

modern poet well describes when speaking of England :—

“ A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom broadens slowly down
From precedent to precedent.
Where faction seldom gathers head,
But, by degrees to fulness wrought,
The strength of some diffusive thought
Hath time and space to work and spread.”

Nor can the Colonies themselves have faith in conferences. The examples before them are of the postal conference in Melbourne, which recommended measures that were never adopted ; and of the conference in Sydney upon customs' duties, that settled no new policy, and defined no boundaries for common action. A conference may, upon one-sided questions, such as the abolition of the Corn-laws, or the adoption of Free-trade principles, when policy is clearly defined, prescribe a course of action so as to arouse agitation, and convince public opinion in such a manner as shall ensure success ; but the same materials can never determine vexed questions of State rights, the limits of constitutional power, the necessities of external or internal defence, the boundaries of principle and action for a colony to observe, or when imperial duties are to be recognised or withheld.

I will not dwell upon the minor mistakes, such as the indecision of plan—whether confederation should or should not be advocated, whether representation should be by agents or diplomatists. It is now open to demonstration that the most flagrant error was in adopting a tone of mind and indulging in expressions which assumed that the great statesmen and the public