, but with the ballot-box. It will attack, not with the rifle, but with the progressive tax. It is, in practice as in theory, the exact reverse of the red-handed individualism of the French Revolution.”

It works towards the ideal without requiring “from each admitted member the complete surrender of all private property at the outset” although its ultimate aim is to nationalise land and capital. Indeed, he progresses, after a scathing assessment of the State-Socialism of the Kaiser’s Germany under Bismarck (“bluster, persecution and tyranny”) to observe the unconscious drift towards socialism in Britain during most of the nineteenth century. This, he insists, has also been happening in New Zealand where even those who vocally condemn socialism as a creed can be found actively supporting state measures and enterprises that manifest it. This passage is well-known to students of New Zealand history:

“In this part of the British Empire the State is the largest landowner, the chief rent-collector, and the owner of the largest industrial ‘going concern’ – the railways. It not only manages the Post Office, the lighthouses, the telephones, and the telegraphs, but has established a powerful Life Insurance Company. Its Public Trustee takes care of private estates. Its Land Transfer Office has taken a whole branch of business form the lawyers. The State not only provides for the sick and the aged helpless, but finds work for the unemployed and teaches, free of charge,

39 Ibid at 31-6.
40 Ibid at 38.
41 Ibid at 40.
every Child in the colony whose parents will accept State teaching … All these acts are Socialistic. All are so much State interference with private enterprise. All are so many steps onward in the march towards making industry one national thing. All show that we live in an age of unconscious Socialism …”

In Some Historical Articles Pharos describes socialism as a necessary and inevitable endpoint of human development. He raises some themes – particularly that of social reform by piecemeal and gradual means – that would later reappear in State Experiments (1902). However that two-volume work was written after Pember Reeves had exited New Zealand politics, permanently as it turned out, though that was not necessarily so apparent at the time. State Experiments was written after his short but dramatic burst of reforming legislation in areas such as labour relations and land tenure. Relocated in London and inside the Fabian circles where he and his wife were mixing with the Webbs, Bernard Shaw, Wallas et al, suggestions that he might run for the House of Commons never eventuated and he never made a return to New Zealand politics.

The younger Pember Reeves, Pharos, has to be read alongside this older one. The younger voice speaks confidently and displays its learning unabashedly, youthful bravura untempered by the cautionary tone running through State Experiments. The younger man flashes a shameless intellectualism that suppressed in the more measured language of the later work written with the actual experience of Ministerial office behind him. In that sense, by the time of State Experiments, the dark art of politics has dimmed the bright glow of the youthful ideologue. The series of profound political thinkers and visionaries that so excited Pharos has turned into catalogues and recitations of statutory enactment in the description of which the prose is more restrained and vastly less gushy. Nonetheless the hallmarks of his writing remain, not least the unshakeable self-confidence as seen in the passages – highly objectionable to the modern eye – where he condemns Chinese immigrant labour and oriental culture as degraded. The tasks the author sets himself occur of course, at different junctures in his life. Pharos, the boyish enthusiast about to make a dramatic and precocious entrance into New Zealand politics, was not the mature London Agent-General writing retrospectively. In State Experiments his former admiration for the visionaries of yore, none of whom make any more than a very fleeting appearance through the two volumes, has been replaced by rhapsodies for realists. In his lengthy chapter on land reform, Edward Gibbon Wakefield and John M’Kenzie are particularly lauded as figures who hitched practical ideas (rather than lofty ideals) to gritty hard-won achievement. Now, in State Experiments, the narrative is a rather dry one of incremental achievement and an agenda of practicality. Unreserved praise goes to the action men with nary a visionary to be seen or heard. For the older Pember Reeves it has become less a case of what people have said, than what they have done. There is no doubt as to what kind of figure he is now admiring. Plainly the philosophers are still shaping his thought but he does not allow them much presence let alone the excited plaudits of Pharos.

