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## UNION OF THE COLONIES OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA.

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CONCLUDED.

In departing from the question of the necessity for a union of the Provinces to take up that of their Constitution under such a union, the writer feels that he is beginning to step upon ground hitherto but imperfectly explored. Nearly every one seems to be impressed with a sense of the necessity for something being done to bring the Provinces into closer connection with each other. A vast deal has been said on the subject, in this its general aspect; but very little upon the practical details. When it has been spoken of, it has been most frequently as a *Federal Union*; but without any reason being given for the application of that epithet, or any argument to prove that that particular kind of union is the most desirable. It is sufficiently obvious that any closer union, if to exist at all, must be either a *federal* union, according to the usual acceptation of that term upon this continent, or an *absolute, legislative* one.

The presumption which seems to exist, in so many minds, that the union contemplated must be a federal one, is, no doubt, founded upon our contiguity to the United States. We are accustomed to see, in that great republic—our nearest neighbour, and that with which our intercourse is most frequent—the most remarkable example of a federal union which the world has probably ever

seen. But it will be difficult to find any argument deducible from the history, or condition, of that republic, to favour the establishing of a similar confederation in British America. The foundation of the federal constitution of the United States, was framed to suit the prejudices of the thirteen States which originally formed the North American Confederation; not because, reasoning upon sound political principles, it was the most desirable constitution for the country. But, although not the result of deliberative design, neither has it grown up gradually out of the circumstances and necessities of the country; and it remains yet to be proved that it is the one best suited to those circumstances and necessities. A confederation had been previously attempted in which each State, completely independent in itself, delegated, to the central authority, such of its power as that State pleased. That share was, at the very outset, extremely insignificant; but, as time elapsed, it rapidly lessened and finally became a merely nominal portion. When the Confederation was on the eve of entire dissolution, and whilst the country, involved in internal difficulties and with crippled resources, was yet fearful of attack from foreign powers, it was deemed indispensable to do *something* towards the consolidation of its strength. Between the requirements of the collective body and the prejudices of the individual States, a compromise was, at length, effected; and in the words of De Tocqueville, "the strict rules of logic were evaded," and a federal constitu-