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Imperial Federation

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Wednesday, June 30, 1886.

THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF CARNARVON, some time Secretary of State for the Colonies, and Chairman of the Royal Commission on Defence of Ports and Coaling Stations abroad, in the Chair.

IMPERIAL FEDERATION.

What we,—the advocates of Imperial Federation,—aim at is the closer Political Union of all the Dominions of the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland.

By Colonel Sir CHARLES H. NUGENT, K.C.B., late R.E.

RUSKIN opens his work on the "Stones of Venice," by setting up for comparison three States, which have risen to eminence above all others by the dominion asserted by their children over the ocean, Tyre, Venice, England, and, says he, of Tyre, only the memory remains,—of Venice, only the ruin,—of England, which inherits (?) their greatness, that if it forget their example, it may be led through prouder eminence to less pitied destruction. Suggestive of serious reflection as this passage must ever be to English readers, it is most suggestive, to me at least, when in his farther description of the State of Venice, I reach that paragraph which describes how an agitated democracy developed into an elective monarchy, gradually limited and shortened of its prerogatives, while increasing in spectral and incapable magnificence, until in the final government of the nobles under the *image* of a king, Venice reaped the fruit of her former energies, consumed them, and expired.

To some memories will no doubt recur the words in which a poet of this century, standing by her still and death-like waters, depicts her past glories, while describing the present condition of Venice:—

True her high spirit is at rest,
And all her days of glory gone,
When the world's waters, east and west,
Beneath her white-winged commerce shone,
When with her numerous barks she went
To meet the Orient Empire's might,
And her Giustinianis sent
Their hundred heroes to the fight.

And the scathing denunciation with which he leaves her:—

Mourn not for Venice, though her fall
Be awful, as if Ocean's wave
Swept o'er her; she deserved it all,
And Justice triumphs o'er her grave.
Thus perish every king and state
Which runs the guilty race she ran!
Strong but in ill, and only great
In outrage against God and man.

MOORE (*from memory*).

Amidst the enthusiasm, chivalry, or fanaticism of the other States of Europe, Venice was roused to action only by the touch of a secret spring, that spring was her commercial interest, the one motive of all her important political acts or enduring national animosities; she calculated the glory of her conquests by their value, and estimated their justice by their facility.

To the thinking mind which endeavours to forecast the course of the future by the teachings of the past, there is something eminently suggestive in this description, and I find myself constantly asking myself the questions, *Are we such as Venice was?* Shall we, too, end like Venice?

Time would not avail me to show how much of the resemblance between England and Venice is seeming and superficial; how much, how *very much*, is due to the masterly touches which the great word-painter, in his absorbing devotion to his art, puts in to give form to the whole, and to complete his picture in accordance with his own ideal.

There is, however, one most weighty consideration to which Ruskin does not—at any rate does not seem to—assign its due share in the rise and fall of Venice, and its due share in the present position of England, and that is, in each case, the *genius of the nation*. We may be unable to say to what the differences of national genius may be due, but we can at least say that they are in part due to physical influences, such as situation, climate, and soil (Cunningham, “Policies and Economics,” p. 135). And herein I find much ground for satisfactory reflection; in these three most essential conditions Nature has so highly favoured England.

No doubt it may be said that the tendency of national genius has been in the case of each to the acquisition of national wealth; but the question what is national wealth will receive a very different answer at different times, and in different countries. We need not stop to inquire what was the Venetian conception of national wealth, but this much we may assert, that it was very different from the present English conception of national wealth, the function of which may be stated as the maintenance of life, the maintenance of as noble a life as may be, and for this a most important requisite is a vigorous and skilful population. Industry is the true source of wealth;—our Colonial Empire, as well as experience within our own land, confirms the truth that a vigorous and industrious population is the true source of wealth. You will find, if you pursue this subject, that health, skill, and moral character are necessary elements if the national life is to be sustained and *prolonged*; it was in this necessity for *prolongation* that Venice fell short; she did not comprehend that national wealth consists of all physical objects, which have not only to sustain, but to *prolong* the national life.

