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BRITANNIC CONFEDERATION.

[The following is the first of a special series of papers on the subject of "Britannic Confederation." The *provisional* list of subsequent papers, with the names of the authors, includes (2) Britannic Confederation, from a Colonial Standpoint (Principal M. H. Hervey), (3) The Physical and Political Bases of National Unity (Professor Edward A. Freeman), (4) The Commerce of the British Empire (George G. Chisholm, Esq.), (5) Tariffs, in their effect on International Commerce, etc. (Professor Shield Nicholson), and (6) The Growth and Consolidation of the British Empire.]

I.—A SURVEY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS.

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Political terminology is generally difficult, but the title that has been selected for the series of papers to which the present one is introductory is more than usually free from objection. The substantive is well chosen, because the federal union to be attained in the scattered Empire of the Queen must necessarily assume the looser form of a confederacy, and not that of a federation, strictly so called. The adjective is equally apt, since "British" is so constantly used in the narrower, insular sense, whilst "Britannic"—the territorial title of the sovereign of these realms, who is to all the world "Her Britannic Majesty"—has a wider range of association, and fitly expresses the larger sweep of the idea it is desired to emphasise. If it be not too late to change, the Imperial Federation League might with advantage adopt the title at the head of these papers.

To answer the question, "What is the empire of Her Britannic Majesty?" we must turn first to geography and then to history. Geographically, the first thing noticeable is the scattered character of the Empire that is usually coloured red on the maps. It literally encircles

the globe east and west, north and south. If it were not so scattered the first thing to strike the eye would be its vast extent, more than nine millions of square miles of the earth's surface, a-fifth part of the whole habitable globe, the largest empire of the ancient or modern world. These characteristics lie patent. But, if we begin to look closely and to analyse, two other features shape themselves that have important bearings. One of these is the distribution of the territories between the temperate and the torrid zones; the other the isolated portion of the little land that gives its name to, and is the political centre of, this world-embracing Empire.

Of these characteristics the scattered position of the component parts of the Empire and their climatological distribution are the two that have the most direct bearing on the present subject. The distribution of the territories between temperate and tropical climates enables us to draw a sharp line between the tropical and the temperate countries. The political confederation of the Empire can refer only to those countries where men of British race live from one generation to another under free British political institutions. Whatever the more remote future may have in store, the present question must leave out of account those tropical portions of the Empire inhabited, and only capable of permanent habitation, by the dark-skinned races, governed by the vicegerents of Her Britannic Majesty, and not intrusted with the free Briton's right of self-government, still less therefore to be endowed with the privilege of sharing in the government of other men of British race. The only point of the question that affects them is whether they would continue to be governed by the United Kingdom alone, or by a united empire. When we talk, then, of a Britannic confederation, we must really be thinking of the Britannic Empire lying in temperate or sub-tropical latitudes; and that, for practical purposes, at the present time, resolves itself into the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, British North America, British South Africa, and Australasia.

The second of the two characteristics having a direct political bearing on our subject, the scattered position of the four great groups just enumerated is fundamentally responsible for the existence of such a question at all as that which now confronts us. If these countries, inhabited as they are by a population almost entirely of common origin and otherwise homogeneous, had lain in geographical contiguity, there would never have arisen such a condition of affairs as we see at present in the political relations of each part of the whole to the centre and to the parts. There might, indeed, and, among a people so wedded to self-government in local affairs, no doubt would have arisen, the need for some loosening of the central authority over such matters by the adoption of a federal system. But the need for drawing closer would never have occurred, because the existing absence of almost every substantial political tie would never have resulted under such geographical conditions. It is distance that has produced this result. When the colonies in the temperate latitudes, inhabited by Britons, grew out of being governed on the same principles as those in the tropics, as mere dependencies of Great Britain, it was their distance from the seat of government that

prevented their incorporation into the United Kingdom, or a legislative union being thought of, while, as to the federal idea, it was not until recently that it has come to be regarded by us as a *via media* between complete legislative union and the absence of all real political union whatever. There were undoubtedly other causes determining the direction that colonial self-government then took. But, if the colonies had been newly-opened countries next door to us, those causes themselves would never have been called into existence. It was geographical position that lay at the root of the developments that have taken place.

