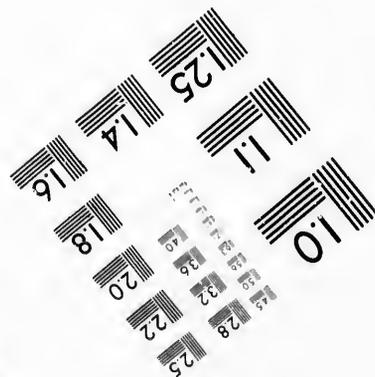
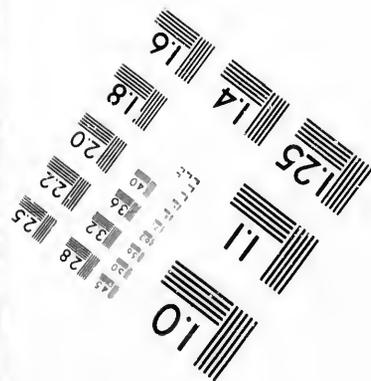
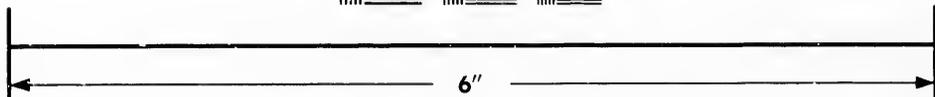
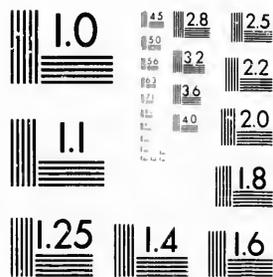


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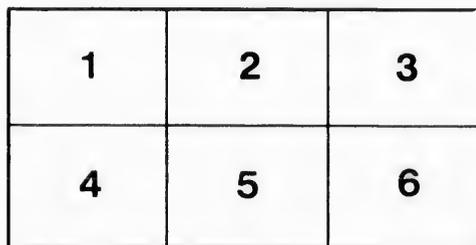
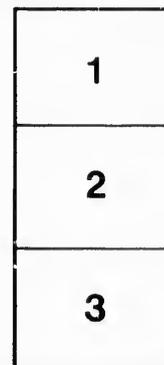
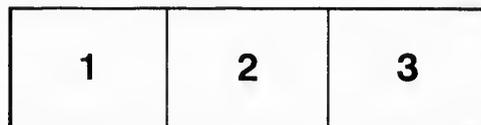
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BRITISH FEDERALISM

ITS RISE AND PROGRESS

BY

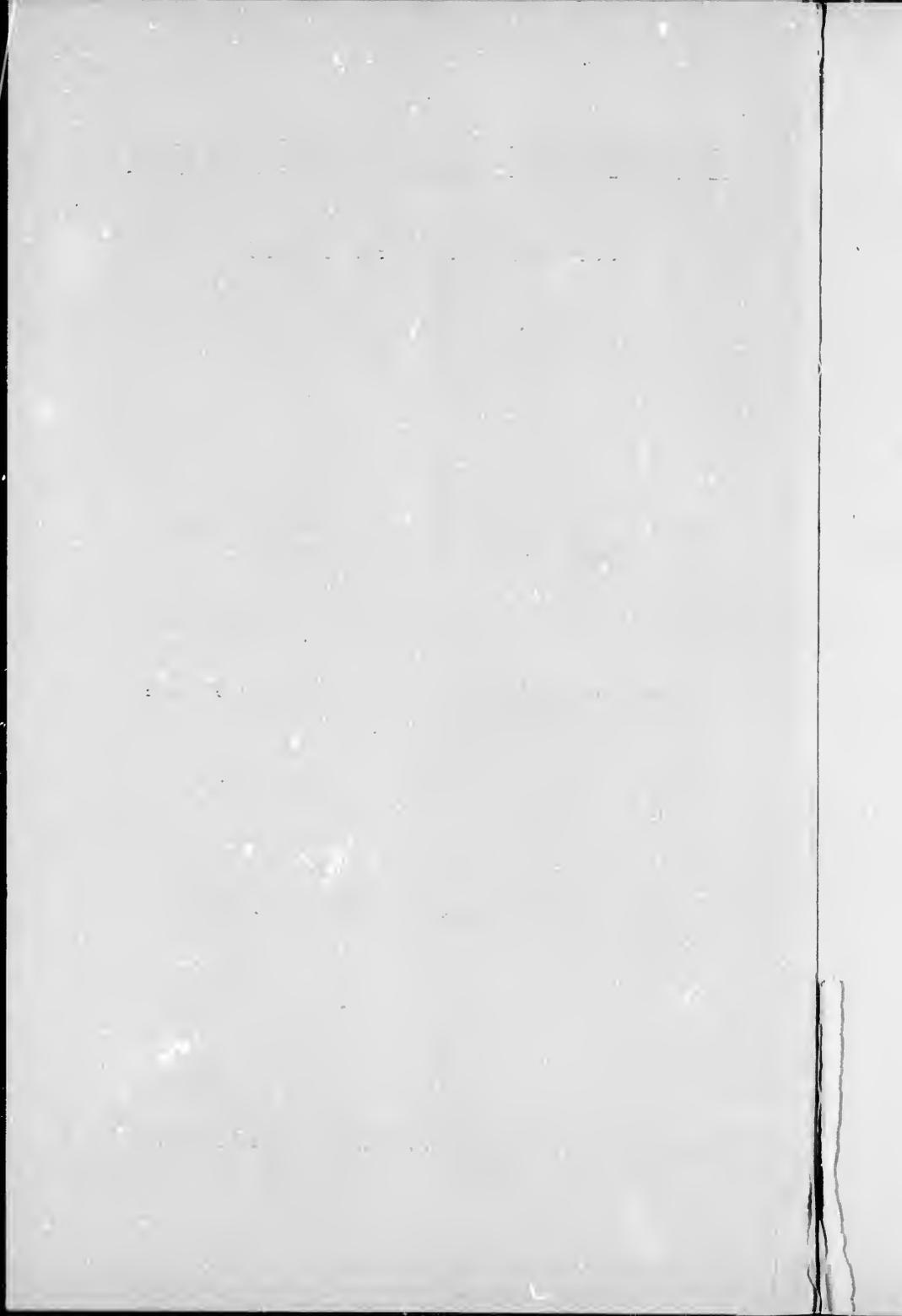
F. P. DE LABILLIERE

AUTHOR OF 'THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE COLONY OF VICTORIA' AND OF
PAPERS ON IMPERIAL AND COLONIAL FEDERALISM
'THE PERMANENT UNITY OF THE EMPIRE' 'THE POLITICAL ORGANISATION OF THE EMPIRE'
'THE CONTRACTION OF ENGLAND AND ITS ADVOCATES' ETC.

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE ROYAL COLONIAL INSTITUTE
JANUARY 10, 1893

SIR FREDERICK YOUNG, K.C.M.G. in the Chair

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BRITISH FEDERALISM

ITS RISE AND PROGRESS

WERE the inception and growth of the great idea of developing the British Empire into a mighty federation thoroughly investigated, the research would, probably, reveal the fact that many more men of thought and weight should be credited with holding the idea than are supposed to have ever entertained it.

Few people on either side of the Atlantic, probably, ever contemplated the separation of the American Colonies from the Mother Country till compelled to do so by the most unwise of policies. Before Lord North and George Grenville pressed their fatal measures, the principle of the permanent unity of the Empire would seem to have been universally taken for granted; but, doubtless, men of foresight gave thought to the question how the position of the Colonies in the Empire could be improved by affording them a voice in its councils—an inquiry which, if followed up, must lead along the highway to Imperial Federation.

