

time when self-government was conferred upon the colonies by Great Britain, all of which constitutes the work of Imperial Consolidation, or Federation, and still remains to be planned and executed. As in Lord Beaconsfield's time provision has still to be made for an Imperial tariff, for a proper system of state-aided emigration to settle our Crown Lands, for the defence of the Empire and for Imperial representation. But to repair the errors and omissions of 50 years ago is a difficult task, and one which is only now beginning to be seriously contemplated by English statesmen. It is only now that they are beginning to respond to the "distant sympathies" mentioned by Lord Beaconsfield, although these have been distinctly enough expressed by the colonies during the last 15 years, and more especially in 1894.

The omissions which were enumerated by Lord Beaconsfield were many and serious, and it is perhaps too early yet to attempt to indicate how they should be attended to in some general scheme of Imperial Federation. But two of them have already attracted the attention of the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, M. P., Secretary of State for the Colonies, who thus expressed himself in March, 1896:

"We may endeavor to establish common interests and common obligations. When

we have done that it will be natural that some sort of representative authority should grow up to deal with the interests and the obligations we have created. What is the greatest of our common obligations? It is Imperial defence. What is the greatest of our common interest? It is Imperial trade. [Hear, hear.] And those two are very closely connected. It is very difficult to see how you can pretend to deal with the great question of Imperial defence without having first dealt with the question of Imperial trade. Imperial defence is largely a matter of ways and means and dependent upon the fiscal and other commercial arrangements you may make; and, therefore, the conclusion to which I arrive is this—that if the people of this country and the people of the colonies mean what they have been saying, and if they intend to approach this question of Imperial unity in a practical spirit, they must approach it on its commercial side."

Nothing can be more appropriate and practical than these remarks, and the present writer proposes in this essay to consider the subjects which Mr. Chamberlain points out as those which, before all others, deserve consideration by the people of Great and Greater Britain, and to elaborate in some detail a scheme for effecting some degree of Imperial consolidation in matters of Imperial commerce and defence.

## CHAPTER II.

### IMPERIAL RECIPROCITY.

The British nation, or rather the British Empire, or (as it might be called in imitation of the old "Holy Roman Empire of German Nations") the United Empire of British Nations, is the only modern political community in the whole world, owing allegiance to the same sovereign and enjoying the protection of the same fleet, which is destitute of the cement of a common material interest in its commercial relations. It resembles the stones in what is to be a mass of concrete before the cementing material is introduced, or has had time to harden in its interstices. The United Kingdom, which is the largest stone in the mass, and is in possession of the hegemony of the British Empire, is equally as closely related commercially with foreign countries, as she is with her own daughter nations, and had, indeed, pledged herself to the former never to accept com-

mercial advantages in the markets of the latter which were not enjoyed as well by the aforesaid alien nations. It is not the object of this essay to enquire how all this came about. It is assumed to have been an unnatural state of things, and it is now, happily, one which is to go out of existence next year. What is now to be considered is the best method of cementing together the loose fragments above referred to, and so reflecting the commercial consolidation of the British Empire.

Such consolidation has, within the last ten years, not infrequently been spoken and written of as "Imperial Reciprocity," or as "British Commercial Union," the object being to improve the trade betwixt the various divisions of the Empire. Such a union means, of course, a combination of the various members of the British Empire by certain arrangement for mutual aid