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42 Ibid at 45. This passage is known to New Zealand history students as an extract in WD McIntyre and WJ Gardner, eds Speeches and Documents on New Zealand History (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 191 at 193-4.
Pember Reeves’ self-relocation from the giddy realm of political thought of Pharos to the dustbowl of practical politics is seen in his description in *State Experiments* of the reforms of the Liberal Government in which he was such a key helmsman. These were “deeply tinged with socialism”. But if those ideas have any traction, they must make pragmatic and acclimatising adjustment. There is an evident reluctance to give that reform a strong intellectual pedigree.\(^{43}\)

“It was not German, much less French Socialism. Here and there, no doubt, visionaries had dreams of Utopia more or less like the communities of Fourier and St Simon. Here and there might be found some student who knew of Lassalle, or through the medium of English tracts and paraphrases, had scraped acquaintance with Karl Marx. Tens of thousands read Bellamy’s *Looking Backwards*. Many studied, and some borrowed from, the Fabian Essays. Such socialism as filtered through newspapers was all English and of the cautious or tentative kind.”

New Zealand socialism was, essentially, polite and diluted. Just as the English were then being asked to distinguish between ‘a war’ and ‘a sort of war’, so, he said, students of state experiments in the colonies might distinguish “between socialism and a sort of socialism.” Pember Reeves had always sided with and continued to support the Parliamentary gradualism of the Fabians, although as a Minister he was legendarily inflexible in countenancing amendments to his Bills. But now, out of politics, his socialism by small but sure steps was being modestly offered to the world as experimental and as driven no more than faintly by philosophy. The integrity and power of thought is treated dismissively. It lies distantly and vaguely in the background. It capitulates to the demands of the moment. Thought is an after-thought. Realism supplants intellectualism.\(^{44}\)

“If, then, colonial Progressives do not concern themselves with the visionary benefits or theoretical dangers of some perfectly organised socialist community, it is because they are too busy in seeing what they can make State energy do for them in experiments which have a definite purpose of immediate usefulness.”

In short, the intellectual position is strongly disposed towards state interference and the eventual but distant goals of the nationalisation of land and industry, but those are navigational principles not programmes or blueprints in themselves. In this way, by that concession, the colonial intellectual becomes complicit in his own marginalisation.

Signs of that approach are evident in Pharos, but it is most fully articulated in *State Experiments*, “an authoritative work which no one has sought to emulate, and … likely to be his most lasting as it is his most scholarly contribution to history and political studies.”\(^{45}\) For Pember Reeves it is not enough to conceive political and legal innovation. Ideas must be accompanied by action. Across these key works the heroes that emerge, most especially in his later post-politics book, are those figures who have

\(^{43}\) *State Experiments* at 68.
\(^{44}\) *Ibid* at 72.
\(^{45}\) Sinclair *William Pember Reeves* at 287.
put their ideas into practice, men like Gibbon Wakefield, Godin, Owens, Lassalle and M’Kenzie. Pharos does not see Karl Marx, for example, as “a tribune of the people” because his mission “has been to provide ammunition for other men to fire.” 46 And in State Experiments the “brainworkers’ that are admitted into his text are the lawyer-politicians “well-read and intellectually above most of their brother members … [among whom] are found most of the few doctrinaires … [and] some of the most honourable and high-principled men in colonial politics.” 47 In this group, he identifies George Higinbotham, the Irish-American Chief Justice of Victoria, Alfred Deakin, another Victorian and later Prime Minister of Australia, and New Zealand’s Christopher Richmond. In this insistence upon the intellectual’s participative responsibility - an emphasis upon good works and civic presence so much as good thought - there appears a common theme of late-Victorian political and legal theory. One finds a similar position, for example, in Pember Reeves’ kiwi contemporary, Sir John Salmond. 48

This observation is as obvious as it is, perhaps, unkind. In providing his pantheon of heroes, there is a clear element of self-association. By the time of the publication of State Experiments, Pember Reeves was being feted in London as the intellectual helmsman of reforms that were bringing New Zealand to considerable if momentary international attention as the ‘social laboratory’ of the world. His biographer Keith Sinclair has noted his tendency to use his writings as “disguised autobiography.” 49 Pember Reeves’ prickliness and thin-skinned response to criticism as well as the praise he heaped upon intellectual action-men hint unmistakeably that he would include himself in his own gallery of heroes.

