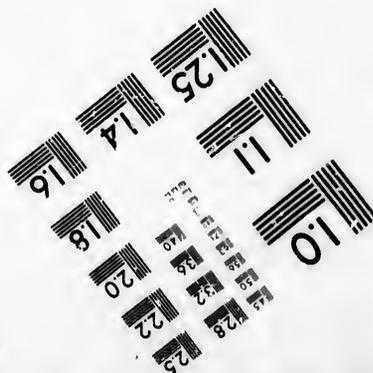
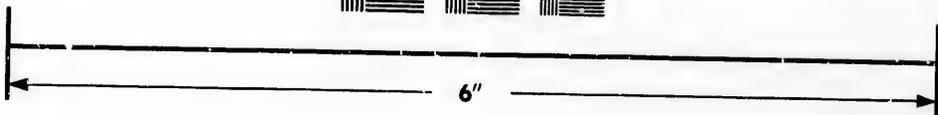
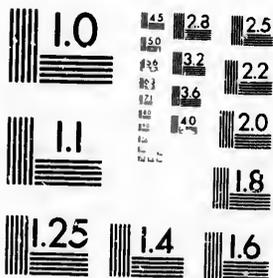


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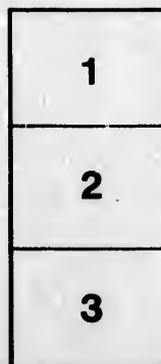
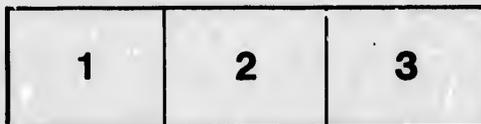
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OUR COLONIAL EMPIRE

AN ADDRESS

*Delivered before the Philosophical Institution of Edinburgh,
on Friday, November 5, 1875*

BY

THE RIGHT HON. W. E. FORSTER, M.P.

REVISED BY THE AUTHOR.

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OUR COLONIAL EMPIRE.

LET me say how it happens that I venture to address you this evening on our Colonial Empire.

When I received the request of the Directors of your Institution that I should open the proceedings of this Session, my first impulse was to thank them for the high honour of the invitation, and to decline it, on the ground—a most true one—of special unfitness. You expect, I am told, and certainly you have a right to expect, that any address which you come to hear shall be a carefully written discourse rather than a speech; but my work, of late years, has been that of a man who has had to get through his political task, from day to day, as best he could, by help of such rough speech as he could command. Your Secretary, however, in forwarding the request of your Directors, suggested my present subject, and I was so tempted by the suggestion that, somewhat hastily, I at once pledged myself to be with you this evening. The temptation was this: I have long felt I had something to say about our Colonies, distinct from the immediate politics or interests or questions of the day, and I know not where I could find an audience more to my mind than in the metropolis of Scotland. Without Scotch colonists where would have been our Colonial Empire? And what this Empire is to be in the future depends not a little upon Scotch energy and action.

This allusion to the future leads me to define more precisely the object of my remarks. To some of you my subject must have appeared almost unmeaning in its vagueness. Do you propose, I might be asked, to give the history of the Colonies, or to describe their present condition, or to discuss their

present relations to the mother country? Any one of these branches of the subject might occupy not one but many addresses, by any man, how great soever his power of condensation. But "Our Colonial Empire" may well appear as misinforming a title as would be "Europe," or "Asia," or "The Roman Empire." My object, however, is not to tell the story of the past, or to debate the questions of the present, but rather to endeavour to describe what will be, or, at any rate, may or should be, our future relations with our Colonies.

I wish to try to answer the question, "What will become of our Colonial Empire if we, in the United Kingdom, do our duty?" Even thus limited, my subject is so wide that I can hardly do more than state my conclusions, with little or no attempt at illustration, begging you to believe that I have not formed them thoughtlessly, and that I propound them with a desire not to appear dogmatic,—rather with the knowledge that if I be dogmatic I must be presumptuous,—and with the hope that you may think it worth while to examine them for yourselves, and to follow up in your own minds the train of thought I may be able to point out.

There is one other limitation I must make. I need not tell you that there are three distinct classes of our Colonial possessions, varying greatly in history, position, and object. There are Posts, such as Gibraltar and Malta—*propugnacula*, as they have been well called,—which we hold, not so much as colonies, but as fortresses, the possession of which we have thought, or still think, necessary to our safety or our interests. There are Possessions, such as Ceylon or Sierra Leone, which we govern, but which are like our Indian Empire in this respect, that they are not, and probably never will be, peopled, that is colonised, by men of our own race. And there are our Colonies, in the strict definition of the word,—those regions which we have peopled, or are now peopling, with English-speaking men and women. Now I do not propose, in this discourse, to deal with either of the first two classes. It would be difficult indeed to find a general description which

would comprehend, or a general rule which would apply to, either our isolated *propugnacula* or our tropical dependencies; nor ought we, strictly speaking, to apply the term "Colonies" to either the one or the other. When, therefore, I ask you to consider with me what is to become of our Colonial Empire, I mean this:—What is to be the future relation between our islands and those regions of the earth to which we have sent, or are still sending, colonists? And this question does, in fact, resolve itself into two questions. First, should we look forward to a separation, more or less remote, from these Colonies, or to a continued connection with them? And next, if to a continued connection, upon what terms? In a word, is our Colonial Empire to last? and if so, by what means?

Now, as our time together is short, I will at once give you my answer to these questions, before I give you the grounds upon which it is based, in order that, as I try to state my arguments, you may test them by my conclusions.

