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CONFEDERATION OR DISMEMBERMENT (?)

THE conference recently held in London to promote imperial confederation affirmed the desirability of a closer political union of the Empire, prudently leaving the means of attaining that object for future consideration. The great journals of England seem unanimously to have endorsed the views and action of the conference, which have since been advocated on the platform by Lord Rosebery and other prominent speakers. A proposed clause, to the effect that a closer union is essential to prevent total dismemberment, was struck out of the resolutions at the desire, it is said, of a prominent Canadian. If this erased clause conveyed a truth, as I believe it did, it is a truth which should not have been suppressed. An early and constant recognition of it would surely help to bring the present agitation to some practical conclusion. Separation is too serious a crisis to drift upon blindly and phlegmatically.

It is likely that England herself would shake off, sooner or later, colonies which accept the protection of her army, navy, and diplomatic service without contributing one dollar to their support, and which refuse to grant her commercial reciprocity. Some of the North American colonies cut adrift from the Mother Country because she taxed them; possibly the Mother Country may cut adrift from the others because they, indirectly, tax her. But for the larger colonies, whether it involve their independence or honourable union with neighbouring colonies or states, the dismemberment of the Empire seems preferable to their being subordinate dependencies for ever. If grown up sons cannot co-operate serviceably in business with each other and their parents, giving and taking a fair *quid pro quo*, better for them to go up for themselves than keep the family together by continuing in infantile dependence on their father. Such important regions as Australia and Canada should be full members in any imperial or