In his emphasis upon the state and his evident distaste for the ‘individualistic’, Reeves is putting himself squarely inside the mainstream of progressive political thought in his era. Recently Martin Loughlin has explored the reaction in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries against the prevailing orthodoxy of analytical legal positivism, as underpinned by the political values of classical liberalism and exemplified in the work of Dicey. He describes this new turn as a "functionalist" approach, one that did not constitute a distinct programmatic school, so much as a "style" or (to adapt Neil Duxbury’s description of American legal realism50) mood in English legal thought. This functionalist approach was "a practical, reformist approach, offering solutions to a variety of legal challenges facing modern government and spanning the range from institutional reforms to alternative modes of interpretation and methods of legal reasoning". By his

46 Some Historical Articles at 42.
47 State Experiments at 55. He contrasts the lawyer-politicians – the intellectual rump of colonial politicians – with the “bulky, bold, hearty … democratic captains” who though “nearly all of them personally honest” it “is not their business to be original thinkers or well-equipped students” (at 53-4). Labour leaders, then a novelty in colonial (as indeed British) politics he describes as “often short men with the nervous build of the skilled mechanic … their real strength lies in their loyalty to their class and in their power of cohesion” (at 55).
49 Sinclair William Pember Reeves at 266.
account it was a broad church and not without its contradictory elements and crosswinds, but its basic thrust was against the tenets of classical liberalism which, although it "no longer provided the official ideology of the twentieth-century administrative state, … [the] precepts [of which] remained built into the foundations of public law thought". In challenging the atomistic assumptions implicit in the construction of individualism and by reworking the central political concepts of liberty and community, the functionalists "aimed to set in place a different, more accurate appreciation of the relationship between individual, state, and society". At the ideological end of their spectrum, functionalists regarded the extending role of the State in social life as a progressive and positive trend. They greeted the rise of the administrative State as a step towards the positive provision of liberty. In this camp, one can surely put Pember Reeves.

As with the ‘functionalists’ at large, Pember Reeves’ offers an affirmation of legislative agency, setting out his Benthamite belief in the science of legislation deliberately shorn of its individualistic spin. In his advocacy of piecemeal legal change and reform for collectivist ends, Pember Reeves, the young and the more mature, does not allow himself to be constrained by the traditional quality of extant institutions or by the past for its own sake. Whilst he is prepared to work incrementally through existing institutions and legal forms, it is not because they have an inherent legitimacy that requires their preservation. Rather, that strategy is necessary because one cannot expect humans to exit or shed fully what comfort present and familiar arrangements might offer. Whilst there is a distrust of the perfection of a total system, the gradual working towards collective fairness and social justice shows no sentimental attachment to extant institutions and legal forms. It follows that Pember Reeves’ state-centred reformism is likely to have more traction in a society that is not enraptured by a sense of its own past. Even when he writes his history of New Zealand, as in *The Long White Cloud* (1898), the first edition completed in London a few years before *State Experiments*, Pember Reeves does not give the colonial and imperial institutions of government more than a functional aspect. His commitment is to the state and Empire as mechanisms for collective and civilized social justice, not as sacred relics or manifestations of a mythologised past. There is no Whiggism in his history, no suggestion of institutional form that is so glorious that it is not capable of present-day reform or adjustment, however small and shaped by local exigency. Indeed, his history, like his future New Zealand utopia, has what Keith Sinclair calls “something domestic” about it. For Pember Reeves, then, the invocation of historical legitimacy is shunned as a conservative tactic and impediment to reform.

Nonetheless Pember Reeves was an historicist, at least as Popper used the term, and this explained his belief in incrementalist legislative agency. Pember Reeves talked of socialism as though it were an historical inevitability. In *Some Historical Articles* he characterized the whole of nineteenth century British history as a progression towards that outcome and away from the individualistic. He gave the measures taken by the conservative Harry Atkinson as Prime Minister of New Zealand as examples of the ‘unconscious socialism’ that was destined to prevail. *State Experiments* therefore became

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52 Sinclair *William Pember Reeves* at 212.
a compendium of the small steps taken by practical men to that end. Socialism was more than an idea. It represented the drumbeat, the inexorable endpoint of history and its champions were the figures who step-by-step gallantly marched history along its ordained path whilst the ‘individualists’ stood impotently on the sideline. And so Pharos ended on a triumphalist note:53

“Socialism is many-sided; it appeals all round … The Socialist holds the vantage-ground of the man with a remedy for great and confessed evils. No one denies that the world is a bad world; that society, as it is now, is a clumsy cruel unrighteous system. The Socialist offers to change all this: the Individualists, when appealed to for a cure, can only cry ‘I know not; am I my brother’s keeper?’”