Historically, the actual course of events has been briefly this. All colonies and plantations having originally been treated alike—that is, both nursed and governed by Britain and from Britain—those that lay in temperate regions, and had no native population of which any account had to be taken, but were inhabited entirely by men of British origin, became little Britains, and after a time claimed the same amount of political freedom and the same political institutions as were enjoyed by their brethren in the mother-country. Distance making legislative union impossible, and federation not being "in the air," this political freedom was conferred by creating local Parliaments, and placing them in the same position towards the Crown, represented by the governor, as that held towards it directly by the Parliament of the United Kingdom. Nominally the Parliament of the United Kingdom as well as the Crown retained supreme authority over the Parliaments so constituted. Practically the power of the Parliament is a reserve force to be called out of abeyance only in great emergencies such as that which, while we write, has arisen with regard to Newfoundland; while that of the Crown, acting through the executive government of the United Kingdom (as distinguished from the Crown, represented by a colonial governor and acting through a colonial executive), is not much more substantial. The political connection between any colony and the United Kingdom is of the slenderest; between any two colonies, except where it has since been created—as between the colonies of British North America by Canadian confederation—there is none at all.

But before we can get a complete bird's-eye view of the general situation we must note some other circumstances that accompanied the grant of parliamentary self-government to the colonies. With the right to manage their own domestic affairs the government and people of the United Kingdom also made to the colonists two free gifts of a strictly material nature, and at an enormous sacrifice to themselves not fully realised at the time. The first and greatest of these gifts was nothing less than the fee-simple of the vast territories, on the fringes of which they had settled.

The vastness of this unconditional and unreserved bounty is even now scarcely appreciated. The sacrifice it entailed on the mother-country is hardly recognised at all. It is not only that the heritage of the whole race was made over absolutely to a few mere handfuls of its members, so that now a native of Great Britain has no more property in and no more rights in or concerning the territory of Victoria, for instance, than any Frenchman or German possesses, and may even be refused permission to

enter that territory if his pecuniary means fail to come up to a certain standard: that is not all. There was another and directly pecuniary sacrifice made when these lands were so lightly given away. The Empire of Great Britain has cost some eight hundred millions to build up. The National Debt was a mortgage upon the whole of the territories composing that empire. Yet these large and fertile lands, containing unknown reserves of wealth, were simply given away to a few favoured members of the race, freed from all responsibility for the mortgage debt that lay upon them, the whole burden of which remains on the shoulders of the people of the United Kingdom. Nine-tenths and more of the area of land charged with its repayment has been released, and the whole stands secured upon the remaining tenth.

After this it seems almost a small thing to come to—but it was no small thing—the second pecuniary gift that accompanied the concession of self-government to the colonies. The people of the United Kingdom further gave them the right of levying all taxes, both of customs and inland revenue, and applying the proceeds for their own exclusive benefit. And, negatively, they required from them no contribution of any kind whatever in respect of those imperial services, supported by the United Kingdom, of which the colonists enjoyed the advantages especially with themselves.

These imperial services consist of the naval and military, the diplomatic and consular, and the Colonial Office staff. The United Kingdom keeps up the Colonial Office for the purpose of maintaining what may be called the discipline of the Empire. For example, Newfoundland was recently allowed to negotiate the basis of a reciprocity treaty with the United States. Canada objects that its terms would be injurious to her. The Colonial Office has to adjust these conflicting interests; and we have lately read the kind of language the Newfoundlanders use towards that Office in consequence. It is by means of the first four named services that the foreign relations of the Empire, whether in peace or war, are conducted. These relations accordingly remain under the sole control of the government and people of the United Kingdom. When, therefore, we speak of the political independence of the Colonies, there is this very large deduction to be made: that, whereas they are self-governing and mutually independent in respect of their domestic affairs, in respect of their foreign relations they remain, constitutionally, in as completely a dependent position as any of the tropical possessions of the Crown: and herein will be found to lie the whole *crux* of the matter. When the Colonies were granted the right of self-government, the grant was partial only; they were not endowed with the imperial franchise, because they were not then in a position to undertake the corresponding imperial obligations and responsibilities. The imperial franchise still remains vested exclusively in the people of the United Kingdom, and upon them exclusively devolve all the responsibilities attaching to the defence of the Empire in time of war, and the maintenance, defence, and advancement of the rights and interests of individual British subjects, of the several countries in the Empire, and of the Empire as a whole in time of peace. There are other aspects in which the

imperial relationship may be viewed, but herein lies its fundamental difficulty.