My answer is this:—I believe that our union with our Colonies will not be severed; because I believe that we and they will more and more prize this union, and become convinced that it can only be preserved by looking forward to association upon equal terms; in other words, I believe that our Colonial Empire will last, because, no longer striving to rule our Colonies as dependencies, when they become strong enough to be independent, we shall welcome them as our partners in a common and mighty Empire. But if this be all I have to say, why, I may be asked, come here at all? who talks now of casting off the Colonies? what more popular cry at present than the preservation of our Colonial Empire? Some twelve years ago, it is true, a voice from Oxford declared this Empire to be an illusion for the future—a danger to the present—but Professor Goldwin Smith has gone to Canada, and his eloquent arguments for disruption have as little convinced the Canadians as ourselves. A most distinguished and successful Indian Governor told us at Glasgow, last year, that he was "not one of those who believe in uniting the Colonies

to our country in a perpetual bond," and he added that, so far as our great Canadian possessions were concerned, "the sooner the connection was severed the better." But Sir George Campbell had only just returned from India, and it is no disrespect to him to suppose that he was at that time a better judge of Indian than of British or Colonial feeling. Some logicians and philosophers, some energetic and thoughtful politicians, have been supposed to desire ultimate separation; but if they hold these opinions, of late they have but little expressed them; and indeed the supposition is based rather upon inferences which others chose to attribute to them than upon actual expressions.

Certainly the late Government was not seldom attacked as an anti-Colonial Administration, but this charge is but another evidence of Imperial feeling. It was known that no charge against a Government could be more damaging, and therefore, considering the conditions of party warfare, it was not unnatural for those who differed from us, both on matters of general policy, and on details of colonial policy, to declare that we were wishing to get rid of the Colonies, or to provoke them to leave us.

If I had come here to defend the Government of which I happened to be a member, which of course is not my object, I think I could show that our Colonial policy has done not a little to improve and strengthen our connection with the Colonies; but at any rate I may be allowed to disown, in the strongest terms, any intention or desire on our part to break it up. Let me add this much about our successors, that it is to me a good symptom that the country appreciates, in its general scope, Lord Carnarvon's endeavours to bring about the confederation of our South African possessions, which, if accomplished, will both uphold the Empire and strengthen the Colonies. Nevertheless, while admitting that such is the general expression and drift of public opinion on this question, I cannot consider that silence is incumbent on those who think with me in regard to it.

There are some persons, probably not many, perhaps not so many as a few years ago, who both desire and expect separation. But are there not very many who, though they do not desire it, expect that it will come—first or last, sooner or later; the later indeed the better; but who look forward to Canada choosing to leave us; to Australia, and New Zealand, and South Africa, one after the other, declaring their independence; who, in a word, believe that the children, when grown to full manhood, will set up house for themselves? I strongly suspect that this is the prevalent feeling of those who try to forecast the future, whether they be philosophical students or active politicians; and that, too, quite irrespective of their political party or school of thought. I could quote many authorities in support of this assertion, had I time, or were it necessary to do so; but I think it will hardly be disputed that this expectation does generally underlie the discussions between those who would and those who would not take immediate steps to hasten its fulfilment. For instance, Mr. Goldwin Smith, in the book in which he republishes his letters on this subject to the *Daily News*, is able to show that the *Times*, in one of its leaders, concludes an able reply to his argument for disruption, by telling the people of the Colonies, that “we do not pretend to deny that the time must come when they will no longer require our aid, and when it will be better for both that they should set up for themselves.”

But if separation is eventually to come, surely we should prepare for it rather than inveigh against it! I am one of those who so far believe in the future, that if I become convinced that the forces of society are tending in a direction which must eventually bring about a certain result, I begin to question my fears of that result, and to ask myself whether the Power which guides man through the ages is not, after all, guiding him aright, though, to my imperfect vision, there may be pitfalls by the way. This expectation is no new notion. It was well expressed in 1856 by Mr. Arthur Mills, in his preface to his informing *Outlines of Colonial Constitutions*.

“To ripen these communities,” he says—that is, our Colonies,—“to the earliest possible maturity, social, political, and commercial—to qualify them by all the appliances within the reach of the parent State, for present self-government and *eventual independence*, is now the universally admitted aim of our Colonial Policy.” But if this be the key-note, let us try to tune the instruments in harmony.

Without doubt, this is one of the many cases in which our duty does not depend on our hopes or our fears. The duty of the day to our Colonial fellow-countrymen is clear enough; but to me, at least, it is easier to fulfil this duty in a hopeful rather than in a desponding spirit, and, if I agreed with the writer in the *Times* in his anticipations, I admit that I should lend a willing ear to the arguments which that writer was answering. And, indeed, this is one of those anticipations, one of those prophecies, which fulfil themselves. Ideas are the rulers of the world. First or last they realise themselves, and become the facts of history. If, then, it is to be the prevalent idea in the minds of English-speaking men, at home and abroad, that each colony must become an independent nation, when it has become powerful enough to protect itself, we may at once try to reconcile ourselves to the inevitable; give up the hope of continuing to girdle the world with our possessions; strive to convince ourselves that this hope is a foolish dream, that this boasted rule is but a vain show—a sacrifice of the reality of power to the pretence of prestige; and concentrate all our endeavours in the attempt to propitiate the new nations, and to obtain from them friendly consideration, as one by one they assert their independence, or, as it were, take up their nationality.

But suppose that, in place of this idea, there comes to prevail another and a very different idea—namely this, that our Colonies, when strong enough to be independent, will yet be stronger, more rich, more intelligent, able to be *better* if still in union with ourselves; that their inhabitants will have greater opportunities, a wider scope, a possibility of a higher career, if

continuing our fellow-countrymen; that in order to fulfil all the duties of free and civilised and self-governing men, they need not cease to be British citizens; that they may have all the advantages of a nationality without disowning their allegiance; and that as *they* increase in strength and power, so also shall *we*. If this, I say, become the prevalent idea, then this will be the idea that will realise itself, and our Colonial Empire may and will last. This, then, is the real question before us, Which of these two ideas will prevail? and, to my mind, that means, In which of these two ideas is there the most truth? After all, then, we are driven to weigh the arguments of the Separationists. If they be right—if there is reason to believe that Separation will ultimately be better for the parent and the children—or for one or the other—we must then admit that the Separation idea is the true one.

