

The majority of thinking men are convinced, therefore, that by some other means must the unity of the Empire be preserved. And in all schemes towards this end certain things must be borne in mind :

(1). The colonies must not be curtailed in their powers of local self-government. If any change be made, it must be in an extension of these rights, as, for example, in the power of treating directly with foreign nations upon commercial questions. Upon this first head all parts of the Empire are agreed.

(2). Whatever the future may bring about, inter-imperial free trade is at present an impossibility. The protectionist colonies (*e. g.* Canada) will never consent to have their fiscal regulations controlled by a parliament the majority of the members of which represent interests and hold views upon political economy diverse from their own interests and views.

(3). As is well known, Canada furnished a regiment (the 100th) to the imperial army during the Crimean War. Quite recently troops for the Soudan campaign were furnished and equipped by the Australian colonies. Although within the past few years no official offer of military assistance has been made by Canada to Britain, yet offers have often been made by men connected with the Canadian volunteer force. From these and other unofficial statements the Government and the people of England have very naturally formed the opinion that Canadians are only too ready to furnish contingents for any war into which England may plunge. This idea is entirely erroneous. A large number of unemployed Canadians could, of course, be enlisted for any service, as was seen during the late war between the North and the South. No difficulty was experienced last autumn in raising the Canadian *voyageur* contingent to take the British troops up the Nile. But Canada will not furnish a yearly quota of men or money, or both, to the various expeditions in which the Home Government may think fit to engage.

To Englishmen this view may appear very selfish ; to Canadians it appears only reasonable. "Why," say the colonists, "should we be called upon to share the burdens of wars in which we have no interest, and as to the justice of which many persons both in Britain and in the colonies are very doubtful?" The colonists think that all they ought to be called upon to do, is to keep peace within their borders and defend their country against invasion. This they are perfectly willing to do, even although the military necessity should arise from British connection. They see, in fact, that most of the wars into which they have been drawn have arisen, as most of the wars into which they are likely to be drawn will arise, from connection with England. For the preservation of internal quiet and for the repelling of foreign invasion they are, by the maintenance of a small standing army, a considerable volunteer force and some excellent military schools, to a certain degree prepared. Canadians feel, moreover, that no other part of the Empire is doing more than they are towards building it up in power and greatness. Evidences of their activity are seen in vast public works (*e. g.*, the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Intercolonial Railway, the St. Lawrence and Welland Canals) capable of utilization in time of war, in the opening up of the resources of their vast country, and in the cultivation of a pride in imperial connection.

(4). The people of Canada do not want any part or share in the Eastern policy of Great Britain, or in any of those affairs in which she is alone deeply concerned. From her conduct in such affairs Britain alone will derive profit or loss ; of the correctness or incorrectness of her policy, she alone is the proper judge. The management of these matters Canadians are quite willing to leave to the Parliament at Westminster.

Such being the conditions of the question, it is plain that any federation which may be formed cannot be a very close one. But it need not, on that account, be the less effective in attaining its end, viz. : the preservation of the unity of the Empire.

According to present indications, if Imperial Federation is ever

brought about, the form it will assume will be an aggregation of British States with Britain as a centre ; each State managing its own local affairs, and Britain having entire control of those of India, Egypt and other lands in which she only is deeply interested. All these States will be under one sovereign and one flag, with one army, navy, consular service and citizenship. It would probably be necessary to have an Imperial Council ; but this, instead of being an unwieldy federal parliament, binding by its ropes the various parts of the Empire, would be merely an advisory council consisting on the part of the colonies of agents-general or high commissioners. The duties of the colonial members of this council would be to act as quasi-ambassadors, to keep their own lands prominently before the people of Great Britain, and to keep their own people informed upon all matters of importance taking place in Britain. The nucleus of this council is already at hand in the High Commissioner from Canada and the Agents-General from the Australasian and the South African colonies.

By means of this limited federation, all possible benefits would be secured, while many dangers likely to result from a closer union would be avoided.

It may be objected that Britain would not consent to defend the outlying parts of the Empire, under the proposed arrangement.

But she defends them now. At present no colony contributes, except voluntarily, towards imperial defence. It must be recollected that it is to England's benefit to preserve imperial unity. Trade and the flag do go together, whichever leads the way. The colonies are a benefit to her, moreover, in a military sense, inasmuch as they give her recruiting grounds for her armies and coaling and refitting stations for her fleets. In a life and death struggle they would prove most valuable supports. Besides all this, there is such a thing as "prestige ;" a word which, notwithstanding the ridicule heaped upon it, has a very decided value ; tangible in £. s. d., and intangible (though not the less real on that account) in many other ways.

To the colonies—then colonies no longer—the benefits arising from imperial federation would be many and varied. Not the least of these would be the possession of a horizon co-terminous only with the limits of the world. In these days, when the tendency is towards a complacent self-satisfaction with our own petty ends and aims, it is impossible to over-estimate the healthful results of "keeping touch," as it were, with the most distant peoples and events.

But there is a grander view of this question : the influence of a united empire upon the world at large. Without any doubt whatever, it would prove the surest guarantee of Christian evangelization and peace.

Never before has so favourable an opportunity appeared for a world-wide union. Everything is ready at hand ; a small central State, rich in wealth, population and historic associations ; vast dependencies ready and willing to receive the surplus growth of Europe ; the control of the world's banking and carrying trade ; and, as a capital, the world's commercial, literary and political metropolis.

Canadians and other colonists feel, then, that they can most worthily play their part in the great historic drama whose first act opened when Cæsar's legions saw the Kentish cliffs, by developing their own resources, by discouraging all tendency towards foreign absorption, and by encouraging a manly pride in the imperial tie.

This they believe they can do for some time as colonists ; afterwards, when they shall have outgrown the colonial state, as outlying members of a vast British Confederation.

By means of such a confederation, there is no reason why imperial unity, for which so much blood has been shed, should not prove as firm and unshaken as are the rocky bulwarks of our parent isle.