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Achæan League was not positively successful in repulsing the overwhelming power which assailed it, it was successful compared with the great monarchies of the time—even the Macedonian—and enjoyed before it fell a period of happiness and glory.¹ The tendency of the Teutonic race, as the stronger and more independent, has been, both in the old world and the new, towards federal government, though in the old world the tendency has been a good deal thwarted by the pressure of military necessities; while the tendency of the weaker Celt has been, and seems to be almost incurably, towards the centralization from which he derives collective strength, or rather force, at the expense of all the higher objects of human association. A federal union also most easily admits of the peaceful extension of territory, a prospect which of course opens before the North American Confederation as well as before the United States. Finally, it leaves everything more open and susceptible of modification; an advantage not apt to be appreciated by the framers of constitutions, but, nevertheless, a considerable one in the case of a continent which is still in course of settlement, and the final divisions and arrangement of which cannot at present be certainly foreseen. It would be somewhat rash, at least, to assert positively that Nature will finally ratify the political accident which has cut off from the rest of the continent the long ribbon of territory stretching from Nova Scotia to the British Colonies on the Northern Pacific.

¹ "How practically efficient the federal principle was in maintaining the strength and freedom of the nation is best shown by the bitter hatred which it crused, first in the Macedonian kings, and then in the Roman senate. It was no contemptible political system against which so many kings and consuls successively conspired; it was no weak bond which the subtlest of all diplomatic senates expended so many intrigues and stratagems to unloose."—Freeman's *History of Federal Governments*, vol. i. (on the *Greek Federations*), p. 710. And see the quotation from Justin in the note. Kent absurdly includes the Amphictyonic League among his instances of the weakness of Federations.

Hamilton, the principal framer of the Washingtonian constitution, was a man of great ability, and of great though honourable ambition, who had been accustomed through the Revolution to act upon an ample scene. He aspired to found a great national Government, the rival of the great national Governments of Europe, in the administration of which a first-rate statesman might find full scope for his capacity. He did not know, and could hardly be expected to know, that as civilization advances the importance and dignity of government, the function of which is compulsion, diminish, while those of voluntary association and spontaneous action increase. Nor, as the position selected for his national capital shows, did he anticipate the extension of the United States beyond the limits hitherto assigned by nature to a centralized nation. His destined capital, the "city of magnificent distances," stands a ghastly and ridiculous monument of his mistake. That his political structure was conceived in error is a fact not so palpable, yet, perhaps, not less certain. There is nothing in the world so sound as American society, with its intimate union of all classes, its general diffusion of property, its common schools, and its free religion. The danger of communism, or of anything like a war of classes, is never felt; and even strikes were almost unknown till the Legal Tender Act multiplied them by causing a frightful derangement of prices. The local institutions also, in which the people administer their own affairs, or elect officers to act under the eye of the constituency and in conjunction with it, are perfectly healthy, and form, in themselves and by their effect in training the political character of the people, the sheet-anchor of the constitution.¹ But the central institutions are full of faction and corruption. In a busy community, which, happily for itself, has no idle class of hereditary

¹ The municipality of New York is very corrupt; but New York with its great Irish and German mob is quite an exceptional case, though regarded by newspaper correspondents and their readers as the type of America.