Had the men of his generation been prepared to accept the new and wise teaching of Edmund Burke, the unhappy rupture with the American Colonies would never have taken place, and their relations with the Mother Country would have become as amicable as those with our present Colonies have been rendered by the policy originated by the great orator and statesman. On the principles enunciated by Burke is based the present policy of maintaining the unity of our race and Empire; and it was fitting that what is most conducive to the future greatness of our British nationality, both in its old and new dominions, should have been set forth in the grandest eloquence of which its language or any other is capable. The speeches which lay the foundation principles of our true Imperial policy are imperishable, and we should hope and strive that the national unity of our race may be equally lasting.

All Burke's sympathies were in the direction of British Federation, and, doubtless, if he had had to deal with the circumstances of our times, he would have been an ardent Imperial Federalist. He is said to have gone as far as to have had some conference or committee in Westminster to consider the question of Colonial representation in this country, or of Federation; but to have come to the decision that the policy was impracticable, by reason of the obstacles interposed by distance and the slow means of communication, which then seemed incapable of improvement; and no wonder that such should have been the conclusion when steamers, railways, telegraphs, and telephones were unheard of.

In 1769 Burke pointed out the impossibility of the American Colonies being represented in the British Parliament, illustrating by the following vivid description the then existing difficulties:—

The writs are issued for electing members for America and the West Indies. Some provinces receive them in six weeks, some in ten, some in twenty. A vessel may be lost, and then some provinces may not receive them at all. But let it be that they all receive them at once and in the shortest time. A proper space must be given for proclamation and for the election—some weeks at least. But the members are chosen, and if the ships are ready to sail, in about six more they arrive in London. In the meantime the Parliament has sat and business far advanced without American representatives. Nay, by this time it may happen that the Parliament is dissolved, and then the members ship themselves again to be again elected. The writs may arrive in America before the poor members of Parliament in which they never sat can arrive at their several provinces. A new interest is formed and they find other members are chosen whilst they are on the high seas. But if the writs and members arrive together, here is at best a new trial of skill amongst the candidates, after one set of them have well aired themselves with their two voyages of 6,000 miles.¹

No picture could present a more striking contrast between past circumstances, which seemed to render Imperial Federation impossible, and the present facilities for its realisation. But we live in another century, and seem almost to be in another world, so vast have been the changes which have marvellously removed the impossibilities of the past.

Among the earliest believers in the possibility of contriving some system of federal organisation for the Empire was certainly the famous Adam Smith, who pronounced as not "insurmountable"

¹ See Burke's *Observations on the State of the Nation*, edition of his works published at Boston, i. 297.

the difficulties of his day in the way of the representation of the Colonies in the English Parliament; for, seven years after the preceding extract from Burke was written, the great political economist expressed the following more hopeful opinion¹ :—

There is not the least probability that the British Constitution would be hurt by the union of Great Britain and her Colonies. That constitution, on the contrary, would be completed by it, and seems to be imperfect without it. The assembly which deliberates and decides concerning the affairs of every part of the Empire, in order to be properly informed, ought certainly to have representatives from every part of it. That this union, however, could be easily effectuated, or that difficulties and great difficulties might not occur in the execution, I do not pretend. I have yet heard of none, however, which appear insurmountable. The principal, perhaps, arise, not from the nature of things, but from the prejudices and opinions of the people, both on this and on the other side of the Atlantic.

What a reflection it would be upon the lustre of the progress and enlightenment of the nineteenth or twentieth century should history have to record that, though the material difficulties of the eighteenth century had passed away, narrow prejudices, short-sighted provincial jealousies, or the selfish rivalries of traders or of politicians, alone remained "insurmountable" obstacles to the most beneficent policy of union and of Empire ever proposed to men of the same blood and language!

After the loss of the American Colonies it must have been difficult to imagine a federated Empire of Great Britain, until the growth of her Australasian and Canadian dominions brought the conception of Imperial Federation into tangible shape, first as a speculative and then as a practical question. The earliest revival of the idea is, probably, that which I unexpectedly discovered in extracting materials for my history of Victoria² from the New South Wales Correspondence in the Record Office. There—in a report of a debate in the Legislative Council at Sydney, on August 20, 1844, when that, the first Australian legislature in which the elective element appeared, was only a year old—is a remarkable speech by Mr. Robert Lowe, afterwards Lord Sherbrooke, on the subject of the separation of the present Colony of Victoria, in which he says :—

As a general rule, he thought their (the Colonies) interests were not consulted by frittering them away into minute particles, but by combining

¹ See *Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776, Book IV. chap. vii

² See ii. 274, and *Sydney Morning Herald*, Aug. 21, 1844.

as large a territory into a single State as could be effectually controlled by a single Government. He cordially agreed in the abstract truth of the motto prefixed to the article in the newspaper of that morning, that " Union is strength," and he would extend that principle to the whole colonial empire of Great Britain. He hoped and believed that the time was not remote when Great Britain would give up the idea of treating the dependencies of the Crown as children, who were to be cast adrift by their parent as soon as they arrived at manhood, and substitute for it the far wiser and nobler policy of knitting herself and her Colonies into one mighty confederacy, girdling the earth in its whole circumference and confident against the world in arts and arms.

That eminent early New Zealand colonist, Mr. J. R. Godley, gave powerful expression to his statesmanlike views respecting the maintenance of the unity of the Empire and on the subject of its federation. In a letter addressed to Mr. Gladstone from Plymouth, December 12, 1849, the day before leaving England, he says¹ :—

The best argument, perhaps, against separation is to be found in the strength and prevalence of a moral instinct which separatists do not recognise, and which they hardly understand, though they bear a strong testimony to its truth in the remarkable reluctance which they manifest to *avow* their doctrines. . . . I maintain that the love of empire, properly understood—that is, the instinct of self-development and expansion—is an unfailing symptom of lusty and vigorous life in a people ; and that, subject to the conditions of justice and humanity, it is not only legitimate but most laudable. Certain am I that the decline of such a feeling is always the result not of matured wisdom or enlarged philanthropy, but of luxurious imbecility and selfish sloth. When the Roman eagles retreated across the Danube, not the loss of Dacia, but the satisfaction of the Roman people at the loss, was the omen of the empire's fall. Or, to take an illustration nearer home, it is unquestionable that, notwithstanding the disgraceful circumstances under which America was torn from the grasp of England, we suffered less in prestige and in strength by that obstinate and disastrous struggle than if, like the soft Triumvir, we had " lost a world and been content to lose it." Depend upon it, the instinct of national pride is sound and true.

No surer test than that of Mr. Godley could be invented to indicate whether, in our old or new dominions, individual Britons or British communities are up to the standard of the true metal, or are deteriorating from the high type of their race. The stamp is effaced, in proportion to the extent to which weakness may be discovered in " the instinct of national pride," or in " the love of

¹ See his *Writings and Speeches*, published in 1863, pp. 37, 123-4.

empire"; for ours, above all other empires, is surely worthy of the admiration and affection of all its children, and of their best efforts to maintain its integrity and greatness; and neither our "national pride" nor "love of empire" requires the slightest surrender of that laudable patriotic devotion due to our several dominions and provinces from their respective sons, but only that they should cultivate and cherish broadness of views and largeness of sympathies.