Let us, however, first try to picture to ourselves what our Colonial Empire is now, and what it will soon be. I will not weary you with statistics, not that I undervalue them in this question, or indeed in any question, but because to be fair they must be exhaustive, and for an exhaustive statistical statement we have not time. I doubt not many of you have made yourselves acquainted with the extent and population and trade of our Colonies, with their resources and prospects; and to those who have not done so, may I venture to say that, without some attention to these matters, no one of us can be said to have fully qualified himself to perform his political duties. But without entering into details, there are one or two broad facts which it may be well to keep before us. Taking our Colonies in their strictest definition—including only those which are, or can be, peopled and settled by white men,—excluding not only India and Ceylon, and our possessions in West Africa, but also, on account of their tropical situation, Mauritius and the West Indies—I find the total area as given in the latest statistical abstract presented to Parliament, to be in round numbers, not much less than four millions of square miles, or about 3,100,000 in Australia, including New Zealand,

225,000 in South Africa, and about 600,000 in North America, not including the vast North-west Territory, the area of which is given in the last circular issued by the Emigration Commissioners at 2,750,000 square miles.

If we add the area of British India and of our tropical dependencies, and that of the United Kingdom, small though it be, we find that the whole British territory is about eight million square miles, or more than one-eighth of the land surface of the globe. But, for our purposes this evening, we must disregard both our territory in the tropics and that north of the line of cultivation, inasmuch as we are now dealing only with British possessions which are or may be colonised. At first I did not find it easy to get trustworthy information as to either the actual or the relative position of these possessions, the geographical books by no means agreeing; but I have been most kindly and efficiently helped by my friend and old colleague Mr. Wyld (than whom no one has more experience and knowledge, not only in geography generally, but especially in political and physical geography), who has compiled for me the map you have before you, and given me some statistics which are, I think, worth considering. I have not given Mr. Wyld time to prepare his figures with minute accuracy, but I have no doubt whatever that they are substantially correct.

The home, not only of Britons, but of all white races, lies in the temperate regions. In the tropics we and they may rule and work with our brains, as in India, but we cannot work hard with our hands, and our children must be sent home, or they dwindle away. But this home is getting over full. No one can say to what extent the population of the United Kingdom, or of Europe, may be increased as the conditions of its society become improved; but as it is, swarms of industrious men and women must leave, not only our islands, but other European countries, notably Germany, Switzerland, and Scandinavia. Where can they go? Our races come from the wilds of Central Asia, and to them they have no wish to return—the circumstances of Siberia and Tartary do not attract emigrants.

China is more overstocked than Europe itself, and that part of North Africa which is not desert is already occupied. There remains the New World, or rather the New Worlds, of America, Australia, and South Africa. But of the temperate regions of these new worlds eighty per cent. belongs to us and our kinsmen in the United States. Forty-four per cent. belongs to us. You will observe, if you look at the map, that I have not made the temperate regions conterminous or co-extensive with the temperate zones. I have taken the two tropics as the boundaries against heat, but as against cold Mr. Wyld has drawn for me a line showing the limits of the cultivation of grain. The district coloured red shows the portion of the temperate regions belonging to us, the green that which belongs to the United States, and the pink the remainder. The result is this:—Let the emigrant from old Europe, who seeks a home for himself or his children, go where he will—except to Spanish or Portuguese America, or to the Dutch republics in the interior of South Africa, which have left us, perhaps only for a time—he will hear our language spoken, he will find our institutions pervading society. If he chooses to study the character of the men and women around him, he will find that it can only be understood by a knowledge of English history; that it has, in fact, been formed by the character of our fathers. And if he goes to Africa, or to the great islands of the west, or to America north of the St. Lawrence, or of the latitude of forty-nine degrees, he will find himself a subject of our Queen.

But now take another fact. Why are those temperate regions of Asia, the wilds of Tartary and Siberia, so scantily peopled? Not altogether by reason of the severity of the climate, but on account of the difficulty of access. It is hard to say what railways will not do in the future; but hitherto the progress of countries has very much depended on their coast-line, and a long coast-line will never cease to be an advantage. For instance, Europe has more than one-twelfth of the coast-line, while it has not one-seventeenth of the land surface of the earth. What, then, is the coast-line of the

English-peopled countries? Again excluding India and West Africa, including only that portion of British territory which is within the temperate regions—excluding therefore the north coast of America—we have a coast-line of more than 21,000 miles. The coast-line of all the temperate regions of the earth is about 70,000 miles. We therefore have more than two-sevenths of the whole. The coast-line of the United States, with so much of Alaska as is below the grain line, is more than 8000 miles, so that English-speaking men have about three-sevenths of the coast-line of all the temperate regions in the two hemispheres.

If we take the coast-line of the temperate regions of North and South America, Australia, and South Africa, we find that we have more than one-half, and we and the United States together about four-fifths, or the same proportion as of the area.