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Julius Vogel’s utopian novel *Anno Domini* (1889) is a different kettle of fish. Like Some Historical Articles, it was inspired by *Looking Backward* but as a capitalist rather than a socialist work. It is a work of fiction so in terms of seeing it as an intellectualised credo one should approach it with some caution. And it seems that Vogel penned it primarily for the money he hoped to make, publishing success that did not eventuate.54 He was not a Jeffrey Archer or even a Disraeli of his time. However the author’s coda makes plain the messages that emerge glaringly anyway from the plot, characterization and various digressions. The book is so thematically obvious and lacking in self-irony and moral complexity that it cannot help but read as the manifesto of its author. So much of the narrative voice meshes with Vogel’s political outlook that one is able to discern a strong link between his fictional and political personae. Vogel was the first Keynesian of New Zealand politics, a spender ahead of his time. He is remembered mostly for his great scheme of public works initiated as colonial Treasurer and continued as Prime Minister during the 1870s. Vogel arranged huge loans for the colony with the City, enabling significant infrastructure construction of roads, railways and communication administered by the central government, so setting the stage for abolition of the provinces and the emergence of the unitary state. However, all that was behind Vogel in the summer and autumn of 1888 as he wrote his novel confined to a wheelchair and strapped for cash in the dull, penurious setting of East Molesey. If Pember Reeves’ most protracted engagement with the utopian form came as a brattish prelude, for Vogel it came as an epilogue, a review rather than a preview of his political career.55 Vogel’s work was published only a few months before Pharos burst so effusively into print, and his short clipped sentences lack the Latinate subordinate clauses of young Pember Reeves. Vogel had little more to say after that. It is not clear if Pember Reeves ever read Vogel’s novel although he was warmly disposed to the old man who towards the end of his life thought well of the Liberals and remained on good terms with Stout. The last book Vogel read was Pember Reève’s history of New Zealand *The Long White Cloud*.56

53 Some Historical Articles at 49.
55 But, in the view of his biographer, one in which his inherent optimism remained undimmed: *ibid*.
56 *Ibid* at 309.
In *Anno Domini 2000* Vogel shows a strong veneration of institutions that Pember Reeves regarded as functional. They shared a very high regard for Parliament and the Empire, but the older writer’s tone is almost cloyingly sentimental. Vogel also exalts explicitly, if not excessively and again with intense reverence, the institutions of monarchy, aristocracy and marriage, matters of no outward concern to Pember Reeves. About the only feature absent from his pedestal is the established church, but then Vogel, a Jew (and one who writes of it as an ethnicity rather than a system of belief), could hardly be expected to go that far.

Vogel’s capitalist utopian novel collapses historical legitimacy and historicism. His future is a more radiant version of his present. The historical legitimacy of extant institutions is projected into the future where they shine more gloriously and more triumphantly in the stronger sun of the dominions. The noble past continues Whiggishly and uninterrupted into that magnificent future. This future has direct continuity with the Empire as it stood in 1889, a place where key features immanent at that time are allowed, through his fiction, to flourish and magnify.

The colonies of the Empire have federated into a union that now surpasses the former British one in wealth and global power. The capital of this Empire rotates around the major cities, sitting in Melbourne in the year 2000 when the novel opens, although Alexandria “probably fulfils” the position of headquarters. London, on the other hand, has become a degraded city that is decadent and subsidised by the prosperous colonies.

