

CHAP.  
XXI

Reasons  
for treat-  
ing the  
Dominions  
as  
separate  
sovereign-  
ties.

' was then laid before the assembly which met in  
' Berlin on February 24th.'<sup>1</sup>

Such are the facts; and the prevalence of political maxims so much at variance with them is largely due to historians and constitutional writers—to their inveterate habit of trying to explain the British Commonwealth in terms of English history. Clearly it is not possible for people living under two or more separate governments to create a common government for common purposes without a cut-and-dried scheme or by any mere process of growth, such as that which in England converted the despotism of William the Conqueror into a commonwealth presided over by King George V. The preparation of cut-and-dried schemes is the first condition of any union of separate communities which is to be effected by virtue of popular discussion, understanding and assent, and not by force. In 1706 England and Scotland were separate sovereignties, although under William of Orange they constituted one international state in their relations to foreign powers. But that dual character was one which, in practice, could only be maintained so long as Scotland and the Scottish Parliament were willing to have no voice in foreign affairs and to leave England to conduct the foreign policy of Great Britain as Prussia conducts that of Germany. The moment the Scottish Parliament insisted on a voice in foreign affairs the two sovereignties were confronted with the alternatives of absolute separation or fusion into one commonwealth. And the Dominions are now in the same relation to Britain

<sup>1</sup> Headlam, *Bismarck*, pp. 291-3.