

decade just past, of the beginnings of a new imperial constitution in the Imperial Conference and the Imperial Secretariate, would have been impossible but for the wave of sentiment which spread over the Dominions during the Boer War, so the still closer intercourse, not only between individual Britons, but also between the several British Governments engaged in a common and world-wide task, cannot but contribute towards the solution of the great British problem: the problem of allying self-governing nationalities in a permanent confederation for common purposes. As it is, the German attack is already converting the loose congeries of Dominions into, not indeed a *Zollverein*, or Customs Union, but a *Kriegverein*, or War Union—an organization for military and naval co-operation. The capture of the *Emden* by the *Sydney* is worth, not only for imperial sentiment, but also for imperial organization, far more than the *Emden* cost us in captured merchantmen.

This is one more illustration of the strength in human affairs both of circumstance and of the unconscious. My German friends, I have noticed, pay us what I have always thought the undeserved compliment of ascribing all our national success to conscious policy, pursued with consistency generation after generation. If only they could discover just what our policy has been and is, they could imitate it, they seem to think, and get the same results! It is in vain I have told them that I thought we commonly had no policy, but just muddled along somehow. That, of course, was a playful exaggeration; just as it is an exaggeration to say that the British Empire has grown simply because it has been attacked, and that it has been forced together only by outside pressure. But it contains quite as much of the