In a lecture delivered in New Zealand, December 1, 1852, Mr. Godley mentions "the questions which it would be right and proper to reserve from Colonial jurisdiction, and place under the exclusive cognisance of the Imperial Government"; and these he gives in the words of Mr. Adderley, now Lord Norton:—

First, the allegiance of the Colonies to Her Majesty's Crown; 2nd, the naturalisation of aliens; 3rd, whatever relates to treaties between the Crown and any foreign Power; 4th, all political intercourse and communications between any of the Colonies and any officer of a foreign Power; 5th, whatever relates to the employment, command, and discipline of Her Majesty's troops and ships within the Colonies, and whatever relates to the defence of the Colonies against foreign aggression, including the command of the Colonial militia and marine in time of war; and 6th, whatever relates to the crime of high treason.

Then, a few lines further on, Mr. Godley thus unmistakably declares for Imperial Federation:—

Before the time arrives when these Colonies, conscious of power, shall demand the privilege of standing on equal terms with the Mother Country in the family of nations, I trust that increased facility of intercourse may render it practical to establish an Imperial Congress for the British Empire, in which all its members may be fairly represented, and which may administer the affairs which are common to all.

Thus did the Federal idea begin to work in the Colonies, and its revival and wide extension was for the most part brought about by Colonial men. In 1854 that eminent Colonial statesman, Mr. Joseph Howe, spoke in the Legislature of Nova Scotia, powerfully advocating Imperial organisation and defence. He was favourable to Colonial representation in the Imperial Parliament. In 1866 his speech was published. A little later one of the most distinguished public men of Canada, Mr. Edward Blake—a new member of the recently elected British House of Commons—advocated Imperial Federation, on behalf of which, about the same time, Sir Julius Vogel, of New Zealand, also ably wrote.

The idea of British Federalism, as we have seen, having, probably for the first time, been conceived and evolved in the capacious intellect of Edmund Burke, and regretfully abandoned by him in 1769 as unattainable in the then condition of the world, and having in 1776 been regarded by Adam Smith as a speculative but possible policy, was revived by three Colonists—in Australia by Mr. Robert Lowe in 1844, in New Zealand by Mr. Godley in 1852, and in Canada by Mr. Joseph Howe in 1854. These men—of large and statesmanlike views, of ample knowledge of the old country and of the Colonies, and looking at the question from such different stand-points—agreed in regarding some form of Imperial Federalism as desirable and practical, at a time when the Colonies were in such an infant stage of existence, and at such much greater distances from England and each other, by reason of duration of voyage and of the fact that neither steam, nor telegraphic communication, had been established, or seemed practicable, between our most widely separated dominions. The honour, therefore, of starting the grand policy, though Colonists have the largest claim to it, must be shared, as it is desirable that it should be, and as the benefits of its realisation will be, between Britons of the old and new lands of the Empire.

The efforts of "The General Association for the Australian Colonies," which existed in London from 1855 to 1862, in endeavouring to harmonise the relations of the Mother Country and Australia, ought not to be forgotten; and Mr. O'Halloran did well in contributing a sketch of its history to the *Colonies and India* in 1884. It was founded with the principal object of promoting the passing of the Constitution Bills for the Australian Colonies, and at one time had as many as 231 members. Its hon. secretary and treasurer was Mr. (now Sir) James Youl, who recently presented the records of the Association to the Royal Colonial Institute. Among its leading members who ought to be mentioned were Messrs. H. G. Ashurst, Captain C. H. Bagot, Niel Black, R. Brooks, W. Campbell, T. Chirnside, Hugh C. E. Childers, Sir Charles Clifford, Lord Alfred Churchill, F. G. Dalgety, F. A. Du Croz, F. H. Dutton, W. F. de Salis, Sir Stuart A. Donaldson, A. L. Elder, J. Hawdon, Arthur Hodgson, D. Larnach, T. Learmouth, Sir William McArthur, Lachlan Mackinnon, Sir George MacLeay, J. Morrison, Sir Charles Nicholson, W. Rutledge, E. Stephens, Alderman Salamons, W. C. Wentworth, W. Westgarth, and Edward Wilson. Most of them are now gone, but happily several of them are with us still. The Australian Association dealt with Intercolonial Federation, and representation of the Colonies in this country did

not escape its consideration. In 1855, when the Australian constitutions were under discussion, it presented a memorial to Lord John Russell, then Secretary for the Colonies, setting forth that "the Constitutions of the Colonies forming the Australian group will be incomplete until a Federal Assembly is constituted." The Government, however, declined to entertain the proposal until the Colonial legislatures should express a desire on the subject. Next year the Association addressed Mr. Labouchere, afterwards Lord Taunton, who had become Secretary for the Colonies, upon "The necessity of Parliament passing a Permissive Bill empowering the Australian Colonies to form a Federal Assembly." It also presented a draft bill with the memorial, but no action was taken by the Government. In 1857 a special general meeting of the members of the Association dealt with the following proposal, which involved the principle of Imperial Federation :—

That a memorial be presented by the Association to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, requesting that he will be pleased, in the Cabinet deliberations on the forthcoming Reform Bill, to represent to Her Majesty's Ministers the strong claims of the Colonies to some share of representation in the Imperial Legislature, but that it be at the same time expressed to Mr. Labouchere that, in the opinion of this Association, the Colonies could not accept of Parliamentary representation unless their present rights of self-taxation be continued and preserved to them inviolate.

After consideration by the meeting, the motion was withdrawn, as it was regarded as inopportune. The Australian Association also did valuable work in promoting steam communication with the Colonies, in obtaining more adequate naval defence, and the establishment of a Commodore's station in the Australian waters, in getting the sovereign admitted as a legal tender, and in the introduction of salmon to the rivers of Tasmania, to which Sir James Youl specially and laboriously devoted himself. The utility of such an Association was undoubted at a time when the Colonies had not advanced to the stage of having official representatives in this country.

It is more than probable that that eminent statesman, the late Earl Russell, had formed decided views on Britannic Federalism long before giving expression to them in his "Recollections and Suggestions," where he says :—

I am disposed to believe that if a Congress or Assembly representing Great Britain and her dependencies could be convoked from time to time, to sit for some months in the autumn, arrangements reciprocally

beneficial might be made In my eyes it would be a sad spectacle—it would be a spectacle for gods and men to weep at—to see this brilliant Empire, the guiding star of freedom, broken up—to behold Nova Scotia, the Cape of Good Hope, Jamaica, and New Zealand try each its little spasm of independence; while France, the United States, and Russia would be looking at each, willing to annex one or more fragments to the nearest part of their dominions.

The foregoing instances suffice to show that the Federal idea was not lost sight of by practical and far-seeing statesmen, even before it had to any extent attracted the attention of political theorists, or even reached the first stage of consideration, so well described by the writer quoted in Sir Frederick Young's "Imperial Federation," p. 134, who says :—

The law of political as of all progress seems to me to be this: first, we hear a few whispers in the cabinet of the student; then the question passes into the area of scientific inquiry; finally, after long maturing, after a severe and searching controversy, it enters the sphere of actual truth and moulds human action.

The Colonies, however, were rapidly passing out of their infant years. Their marvellous growth had eclipsed all experience or expectation. They had to be speedily equipped with the institutions of self-government. These could only be supplied by paper constitutions—the aversion of some sticklers for precedent—for the need of Colonial organisation would not permit that the governmental systems of the Colonies should be evolved through long ages, like the grand old model British Constitution, from which all the free and good governments of the world have, directly or indirectly, been derived. As the Colonies could not wait for institutions of slow growth, neither can they, nor the Empire at large, postpone, for anything like half a century, the inauguration of some federal system, if our Imperial union is to be rendered effective and all-powerful to safeguard our vast and growing common interests on land and sea.