So much for area, and now a word on Population. The Parliamentary return estimates the population, in 1871, of British North America as about 3,750,000; Australia, including New Zealand, about 2,000,000; the Cape and Natal, about 850,000; or in round numbers, a total of 6,600,000. The same return shows the numbers in 1850 to be less than 3,500,000, being for British North America about 2,500,000, Australia and New Zealand about 550,000, the Cape and Natal about 400,000. This shows a total increase in the twenty-one years of more than 88 per cent. What will be the future increase? Who can tell? No trustworthy answer can be given, except that it will be very great. Suppose an increase for the remainder of this century proportionate to that since 1850; these colonies would then start in the twentieth century with a population of at least 15,000,000. Many of you will live to know whether this estimate is too sanguine. I believe it will be found to be under the mark. There is reason to expect that future emigration will be conducted on a greater scale than at present; and, indeed, we are only now beginning to open out the fertile portions of the North-west

Territory of the Dominion. By the last census, the population of the United Kingdom was about 31,500,000; and the Registrar-General informs us in his Preliminary Report that, at the rate of increase for the last ten years, this population would double itself in eighty-four years, that is, it would be about 63,000,000 in 1955. It may well be doubted whether our two small islands could support so dense a population; but every one admits that there is room in the Colonies, and, supposing their increase to be at the rate of the twenty-one years from 1850 to 1871, their number, at the end of the eighty-four years, would become more than 82,000,000. Their proportion to the United Kingdom, instead of 66 to 315, would be 82 to 63.

You may or may not accept these calculations, or rather these guesses; but I think we shall all accept almost as certainties these three probabilities:—First, that by the end of this century our colonies within the temperate zones will be strong enough to assert their independence, if they please—will, in short, be able to shift for themselves. Secondly, that whether they do or do not assert their independence, they will be too mighty to be treated any longer as dependencies. And lastly, that before the middle of next century, their population will outnumber ours, and still leave room for indefinite increase. And if I had time, I could show that there is every reason to expect that their progress in wealth and in culture, and in all the conditions of power, will at least keep pace with their population.

With these facts and probabilities before us, let us consider the arguments of those who look forward to the loss of these possessions not only without regret, but with satisfaction. I can only give these arguments very briefly, but I will try to give them fairly.

I think they may be stated as follows:—The loss of our Colonies would in reality, it is said, be a gain to us, because it would relieve our taxpayers of a large pecuniary burden; because, also, it would make wars with other nations less

likely to occur, and less difficult to wage, or would, in fact, diminish our danger, both of war, and in war. And as regards the Colonies themselves, it is stated that the severance of their connection with us would increase their safety and diminish their burdens; would prevent their being involved in wars in which they are not interested; would stimulate their progress in population and in wealth; would train them to self-reliance; and is, indeed, the only mode by which they can become fit to fill their proper place, and to fulfil their duties in the world. And lastly, it is strenuously urged that any association with such communities on terms of equality is impracticable—that no federation is possible—that the difficulties of time and space would, as it were, drive them to eventual independence, and that the only tie which can bind them to the mother country is that dependent relation which is every year becoming more and more relaxed, and which must ultimately disappear.

Now, first, what is the actual cost of these Colonies? How heavy is the burden on our taxpayers? I believe there are few matters on which greater misapprehension exists in the public mind. Some years ago, it is true, we paid largely, not only towards their military defence, but their civil government. It was only fair that we should do so. While we made them take our criminals, and controlled their markets, and sent out to them almost all their officials,—while, in fact, we not only actually governed them, but governed them for what we supposed to be our interests,—it was but just that we should pay much of the cost of that government. It is true, also, that we have admitted their right to self-government somewhat more quickly than we have called upon them to defray its cost, and for a time our taxpayers had grounds for complaint. It could not be expected that the inhabitants of these islands, borne down, as they are, under the load of taxes—the heritage of past struggles, and forced to pay much in order to meet the wants of our ancient and complicated society, would patiently maintain the machinery by which their Colonial fellow-countrymen administer their own affairs, or relieve them from all

expense in defending the property they are so rapidly acquiring. But this grievance has now little, if any, foundation. Let me give you the actual figures. Last year there was a Parliamentary "Return of the Cost of the several Colonies of the British Empire, at the expense of the British Exchequer," including not only payments of Governors, but all contributions towards Police, Schools, and other local charges; and the expense not only of the troops we have sent out, but the money spent on fortifications and other military defences. In 1869-70 the amount was £2,745,980. In 1872-73 (the last year given) it was £1,817,471. But these sums include the expenses of all the Colonies. If we take only those with which we are dealing, that is, British North America, Australia (including New Zealand), and South Africa, we have £1,165,316 in 1869-70 against £372,451 in 1872-73, and of this £370,000, about £150,000 was spent in Nova Scotia, mainly at the Imperial Station at Halifax, and more than £40,000 on the convict establishment, which we still maintain for Imperial purposes, in Western Australia, and of which the cost is rapidly diminishing. In thus reducing the charges on the Imperial Exchequer, the late Government has, I believe, made our relation with the Colonies more close and more durable, because more in accordance with fairness and justice. And though this change excited some opposition at first, it was more at home than abroad. Australia is proud of her pecuniary position, and in Canada, where the diminution in Imperial payment, for the two great provinces of Ontario and Quebec, has been from £434,223 to £3552, I certainly, in my short visit last year, found no dissatisfaction.