It is the pursuit of this national wealth which has raised this country to the pinnacle of eminence upon which she stands; it is the energy and industry of her sons which have enabled her to outstrip all rivals, and in doing so have placed the carrying trade of the world in her hands. This is a wonderful position, but in the achievement of this position the whole condition of things in England has changed;

the population has increased enormously, but the land no longer supports this population to the extent it did; the average mode of living has risen to a higher standard, and the average cost of living has risen with it, and it has come to pass that many of the necessities of life can be raised at a far less cost in other and far distant countries, where labour is perhaps not half the price it is here: can not only be raised, but be raised and carried to this country, and here sold at prices with which the English agriculturalist finds himself in many cases unable to compete.

You can form some idea of this when I tell you that the British imports exceed the exports by 187,092,106*l.*:—

United Kingdom.

Imports.....	£426,891,579
Exports.....	239,799,473
	<hr/>
	£666,691,052

and that upwards of 100 millions of the imports are for foodstuffs, meat, animals, grain, flour, and vegetables. Now in this respect our position in Europe is, and not in Europe only but in the world, almost unique. With the exception of France and Italy, all the other great nations of Europe are self-supporting; and in France the imports are to the exports as 231 millions to 182 millions:—

	Imports. Millions.		Exports. Millions.
Germany	164	to	166
Russia	130		129
Italy	52		47
Austria.....	29		34
Spain	33		34
United States.....	115		148

But we depend upon foreign countries for more than half our food supply; thus we import 1 lb. of wheat or flour daily, and $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of meat daily,—per head of the population,—to say nothing of tea, wine, and spirits.

Competent authorities estimate that by 1891 the population of these islands will have risen to 40,000,000, an increase in the intervening five years of 3,600,000; then still less will the land support the population, and the imports of food, which now amount to 2*l.* 15*s.* per head, will probably be not less than 4*l.* per head. 2*l.* 15*s.* appears to be an abnormally low figure; the year preceding it was 3*l.* 9*s.* per head.

In the changed conditions of labour, owing to which the agricultural population is being gradually withdrawn from the land to overpeople the manufacturing cities, the health of a large section of the nation suffers prejudice: it is true that the tables of mortality show progressive increase in the duration of life, but this increase cannot

be the rule for a large section of the manufacturing class. In skill we have improved, I believe, upon our predecessors. In moral character—well, it is difficult to speak with certainty respecting this element of the national life. In reflecting upon it, it occurs to me sometimes that we are no worse than our predecessors, but certainly it never occurs to me that we are better. Nevertheless, I believe that the bulk of the nation, especially in the middle and lower classes, is sound at heart.

Yet in spite of this, the present state of things in this country is very unsatisfactory,—indeed the present is a serious crisis in the national life. Trade is depressed, capital is idle, production, overstimulated here and in other countries also, is restricted, distribution is contracted, and a great number of men are without employment; the whole world seems to be suffering from want of markets. Some advanced thinkers have arrived at the conclusion that this will recur periodically,—that, with the facilities for intercommunication, by which the wants of one people are brought within reach (to the very doors) of another, the competition will be so keen, that the tendency of supply will be to exceed the demand, and that the markets of the world will be always swelling up to the point of repletion.

If the state of things be so with us now,—what will it be five years hence when four millions are added to the population? What will it be when we are engaged in an European war?

I have already told you that we depend upon foreign countries for half our supply of food, but if this supply were suddenly cut off, what would become of us? And it might be cut off,—the operation would not be very difficult,—for this supply of food comes from long distances—from America, from India, from Russia, from Australia—and passes within striking distance of countries envious if not unfriendly, and which may at any moment become hostile.