Besides the Republic of the United States, the Empires of Germany and Austria-Hungary have, during the last two decades, been furnishing to the world striking examples of the great-power-making capabilities of federalism, even when contending with difficulties and drawbacks more serious than those arising out of the circumstances of our widespread Empire. The remarkable rise and growth of the federal constitution of Canada—a mere paper constitution, as were all those of the Colonies not many years back—

is by itself an object lesson for the people of the Empire, sufficient to instruct them in the advantages of federation. The Dominion Act—that paper constitution only a quarter of a century ago—a veritable slip, full of vitality, of the old British Constitution, no sooner touched the soil of Canada than, like a tropical tree in a congenial clime, it at once struck down its roots and sent up its foliage, and, like the hardiest giant of the forest amid the snows of a North American winter, it already seems to stand as firm as the ancient, slowly developed constitution of the parent land.

It would have been extraordinary if, after the establishment of provincial self-government in Australia, and of Intercolonial Federation in Canada, thoughtful men had not soon begun to consider what further developments would be needed to complete the political organisation of our United Empire; and a little reflection would soon bring home the conviction that one of two things is ultimately inevitable—Federation or Separation. In either we must follow the example of our kinsmen of the United States; and why should the alternative for us be that most undesirable one, which the foolish policy of last century—the reverse of our present Colonial policy—forced upon the Americans? Some illogical people take the unhappy historical fact that the United States were driven into independence as a conclusive reason why the present British Colonies must sooner or later go out of the Empire. Let us follow our American kinsmen, not in the paths of separation, into which they most unwillingly entered, but in the great example they have given the world of how a number of States may retain all the advantages of complete provincial self-government in combination with those of national unity, and may thus secure a position among the greatest Powers on earth by means of well-organised federation. When even an American like Mr. Henry George¹ tells us that the United States might even now not be independent but for the attempt “to crush the American Colonies into submission”—which he says had “the effect of splitting into two what might but for that have perhaps yet been one great confederated nation”—surely none but a few short-sighted, faint-hearted, or cross-grained Britishers can be found in any part of our United Empire to believe that there must ever be any necessity for its dismemberment.

With the conviction that the maturity of the Colonies must bring change in their relations to each other and to the Mother Country no clear policy was, at first, presented, save in such isolated instances

¹ *Social Problems*, chap. xvi.

as have been already mentioned. For a time there seemed to be a general feeling that things must be allowed to drift. In this stage of stagnation sprang up that noxious negation of a policy, the idea of disintegration. This was boldly and, no doubt, ably advocated by Professor Goldwin Smith in a series of letters to the *Daily News*, afterwards published in a volume entitled "The Empire." The title is defective, the words "And how to get rid of it" being required to complete it; for such was the tenor of the work. The clear and simple course of letting the Empire fall to pieces, which requires no energy, statesmanship, or ability, had an attraction for some minds at a time when no decided Imperial policy was in prospect. To prepare the Colonies for being cast adrift, or for "self-reliance"—Mr. Smith's expression to soften the idea—was the policy of Sir Frederick Rogers, the permanent head of the Colonial Office, who for eleven years had the ear of several of its political chiefs. On retiring with a peerage as Lord Blachford, he contributed, in 1877, to the *Nineteenth Century* review an article decidedly favourable to disintegration. How much wiser and wider have been the views of his successor, Sir Robert Herbert, who has also recently retired from the office!

It was not to be supposed that men of British blood and spirit—of the race having "the genius of universal empire," as the American orator, Mr. Depew, has recently described it—would long leave in undisputed possession of the field a policy of incapacity, which hopelessly proclaimed that all the splendid materials for Empire-building which the genius and energy of our race were accumulating should be left helplessly to drift, instead of being fitted together into the grandest Imperial structure it is possible for the world to behold. The suggestion of disruption, made by a few persons, was speedily answered by many voices raising the patriotic cries of "United Empire," "Permanent Unity," which have ever since echoed and re-echoed in every British land.

The opposition called forth by the public advocacy of disintegration at first confined itself to directing the attention of both Mother Country and Colonies to the value to them of their union. It was only to be expected that men best acquainted with the latter should have most clearly seen, and decidedly declared, the truth as to this point at a time when it was not so conspicuous as the development of the Colonial Empire has since made it. A large and influential number of Colonists attended the Social Science Congress at Bristol in September 1869, when the question of the relations of England and the Colonies was discussed, Papers being read by Mr. (now Sir)

John Gorst, Mr. Thomas Hare, myself, and Mr. John Noble, all but the last being favourable to the unity of the Empire ; but its federation, if barely alluded to, was not advocated. Among speakers of weight who took part in the discussion were Sir William Denison and Mr. Edward Wilson.

The latter gentleman, being strongly impressed with the conviction that an important point had been reached in Colonial progress, took steps for calling together the Cannon Street meetings, which had no little share in giving a direction to the current of opinion. They were held at the large station hotel, and, beginning at the end of November 1869, took place weekly for five or six weeks. The chair was ably filled by our Vice-President, Sir James A. Youl. The object of these meetings was to call attention to the advantages of the unity of the Empire, and to indicate points upon which its relations might be improved ; but all of us who were present were, no doubt, still only groping our way to a practical policy of organised union to place in opposition to the destructive proposals of the Disruptionists. The Cannon Street meetings mark the rise of a better feeling as regards Mother Country and Colonies, and they left on record, among others, two valuable resolutions, both drawn by a good friend of the cause, the late Mr. William Westgarth. The first, moved by him, affirmed "That the Colonies are the source of great commercial, political, and social advantages to the parent country, and largely contribute to the influence and greatness of the Empire."

As it was thought that the mover of the second resolution, affirming the benefits to the Colonies of the Imperial connection, should be of Colonial birth, I had the honour of being called on to propose—

That, on the other hand, the rights of Imperial citizenship, Imperial supervision, influence and example, and Imperial commerce and resources, promote all the best interests of the Colonies, and they on their part are not wanting in a loyal appreciation of their beneficial relationship.

The idea of Imperial Federation was not broached at the Cannon Street meetings ; and this is not to be wondered at, seeing that, in 1869, a telegraphic cable had not been carried to Australia, the opening of the Canadian Pacific Railway was a prospect in the dim distance, and the speedy development of our present highly improved means of communication was so little anticipated. For a time nothing more worthy of the Empire than a mere council of advice was suggested ; but in the January number of the *Contemporary Review* for 1871 appeared an article headed "Imperial Federation,"

by Mr. Edward Jenkins, proposing a Federal Parliament for Imperial affairs, indicating the questions with which it should deal, and showing that provincial concerns should be left to provincial Governments. Mr. Jenkins also pointed out that, in the previous session of what is called the Imperial Parliament, only 48 Acts, out of 293 passed, were really Imperial.

On July 20, 1871, at the Conference on Colonial questions,¹ to which I was honorary secretary, held at the Westminster Palace Hotel, I read a paper on "Imperial and Colonial Federalism," in which I advocated an Imperial Federal Parliament and Executive; and in the discussion following, which, I believe, was the first public one on the subject of Imperial Federation, that policy was supported by Mr. Jenkins, Mr. J. Dennistoun Wood, and Sir Frederick Young, whilst Mr. Edward Wilson, though sympathetic, did not think the scheme practical.