We are now in a position to look into the situation more closely. What is the actual working of the present anomalous arrangement? To the Colonies it means that, while on the one hand they escape altogether the political difficulty, the labour and expense, the money-tax and the blood-tax, involved in responsibility for the maintenance and defence of the Empire in all its foreign relations, they find themselves, on the other hand, without any constitutional voice in foreign affairs—even when these nearly affect their own special interests—and are unable to carry out or procure the adoption by the mother-country of any foreign policy, however much they may desire it. Witness the annexation of New Guinea, attempted, on behalf of Australia, by the colony of Queensland, but vetoed by the Government of the United Kingdom, and the whole annexation policy of Australia in the South Pacific continually pressed upon the Home Government, and that government's steady refusal to carry it out. They find themselves at the same time exposed to the inconvenience and risks of wars entered upon by the Government of the United Kingdom—wars in which it is possible they may—some of them at any rate—have no direct interest, and in the making or ending of which they have no part or voice.

How does this affect the United Kingdom? In the first place the people of the United Kingdom have to bear the whole pecuniary expense of the four services concerned with foreign affairs (with the exception of some military contributions from India and the Crown Colonies), the advantages of which are shared by all parts of the Empire and every individual in it alike. And, more than that, they may be called upon to undertake a war, involving untold loss and misery and enormous expense to themselves on account of some single one of the Colonies. On whatever account the war, the whole Empire suffers in some way, or at least runs the risk of suffering, but in all cases the United Kingdom immeasurably the most of all. Colonists, referring to these risks, sometimes talk of Great Britain going to war in some cause that does not concern them. There might be a war in which not all the Colonies would have a direct interest, as, for instance, if we went to war with France on behalf of Newfoundland, or with America on behalf of Canadian interests in Bering Sea or elsewhere. Australasia and South Africa would have no direct interest there, but neither would the United Kingdom itself. Historically, the facts are all the other way. Britain's quarrels for the last three centuries, wherever the theatre of war may have been, and whatever the ostensible *casus belli*, have not been fought on grounds concerning Britain herself, but have been in one way or another Colonial wars; and Britain's only danger of war now lies, not at home, but in one corner or the other of the outlying Empire. A war with Russia, even, would not in the future any more than in the past arise from any danger threatening these islands, but from the danger that threatens our lines of communication and those of the Colonies, that threatens India, and, more remotely, Australasia in the South, and Canada in the North, Pacific.

The existing anomalous condition of the imperial relationship has

grown up, as we have seen, from the partial nature of the transition from the absolute dependence of the Colonies to the position they now enjoy. So long as they were in a completely dependent position, and the territories themselves remained the property of the people of Great Britain and Ireland, it was only right and natural that the mother-country should mainly undertake the work of imperial defence as well as the control also of local defences. When the Colonies obtained domestic self-government and the ownership of their own lands they were left to supply their own local defences, for which this country then ceased to be responsible, but were not then wealthy enough to undertake the expense, or politically advanced enough to be intrusted with the responsibility, of sharing in any imperial obligations, whether of defence or otherwise. But their growth has been, and continues to be, very rapid; and things have reached a stage now, when on both sides it is felt that the present loose and anomalous relationship is unsatisfactory, for different reasons, to both parties to it, and fraught with danger to the maintenance of imperial unity. The anomalous nature to-day of a state of things that was all very well even a generation ago becomes transparently plain when we compare the material condition of the Colonies then and now.

In a paper which I read in 1886 before the Royal United Service Institution upon "Imperial Federation: Naval and Military," some of the most striking comparisons were brought out between the material development of the Empire at the period of the great Exhibition of 1851, and at that of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886. These were illustrated by diagrams; and it is not a little significant that many items in the comparison, in which the Colonial portion bulks large in 1886, were in 1851 too small to admit of illustration on the scale adopted! The "Growth and Consolidation" of the Empire is, I understand, to form the subject of a special paper in this series; but, without trenching unduly on the province of that paper, it will be useful, in this preliminary exposition of the case for consideration, to notice some of the main outlines in the picture of the Empire drawn in the lecture referred to, and some further statements made by myself, in the House of Commons, in dealing only a month or two ago with the question of the growth of Colonial sea commerce and the need of naval defence.

In 1851 the trade of the Colonies (which throughout must be taken to mean British North America, Australasia, and South Africa, as distinguished from Dependencies, India, Ceylon, West Indies, &c.) amounted to 24 millions pounds sterling. In 1884-85 the same trade had risen to 176 millions. A similar comparison for the whole Empire between the two Exhibition years, 1851 and 1886, brings out the fact of the following astounding growth. In 1851 the total trade of the Empire, United Kingdom, Colonies, and Dependencies, added together, amounted to not quite 400 millions (£399,765,796), of which that of the United Kingdom counted for 324 millions, odd. In 1886 the total stood at 1079 millions odd, of which the United Kingdom supplied 644 millions, the Dependencies 258 millions, and the Colonies the balance of 176 millions.