This federation was founded as a result of the intervention of the colonial Prime Ministers in the 1920s enjoining the British to admit Ireland to a fully federated Empire. In consequence Great Britain “has long ceased to be a bundle of sticks” and the British dominions “have been consolidated into the empire … and not only is it the most powerful empire on the globe, but at present no sign is shown of any tendency to weakness or decay.” It was just as well Gladstone’s Home Rule did not come about, says Mrs Hardinge, the Irish Prime Minister of the Empire in 2000, looking back “to what she called the Parnell period”. “If we had taken as a boon the overall instalment of self-government he offered,” she comments, “we could only have taken it with the determination to use the power we acquired for the purpose of seeking more or of gaining independence.” She proceeds to note how “at one moment it stood in the balance whether this great cluster of states should be consolidated into the present happy and united Empire or become a number off disintegrated communities, threatened with all the woes to which weak states are subject.” Ireland is now the world’s most prosperous country and at the very heart of the Empire, as her distinguished premiership itself shows.

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58 *Ibid* at 235: “The Londoners were luxurious to the verge of effeminacy.”
59 *Anno Domini* at 31-2.
60 *Ibid* at 246.
61 *Ibid* at 248.
Irish emigrants to the United States have been repatriating in droves “bringing with them that practical genius for progress of all sorts that distinguishes the American people.”

So desirable is this Empire that history rewinds. Fiction of course can do that. After a brief War sparked by the United States’ foolhardy invasion of Canada – a crass over-reaction to the ongoing dispute over Atlantic fisheries – the defeated republic faces massive reparations. It is required to give these not to the Empire but to its New England States, who after a plebiscite imposed in defeat, agree by a vote of four to one to secede and to join the Canadian Dominion. The inhabitants of the rebellious colonies, it transpires, have been regretting their error and itching to return to the imperial bosom. New York now becomes the capital of Canada. And thus Vogel’s whirligig of time brings in its revenge.

If we take the narrative voice to be a sincere reflection of Vogel’s views – the guileless plot and shallow, obvious characterization permit this safe assumption – then plainly he is commenting upon imperial problems of his time, Ireland and Egypt included, the trouble-spots of the 1880s. He sees the future of both those countries as lying inside the Empire. Whilst he does not comment on Egypt beyond that passing but significant reference to Alexandria, with all the implications of its renaissance a century later as imperial HQ, his asides on Ireland make plain his feeling that it should be treated no differently than Australasia and Canada. Anything less – such as the proposals Gladstone had on the table during his premiership (1880-85) like the Irish land legislation – would be counter-productive, tending to alienate rather than conciliate the Irish inside the Empire. By the late 1880s when Vogel wrote, establishing self-government in the white settlement colonies was hardly controversial, a club he believed that Ireland could rightly expect to join.

However, self-government in the non-Christian countries of the imperial domain was more problematic. Vogel was writing in the decade of the bombardment of Alexandria (1882) and the fall of Khartoum (1884) not to mention the beginnings in earnest of the Scramble for Africa. However, there are only a few clues that these issues are happening in the Empire of his time, the one self-propelling to the year 2000. Subject races are kept out of his novel except for a brief mention of a recently discovered people in the Antarctic who venture out occasionally to trade furs but mostly keep to their inhospitable frozen continent. Like the Australian television soap opera Neighbours there are no ethnically awkward inhabitants and cultural pluralism is absent: Westminster democratic values prevail and have been extended to include women but no further. Vogel’s is a very white Empire of super-fit Anglo-Saxons. It “remained a pigmentopia, a utopian discourse with a strong or prevailing racist worldview.”

Pember Reeves constructs his socialist polity in overtly racialised terms. This aspect is not directed against the indigenous Maori on whose situation he remains silent (doubtless in part as a South

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62 Ibid at 241.
63 Ibid at 292. The terms of capitulation and surrender required a majority of two to one but plainly, the overwhelming majority had been awaiting the chance eagerly to rejoin the British Empire.
64 Shakespeare Twelfth Night V, I, 375-6 (Feste)
65 Alessio, “Promoting Paradise”, supra at 33.
Islander with less experience of their ways). Rather he vehemently attacks migrant oriental labour as upsetting the integrity and political decency of the New Zealand state.