Next year (1872) Mr. Jehu Mathews, of Toronto, brought out his valuable work in favour of Imperial Federation, treating the subject with considerable detail; and in October Mr. Jenkins and I again brought forward the question, by reading papers before the Social Science Congress at Devonport. In December there appeared in *Frazer's Magazine* an article powerfully supporting the policy, entitled, "Empire or no Empire." It was dated "Melbourne, August 1872," bore the initials "W. J. S.," and stated that the writer was a Colonist of twenty years' standing.

A remarkable pronouncement in favour of British Federalism, also made in 1872, was that of the famous Lord Beaconsfield, at the Crystal Palace, on June 24, when he said:—

I cannot conceive how our distant Colonies can have their affairs administered except by self-government. But self-government, in my opinion, when it was conceded, ought to have been conceded as part of a great policy of Imperial consolidation. . . . It ought, further, to have been accompanied by the institution of some representative Council in the metropolis, which would have brought the Colonies into constant and continuous relations with the Home Government. . . . In my opinion no Minister in this country will do his duty who neglects any opportunity of reconstructing, as much as possible, our Colonial Empire, and of responding to those distant sympathies which may become the source of incalculable strength and happiness to this land.

The opening of telegraphic communication with Australia had a powerful effect upon the question. It proved that the most distant

¹ The proceedings were published in a volume entitled *Discussions on Colonial Questions*.

dominions of the United Empire are in more immediate contact with its metropolis than were the most distant parts of the United Kingdom in the early years of this century. At the banquet of November 13, 1872, to celebrate the event, to a telegram despatched as the guests sat down, a reply from the other side of the globe was within two hours read by the chairman. The toast, "The Integrity of the British Empire," given, perhaps, for the first time, "was received with immense enthusiasm and cries of 'Hurrah!' that lasted for several minutes."¹ I never witnessed anything more impressive than that great gathering of men from all parts of the Empire, springing to their feet and acclaiming their devotion to its unity.

In October 1874 Mr. C. W. Eddy brought the question of the relations of the Colonies to the Empire again under discussion at the Glasgow meetings of the Social Science Congress immediately before his sudden death; and his Paper was afterwards also read at the Royal Colonial Institute, of which he had been Honorary Secretary. In January 1875 this Society occupied two meetings in discussing Imperial Federation, the question being opened by me with a Paper entitled "The Permanent Unity of the Empire."²

Subsequently, Imperial Federation has been frequently before this Institute, either as the subject of Papers read at its meetings or incidentally in its discussions. I again had the honour of twice introducing it in 1881 by a Paper on "The Political Organisation of the Empire,"³ and also at the Conference held under the auspices of this Institute at the Colonial Exhibition, South Kensington, in 1886,⁴ by a Paper entitled "Imperial Federation."⁵

¹ See report of the banquet, *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, vol. iii.

² *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, vol. vi.

³ *Ibid.* vol. xii.

⁴ Besides the discussions of Imperial Unity and Federation above referred to, and incidental mention of them in connection with other subjects brought before the Royal Colonial Institute, some idea may be given of what it has done to promote the great policy by enumerating the following Papers read before it, and published in its *Proceedings*:—vol. i. (1869) "Relations of the Colonies to the Mother Country," Mr. W. Westgarth; vol. ii. "The Colonial Question," Mr. Westgarth, and "Relations of the Colonies to the Parent State," Mr. A. C. Cattanaeh; vol. iii. "The Crises of the Empire," Mr. R. A. Macfie, and "Practical Suggestions on Our Colonial Relations," and also "Propositions for the Reform of Our Relations with the Colonies," Mr. Westgarth; vol. iv. "Colonial Defences," Captain J. C. R. Colomb; vol. vi. "Forty Years Since, and Now,"

⁵ *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, vol. xvii.

Many incidents worthy of notice in the development of the great policy may escape observation, but no greater oversight could be committed than to fail to observe how the rise of the unity and federal principles and of the Royal Colonial Institute have been contemporaneous, and have doubtless helped each other. Founded in 1868, on the suggestion of Mr. A. R. Roche, its first honorary secretary, and with Lord Bury, now Earl of Albemarle, as its virtual Founder and its First President, it was not long before the Institute was seen to be supplying a great want. There had been previous attempts to create centres of Colonial interest in the metropolis of the Empire, such as the Australian Association already spoken of and the rooms started by it, which for a short time existed at the Jerusalem Coffee House, Cornhill; but for breadth of interests, largeness of sympathies, and comprehensiveness of objects, nothing like our Institute had ever been designed. It was early evident that much more than had been sought for had been found; that the new Society possessed those possibilities of development which have been so largely realised—that not merely a club or social meeting-place—agreeable as the Institute has in this way become—had been founded, but a great national institution with a noble principle expressed in the two words of its motto, “United Empire,” and with a great work which has year by year been expanding during nearly two decades and a

Mr. H. B. T. Strangways; vol. viii. “Benefit to the Colonies of being Members of the British Empire,” Mr. J. Dennistoun Wood, and “Fallacies of Federation (Intercolonial),” Mr. W. Forster, of New South Wales, and “Imperial and Colonial Responsibilities in War,” Captain Colomb; vol. ix. “Character of Colonial and Indian Trade of England, contrasted with Her Foreign Trade,” Dr. Forbes Watson, and “New Zealand and the South Sea Islands, and their Relation to the Empire,” Sir Julius Vogel; vol. x. “England and Her Colonies at the Paris Exhibition,” Mr. Frederiek Young; vol. xi. “Extended Colonisation a Necessity to the Mother Country,” Mr. Stephen Bourne, and “An Empire’s Parliament,” Mr. A. Staveley Hill; vol. xiii. “Commercial Advantages of Federation,” Mr. W. J. Harris, and “Imperial Defence in Our Time,” Mr. G. Baden-Powell; vol. xiv. “Relations of the Colonies to the Empire, Present and Future,” Sir Alex. Galt; vol. xv. “Our Relations with Canada and Great Colonies,” Marquis of Lorne; vol. xvi. “National Unity,” Mr. G. Baden-Powell, “The British Empire of To-day,” Mr. Howard Vincent; vol. xvii. “Federation of the British Empire,” Sir George Bowen; and “Imperial Defence,” Captain J. C. R. Colomb; vol. xviii. “Colonies in Relation to the Empire,” Sir Graham Berry; vol. xix. “Colonial Conference, 1887,” Rev. Canon Dalton, and “Postal and Telegraphic Communication of the Empire,” Mr. Henniker Heaton; vol. xxii. “Inter-British Trade and its Influence on the Unity of the Empire,” Mr. Howard Vincent.

half. In all truth and fairness it must be acknowledged that some of the strongest and happiest influences, in promoting the best relations between all parts of the Empire, have been exercised by this Institute and by its Resident and Non-Resident Fellows— numbering now almost 4,000—who, collectively and individually, have been heartily promoting the good cause of unity in every British land. There can be no doubt about this if we attempt to estimate the amount of good done by the Royal Colonial Institute, in bringing together men from all parts of the Empire, in promoting the feelings of nationality and brotherhood among them, in increasing their knowledge of each other as well as of their respective countries, and in cultivating among them the idea of permanent unity and federation. The toast of “The Queen and United Empire,” always given at its dinners, the simple device of Union Jacks and trident as its badge, with the motto, “United Empire,” sent forth on tens of thousands of letters and papers to every corner of our dominions, have all contributed to the growth of the grand idea, and so has the annual volume of the “Proceedings,” distributed by thousands far and wide throughout Britain within and beyond these seas. I feel it is not unbecoming in any member of the Institute to speak so strongly of what it has done and is doing, because I know I am saying no more than the exact truth.