But in considering this matter of striking distances our view should not be restricted to Europe; Russia is an Asiatic as well as an European Power,—indeed it is as an Asiatic Power that she should be a source of anxiety to us,—as I have pointed out on previous occasions here, the Naval and Military Establishments which she has formed and is perfecting in the Pacific, seem scarcely called for by the circumstances of her Empire in that Ocean, and are well placed for offensive operations against Australia, England, and the seaboard of our Indian Possessions.

Conversely, how infinitely stronger becomes our position in India, with a wealthy, contented, and United England in Australia.

Nor is it to Russia only that we should look in Asia. China, with its enormous population and its distinctive civilization, which, while it parts its children from amalgamation with Western races, does not preclude the assimilation of Western ideas, and the adoption of Western military methods, must be a cause of anxiety to our kinsfolk in Australia,—even when China is confined within the limits of her own territories,—and must be still more so when her children flow over the islands and shores of the Pacific.

Japan, too, though smaller, manifests similar tendencies, but to a

higher degree, and must claim attention. These two nations, even if not formidable in themselves, may readily become so under European leaders, and many of our difficulties in the East have been due to Native Troops led by Europeans. The Chinese under a second Gordon would be formidable adversaries.

The lessons of the past will have been in vain for us if we lose sight of the part played by France in the War of Independence. France, while at peace with England, assisted America for two years, and indeed virtually fought the War of Independence. The France of that day is the France of to-day, and will remain so,—as long as France is France and England is England. So also Holland, while at peace with England, was actively assisting the Americans for two years before England declared war with her.

Defence is in reality the Prime Factor in all Federations. I am aware that this matter of Defence is sometimes deliberately put aside, under the apprehension that the cost involved in it may frighten the lukewarm into opposition, but I venture to think that this apprehension is misplaced, and that our kinsfolk beyond the sea are more able individually, and quite as willing as we are, to take their share of the cost.

In previous papers read before this Institution, I have shown that the measures necessary for safeguarding our commerce, and of course in it our food supplies, are neither very difficult nor inordinately costly. Captain Colomb has fully placed the military aspects of Imperial Federation before this Institution, in his paper read here on the 30th ultimo, and I will content myself by merely indicating what measures are necessary. Stated in the most general terms they are: thoroughly defended ports and arsenals at home; thoroughly defended ports and naval arsenals at carefully chosen places abroad; intermediate refitting stations, nearly all of which are already in our hands, also thoroughly defended; efficient and strong patrols maintained on the well-defined passing places, where the Ocean Trade Routes converge, and which are not many in either hemisphere.

One thing is certain, that if this food supply were cut off, we could not revert to old economic conditions; we could not fall back upon agriculture, the land in this country will never again support the people. Possibly, though I am unable to see in what direction the possibility lies, an altered economic condition may develop itself to meet the altered circumstances of the case.

If this food supply were cut off, we should drag on, well, perhaps for six weeks! and then if we fought our way through, as I cannot doubt we should, we should have lost perhaps for ever a large portion of our carrying trade, which is literally the bread of our national life.

People do not sufficiently realize the vital importance to us of this carrying trade, indeed, they cannot do so unless their attention is directed to it; the total reaches the vast sum of upwards of 1,000 millions per annum, and the profits which the country realizes upon this must be very large;—it finds employment for 220,000 sailors, not all British sailors to be sure; a cessation of trade then would,

amongst other evils, mean 200,000 men lying idle and demanding food. Ships representing 71,000,000*l.* capital out of employ, and at least 70,000,000*l.* trading capital unable to earn income, the result would be fearful to contemplate, and I cannot doubt, to use a historic phrase, that we should be within measurable distance of revolution, and perhaps of anarchy.¹