In *Anno Domini 2000* the Westminster tradition is flourishing and its head of state is a tall, blonde twenty-seven year old Emperor who retains prerogatives uncannily identical to those that Victoria regarded herself still as holding at the time of publication, most notably the extent of the obligation to accept advice from Ministers on matters touching the prerogative and the right to send for a government.66 This prerogative is set out as bearing a significant measure of residual discretion in the monarch that we today know to have long since (though not wholly) disappeared. Nonetheless, we are told that it “need scarcely be said that the Constitution was no longer an ill-defined and unwritten one” 67 Plainly, the author’s idea of a written constitution did not extend to codifying the royal prerogative (which is the way we think of written constitutions today). Rather its scope was this:68

“The Constitution was so framed as to indicate within itself the principles which were susceptible to modification or change, such, for example, as the conditions of the franchise and the modes of conducting elections. But there were three fundamental points concerning which no change was allowable, and these were – first, that the Empire should continue an empire; secondly, that the sovereignty should remain in the present reigning family; and, thirdly, that the union of the different parts of the dominion was irrevocable and indissoluble …”

The Imperial Parliament is unicameral. The House of Lords has ceased to exist as a separate chamber, however the hereditary principle has not disappeared. Indeed, the author shows considerable respect for the aristocracy (as also the established, philanthropic magnates and their dynasties, such as the Cardrosses – a literary version of the Rothschild family). Although the “peers began to feel ashamed of holding positions not in virtue of their abilities, but because of the accident of birth … finally it was decided that the peerage should elect a certain number of its own members to represent it in the federal Parliament.”69 Party politics are only faintly present in the Imperial Parliament of 2000 and they are more under the sway of personalities than dogma.

A central feature of this world is that women have the vote and they dominate politics: The Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition are women and the President of the United States is the trigger-happy Mrs Washington-Lawrence (with a wilful, disobedient daughter, a true American brat unlike the dutiful heroine daughters of Empire). However, the succession to the imperial throne remains in the first-born male. Our heroine, Hilda Richmond Fitzherbert, is a robust as well as extremely pretty Parliamentarian from good New Zealand stock – predictably, the South Island. She privately advises the Emperor, as ‘woman to man’ (which means, of course, that after the requisite series of crises she, a commoner ennobled as the Duchess of New Zealand, will

67 Ibid at 136.
68 Ibid at 134-5.
69 Ibid at 36-7.
marry him). She agrees that he is right to keep to his belief in the male line ascending the throne. An emperor must lead his troops from the front, she agrees strongly, and a woman could never go into battle. For all his avowed advocacy of women’s rights, the modern eye sees that Vogel still has his women deferring to male judgement, particularly that of the man destined to become their husband.

Vogel’s utopian Empire is not only loyalist and Tory, but it is also capitalist. Income tax and gift and death duties are at a flat 25% rate above a blanket basic allowance. Stamp duties “as obstacles to business, were considered an evidence of the ignorance of the past” and they have been abolished.\(^{70}\) The “result” of this taxation system, with revenue divided between the Imperial centre and the Dominions (who get customs and excise), “was that pecuniary suffering in all directions was at an end, but the ambition to acquire wealth, with its concomitant powers, was in no degree abated.”\(^{71}\) No one is required to work and they can remain idle, but if they choose to do so they must wear a distinctive uniform and they are regarded “as inferior by the healthy body politic.”\(^ {72}\) The satisfaction of debt is a matter of honour rather than law.\(^ {73}\) Vogel’s fictional Empire is also protectionist in terms of employment and trade. A tariff system applies not unlike what will become imperial preference some years later. Following “the practice of other countries” the Empire “was utterly averse to giving employment to the peoples of foreign nations.”\(^ {74}\) It also encourages inventors through a system of state-sponsored venture capital. This is the means by which air-cruisers have become the mode of international traffic, travelling between Australia and New Zealand at fifty feet over the ocean at the speed of 100 miles an hour (sixteen hours Melbourne to Christchurch via Stewart Island). It is also the means by which a form of nuclear energy has been discovered based on principles of chemical decomposition.\(^ {75}\) Electricity, much of it generated by “waves, tides and winds,”\(^ {76}\) has become the chief fuel. New Zealand’s Clutha River has been dammed, not for hydroelectric purposes so much as to extract its massive wealth in gold ore.

