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THE SITUATION.

An Australian Confederation is now in process of formation. The Legislature of New South Wales has sent an address to the Queen, asking that the necessary Imperial legislation be passed to carry out the result of the affirmative vote, in favor of Australian federation, given on the referendum of July 20. The Canadian Confederation will serve, in some sort, as a model; and if there were any mistakes in our plan, it will be essential to see that they are not repeated in the case of Australia. A mode of selecting the Senate more likely to give permanent satisfaction would seem to be in order. The theory, as old at least as Adam Smith, was that they, the colonies, were bound to become independent as soon as they were able to stand alone. Canada shrank from an independence which she felt she could not sustain, when it was almost thrust upon her, and the last British soldier was withdrawn from the citadel of Quebec. Now the Premier of the Dominion talks vaguely about Canada being a nation; but there is certainly something irregular in the baptism. Do these colonial confederations, of which a third may be described in Africa, in the obscure future, portend a federation of the British Empire? Or will there come a reaction to the old and now disused theory of the ultimate independence of the colonies? English colonies and confederations of English colonies have no more franchises to ask or receive from the parent state. There may be a danger that a country which does not feel all the responsibilities of an independent nation, may, on some question, assume an attitude towards a foreign nation which it might not otherwise have assumed, and of which the mother country may not see its way to accept the responsibility.

Perversity herself would be asked, in vain, to explain why French Anarchists should expect to help Dreyfus, in his second trial, or themselves, by an insane outbreak in Paris, which is like nothing so much as Bedlam let loose, and in which hundreds of people were wounded. The result will be, if the riots have any effect at all on the trial, to create a prejudice against a cause to the support of which the argument of violence is

brought. But is not this violence, in some obscure way, the repercussion of the violence which has been used against Dreyfus, sometimes in legal form, and sometimes in oppression of the captive, on Devil's Island? Whatever the cause, it is folly in action. To us it is inexplicable. We know it is French; there is in it enough to remind us of the Commune, and feebly to recall some wild scenes of the great revolution itself.

The Dreyfus case is becoming more intelligible, as it is unfolded in the open Court; still it continues to be overshadowed by mysteries which are impenetrable. Dreyfus was convicted on the contents of a bundle of papers, which got into the Intelligence Office of the French Government, nobody knows how; which was irregularly taken, the then head of the Intelligence Office does not know by whom, to the court martial which convicted Dreyfus, which, after the conviction which it had effected, was sent back to the drawer whence it was taken. At this point, Col. Picquart, the able and astute officer who was at the head of the Intelligence Office, began to study the case, for his own satisfaction, he having had nothing to do with the trial. He found a bundle of trivialities and forgeries, and no evidence on which Dreyfus could properly be convicted. He stated the facts to one of the generals, by whom he was sent to another. The latter received the statement with an open mind, and remarked, "then a mistake has been made" in the conviction of an innocent man. But he was not willing that steps should be taken to right the wrong that had been done. Why, it is impossible to say. And the attitude of this general has been that of most of the others. When it was learned that Col. Picquart had become convinced that there was nothing in this bundle of secret papers to convict Dreyfus, the documents were again taken out of the Intelligence Office, and Col. Henry added to them another forgery to make the case look stronger against Dreyfus, and put it in the packet. He afterwards confessed his crime and committed suicide. His widow swears that he did this to save the honor of the country! How honor? Col. Picquart's evidence before the new court martial points distinctly to Col. Esterhazy as the culprit. Esterhazy was known to be in intimate relations with Col. Henry. The day before the generals were to be examined before the new court martial, Labori, the chief counsel for Dreyfus, was shot by an assassin, who, however, did not complete his work of death. It is difficult to imagine that generals, some of whom had been Ministers of War in the French Cabinet, have any treason of their own to conceal. They are the mortal enemies of Dreyfus, and have done all they could to prevent his obtaining justice.

Sir William Des Voes, formerly governor of Newfoundland, in an article in *The Nineteenth Century*, suggests a mode by which, in his opinion, Newfoundland might be brought into the Canadian Confederation. The negotiations once held with that object, he observes, failed mainly on a question of money consideration. Canada, he admits, offered a considerable sum, though he holds that it was incomparably less than the debt which is morally due to our oldest colony. He does not allege that it is due by Canada. His suggestion is that, if England were to "assist with this sum," in other words pay the difference between the moral debt and Canada's offer, "there might still be accomplished that