

proposed might have been "the key-stone of that fabric of independence" * which was eventually set up, but at all events the principal object its framers had in view was that of better securing themselves from the aggression of the French. This scheme of Union having failed, the colonies remained still without combination between each other for defensive purposes. Even after the defeat of BRADDOCK, when it became more necessary than ever for the colonies to unite, the local legislatures continued their policy of opposing the demands of the crown. Some of them actually "assumed the power of sending field commissioners with their armies after the fashion of the Dutch."†

Now in 1866 the British American colonies also stand in the presence of a powerful and uncertain Power, without combination between one another for political or military purposes. Again a Colonial Congress has been held, with the view of affording the means of combination. As in 1754, there is a show of resistance in some of the colonies to the carrying out of this political project. It is satisfactory, however, to know that the relations between the parent state and its dependencies are very different from what they were a century ago. No suspicion or misunderstanding exists as to each other's motives and intentions. Both British and Colonial statesmen are influenced by the desire of promoting the interests of Great Britain and British America at one and the same time.

But will a Union between the provinces afford them that security from aggression which its advocates say it will? It seems almost absurd to argue a point which ought to be obvious to everyone. Especially now-a-days when Union is the great lever among peoples, no doubt should be raised on the subject. We have seen the great Power on our borders contending for this very principle. What was it that gave

such power for several years to the Southern States, in their efforts to obtain their independence, but the Union that existed between them? What was it but the same great cause that brought victory finally to the Northern States? Or, if we look across the Atlantic, we see Italy at last, after years of misery, anarchy and tyranny, realizing the great idea of Unity within its borders. And we have just seen the same absorbing idea predominating within the limits of the old and effete Germanic Confederation.

Whilst the old Thirteen Colonies remained without combination, suspicious of the motives of the Crown and of each other as well, they were comparatively powerless. If it had not been for the energy and determination of Great Britain herself, the French might have carried out their ambitious designs on this continent. The moment, however, the colonists became animated by a common purpose, and entered into a common combination, they showed the strength and power that really existed within themselves. Still, in the face of the evidence that the War of Independence gave them, there were not a few persons who contended in favour of the disintegration of the Union that had been formed for the purposes of mutual defence. That admirable collection of political papers known as "The Federalist" was rendered necessary by the existence of the very spirit of isolation that now obtains among certain classes in these colonies. The question which is discussed in these essays is stated to be,—"Whether it would conduce more to the interests of the people of America that they should, to all general purposes, be one nation, under one Federal Government, or that they should divide themselves into separate confederacies, and give to the head of each the same kind of powers which they are advised to place in one national government." Politicians then appeared who insisted that "instead of looking for safety and happiness in union, we ought to see it in a division of the States into distinct confederacies or sovereignties." Suppose this doctrine had prevailed, a number of confederacies would have grown up on this continent, each jealous of the other. The aptitude of the Anglo-Saxon race for self-government might perhaps prevent the occurrence of such a state of affairs as has characterized the South American republics, but still jealousias

* Chalmers II. 273.

† Lord Bury's EXODUS OF WESTERN NATIONS. Vol. II. p. 245.