Between the same periods, 1851 and 1886, the growth in shipping

annually entered and cleared at British ports was equally remarkable. At the former date the movements of shipping in the Colonies, being less than 5 million tons, could not be illustrated in the diagrams on the scale necessarily adopted to bring the measurements for the whole Empire within manageable limits. It was then only 4 millions and three-quarters tons, while in 1884-85 it had risen to 26 millions and a half. The totals of such movements of shipping for the Empire, for 1851, gave a little over 25 millions and a quarter tons (25,283,241), of which the United Kingdom had 14 millions and a half. In 1886 the total stood at 141 million tons. And here, it is to be noticed, the proportions have to be reversed. The share of the United Kingdom is 64 millions against 77 millions provided by the Dependencies (51 millions) and the Colonies (16 millions).

The bearing of these figures on the question of Imperial Defence, which means primarily the defence of sea-borne commerce, is, of course, obvious; and, in the same paper, two other comparisons were made, giving direct point to this connection. One of these compared, on the one side, the trade of the five principal countries (exclusive of the United States) having sea-boards on the Pacific Ocean, and, on the other, their effective naval power. The countries were Peru, Japan, Chili, China, and Australasia, in the order of an ascending scale of their commerce. The trade of Peru and Japan was comparatively insignificant; that of Chili about a quarter, and of China less than half, of Australasia. On the other side, we find that Peru's navy had recently been destroyed in the war with Chili; Japan at that date maintained 7 sea-going modern cruisers, Chili 8, and China 7, irrespective in all cases of ships of other classes. What do we find against Australasia, whose trade exceeds that of all the others put together? The entry at the time was, "Australasia maintains no ocean cruisers."

The other table compared the Colonies (in the same sense as here throughout) with the United States of America—a country inhabited by an equally industrial and peace-loving population. The area of the Colonies is a little over 7 millions square miles; that of the United States a little over 3 millions. The Colonial trade was 176 millions, against 293 millions for the United States; the revenue 37 millions and a half, against 72 millions and a half. But the "Expenditure on War Forces" by the States was 11 millions and three-quarters, while that of the Colonies was "incapable of being shown on the diagram," being but little more than the odd three-quarters of a million (£802,559).

On the motion for going into Committee of Supply on the Navy Estimates in March last, I raised a debate by "calling attention" to the growth of colonial maritime commerce, and the increase of British naval responsibilities caused thereby. I pointed out that our Home population was now dependent on maritime trade for food, and, I might have added, for the means of buying it to be gained by working up the raw materials, the supply of which also depends on the safety of our ocean-trade. Formerly, danger to our commerce was virtually confined to European waters and the North-West Atlantic. The area of danger now includes every sea in the world. At the close of our great European war (1815), the commerce to be protected was that of the United Kingdom

alone. At that time, though we had already asserted the supremacy of the seas, and had only the germs of an outlying empire to defend, the naval estimates were £22,000,000. For the present year the estimate is only something over £14,000,000; and we have to protect an immense empire, having a vastly extended area and an enormously increased sea-trade.

The increase over, roughly, fifty years—from the commencement of Her Majesty's reign—is shown by the following figures. In 1837 the annual revenue of the United Kingdom was 55 millions, and the annual sea-commerce was valued at 155 millions. At the present day the revenue is 89 millions, and the sea-commerce 744 millions. But a much larger proportionate growth of sea-commerce is shown on the side of the outlying portions of the Empire. The aggregate revenue of these was, at the beginning of the reign, 23 millions, against 105 millions now; while the sea-trade, then under 55 millions, has now risen to 460 millions. During this period, therefore, the revenue of the United Kingdom has increased only by about one-half, and the sea-trade has increased five times, while the revenue of the rest of the Empire has increased nearly five times, and its sea-trade about nine times. Of 194 millions of revenue raised last year throughout the Empire, 105 millions were raised in the outlying parts, and that portion constantly increases, whilst that of the United Kingdom remains about stationary.