Some will no doubt say that this danger is not great, and at any rate may be easily exaggerated; it is not my wish to exaggerate; no good is got by exaggeration. If we have avoided the danger hitherto it is rather because we are strong, wealthy, and resolute, but strength is after all a question of numbers, and England, more densely populated than the great European nations, is less capable of expansion than they are. Yet even as it is have we no rivals? We hold our place by great exertion, and look what efforts Germany is making with her already larger population of 45 millions, to gain a share in the carrying trade of the world,²—the vast sums she has spent or is spending on her two fortified ports of Kiel and Wilhelmshafen,—the money she contemplates spending on the ship-canal across the neck of the Jutland Peninsula, by which the Baltic will be united to the North Sea; her measures, which do not always commend themselves to our ideas, for planting Colonies: her policy of State subsidies to all the large lines of steamers which trade to these Colonies,—all point to a steadfast pursuit of, if not the Empire of the Ocean, at least a share in the commerce moving over the waters, and recollect these Germans are good colonists, possessed of many admirable qualities, thrifty, manly, and persevering; already considerable success has attended their efforts in Europe, and English goods are in many places being thrust out by German goods.

"Von Hubner says the Germans prosper here (Fiji) as in all other parts of the globe wherever they settle. Their activity, their intelligence, their spirit of economy and their sobriety are warmly praised. They are strangers alike to luxury and any form of extravagance."—(*Brit. Emp.*, vol. ii, p. 294.)

Travelling last autumn in Denmark, I was much impressed by the observations of a Dane with whom I fell into company; he remarked to me how their country was being flooded by inferior German cloths. He said that his countrymen were very constant in the use of broad cloths, and of the same description of cloth, that they had been in the habit for generations of getting such from England, but that the Germans had pushed in of late, and by dint of perpetual touting were securing the market, though, added he, if the English took the same pains, the Danes would not look at German cloths; but the English were too proud to tout for small orders, and so "they are losing our trade because they do not think it worth pushing for; the

¹ 150,000,000*l.* idle, represent a loss of say 10,000,000*l.* of income, and cost of feeding 200,000 idlers 5,000,000*l.* more, a total annual loss of 15,000,000*l.*

² Between 1874 and 1883 the exports from Germany to the United Kingdom rose from 20,000,000*l.* to 28,000,000*l.*, while the imports to Germany from the United Kingdom fell from 24,750,000*l.* to 18,750,000*l.*: that is, in the nine years Germany gave us 8,000,000*l.* more, and took from us 6,000,000*l.* less.

fact is the German will strive for a penny in a way an Englishman will not for a shilling"—I don't think the Englishman is the wiser.

This matter of numbers being of such importance, no Englishman can notice without concern the tendency of peoples to empire themselves in great nationalities,¹ this process of the absorption of the smaller by the greater has been going on steadily throughout the past century. Cast a handful of globules of quicksilver upon a smooth dish, agitate the dish slowly and you will see the smaller globules uniting to form larger,—the smaller globules still left falling into the nearer larger,—until, as the movement proceeds, only one mass remains. This is the process going on throughout Europe, the larger communities are steadily absorbing the smaller; look what has happened in Poland, in Finland, in the smaller States of Germany, in Savoy, in Schleswig-Holstein, in Alsace and Lorraine, and in Montenegro. Consider what may happen in the case of Holland, of Belgium, of Denmark, of Portugal: it does not need a far-seeing eye to forecast the period when the Continent of Europe shall be apportioned between Slavonic, Teutonic, Latin, and Greek nations.

When this happens, what shall be our position? The population of these islands will be insignificant in numbers beside the magnitudes of these nations. If our Empire be then limited to these four seas, we shall be indeed insignificant, the Holland of that day with our carrying trade departed, leading the existence of sufferance only. Is such an existence worth leading? Every man must answer this as his feeling prompts, but for myself I have no hesitation in saying, better that this country should be whelmed beneath the ocean than that that day should dawn upon it.

How are we to avoid such a future? And again the question I put to myself at starting rises within me: How are we to avoid the fate of Venice? My answer is, *by Federation*, for it seems to me—and the more I reflect upon it the more certain it seems to me—that our future rests upon the consolidation of a Greater Britain, by cementing into Federal union with us our Provinces beyond the seas.