The late Duke of Manchester, who in the early and uphill days of the Institute took such an active part in its affairs, and seldom failed to preside at its meetings, was ever ready to avail himself of opportunities of commending Imperial Federation at a time when its advocates were but few.

Mr. S. W. Silver, a warm supporter of the good cause, lent the *Colonies* newspaper, which he founded, to its advocacy ; and for two or three years, about twenty years ago, its articles, written by Professor Bonamy Price and by myself, strongly advocated the unity of the Empire, mine being decidedly in favour of Imperial Federation. At the end of 1875 a correspondence was opened in this journal by Sir Frederick Young, who had for an opponent a writer with the signature “Colonus.” Others also joined in ; and on the close of the discussion Sir Frederick reproduced the correspondence, as well as other contributions upon the subject, in his valuable work “Imperial Federation.” He has, from the beginning of the great revival of the federal principle, been an able advocate and zealous apostle of the good cause. From the time of the Cannon Street meetings, where I had the pleasure of making his acquaintance, he has taken part in most discussions of the question.

A powerful impetus was undoubtedly given to the principle of maintaining the unity of the Empire and to Imperial Federation by the address on "Our Colonial Empire," delivered in Edinburgh, on November 5, 1875, by the Right Hon. W. E. Forster. It was felt that any cause taken up by this distinguished statesman, who was so universally trusted and so eminently practical, could be no longer regarded as a mere dream or speculation. Mr. Forster not only adduced very strong arguments in support of the principle of unity, but clearly pointed to Imperial Federation as the means of preserving it.

Surely [he said] it cannot be denied that, if it be possible to replace dependence by association, each member of the federation would find in the common nationality at least as much scope for its aspirations, as much demand for the patriotism, and the energy, and the self-reliance of its citizens, as it would if trying to obtain a distinct nationality of itself.

And further on are these words of wisdom:—

All that is required now is to imbue them—the Colonies—and ourselves with the desire that the Union should last, with the determination that the Empire should not be broken up—to replace the idea of eventual independence, which means disunion, by that of association on equal terms, which means union. If this be done, we need not fear that at the fitting time this last idea will realise itself.

Mr. Forster, in dealing with Imperial Federation, was able to affirm that which, if Burke could have said, he would not have felt constrained to abandon the policy:—

Science has brought together the ends of the earth and made it possible for a nation to have oceans roll between its provinces. Why, then, should we alone among the nations set ourselves against that desire for nationality which is one of the most powerful ideas of the age? What right have we to entail upon the men of our race the dangers and disadvantages of disunion? Why should we reject the gifts of science, and neglect the possibilities of union which steam and electricity afford? . . . May not we and our Colonists together, by the exercise of some mutual forbearance, by willingness to incur some mutual sacrifice, hope to transform our Colonial Empire into a federation of peaceful, industrious, law-abiding commonwealths, so that in due time our British brotherhood may prove to the world, as no nation has ever proved before, "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity"?

Thus was the policy of Imperial Federation developed out of the aspiration of the people of the Empire for the permanence of their unity; and, as it advanced, that inane substitute for a policy,

drift and disintegration—so unworthy of our Imperial race—receded before it, to retain as supporters only a few doctrinaires and narrow provincialists, who are too short-sighted to perceive that the surest guarantees for the fullest local developments and self-government are to be found in the strength and security of Imperial unity, rather than in complete provincial independence.

In his "Australian Federation," Mr. Howard Willoughby says : "The provincialist will, of course, never be won over to any scheme," and speaks of "his small-minded and selfish idea that you benefit a locality by isolating it from its national whole," but, "happily for mankind, more generous impulses and truer instincts—those that tell us that all men's good is each man's benefit—are in the end usually triumphant."

The next step forward was the formation of the League for the special advocacy of Imperial Federation. It was evident, when the principle of maintaining the unity of the Empire had been so widely accepted, and the idea of its federal union adopted by so many people, that the time had arrived for a forward movement. Accordingly, early in 1884, in a conversation with Sir John Colomb, I suggested the formation of a society with the special object of promoting the policy of Imperial Federation ; and we determined to seek the co-operation of some whose sympathies we knew to be warmest in the cause. The result was that a small committee was formed, consisting of, besides ourselves, Sir George Baden-Powell, the late Mr. William Westgarth, Mr. J. Dennistoun Wood, and Sir Frederick Young.

After some deliberations, the members of the committee, except Sir George Baden-Powell and Mr. Westgarth, who were unable to attend its meetings, had an interview, on April 9, 1884, with Mr. Forster, to whom they submitted a proposal that he and other public men should be invited to a conference which should be strictly non-party in its composition ; but that those consenting to attend should do so on the understanding that they accepted the principle that the unity of the Empire ought to be permanently maintained. Mr. Forster declared himself decidedly favourable to the conference being held on the basis proposed, and granted permission to the committee to mention him as being willing to take part in it.

Having succeeded in securing for the movement the inestimable advantage of having such a statesman at its head, the Provisional Committee added to its numbers Mr. H. O. Arnold-Forster, Sir Daniel Cooper, Bart. (New South Wales), Messrs. W. J. Courthope,

R. R. Dobell (Canada), William Gisborne (New Zealand) Hon. Harold Finch-Hatton, Alex. Staveley Hill, Q.C., M.P., Sir Roper Lethbridge, J. B. Watt (New South Wales), and Sir Samuel Wilson (Victoria). The committee, which by the permission of the Council held all its meetings at the old rooms of the Royal Colonial Institute in the Strand, lost no time in making the arrangements for the conference, which took place at the Westminster Palace Hotel on July 29, 1884, under the presidency of Mr. Forster. It affirmed the principle that, "to secure the permanent unity of the Empire, some form of Federation is essential," and also resolved that "a society be formed of men of all parties, to advocate and support the principle of federation." The first resolution was moved by the Right Hon. W. H. Smith, M.P., and seconded by the Earl of Rosebery, and the second by Mr. Edward Stanhope, M.P., and seconded by Mr. Mowat, Premier of Ontario.

The Provisional Committee, of which up to this time I was honorary secretary, and afterwards jointly with Mr. Arnold-Forster, was empowered to arrange the details of the organisation of the new Society and to report to an adjourned meeting of the conference, which was held on November 18, 1884, Mr. Forster, who had given much time and consideration to the preparations of the committee, being again in the chair. On this occasion the Imperial Federation League was formally established, the motion for its foundation being moved by the late Marquis of Normanby, seconded by the present Lord Knutsford, and supported by Mr. Edward Stanhope. The second resolution, appointing the first General Committee to conduct the affairs of the League, was proposed by the Premier of Canada, Sir John A. Macdonald—that great Colonial statesman, who, as Lord Rosebery has so well said, "had grasped the central idea that the British Empire is the greatest secular agency for good now known to mankind." Sir William Fox, ex-Premier of New Zealand, seconded the proposal.

The League has ever since continued the advocacy of the great policy, first under the presidency of Mr. Forster, and since his lamented death, of another distinguished statesman, Lord Rosebery, who, on recently accepting the office of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the present Government, was succeeded by Mr. Stanhope, Secretary for War in the late Ministry. The League has many branches in this country, a very strong one in Canada, and some in Australia. It circulates a large amount of literature upon the subject, and by public meetings and lectures is doing much to familiarise

the public mind of the Empire with the question. Its monthly journal *Imperial Federation*, is also of great service in promoting the cause.