Here, then, we have a very pregnant comparison indeed. But there is more behind. The commerce of the outlying portions of the Empire is capable of division into two classes—that carried on with the United Kingdom, in which, therefore, the United Kingdom is equally interested, and that carried on independently. The former is put down at 187 millions, the latter at 273 millions a year. It is accordingly not only the trade of the rest of the Empire rather than that of the United Kingdom which has so greatly increased the bulk of the commerce requiring naval protection, but it is in chief part their independent trade in which the United Kingdom has no direct interest whatever. This independent sea-borne trade of the outlying portions of the Empire is four times that of Russia, two and a half times that of Italy, about half that of the United States, nearly equal to that of Germany, and about three-quarters that of France; and it is increasing every year at such a rate as to be fast overtaking the sea-borne commerce of the United Kingdom itself.

And how is the naval protection of this commerce—the commerce of the whole British Empire, of which so large a proportion is of this character so brought out—how is its protection provided and paid for? Let it be borne in mind that the commerce of the United Kingdom requiring protection is valued at 744 millions; that of the rest of the Empire 460 millions, of which 273 millions have no connection with the United Kingdom at all. Well, the United Kingdom finds 14 millions and a quarter of the cost, the rest of the Empire 381 *thousands*. Of this not very magnificent total India alone finds 254 thousands (two-thirds of which, however, is for troopships and harbours, not for sea-going vessels protecting trade), and the balance, except some few hundreds, consists of the £126,000 to be contributed from Australasia towards the cost of the local squadron to cruise in her own waters exclusively. *Out of every*

pound spent during the current year for the naval protection of the Empire the outlying portions will spend about $6\frac{1}{4}d.$*, and the United Kingdom the balance of* 19*s.* $5\frac{3}{4}d.$

Enough of these comparisons, taken from the sources already indicated, have been given to demonstrate very clearly two or three propositions. First, the provision made for imperial defence is very far indeed from keeping pace with imperial property requiring defence. Second, the growth of commerce, which causes the increase of property to be defended, is much more rapid in the outlying Empire than in the United Kingdom; and of that growing commerce outside the United Kingdom the major part is independent, and has no direct interest whatever for the United Kingdom. Third, the United Kingdom bears practically the entire burden of the defence of the commerce of the whole Empire, to which India contributes an insignificant quota, and the self-governing colonies simply nothing at all—for the other small quota from Australia figuring in the estimates is devoted to local, not imperial, defence, and is demonstrably no relief whatever to the expenditure of the United Kingdom, which was increased *pari passu* with that contribution.

If we turn for a moment from the navy to the army, we find that towards the expense of this arm of defence the self-governing colonies contribute nothing at all, while the dependencies do. Looking at the diplomatic service we see at this moment the whole burden of Canada's dispute with the United States being borne by the British Foreign Office and its diplomatic agents while the Canadian government merely look on and criticise, and they and the whole people of Canada are able to devote themselves to fighting a general election in which this grave question plays no part whatever. We see also, at this very moment, the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office engaged in most difficult negotiations with France on behalf of Newfoundland in her dispute with that Power, while, again, the government and people of Newfoundland not only lend no help—not only even stand by and criticise—but, in addition to criticising, refuse to move a finger to help their champion. Apart from the diplomatic service proper there is the Consular establishment of Great Britain in every country on the face of the globe, by means of which every business man in the colonies is being assisted either directly or indirectly year in and year out. In short, every individual colonist gets the full advantage of being a citizen of one of the oldest, richest, and most powerful States in the world without either directly or indirectly paying one penny-piece for the privilege.

Such a condition of affairs has not in it the elements of permanency. It is possible, on the one hand, that when the true state of the case comes to be widely known and appreciated in the United Kingdom, the taxpayers may become restive under such an apparently one-sided bargain. On the other hand, the Colonies, though well enough satisfied at present with an arrangement that relieves them of expense and responsibility, may not always be content, even at a saving to their pockets, to have their foreign relations managed for them as they now are. Moreover, there is room for very grave doubt whether the protection of the mother-country would prove, in the actual event of war, as effective as is assumed.

In addition to the probability of the fleet proving inadequate to the large responsibilities to be faced, it is pretty certain that, in the event of the food-supplies of the United Kingdom being seriously threatened, the British tax-payer would insist on the whole strength of his navy being concentrated for their protection. At present, however, the colonists do not seem to concern themselves about this.

