

Lastly, and perhaps this is the most important matter of all, in a colony, however free be its government, no real training for independence is possible. Colonies have no foreign policy. They cannot quarrel with their neighbours, and can have no war. They are like boys at school who are not allowed to fight, and in these ominous times no country can keep its liberties long which is unable or unprepared to defend itself.

And yet the child learns to walk by falling down. All that we learn that is worth learning, we learn by our own efforts and by our own mistakes. We value nothing which is freely given to us. Hardihood and perseverance, the stubborn virtue which prefers death to failure, the qualities which have made illustrious the consecrated name of history—these are the only foundation on which national life can be built up, and they are learnt only in the severe school of experience. A people who are to hold an important place in the world must be hardened in the fire, and the fire cannot approach where the British flag is flying. An individual who has never had to struggle, never grows to be a man. A nation which is forced forward in a political conservatory may shoot rapidly into imposing luxuriance of flowers and fruit, but it will not stand the frost or the storm. The oak does not grow under glass, nor nations which have the oak's fibre.

Such, then, are the difficulties in the way of maintaining a union between Great Britain and her magnificent dependencies. If we keep them under the crown, we mismanage them; if we give them self-government, they tend to drift away from us; and the intermediate is so inconvenient, and produces so many serious evils, that for the sake of the colonies themselves we ought not to desire it to be continued. We may go on as we are for some time longer, but the existing arrangement is only temporary. In some form or other they must be drawn closer to us, or the connection will come to an end. And I think that, if we persevere much further with the "poor relation" principle, the second alternative is the more likely of the two. The question is what we desire and what they desire, and how earnest that desire is. If we have merely a vague wish and do not care to exert ourselves, events will take their natural course. If we are serious, if we are really convinced on both sides that the union of the empire is worth struggling for, then this nation would not be what