The population of these Provinces already exceeds 10 millions of Englishmen. In these Provinces, which are of enormous area, is unlimited room for expansion, and by the time the population of the United Kingdom reaches the total of 50 millions, the population of these Provinces will be as many more,—in about fifty years according to Seeley.

¹ *Standing Armies.*

	Peace.	War.
Great Britain	239,000 ^a	559,000
France	524,497	2,500,000
Germany	445,392	1,535,400 ^b
Russia	550,538	1,010,601 ^c
Italy	750,765	1,021,954
Austria	272,400	1,039,556

^a, includes 44,000 Reserve.

^b, without Landsturm, and 14 cadres, 11,000,000 additional!

^c, without Territorial Army and Reserve, 1,876,353 additional.

People do not sufficiently realize this capacity for expansion, it is one of the most marked features of these new worlds. Forty years ago my service carried me to North America; at that time the feeling of the Americans (I should say here that the inhabitants of the United States admit no others to be Americans) was distinctly unfriendly to us; rebellions in Canada in which American sympathizers had taken active part had not long been suppressed, and the question uppermost in men's mind was: would the States some day annex Canada? I confess that I was constantly filled with gloomy forebodings as to the issue of the rivalry between the two countries. England was so heavily handicapped, the sense of freedom of power of expansion seemed to afford the dwellers across the Atlantic more space for breathing, to invest them with a more vigorous type of life, to endue them with more independence; so that on my return after a prolonged absence, much as I found to admire in the movement and improvement in England, it was long before I could rid myself of an oppressive feeling of want of *elbow-room*.

This has been noticed by Von Hubner, who says of the Americans: "You feel you have to do with people who are open-handed, and who give you plenty of *elbow-room*."

To use Seeley's words, "In the Colonies are lands for the landless; prosperity and wealth for those in straitened circumstances; on the one side are men without property, on the other is property waiting for the men; if there is pauperism in Wiltshire and Dorsetshire, it is but complementary to unowned wealth in Australia." Who shall deny that we ought to strain every nerve to draw the Colonies closer to us? Federation will so materially help us in point of numbers, and numbers are strength, and especially strength in war—you know the old saying that Providence is on the side of the strongest battalions—but Federation will do more than this, it will afford an outlet for our redundant population, an outlet through which they will pass, not to go out from us for ever, but to gather fresh vitality and energy with which to come back to us in our time of need;¹ for in these Territories is room and to spare for all to live, and, if thrifty, to prosper; will open to us favourable markets, and will lay open to us lands of fertility from which we may draw without stint all the food supplies of which we stand so urgently in need.

But those who are not with us object that Federation, however desirable, is not feasible for us under the diverse conditions of soil and climate which obtain in our Colonies, and at their enormous distances from us. Let me at once deal with this matter of distance; distance is no bar, steam and electricity have done so much for us already, and their limits of power are not yet reached, that political union over these vast expanses of water is even closer and more certain than the union of 80 millions of Russians scattered over a territory, entirely land, of 2 million square miles; militarily too, the sea,

¹ The Colonies have ever shown this feeling—going further back than the late war, before the American Colonies were forced into separation, we find them saying, that in peace they cost Great Britain nothing; in war they contributed to the Imperial expenses, and would *continue to contribute*.—(Froude, vol. ii, p. 136.)

as we are able to put it to our use, is the best Line of Communication that Captain can desire.

It is recorded that when Cromwell assumed the Protectorate, the news was thirteen or sixteen days in reaching Devonshire. In sixteen days in this year of Grace you may go to America and back; in sixteen days the Home and Australian Fleets might concentrate in the neighbourhood of Suez. So much for distance. Distance was no bar to Cromwell; why need it be to us, who can by telegraph communicate almost instantaneously our wishes to the Antipodes?