There are two directions in which men's thoughts are moving in the Colonies in connection with this question. Among some there is a tendency to consider the complications and risk of being dragged into war entailed by the Imperial connection too high a price to pay for the gratuitous support and protection afforded by the mother-country. Another and more high-spirited feeling is also working against the continuance of the existing relations. Men in the Colonies, who have minds above greed alone, and can speak their minds without having the fear of ignorant constituents before their eyes, feel the irksomeness and humiliation of their present position. They cannot tolerate that their otherwise free countries should continue, *vis-à-vis* of the outside world, to be in the position of mere dependants, living under the protection of a wealthy patron. Such men desire accordingly either to come forward and take up the full citizenship of the Empire, or to sever the connection altogether, and stand boldly before the world in their own right and by their own strength. Many men, and not a few of considerable political eminence, have spoken openly of separation, as we all know—unless, as perhaps we ought, we except Lord Carrington, whose high office in New South Wales appears to have prevented his knowing what was notorious to every one else, and was openly canvassed in the press and in Parliament. Now, however much the idea of separation is to be deprecated by patriotic Britons in all parts of the world, it has to be remembered that the time is past for disputing the right of the great groups to sever their political connection with the mother-country, if in their wisdom, or unwisdom, they should definitely and solemnly elect to do so. The whole case to the contrary was given away when the Colonies were granted responsible government, and with it the absolute ownership of their land, freed from its share in the public debt, and the complete control of their finances and tariffs without any reservation of any sort or kind calculated to maintain the political union inviolate. In fact, the policy which found public expression in the speeches of the apostles of the old Manchester School determined the policy of British government in those days. The Colonies were repeatedly told they were free to go, not without a hint that the sooner they availed themselves of that freedom the better. Responsible government was conceded as a stepping-stone to independence, which was officially regarded as their natural destiny.

Now, however, a large numerical majority of the people on both sides the sea, and almost all the leaders of opinion and far-seeing and responsible members of the community throughout the Empire, recognise that separation would be a mistake. But there is, in consequence of the fatal errors of policy committed by a former generation of British statesmen and publicists, an alarming amount of leeway to be made up.

The question of the maintenance of the imperial connection anywhere is an open one; and it is this uncertainty as to the future that paralyses community of action. If it be practically an open question whether or not the Colonies will one by one cut themselves adrift as and whenever it suits their individual convenience to do so, it is the height of folly for the United Kingdom to continue to do everything for them, and treat them in all respects in a manner only reasonably compatible with a sense of their permanent union with itself. On the other hand, the Colonies naturally desire to prolong the present happy state of things; while in some cases, perhaps, they would in any circumstance hesitate to take an irretrievable step in the direction of a closer union on a permanent footing, not having quite made up their minds what they would best like to do ultimately, when the present halcyon days come to an end for them.

Until the question is fairly faced—as it will have to be faced before very long—no great progress can be made. It behoves both sides, therefore, to consider what the effect of separation would be. Without going over the whole ground, it is easy to show upon the one case of naval and military defence that the interests of both the mother-country and the Colonies alike are bound up in the maintenance of political unity. Both alike are equally interested in keeping open and protecting from interference the great trade-routes of the world in time of war as well as in peace. As it has been well put, "Above all questions of free trade or of fair trade is the paramount question of safe trade."

To the United Kingdom the safety of its food-supplies and the routes for what is a necessity second only to the supply of food—the supply of the raw materials that support its mills—is of absolutely vital moment; and it is the possession of naval bases in every sea that largely contributes to this safety. If Australia, for example, were independent, and an alien though friendly nation, her ports, dockyards, and coaling-stations would be open to the ships of Her Majesty's navy when engaged in war, only on precisely the same terms as to those of the enemy. While, if Australia were at war with another Power, France, for instance—Britain being neutral—this country would be powerless, while maintaining her neutrality, to prevent the blockade of Australian ports, whereby our supplies of wool would be cut off from that quarter. The case, in fact, might reproduce the results that followed in our centres of industry from the blockade of the cotton ports in the American civil war.

Again, if for Australia we put Canada, the same results would follow, with the difference that for "wool" we must now read "food." Canada is more and more becoming, and likely to become, the granary of the United Kingdom, so that our food-supplies from that source increase in importance every year. Or, to complete the circle, let us suppose South Africa independent. We are at war, and South Africa is neutral. Result: our enemy's fleet can do that which it cannot do now—coal at the Cape, and steam on to the attack of India or Australia.

To the Colonies, the first and most palpable result of separation would be felt on the financial side. They depend for their development on the public and private loans obtained in such abundance from England; and the golden stream, if it did not dry up, would promptly cease

to flow so smoothly, on such easy terms, to countries no longer under the British flag. "Cheap money" is to these young communities as the breath of their nostrils. They are deeply anxious now to obtain the right of having their public stocks placed on the list of investments sanctioned for trust funds, in order to raise the price of their stocks, and so enable them to obtain money still more cheaply. Obviously, the effect of separation would be to lower these stocks and their credit, public and private, very materially; and this is a contingency their politicians and public men have no desire to face.