Unsurprisingly, then, one recognises much of Vogel’s own times in his fictional and forward transposition of empire. As if it were not clear enough already, he makes his message plain in a short non-fictional coda at the end of the book. The novel you have just read, he states, has had “three leading features”. The first is to show that the recognised dominance of either sex is unnecessary and that men and women may take part in the affairs of the world in terms of equality. Secondly he aims to suggest that the materials are to hand “for forming the dominions of Great Britain into a powerful and beneficent empire.” Finally he asks whether “it is not possible to relieve the misery under which a large portion of mankind languishes on account of extreme poverty and destitution.” Plainly – although he does not acknowledge this overtly in signing-off – his novel, as also his political career – indicate his support for state intervention but it is on a

\(^{70}\) Ibid at 141.  
\(^{71}\) Ibid at 141.  
\(^{72}\) Ibid at 136.  
\(^{73}\) Ibid at 30.  
\(^{74}\) Ibid at 140.  
\(^{75}\) Ibid at 177-187.  
\(^{76}\) Ibid at 136.
much lower scale and vastly more minimalist than Pember Reeves.\textsuperscript{77} Vogel admits that he “hates the idea of anything approaching to Communism, as it would be fatal to energy and ambition, two of the most ennobling qualities with which human beings are endowed.” Nonetheless he feels an “incalculable increase in wealth, position, and authority would accompany an ameliorated condition of the proletariat, so the scope of ambition would be proportionately enlarged.”\textsuperscript{78}

For Vogel, then, the colonial Parliaments not only partake in the historical legitimacy of Westminster but, federated together (incorporating Ireland, Egypt at least inferentially, and, at the novels’ close, the regained New England states), they are able to fuse with and exceed the Mother from which they have spawned. They share in its historical and transplanted legitimacy but together they will also surpass it. The sum of the present parts becomes a much more lustrous whole. This is using the literary form to project Whig history and historicism on a grand Imperial scale.

Pember Reeves was also a believer in imperial federation although by the time he was getting actively involved very early in the twentieth century as Agent-General, the temperature and goals of the movement were lowering away from stronger forms of federation with a single Imperial Parliament and ultimate court to weaker more consociational models. Active participation by Vogel and Pember Reeves in this running and rather scrambled conversation was separated by twenty years and, crucially, the white dominions’ growing experience of self-government in that time. Yet both had fundamentally different approaches, and these were ideological as well as generational. For Vogel it was a matter of loyalism, patriotism and veneration of institutions on grounds of their historical durability and excellence. Pember Reeves did not cast his belief in those Burkean terms, conservative and nostalgic as they were. For him imperial federation was in service of civilisation, racial superiority and the delivery by democratic means of social justice. It looked forward not backward, propelled inexorably to its destiny and certainly not mesmerised by sentimental devotion to monarchy and a glorious past.

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In 1904 William Pember Reeves wrote what is often regarded as his finest poem, ‘A Colonist in his Garden’ in which a colonist spurns the blandishments of a friend calling him to return ‘home’ to England. This friend, an Englishman, talks of New Zealand this way, as a country without a history and of bland undiscriminating egalitarianism:

“A land without a past; a race
Set in the rut of commonplace;
Where Demos overfed
Allows no gulf, respects no height;
And grace and colour, music, light
From sturdy scorn are fled.”

\textsuperscript{77} Some Historical Articles\textsuperscript{ at 43.} Pember Reeves described Vogel as a ‘Tory-Democrat’, not hostile to state interventionism but “just as little as will content them [the masses].”\textsuperscript{78}

\textsuperscript{78} Anno Domini\textsuperscript{ at 328-30.}
To this the colonist, a native-born son, replies:

“Here am I rooted. Firm and fast
We men take root who face the blast
When to the desert come,
We stand where none before have stood …

‘No Art?’ Who serves an art more great
Than we, rough architects of State
With the old Earth at Strife?
‘No colour?’ In the silent waste
In pigments not to be effaced
We paint the hues of life.”