I may be told that the direct charges do not cover the actual loss, and that we ought to take into account the ships of-war we have to build and man for the defence of these communities. I cannot admit that we ought to count any such indirect charge. It would not be easy to show that, irrespective of our Colonies, our Navy, as compared with other nations, is too strong. If all our Colonies were to leave us to-

morrow, we still must have men-of-war to protect our commerce, unless, indeed, that went also ; and the want of their ports in which we now coal and refit would, I suspect, soon be seen in our Estimates. And if we come to indirect effects, we must consider whether there might not be a diminution in our trade, and therefore in our revenue. There is no Colonial question more debated than this effect on our commerce. If I were to consider nothing else this evening, I could not enter fully into the arguments on both sides. I must ask you to look into the facts for yourselves ; and if you do so, I think you will incline to believe that the balance of evidence shows that the Trade does follow the Flag. Remember, all that is required to justify this opinion, is to have ground to believe that we have more trade with the Colonists than we should if they were foreigners. Take then these figures. We find by the Parliamentary Returns that our exports last year were in value to

Australia, including New Zealand, more than	£20,000,000
France, less than	30,000,000
British North America, more than	10,000,000
The United States, less than	33,000,000
The Cape and Natal, about	4,700,000
China, less than	5,000,000

Taking in each case the last recorded census, this return shows that our fellow-countrymen at the Antipodes took each of them last year an average of £10 worth of our goods ; while our nearest neighbours, the French, took less than 17s. per head. The average to the States was rather more than to France, but less than 17s. 6d. per head, while to our North American possessions it was more than 53s. I need not compare the averages of South Africa and China. Again, the imports from the North American, Australian, and South African Colonies for the five years ending 1874, were in round numbers about £148,000,000, and the exports to them about £142,000,000. Our imports from all foreign countries for the same period were about £1,350,000,000, and our exports to

them about £1,125,000,000. These seven millions of Colonists cannot then be considered bad customers. Our import from them is about 11 per cent. ; and our export to them about 12½ per cent. of our import and export to and from all foreign countries. I am not surprised that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when consoling us at Middlesborough last month, for "the falling off in our foreign trade," was able to say it "was to a great extent counterbalanced by the improvement in our exports to the Colonies."

Nor, while making up our Profit and Loss Account, can we disregard the pecuniary advantages of Emigration. Here again there is much dispute. There are persons who believe that colonisation has had little or nothing to do with the connection of the colonists with the mother country. I am not of that opinion. The last circular issued by the Emigration Commissioners tells me that more than a million of emigrants proceeded from the United Kingdom to Australia and New Zealand between 1825 and 1873. It is not easy for me to suppose, that anything approaching to this number would have either been willing or able to meet the cost and difficulties of the voyage to the other side of the earth, had not the connection with the mother country continued, and had there not been in consequence a successful co-operation of the Home and Colonial Governments in aiding and promoting Emigration. I will not dwell longer on the pocket argument. It is not easy to bring ourselves to consider this question as simply one of pecuniary profit or loss. But, if we do so, we find that the actual profits of the partnership are very large, that the expenses of the management are very small, and that the probability is, that no one of the partners would carry on so large a business by himself. I then, for one, am not inclined to think that it would be a business-like act to give a notice of dissolution.

But this partnership, we are told, though profitable in peace, may be unprofitable in war ; or may lead to wars which might swallow up in a year the gains of decades of peace.

Let us consider this part of the question carefully, for in it lies much of the gist of the matter. There are two dangers feared. Our Colonies, it is said, may involve us in war, or their possession may place us in a worse position when we are at war. Well, as regards South Africa or Australia, I confess I cannot see in what way they could drag us into war with any civilised nation, or endanger us if at war. I think we may wait till a probable cause of conflict is pointed out; and certainly in no one of our recent wars have we been weakened by their possession. How then about America? Can we protect the long frontier of the Dominion, with its population, as yet scanty and scattered, against its neighbours, with their wealth, and resources, and energy; with their millions of men, who have shown how quickly they can learn to be soldiers? But what right have we expect that these neighbours will attack Canada? I firmly believe that both good sense and good feeling prevail too much in the great Republic to make such an attack possible. But if this most improbable crime were committed, who can foretell the result of the contest that would follow? There would be great suffering in Canada; for a time, perhaps, a successful invasion, but, in the end, I believe that the four millions of freemen would not be conquered.

But the contest, it might be said, if it came at all, would not come from an unprovoked act of American ambition, but as the final issue of mutual misunderstandings and recriminations, of faults on both sides, which might be aggravated by the fact that the colony knew she had the mother country at her back. Is it not, then, better to warn Canada without delay that she must prepare to take care of herself, or, if she finds that she cannot stand alone, to make up her mind to join the Union? Well, this warning I would not give, and for three reasons. I do not believe that it is necessary. I do believe that it would be dangerous. I am sure it would be cowardly. After all, what are the facts? They are very different from what they were fifteen years ago. When the slave-owners prevailed at Washington, there was real danger of war between England and the States, because the principles

of the two Governments were becoming as antagonistic as truth and falsehood. But now that freedom rules in both countries, common descent, similar institutions, mutual interest, and individual kinsmanship, will keep the peace. That this is a reasonable trust is confirmed by the settlement of recent misunderstandings. It would be hard, indeed, for any alarmist to conjure up Canadian causes of disagreement more rankling, or more dangerous, than the claims which arose out of the American civil war, and which were urged, not unnaturally, with not a little of the fierce bitterness of that 'terrible' conflict. There is friendship now between the English-speaking Kingdom and the English-speaking Republic. Canada prefers to be part of the Kingdom. Is it reasonable to suppose that this preference will interrupt the friendship? If the time should come that she had no longer this preference, if she should clearly show us that she had changed her mind, we should not attempt to control her. I, at least, should grieve to lose my Canadian fellow-countrymen, but I should wish them well as citizens of the States. But so long as they desire to continue our fellow-subjects, I believe that to cast them off, or to desert them, would be one of those acts of cowardice which, of all political acts, is the most dangerous, because they tempt attack, and provoke wrong and insult, by both causing and confessing an abatement of that high and noble spirit without which, how strong soever our material defences, we should be defenceless. I am not then possessed by the fear that our Colonies will drag us into war, or burden us if at war. Wars generally spring out of frontier quarrels, and, except in America, we have no civilised nation on our frontier; and our ships, while guarding our commerce, would protect the shores of our Colonies, and, as I have already stated, would greatly benefit by the use of their ports.