Just at the time when facilities for borrowing were thus seriously checked, they would at once have to set to work and undertake expenses beyond any they have ever dreamt of to provide for their security against foreign aggression. They would have to set up a complete naval equipment—ships, guns, dockyards, arsenals, an Admiralty Department, and a force of officers and seamen; some would have to materially increase their military forces, horse, foot, and artillery; and they would have to set up a Foreign Office, with a staff of diplomatic representatives and Consular officers in all the civilised and half-civilised countries with which they have any dealings, political or commercial.

Much of this seems scarcely to have suggested itself to the run of politicians and writers in the Colonies. They have thought something of the question of defending these shores from foreign enemies, but have for the most part altogether failed to get a real grasp of what that means. They think that, as they already provide for the land-defence of their own coasts, the only addition they would have to make would be at most the establishment of a naval squadron of their own for their own waters, to replace the ships of the Imperial navy now stationed there. This is a very superficial view indeed. The cardinal fact of imperial defence is that the safety of each part depends upon the aggregate strength of the whole force of the Empire. It is not alone the few ships on the Australian station (to keep to the same country for illustration) that render Australia safe from attack. It is also the ships in European waters, in North Pacific waters, and elsewhere throughout the world, that, by closing up the hostile ports of issue at the commencement of a war would prevent the despatch of an expedition in force too great to be resisted by the squadron of local defence. Moreover, it is not the fear of that squadron or of Australia's land-defences that would make a foreign Power hesitate on occasion to attack her, but the knowledge that the whole power of the British Empire is behind her.

The effect of this is found in peace as well as in war. Suppose Australia independent, and having her representatives in the capitals of Europe, with what sort of voice could they speak? What force lying behind them would give a sanction to their remonstrances or their threats? For passive defence, but little; for effective action in the offensive operations of defence, none at all. No; it is the power to back a word with a blow that gives effectiveness to words; or, where the case does not go to such lengths, it is the authority and prestige of a great, powerful, and historic nation, having a place among the Powers of the world, that cause the voice of its ambassadors to be listened to with respect, and

their words to carry weight and influence. Of all this, in peace and war, the colonies have now the incalculable advantage, though they scarcely recognise it. They would find out the difference all too soon and too surely if they threw away their birthright, and found themselves ranking in the world with the groups of republics in South America.

And if the power of the United Kingdom, strengthened at present only by the vague and shadowy reserve of unapplied force, afforded by her outlying colonies and dependencies, is so great as it is now, what would not the might of the Empire become if all its scattered resources were welded into one homogeneous whole? Under a complete federation for defence with an imperial navy, and each part doing its share of land-defence and co-operating with the navy, in pursuance of an ordered and uniform system, the effective power of the Empire for defence would be multiplied in a ratio out of all proportion to the mere sum of the forces of its several parts. It would be able to defy attack, and would form a League of Peace capable of enforcing its will—so long as its will meant peace—upon the world.

But, though federation as regards matters of actual relations, and especially for defence, is at once the most important and the most pressing part of the Federal problem, it is not quite the whole of it. There are other lines along which the movement might travel, many matters calling for joint action, all helping towards the attainment of national unity. The exigencies of space forbid more than a bare mention of these elements of unity, but their mere mention will be sufficiently suggestive. Under the head of "Communications" much could be written. Some steps have been taken by the governments of the United Kingdom and of both the Colonies and Dependencies towards common action in Postal matters, that may lead, it is hoped, to far more uniformity than at present exists in this respect. Here, and, in another branch of communications, Telegraphs, the goal to be aimed at is the recognition of the Empire as a solid unit. Every step in this direction is a step towards political federation which must make itself useful in other branches of administration as well.

Law is a thorny subject; but it is one in which an enormous amount of advantage would be gained by more concerted action between the various parts of the Empire. The principle of this is already recognised by the passage of statutes having the effect of extending the legal processes of each part of the Empire to other parts, and generally providing for the recognition throughout the Empire of legal rights and obligations in whatever part of it originating. The discussions of the Imperial Conference of 1887, and of the conferences held among themselves by the Colonies of the Australasian group, show how great need exists for concerted action in this direction; and few things would exercise a more practically binding effect than the extended recognition of the unity of the Empire by further advances along this line. Business men as well as lawyers will see at once the work that has to be done here in bankruptcy and commercial law, and the execution of process in these branches and in criminal cases, copyright, trade-marks, etc.