If, departing from the original idea of its founders and from the lines upon which, in Canada and, so far, in Australia, federal institutions have been successfully evolved, the League were to frame a detailed scheme of federation, it would enter upon dangerous ground. It is not for individuals, however influential personally or as an organisation, to draw up a constitution, and, by adopting it as their own, in effect to say, "This is what we *propose* to the Empire." They may, however, render invaluable service by expounding the essential principles of federation, by suggesting different forms in which it can be adopted, and by instructing the people of the Empire as to the history and working of existing federal systems ; but to *propose* a plan is for those delegated to do so by the responsible Governments of this country and of the Colonies, and for them only. The drawing up of a federal scheme, even by the Governments concerned, was not a condition precedent to the meeting of the conferences of official delegates who framed the Canadian federal constitution, or of those which have recently been at work with a similar object in Australia. The League has done much, and may do more, to ripen the question for practical adoption by the statesmen and Parliaments of the Empire ; but to father any particular scheme is outside its proper functions, and would certainly impair its usefulness.

The League seems to have been rather drawn in this direction by the reply of the then Prime Minister to the deputation which, in June 1891, asked him to convene another Colonial Conference. Lord Salisbury suggested that delegates should not be invited from the Colonies "unless we are prepared to lay before them for discussion some definite scheme." But herein is the danger of going further than submitting as a basis certain broad essential principles. Any scheme proposed may not commend itself to the Prime Minister of the day, and he may refuse to summon a conference to consider it, or, should he approve of it, some of the Colonies may decline to entertain it. Then what would the League do ? Go on framing schemes, till it should hit upon one which would draw the Governments together in a conference ? There is also this disadvantage in submitting a cut-and-dried detailed system of federal organisation to delegates from the Colonies. It would prevent them from taking that part, which it is desirable they should have, in the foundation work of the mighty structure of a federated Great Britain. All the sons of the Empire should have a share in the honour of initiating

and achieving this great undertaking. By provoking criticism of the details of a single plan the League would assuredly compromise itself; by standing upon its first principles, as well as upon the ground of precedent and experience, it will decline to take upon itself one of the functions of the Governments—the proposal of an Imperial Federal Constitution; and no one would have more highly appreciated such a position than a statesman like Lord Salisbury, had it been taken up and explained to him by the deputation from the League.

The League, however, submitted to a special committee of eleven, only three of whom had been Colonists, the task of forming a scheme; and after more than a year's deliberation a report was published, which contains some valuable original suggestions in addition to many which had been previously made. Although the report, which was adopted at a meeting on November 16, 1892, is throughout its course skilfully steered clear of details, and of prescribing as essential principles of federation things that are not, it grazes rather severely against one of these rocks in proclaiming Intercolonial Federation a condition precedent to Imperial Federation. The words are, under the head of "Mode of Colonial Representation":—

When the provinces of Australasia and South Africa are each united under one Government, as Canada now is, and those three dominions are represented in London by a member of each Government respectively, such representatives should be available for consultation with the Cabinet when matters of foreign policy affecting the Colonies are under consideration.

But this carries us scarcely a step beyond where we are at present, for the Agents-General are now available to be consulted as suggested; and the delay of years, proposed in the recommendation, is just what any Minister would take his stand upon were he disposed to shelve the question. The report proceeds to define how the United Kingdom, and "the three groups of self-governing Colonies," are to be represented in a Council to deal with Imperial defence. Intercolonial Federation in Australia and South Africa is a question for the people of these portions of the Empire to decide for themselves, and no one else should prescribe that policy to them; and although we may be morally certain that the Australians will federate among themselves within a very short time, it is surely imprudent to declare that their doing so is essential to Imperial Federation, especially as it does not follow that, if for any reason they should prefer to remain as they are, their organised federal union with the rest of

the Empire is out of the question. Then to say that Imperial federal organisation must wait till Intercolonial Federation is carried out in South Africa is to declare that the former policy, even in the elementary form in which the report of the League suggests it, cannot be initiated for probably a quarter of a century—a long time for the Empire to wait for that adequate organised defence which its commerce, common interests, as well as provincial security require. Even if Intercolonial Federation were indispensable to Imperial Federation, surely the adoption of the latter policy ought not to be delayed during all the years required to mature the former in South Africa; but, as soon as it has been established in Australia, she ought with Canada to be federally organised with the United Kingdom, South Africa coming in as soon as she has arranged her own internal federation, even if she could not join in her present condition, which seems to present no greater obstacles to her being represented in any Council of the Empire that may assemble in London than it did to her taking part in the Colonial Conference of 1887. It is therefore to be regretted that the League did not put Intercolonial Federation under its heading of "Measures conducive but not essential in (Imperial) Federation."

The rise of the policy of Britannic Federalism was marked in a notable manner by the meeting in London of the Colonial Conference of 1887, in which all the self-governing provinces of the Empire were represented. It was a great object lesson in Imperial Federation, though the question itself was excluded from discussion. The creation of the Australian naval squadron was an important federal arrangement; and the conference itself was undoubtedly a federal assembly, though of a very elementary description. The periodical meetings of such a body would be actual federation in the first stage of development.

The United Empire Trade League has been formed for an important object, with which all Imperial Unionists must sympathise—the harmonising, as far as possible, of the tariffs and commercial systems of the Empire. It is, however, too much to expect the speedy adoption of a uniform fiscal policy, or that all the self-governing provinces and dominions of the Empire will ever take the same view of politico-economical questions. Nor, however much this might be desirable, is it indispensable to Imperial Federation, the primary object of that policy being, by united defence, to assure peace and security—the most important essentials of commercial prosperity. The policy of the Imperial Federation League

plus that of the United Empire Trade League may be much the most desirable ; but if we can only have that of the former *minus* that of the latter, will commercial men decline its advantages ? Our merchants are not so short-sighted as not to perceive that the security of trade *in* or *from* war is of greater importance than the most perfect fiscal or commercial arrangements, which an outbreak of hostilities might utterly and for ever derange. The United States have never replaced their mercantile marine destroyed by a few cruisers during the Civil War. The insurance of perfect defence by land and especially at sea, which Imperial federal organisation alone can provide, will be the most valuable boon to the entire commerce of the Empire, however desirable the policy of the Trade League may be. That society will, therefore, do harm if it make the mistake of insisting on its policy being an indispensable condition of Imperial Federation.

Among bodies in this country whose discussions have materially aided the cause of Imperial unity and organisation are the Society of Arts, the United Service Institution, and the London Chamber of Commerce. In fact, our great policy is sure to have an important bearing upon some of the subjects within the scope of most societies with a broad platform.

The great change in public opinion regarding extensions of the Empire affords striking proof of the strength attained by a healthy and enlightened Imperial national feeling. The movement, started about the time of the Cannon Street meetings, and vigorously promoted by the Royal Colonial Institute, soon sunk the policy of curtailing the Empire which had got afloat ; but the mischievous idea, held even by some good friends of Imperial unity, that the Empire was large enough, and ought not to be extended, was harder to kill. It lived long enough to lose for us half, and nearly the whole, of eastern New Guinea, which the Imperial Government, had it acted upon the repeated representations of the Council of this Institute, would have annexed in good time. The survival to any influential extent of this idea would for ever have politically excluded us from those grand regions in South and Central Africa which are being just brought under that flag of ours, without which our trade could never enter ; for the Powers which would be quick to appropriate any magnificent piece of Empire, were we foolish enough to throw it away, would effectually keep out our commerce by high protective tariffs. To hold and develop the splendid new territory to their north, merely with a view to their own best advantage, South Africans, whether of British or Dutch

origin, must see that the strength of an Imperial organisation will be all-important, and that they must never think of standing alone among so many great Powers who will be their neighbours. The finest position for the most commanding naval station of the world is in South Africa. All the great maritime Powers may well covet it, and, were she independent, might contend for it. The Afrikaner can only confidently assure himself of its possession by well-organised federal union with the Empire.

