

PREFACE.

It will not be unsafe to assume that practically all the people owing allegiance to the British Crown, or who have once experienced and realized the personal liberty guaranteed under its protection, have a sincere desire for the unity and perpetuation of the Empire, and may be relied on to oppose any internal change that might endanger its continuity or check its material advance.

Recent events in South Africa manifested the degree of real and practical unity now existing. The most astute observers of Imperial affairs could not disguise their surprise at the evidences of its existence, or, unfriendly nations their chagrin.

There was a time within the memory of many people living, when such unity did not exist, but, when indeed, the signs of disintegration within the Empire were fast accumulating.

Before disturbing the conditions under which British Imperial unity has gathered such strength, we should at least be certain that the proposed change will not put out of action, any of the unifying influences which experience teaches have had such happy results.

The proposal now made to re-impose preferential duties within the Empire as against the rest of the World, is attracting wide attention, for it involves a change far reaching in its consequences.