The status of the Home and Colonial Civil Services and of the

learned professions and others, and the reciprocal recognition throughout the Empire of these ranks and diplomas, would also lend themselves to similar treatment. Emigration and colonisation are now subjects of great difficulty. The replies sent in by the Colonial Governments to the questions submitted to them, the report of the Colonisation Committee, which has just been issued, and the evidence of Agents-General and other witnesses, all show that, as things stand, the attitude of the colonies renders impossible any attempt by the Home Government to plant our surplus population on the vast tracts of land lying unoccupied in the Colonies.

The question of tariffs attracts much attention just at present; and some persons see in it the means by which Britannic Confederation can best be achieved. It is one of the subjects to be specially treated in a separate paper. It will be sufficient here to point out that, however desirable it may be to promote the intercourse of trade within the Empire, there are at present formidable obstacles in the way of attempts to do this, whichever direction such attempts take. If it be sought to establish an Imperial *Zollverein* with free trade within the Empire, there is the obstacle of the colonial tariffs, which are almost universally protective; and the colonists show no disposition to relax these tariffs, which, apart from protecting their young industries against the competition of the cheaper production of the mother-country, are by all of them presently regarded as necessarily the chief source of revenue in countries too young in the accumulation of wealth to stand heavy direct taxation. If, on the other hand, it be proposed to keep up in the Colonies a tariff-wall against the goods of the United Kingdom, only raising it somewhat higher against outsiders, this, on the one side, would not benefit the United Kingdom, while, on the other hand, it would involve the imposition of import duties against foreign countries by the United Kingdom; and these, to be of any use by way of giving a preference to the Colonies, must be on their chief productions, food-stuffs, and the raw material of manufactures, to increase the cost of which is a course that does not at present, in the absence of any substantial countervailing advantage, commend itself to the people of this country. Community of trade interests would undoubtedly be most valuable in cementing the bonds of national unity. But there are lines of less resistance along which the movement to that end can just now more safely proceed.

Before concluding this, perhaps, too lengthy paper, it seems fitting to make some reference to the work of the Imperial Federation League, to which is due in so large a measure the position which the colonial question now occupies in the politics of the day, and the great change that has come over the public mind upon the future of the imperial relationship within the past few years. Formed in 1884, at a Conference held in London, and presided over by the Right Hon. W. E. Forster, this League has now assumed almost the proportions of a national, or—though the two words ought really to mean the same thing when applied as they are here—imperial, organisation. The Conference laid down in its resolutions three fundamental propositions, which are as follows:—(1) That, in order to secure the permanent unity of the Empire some form of Federation is

essential; (2) that no scheme of Federation should interfere with the existing rights of local parliaments as regards local affairs; and (3) that any scheme of Imperial Federation should combine on an equitable basis the resources of the Empire for the maintenance of common interests, and adequately provide for an organised defence of common rights. These are broad and statesmanlike propositions, and they have withstood the fire of criticism—and the League has been subject to a pretty constant, if not always very heavy fire—during the seven years that have passed since they were adopted as the constitution and charter of the League.

The principal aim of the League hitherto has been to diffuse information and form public opinion on the subject of the colonial question both at home and in the Colonies. The measure of its attainment of these ends may be gauged by any one who will merely glance over files of newspapers and reviews for 1883 and 1884, and then for 1889–1890. To the action of the League, moreover, was directly due the convocation of the Imperial Conference of 1887, which, besides making a small beginning on the principle of common action in naval defence, though not quite on federal lines, was the means of showing how much required to be done in the way of common action, and how it might be done by discussions and action by Federal Councils at conferences.

In conclusion, it may, perhaps, be well to say that in this paper Federation for Defence has been given so outstanding a prominence for two reasons. First, it would have deserved and required such prominence in any case, because, in the opinion of the writer, it constitutes eight-tenths of the whole question of Federation. Secondly, it seemed to call for such treatment, especially in this introductory paper, because, though other branches of the subject are set down for separate treatment, no specific mention of "Defence" is made at all in the syllabus of papers to follow this one, and it would therefore have to be treated, it is presumed, under the general head of "Political." This seemed a sufficient reason for dwelling at length upon it here even to the partial exclusion of other topics.

In closing this article I must express my indebtedness to Mr. Robert Beadon—a member of the Executive Committee of the Imperial Federation League—without whose aid it could not, owing to other demands upon my attention, have been prepared in time for publication.