The support which, for some years, the press throughout the Empire has so largely given to British unity and federalism is conclusive evidence of the growth of the great policy. To mention some journals would be invidious; a complete list would be too long to be given. Some idea of the amount of what has been written on the question may be formed by looking through Mr. BOOSE'S "Titles of Publications in Connection with Imperial Policy." One of the most important, which had a very great influence upon the question is Professor Seeley's standard work, the "Expansion of England."

During the two decades since the revival of British Federalism that policy has been steadily advancing, at one time slowly, at another with leaps and bounds. At present its progress is not so visible; but the germination of newly-sown seed in the best of soils is not at once apparent, and plants, when striking down their first and strongest roots, often make least promise of future growth. The cause has outstripped the expectations of the most hopeful of its early advocates. These practical promoters of a practical policy, though ready themselves to go at a quicker pace, may be well content when they see public opinion flowing in the right direction. As long as it is set that way it would be injudicious, by attempting to put on high-pressure speed, to alarm many people who prefer to be carried more slowly along.

It is evident that the question of Intercolonial Federation in Australia will for a time stop the way of Imperial Federation. Any failure of the Australians to federate would retard the latter policy, for it would at first be thought—erroneously however—that Colonies which could not federate among themselves could not federate with the Empire, although Imperial Federation would require the surrender of far less by the Provincial Governments, and could be worked either with or without Intercolonial Federation. The adoption of Australian Federation would also delay Imperial Federation, for our Australian brothers would have enough to do for a time in getting their federal institutions into working

order. This done, Imperial Federation would come to the front, and could be more easily arranged by four great responsible Governments in the Empire—those of the British Isles, Canada, Australia, and South Africa—than by the much larger number of Governments which, without Intercolonial Federation, would have to deal with the question. The Australian Convention, as Mr. Howard Willoughby points out in his able and useful little work,¹ has presented another form of federation—partly copied from that of the United States and partly from that of Canada. This adds one more to the many models from which an imperial federal union may be designed.

There are, doubtless, some Australians under the delusion that the greatest future for the Island-Continent lies in independence, as there are Canadians and South Africans equally unwise in thinking that the same policy will be best for their respective countries; but no greater aspersion could be cast upon the intelligence and knowledge of the Colonial born than to suppose that many of them are of that opinion. I cannot believe that my Australian fellow-countrymen—whose welfare has always the first place in my heart whenever I advocate Imperial unity and federation—will ever allow themselves to be misled by men, not of Colonial birth, who have been trying to get into their favour by advocating separation from the Empire. Two of the ablest of native-born statesmen—the late Mr. Dalley, of New South Wales, and Mr. Deakin, of Victoria—have pronounced in no uncertain terms in favour of a United Empire. Sir Henry Parkes has truly said that in independence Australia would “miss her highest destiny.” To stand separate from the Empire, and, isolated, to face great Powers establishing themselves as her near neighbours, may, to romantic or hot-headed admirers, seem a grand, heroic position for Australia; but those who love her most, and desire for her what is best, must regard it as foolish and Quixotic. A Russian newspaper recently avowed that it is the aim of Muscovite policy to secure an outlet to the Indian Ocean. No doubt it is, even if India be not the ultimate goal of the ambition of Russia, whose acquisition of that country would probably prove of more serious and lasting importance to Australia even than to England. Against such an event both can only find adequate insurance in the organised strength of our federated Empire. With the Colossus of the North striding south, and with the possibility of his coalescing with other Powers, or of their maritime forces becoming formidable in her waters, independ-

¹ *Australian Federation*. Published in Melbourne.

ent Australia would need a much larger navy to safeguard her enormous coast-line of 8,000 miles than the British Isles if independent of the Empire, or an independent Canada, or an independent South Africa, or, indeed, any other nation would require to protect its less extensive seaboard. Even compared with her friendly American *vis-à-vis* in the Pacific, Australia, if standing apart from the Empire of Great Britain, would always look to disadvantage, for her people must always be greatly outnumbered by those of the United States. The same may be said of Canada, whose very name would be blotted out by annexation to her Southern neighbour.

For none of our dominions, old or new, can independence of the Empire be desirable, or even safe, for many long years. It needs no prophetic vision, but only a reasonable estimate of the future growth and circumstances of nations, to enable us to affirm, that for Australia—and what follows may almost word for word be said of Canada and South Africa—it would be perilous to become independent before the year 2,000, but more probably long afterwards it would be unsafe or undesirable. Were Australia at present willing to enter into that position, which would close some of her brightest prospects, without opening any as good to her, she would stake what now seems her inevitable and most desirable destiny—she would risk the now apparent certainty of political unity, even within her own territories—she would tempt the intrusion of other nations, and might have rooted in her soil communities speaking alien languages. Her future might, easily and for ever, be changed; seeing that for years her condition will be sufficiently plastic to take shape from different moulds. For the sake of the individuality she now desires for herself, if for no other reasons, she will do well to secure, on a permanent basis, the organisation of her union with the Empire.

Young communities may, like young persons, pass through a period of existence, when they fancy that the most dignified, proud, and enviable position for them is to stand absolutely alone, and without paternal or fraternal help or support, to do everything for themselves. When, however, the years of hobbledehoyhood—which, happily, are few—are past, the advantages of association and partnership with those nearest of kin are fully appreciated. The good sense, high education, political and general, of the great majority of native-born Australians will, doubtless, restrain any minority from placing their country in any absurd or objectionable position—will prevent them from tolerating an undignified spread-eagleism and falling into provincial narrowness—and will clearly demonstrate to them, as to

people in all parts of the Empire, that the dignity, development, security, and self-government of its greatest as well as of its least important dominions will be best sustained and safeguarded by well-organised Imperial unity. Whether England, Canada, Australia, or South Africa shall be the greatest in the future, and to whatever height of national splendour it may rise, its position in the world will be grander, safer, more peaceful and dignified, as a member of the United Empire of Great Britain, than as the greatest fragment of that mighty Power if, unhappily, it were broken in pieces.

In his newly-made grave in that great national historic Abbey—which will continue the common property of our British race so long as they have the wisdom to maintain a United Empire—lies one of the greatest friends of our world-wide people, the late Poet Laureate, who, though dead, yet speaks to us ; and his words will ever touch the most practical, prosaic commonsense, as well as the highest poetic sentiment of every true son of the Empire when, calling

To all the loyal hearts who long
To keep our English Empire whole,

he thus appeals to them in lines which cannot be too often repeated :

Sharers of our glorious past,
Brothers, must we part at last ?
Shall we not thro' good and ill
Cleave to one another still ?
Britain's myriad voices call,
" Sons, be welded each and all,
Into one Imperial whole,
One with Britain, heart and soul !
One life, one flag, one fleet, one throne ! "

And shall we not treasure and ever reverently observe this, as if the last dying injunction from a friend?—

Pray God our greatness may not fail
Through craven fears of being great.

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