But if this war argument, fairly discussed, ought not to induce the mother country to desire separation, ought it not to have great weight in the Colonies? Why should they spend their money or their blood? why should their ships be in

danger of capture, or their cities of bombardment, because our diplomatists, or our Government, have involved us in some European conflict, or because we may be fighting for our Indian Empire? But here again we must look at reasonable probabilities, and not allow ourselves to be misled by vague possibilities. Let us try to put ourselves in the position of the Colonists, and consider at what we should aim if we were in their places. At present we should certainly desire no change. The gain is greater than the loss. The protection against attack is cheaply purchased by a small risk of an unlikely danger. But should we feel that we ought to leave the old country to fight its battles by itself, as soon as we became strong enough to fight our battles without her help? This would depend upon the reason why England had battles to fight. Here, indeed, the future is uncertain, too uncertain to be a ground of action, almost too obscure for speculation. But is it unreasonable to suppose that the probabilities of future British wars may be divided into three categories? England may be fighting in self-defence; or to fulfil her engagements with other powers; or because she takes part in their conflicts. Well, in the first case, I think the answer of the Colonists would be clear: it would be an insult to them not to believe that they would rally to our rescue. No one who visits any colony, or takes any heed of Colonial feeling, can doubt what in such case would be their action. And as regards the fulfilment of past engagements, I think they would be ashamed of us if we broke them, and ashamed of themselves if they did not help us to maintain them.

There remains the possibility of future entanglement. That may arise either because, not having learnt the lesson of the past, we may meddle in matters which do not concern us, or possibly, because we may be forced, after exhausting every peaceful effort, to draw the sword on behalf of some great cause, or to prevent some great wrong. In the one case the Colonists might be justified in refusing to take their share, if, indeed, the unlikely event should happen of our insisting

upon engaging in some war which concerns us not ; but, in the other case, would it not be their duty to remember that they also owe their existence to the principles of freedom, and that they are as much bound as are we ourselves to keep those principles living in the world? This, indeed, they would have a right to say : that they must have some share, not only in the burdens of our wars, but in the policy out of which they may spring.

And this brings us to the practical question : Are there any means by which it is possible that these future commonwealths, when no longer dependent, can be united with us, and with one another? I may hasten at once to try to answer this question ; for if it can be answered, that argument will be also met which I have already mentioned, namely, that Separation would stimulate the Colonies to greater progress, and would increase their self-reliance. Surely 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 for itself.

But is this federation possible? There are many, even of those who desire it, who think that it is not. This opinion chiefly depends upon the difficulties of distance. If, however, these difficulties have not prevented the government of a colony from England, why must they prevent the association of self-governing communities with England? *A priori*, it might seem probable that the association would be easier than the direct government. But distance is in itself a very different matter from what it was, when this opinion was first entertained. The telegraph has made communication of thought instantaneous with Australia, and doubtless we shall soon send direct messages to New Zealand and the Cape. And as regards the length of time required to travel to the end of the earth, steam and the great circle sailing have diminished it more

than a half. Thirty years ago the average voyage to Australia was four months; now we can get a reply to a message in a day, and we can fetch a man back in six weeks. But the geographical argument, I am well aware, cannot be quite so easily disposed of. It would not be stating it fairly to make it depend solely upon the length of intervening miles between the several regions. It is said that the difference in local circumstances will produce such a disagreement in institutions and social arrangements, as would make any political connection undesirable. To this remark I can only reply that, as yet, this disagreement is not apparent: that the enormous majority of colonists themselves disclaim it; and that I can see no ground for believing in any irresistible tendency to its development. Judging from what I have heard, or read, and what little I have myself seen, I should say that an Englishman, or a Scotchman, or an Irishman, and their children, remain English, Scotch, or Irish, wherever they be; or, if there be a change, it is that the distinct characteristics of the inhabitants of the three kingdoms tend to be lost in their common similarity. In the province of Quebec, we are continually reminded that Frenchmen can be loyal subjects to the British Queen, and strong supporters of the British connection; but in Toronto or Kingston, or other towns and villages of Upper Canada, I had to look out for the St. Lawrence, or the lakes, or the forest, to feel that I was not at home. Even in the States the difference is so completely on the surface, and so quickly disappears, that it soon requires an actual effort of the mind to remember that the farmers of the West, or the citizens of Boston, are not as English as ourselves.

The fact is, English-speaking men and women look at life and its problems, especially the problems of Government, with much the same eyes everywhere. Slavery distorted the vision of many for a time, but now there is more difference between the German and the British monarchies, and between the French and the American Republics, than there is between the British Monarchy and the American Republic. Doubtless

society in the new communities is, and probably for some time will be, more democratic than with us. Men start more equally than in the old country, and it will take time before it will be found out that one man runs faster than another. But are not the tendencies at home also democratic? We cannot send over to Australia a ready-made aristocracy. But we, too, have our democracy, and already we have found it convenient that Australia tries democratic experiments which help us to solve the problems with which we know we must deal. If any one thinks that it is either probable or desirable that any Anglo-Saxon community should develop political ideas opposed to those of our forefathers—for instance, the Latin idea of an emperor, or elected despot,—it would be quite consistent for such a person to desire that our Colonial Empire should be dissolved, in the hope that emperors should be chosen by the new nations. But believing, as I do, that on the whole Representative Government is the best form of government, that by which orderly progress is best secured, I, for my part, rejoice in the conviction that a common preference for this form of government is one of the strongest ties which bind together all who speak our language.

