

raising armaments; and that of the British Islands either by creating local legislatures endowed with prerogatives similar to those of the Colonies, or by having the Imperial Legislature, as at present constituted, hold one session for legislation on matters defined as belonging to the local government of the British Islands, and then having the colonial representatives admitted to their seats and a second session held for the discharge of matters belonging to the Federal Government of the Empire. Fully to explain and defend the details of these measures would require a volume; and as I have already devoted one to the subject, I must take the liberty, of referring my readers to it, should they desire to pursue the subject.\*

The scheme of Imperial Federation is usually met by opponents clapping their hands to their ears and shouting, "Impracticable! Impracticable! Impracticable!" in loud, louder, and loudest tones. A few of the more calm-minded occasionally accompany this shout with a statement of their reasons for the faith that is in them. The feasibility of the scheme can probably be best tested by examining the soundness of their pleas.

1. A very common argument is that employed by Mr. Norris when he says: "The scheme was never recognised by statesmen as possible. It is the theme of dreamers and speculators only, and can only be ranked with that other beautiful but impracticable dream, the Utopia of Sir Thomas More" (p. 40). Those who adopt this argument must be rather short of memory. In Canada the scheme has been warmly supported by the late Mr. Howe and by Mr. Blake, and in England it is supported by an ex-Premier. Lord Russell, in his "Recollections and Suggestions," after denouncing emancipationist theories as strongly as he possibly could do, goes on to say: "At the same time I do not think the relations of the Colonies to the Mother Country can be kept up precisely in their present form." And after a short sketch of what might be done, he remarks: "This scheme may seem impracticable to many. But so did the Reform Act of 1832; so did the total repeal of the Corn Laws; so did the abolition of the Irish Church. Great changes have been

made; great changes are impending; amid these changes *there is no greater benefit to mankind than a statesman can propose to himself than the consolidation of the British Empire.*" None of these gentlemen can be called "dreamers and speculators." If they are few in number, it is simply because the need for action, and the circumstances calculated to encourage it, are both of recent occurrence.

2. The great standing plea against Federation is that concisely stated by Mr. Mill, in the words: "Countries separated by half the globe, do not present the natural conditions for being under one government, or even members of one Federation." The answer to this *theory* is the *fact*, that all the countries in question have been thus united for about a century. The Imperial authorities have, during that time, fulfilled for the whole Empire, all the duties which would devolve upon a Federal Government, with the single exception of raising a revenue. When alleged "natural" laws, or conditions, are contradicted by actual historical facts, the only possible explanation is, that the laws of nature have been misinterpreted. If the testimony of facts is of any value, Mr. Mill and his endorsers are, in this instance, guilty of such misinterpretation. For the British Islands and their Colonies not only have been, and are, for certain purposes, united under one government; but, after an experience of its administration, desire to remain so. Seeing is believing. That a central authority is competent to manage the diplomacy and armaments of the Empire, has been demonstrated by experience. That the difficulty of the task would be increased by the mere receipt of colonial contributions to the revenue, can be maintained by nobody. Under such a financial policy as is sketched above, no difficulty could arise in reference to unjust appropriations of taxation, because the amount for which each member would be liable could be ascertained by a simple operation of arithmetic; nor could any difficulty occur as to the "ways and means" of raising it, as the source from which it should be taken would be specified. With the commercial policy of the Empire the Federal Legislature would not interfere, save to enforce the observance of the terms of union. Thus the Federal Legislature would have few, if any, further duties to discharge in the future than the Imperial Government has

\* See "A Colonist on the Colonial Question," by Jehu Mathews. London: Longmans & Co. Toronto: Adam, Stevenson & Co.