

In a speech before "The 1900 Club" (Albert Hall, April, 1907), Mr. Balfour testified to the existence and necessity for Colonial independence in the following language:

"We have, therefore, a great experiment to carry out, the experiment of retaining in our Empire communities which must each be left unhampered, untrammelled, unimpeded, to follow its own laws and destiny and development. We have to combine those and to keep them bound in our great Empire. That is the problem of the British Empire, and do not let us conceal from ourselves that as time goes on it must involve, like everything else which is worth doing, difficulties of its own.

If I am asked how I think those difficulties should be faced, how the centrifugal forces which may not be powerful, which are not powerful, but which exist, are to be neutralized, then I say it cannot be done by the old method of control by this country of its children. That has long been abandoned by every British statesman of every school. Neither can it be done, I think, by a reciprocal intervention in each other's affairs on the part of all these great self-governing communities.

The connection is, and must remain, so far as paper constitutions are concerned, a loose connection, but which need not and must not be loose so far as these bonds are concerned which cannot be put on paper, cannot be embodied in a constitution, but which are written in the hearts of men.

I have heard the British Empire compared to an alliance, a close alliance, of independent States. I do not agree with the parallel. I do not think that is the ideal we ought to look to. Mere treaties or the substitute of treaties framed in order that a common end may be obtained by independent communities, are useful things, but they are not the bonds which are going to unite us for all time to our children beyond the seas.

Again, I have heard the British Empire compared to a commercial corporation, a partnership, but here also I think the parallel is poverty-stricken and falls far below the reality at which we should aim. We are not partners in a commercial concern in which each partner has to consider nicely whether he gets his proper share of the common profits of the firm, and in which each is prepared to transfer himself and his capital to some other firm if he thinks he can get better terms. That is not the way in which any member of our Empire should look upon the great body of which he is a member. That is not the mode in which he should represent his relationship either to the Mother Country or to the other Colonies.

No. The true parallel is not that of an alliance or of a partnership. It is that of a family. We have to feel, and I think we do feel, that the bonds that unite us—in almost all cases the bonds of blood, and in all cases without exception bonds, of common institutions and common love of freedom—carry with them, and must carry with them more and more, feelings of obligation and of mutual service which cannot be put down in black and white, which cannot be added up by any arithmetical process, but which bind us together as members of a united family are bound together, pleased when they give to each other some service which differentiates them as a family from the rest of the world, and anxious to do that service without too close calculation of what they are to get by it. A family between whom there may be and must be business relations, but with whom, though business be business, it is yet something more. That is the ideal we have to look to."

LORD CURZON.

Speaking at Birmingham (11 Dec., 1907) the former Viceroy of India said:—

"The constituents were there; the spirit was there; but the problems were still involved and the plan had yet to be produced. We had so to work that the concentric rings should continue to revolve around the central star, not merely because it had hitherto been the law of their being, but because it was their interest and their voluntary choice. In the economy of the imperial household we were dealing, not with children, but with grown men. At our table were seated, not dependants or menials, but partners as free as ourselves, and with aspirations not less ample or keen. That they were bound to us by sentiment was a priceless asset; to throw it away would be a criminal blunder. . . . Of one thing he was certain, namely, that in proper hands the Crown would become, if not more powerful, at all events more indispensable and more important. He looked forward to the day when the Sovereign would visit his Dominions in person and hold his court in Calcutta or Quebec. Nor could he imagine any stronger cement of Empire than that its government and unity, as typified by the Sovereign, should from time to time be incorporated in the allied States or Dominions. The capital of the Empire would probably never leave London; but there was no stationary necessity or obligation in the Crown."