Yet many millions of our race prefer a Republic to a Monarchy. Yes, but remember these facts: first, that we so treated their fathers that we almost forced them to be Republicans; secondly, that many of them now acknowledge that at least it is a moot question whether, as regards the real meaning of the word, and its true significance, our Limited Monarchy is not a more complete Republic than their own; and lastly, that the great majority of the colonists in America, Australia, and Africa are as loyal to our Monarchy as we are ourselves. Not merely because they honour and respect our Queen; not merely because of their personal feeling towards the Royal Lady under whose rule they have grown from childhood to lusty youth; but because they are as proud as we are of the traditions of our history, and as convinced as we are of the actual advantages of an hereditary executive.

In fact, it seems to me to be not one of the least reasons or preserving our connection with the Colonies, that what may be termed the local tendencies, very generally the result of local selfishness, will both with them and with us be in measure checked, and counteracted, and overbalanced by great Imperial interests—Imperial because they are great.

And now, if any of you have followed me thus far in the line of thought which I have taken, he will, I think, be ready with the question—If you think this future association possible, if you see no insuperable physical or moral bar to prevent it, in what way do you expect it to be formed? What kind of federation do you propose? My reply is, I am ready with no proposition. I believe any precise proposition would be premature; and for this reason, that as yet no change in our relations is necessary. As Mr. Arthur Mills stated in the passage I have already quoted, "The present principle of our Colonial policy is to ripen these communities to the earliest possible maturity," and when they have obtained this maturity, it will be for us and for them to consider what, under the circumstances then existing, will be the best bond of union. All that is required now is to imbue them and ourselves with the desire that the union should last, with the determination that the Empire shall 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.

We may, however, try to define what must be the necessary conditions of such union. I have not time to do more than mention my definition. You must test it for yourselves. It seems to me that in order that our Empire should continue, all its different self-governing communities must agree in maintaining allegiance to one monarch;—in maintaining a common nationality, so that each subject may find that he has the political rights and privileges of other subjects wheresoever he may go in the Realm; and, lastly, must agree not only in

maintaining a mutual alliance in all relations with foreign powers, but in apportioning among themselves the obligations imposed by such alliance. I have seen it proposed that there should be an attempt to escape the third of these conditions. It has been suggested that a colony might, if it pleased, be considered neutral in any war in which we might be engaged; especially this has been urged for Canada. I cannot suppose that any one who supports this view can either contemplate or desire the continuance of the Imperial connection. The very essence of such continuance is a common patriotism;—the feeling throughout all the different communities that, notwithstanding the seas that roll between them, they are yet one nation; and that all their inhabitants are fellow-countrymen. But patriots cannot stipulate that they will not fight for their country, or arrange to desert their fellow-countrymen when in danger; nor would any foreign belligerent be bound by any such attempt to wage war on the principle of limited liability. There might, however, be this qualification of this condition. It might be understood that any member of the Federation, either the mother country, or any one of its children, should have an acknowledged right to withdraw from the mutual alliance on giving reasonable notice. I do not look forward to such an understanding; still less should I propose it. But even if this proviso were attached to my third condition of union, I do not think that the union would be dissolved; because I do not believe that fear of war would induce this notice of withdrawal, or rather of desertion, to be given. I may be told that I merely ground this belief on sentimental hopes. But the sentiments of courage, of honour, of fidelity, have long been facts in British—yes, and also in Irish—history. And why should the children have less of these sentiments than their fathers? But while I must admit that without the fulfilment of these three conditions we could not hope that the Empire would last, it by no means follows that no other condition would exist. For instance: I do not despair of one future tariff for the Empire, and that a tariff based upon our

present fiscal policy—namely, customs levied upon as few articles as possible, with a corresponding excise. Judging from present facts this expectation will appear over-sanguine, but, inasmuch as I believe in the principle of free-trade, I expect that in the Colonies, as elsewhere, protectionists will lose strength as consumers learn their power and their interest; and there seems to me nothing in the position of these communities which will prevent their finding it to their advantage, as we do, to raise, by duties on a few articles of general consumption, so much of their revenue as is obtained by indirect taxes.

There is another matter upon which there may be one law throughout the Empire, as there must be one principle of action—viz., the treatment of uncivilised or half-civilised races. For instance, we could have no slave-owning partner. The least we could do if any colony chose to establish slavery, would be to give her notice that she must leave—that we could not consider slave-owners fellow-countrymen. Whether it would be our duty to do more than this would depend upon the circumstances, and especially upon our responsibility to the intended slaves. But notwithstanding the recent crimes committed by some individual colonists in the islands of the Pacific—quite as often as not by colonists born on British soil—I believe that there is as little danger of slavery in the Australian colonies, or in any colony, as in the United Kingdom. The Imperial policy, however, must include foreign policy, and therefore arrangements for mutual defence. It may, by agreement, include fiscal or any other policy. Generally speaking, internal affairs must be left to the local governments; and, therefore, I confess I do not think that the admission of Colonial representatives into our Parliament could be a permanent form of association, though it might possibly be useful in the temporary transition from the dependent to the associated relation. The new communities could not be expected to allow the overpowering majority of English, Scotch, and Irish members to make their local laws, nor should we like

their members to vote on questions merely affecting our local administration.

Beyond this remark I have nothing to say about the precise machinery of association. Doubtless the ruling principle and power of the realm will be in future, as now, the representation of the people; but I do not pretend to determine the precise form of this Imperial representation, nor do I think that any one can so foretell circumstances as to be able to determine it. I can only repeat my belief that it is one of those cases in which, when the time comes, it will be found that where there's a will there's a way.

Much, however, can be done to make that way easier. I am not now making a speech on present Colonial questions; but I may venture to allude very briefly to a few principles which I think ought to actuate our policy if we look forward to a permanent union.

