

carrying on the war; the protracted and successful resistance of South Carolina to the confederated authorities, upon the tariff question of 1832—a resistance which became successful through acts of open rebellion, on the part of that State; and the “melancholy acknowledgment” made by a member of the Washington Cabinet, but a few years since, to a British Minister, that the Federal Government found itself unable to restrain the piratical expeditions of Louisiana. The population of the United States is scattered over an immense and productive territory, affording to all abundant facilities for providing for their most pressing wants, and hindering those clashings of vital interests which convulse society and endanger its peace, in more densely populated countries; the frontiers of that republic are in contact with the territories of no hostile and dangerous power; and its history, as an independent power, has not yet extended over a period of three-quarters of a century. The Federal Constitution has, therefore, not been fairly tried, in that republic; and the partial trial which it has had, has been under the most favorable circumstances. The results of that partial trial are anything but favorable to the reputation of such a constitution; and when the inevitable progress of events shall subject the United States to those internal, social convulsions and complications of foreign relations which have proved the most trying ordeal of all governments, in older nations, we have certainly good grounds for believing that that constitution, if it shall have existed so long, will be found utterly inadequate to the wants of the country.

On turning to the other side of the question, we find that the benefits derived from a Federal Constitution, are patent—so much so as to be discernable by the most superficial observer—and are traceable to a single cause. The evil effects, when carried to an extreme, of the principle of centralization in carrying on the operations of government, are well known. The local interests of every section of the country considerably removed from the centre of authority, must, under an ultra centralization system, suffer severely. The federal system, by dividing the country into certain sections, and giving to

each the management, to a great extent, of its own local affairs, has a directly opposite tendency, and does not conduce to the prosperity of any one of those sections at the expense of the others. The mode of its operation to produce this effect, is too obvious to require explanation. Two further observations must be made, however, in connection with this branch of the subject. First, this management of local affairs is, in each case, conducted by a power which, at the same time, exercises certain other functions highly detrimental to the welfare of the nation at large, as already shown. Secondly, these purely local affairs can, it is quite obvious, be managed equally well, if not much better, by a local power *not* endowed with those objectionable functions.

The preceding remarks have reference only to such a Constitution as we find in operation in the United States of America, not because such a one is the form most usually adopted by Confederations—it being, in strict point of fact, not a Federal Constitution at all; but because it is the least objectionable, with reference to the case of British America, of any which have hitherto borne that name. Nearly every former Confederation, besides having been formed with reference *only* to the foreign relations of the Union, has combined States having an entirely distinct nationality.

Then as to a Federal Union such as that of the United States, the inferences intended to be drawn from the foregoing remarks are, that such a Union, if attempted, would be repugnant to the feelings of the several Provincial Legislatures; that, if not so repugnant to the Colonies, such a union could not go into operation except by virtue of a divestiture of authority, on the part of the Mother Country, which is of a problematical occurrence; that, supposing this condition fulfilled, such a union could be effected only by a radical change in the Provincial Constitutions, making that of the elective body, and those of the various, subordinate Provinces, all essentially different from the Constitution which now prevails in each; that, if effected, there is no probability of its working with even ordinary success, owing to the complication of machinery employed and the