

these pictures before us, and remembering what our Provincial Militia have done, and knowing what they are, I do not think we need blush for their history or organization.

At this moment Queen Victoria rules over fifty-one colonies and dependencies, which, with the British Islands, form the Empire that you and I desire to consolidate and improve. How this is to be done is a question of stupendous interest, demanding the highest qualities of statesmanship for its consideration and adjustment. There are those who seem to contemplate the dismemberment of this great Empire with evident delight, and who appear to regard the spread of British institutions and civilization as a misfortune to the world at large, and an injury to the parent state.

But let us see what there is within this charmed circle of Imperial duties and relations that is worth preserving. It is true that every outlying Province, as I have already shewn, may be attacked whenever the mother country is at war, yet war can only come when the plastic powers of astute diplomacy have been exhausted, and when the dread alternative has been deliberately accepted by enlightened public opinion. But into how many wars might not these fifty-one provinces be dragged if this Empire were dismembered, and if they were left to be overrun by neighbouring States, or drawn into entangling alliances with populations often ruthless or unenlightened?