We must continue by every means to strengthen the Colonies; therefore, we must try to give them the strength of union with one another wherever possible, as already in the Dominion, as we trust may soon be the case at the Cape, and as hereafter may be accomplished in Australia. We ought also to do our utmost to increase their moral strength by encouraging them in self-reliance, and in the fulfilment of all the duties of citizenship. Nor must we suppose that we can give this right to self-government by halves. We must allow them to manage, or even, in our opinion, to mismanage, their own affairs. But while fully admitting this right of self-government, I think we may in honest friendliness ask them to carefully consider any internal measure which might appear to be contrary to Imperial interests. For instance, the Canadian Parliament lately passed a Copyright Act. Our Parliament last session confirmed it, as was its duty. But it might perhaps have been well if the Dominion Government had been asked whether arrangements could not be made for an Imperial Copyright. Next, we must not sap the desire for union at home by asking the British taxpayer to pay for the Colonist

that which he is able, and I believe is willing, to pay for himself. And, lastly, we ought to take every opportunity of showing that we consider the Colonists our countrymen, and every colony part of the common country, and especially we ought to welcome every step that any colony may take in measures of common defence. I trust I shall not be supposed to attack the present Government if I say, that I think the refusal to allow our officers in the army to keep their rank while assisting the Dominions in forming a military school, requires explanation.

May I venture on one more suggestion, which may appear, perhaps, to savour too much of my own late official occupation. I confess I think Political Geography, and especially British political geography, might be taught more generally and completely in our schools; not merely our elementary schools, but those for all classes. No boy ought to leave school, either at home or in the colonies, without knowing what the British Empire is. If he fully gains that knowledge, I think he will not seldom draw the inference that the British Empire ought to last, and determine that, so far as in him lies, he will do what he can to insure that it shall last.

I have detained you so long that I feel I must say but little more, though I am painfully conscious that I have only skirted my subject. There is, however, one probable criticism to which I must allude. I have quoted Mr. Goldwin Smith because I could not find a more able or more sincere representative of the policy of disunion; but it would be unfair to him, and to those who agree with him, not to admit that while desiring formal separation, they do at the same time desire the closest and most friendly alliance. In fact, they would appear to contemplate some form of association as the consequence of separation. For instance, Mr. Goldwin Smith, although he argues strongly against federation, states that he looks forward to "the emancipation"—that is, the independence—"of the Colonies resulting in England being the heart and centre of a great confederacy of States belonging to our own race, bound

together not only by sympathy, but by alliance, and not only by alliance, but also to some extent by civic rights." And Sir Charles Dilke ends one of his most interesting chapters in his *Greater Britain* by saying that, "after all, the strongest of the arguments in favour of separation is the somewhat paradoxical one, that it would bring us a step nearer to the virtual confederation of the English race." Probably both these gentlemen would include in this expected confederation the United States. Why, then, I may be asked, not rest content with this anticipation? Why is not this your "Greater Britain" of the future? And if any one thought it worth while, I might be referred to what I have already said in expectation and earnest desire of an Anglo-American alliance. I gladly repeat in Edinburgh what I ventured last year to say in New York, that my belief in the good that would follow from such an alliance to Americans, to English, and to the world, is not the least powerful of those beliefs which make me think politics worth pursuing. I repeat also my conviction, that the time will come when this alliance will be marked by some acknowledged relation between our Empire and the Republic, closer than between us or them and other nations. But I do not believe that the way to arrive at this alliance or this confederation is by encouraging our Colonies to disregard the advantages of our limited monarchy, or by tempting them to a policy of disintegration, or by yielding to the demands of local selfishness, or by so isolating them that they would be exposed to foreign solicitation, if not placed under the influence of foreign intrigue.

And now one more remark, and I have done. Supposing your hope fulfilled, I may be asked,—Would the world be the gainer? You boast of the long British coast-line; you remind us of the British lion's share of the temperate zones. You do not forget the vast regions and many millions of subject races under our rule. Do you then desire to intoxicate us with that vain-glorious love of empire which has filled the pages of history with crimes and their punishments? What is there

in our race that will make humanity safe under its guidance? Is it well that we should have this power at which you appear to aim? Have we proved ourselves so humane—so forbearing—so unselfish—so Christian-minded, that we, any more than any other nation, can be trusted to use this power to advance that which is true, or just, or right? Well, to this remark I can make but one reply. Our success in the future—nay, not merely our success, our safety—so great are our responsibilities,—our existence depends upon the fulfilment of our duty—not its perfect fulfilment, that is beyond our reach, but on such fulfilment as is possible. And we shall not fulfil our duty if we attempt to avoid, or escape, or disown the responsibilities of our position. There are two conditions of this position which I must ask you to bear in mind. If I leave you any more impressed with them than I found you, my object will have been gained.

One of these conditions we share with other civilised nations. The other applies especially to ourselves. If there be one fact more evident than another in that page of the story of humanity that is now being written, it is the strength of what we may call the national force—the tendency—the longing of men speaking one tongue, and having a common ancestry, to bind themselves together in a common nationality. But remember that, with the exception of ourselves, this tendency is making itself felt in the creation and maintenance of enormous standing armies. It would appear as though the nations of Europe suppose that they can only hold themselves from disruption by being armed camps.

Now, turn to the other fact, peculiar to ourselves. Our islands are so well situated for colonising; their inhabitants are so industrious, so persevering, so possessed with energy, so imbued with freedom, so gifted, in a word, with the colonising faculty, that we have encircled the earth by the free and orderly communities we have founded. Remember also that, if these communities remain united, they are so strong in their inherited courage, and are so quickly increasing

in strength, that it will matter not to any one of them how quickly soever these armed and drilled nations also may grow.

Remember, also, that 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 those possibilities of union which steam and electricity afford? The time is come that all Governments, even military and despotic Governments, must, without much delay, do what their subjects wish. Can we not, by the example of our peaceful union, tempt these subjects to induce their Governments to disarm? 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"?