The landing of William in Torbay in November, 1688, was not known in Shetland till the following May; but there was no regular post from Edinburgh even to as far north as Inverness until the Union in 1707, and for fifty years after that it was carried on foot (Lecky, England in the Eighteenth Century, vol. ii, p. 28).

And now for climate and soil. Climate and soil do not altogether fashion men's interests, though no doubt they play their part in shaping them. Attachment to the old country, which we still call patriotism; respect for law, upon which we rest our freedom; regard for domestic ties, which is our ideal of social duty; and the habit of manly self-reliance, upon which we justly pride ourselves, are not altered, are not even lessened by climate. As I write, Ingoldsby's clever rhyme upon the old Latin verse rises in my memory—

"Cælum non animum mutant qui currunt transmare."

"Climates, not men's minds, by travelling vary."

What have we further to encourage us in starting upon this course of Federation? We have Community of Race, Community of Language, Community of Religion, and we have primarily Community of Interests, though of course as time rolls on, local matters become of more absorbing interest than more distant matters; but however these interests may tend more and more apart, we have at least this strong interest in common—the interest for maintaining the connection between us.

Von Hubner remarks, "Much more is thought of the interests which separate the Colonies than of those which they share in common and which ought to unite them" (Through British Empire, vol. ii, p. 494).

What are the objects of Federation? Defence, External Policy, Extension of Territory, International Communication, Regulation of Commerce, Prosecution of Justice, Extradition of Criminals, Patent and Copy Rights.

Should the "Obligation of Contracts" be included? than which Maine says there is no more important point in the whole (American) Constitution; it is the bulwark of American individualism against Democratic impatience and Socialistic fantasy.

But again the objectors who ask "What is the good of Federation?" say, You have already got all these things—got in fact all that you want; the loose tie which binds our Colonies to us is sufficient—is indeed eminently suited to the disposition of the British people. *Let it alone.* The answer is, The Union we have is an Union of Sufferance,

and we cannot place absolute dependence upon sufferance. It is an Union of Sentiment, and we would place ourselves out of the reach of sentiment, believing that sentiment affords opportunity for caprice, as well as scope for the infirmity of Imperial Officials,¹ who seem not always chosen for their knowledge of the Colonies, and perhaps not unfrequently in requital of party services. It is an Union without responsibility,² and wanting in cohesion: moreover, the position is galling to educated Colonists, and the system is utterly irrational, if we can call that a system which grants representative institutions to one class of interests and withholds them from another.

Turned aside from this, they next object that Federation in our case is not feasible, and taking their stand upon the word which we have wisely or unwisely adopted, that there can be no such thing as *Imperial Federation*—that the course which we are pursuing will lead us to Sovereignty or Unitarianism, or, failing these, to disintegration. Moreover, they say that in the natural course of things the Colonies, as they arrive at men's estate, will separate from the Mother Country as ripe fruit falls from the tree; and they point, not without inward satisfaction perhaps, to the United States, which they consider a case in point.

At the time the American Colonies separated from the Mother Country the state of things was very different from what it is now. Colonies were regarded as *possessions*, not as parts of the Empire of England—as estates to be worked for the benefit of those Englishmen who remained at home. Thus Froude says: "The lesson especially the Mother Country had never ceased to impress upon the Colonies, that they existed not for their own sakes but for her; she regarded them as created by herself,—as outlets for her own productions; they were strictly forbidden to trade with any countries but England or Ireland, or to ship their cargoes in any but English ships." On the one side was a King, almost alien, who, however little he cared for Hanover, and however much for governing England, understood and perhaps cared really very little for English interests at home, and still less for English interests abroad—a King³ who was unwilling to concede any

¹ Thus "Imperial Federation," speaking of Lord Granville and Mr. Osborne Morgan as the new Secretary and Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, says of the former, he was Foreign Minister at the time the unfortunate arrangements for New Guinea and Angra Pequena were made; of the latter that he is chiefly known to the public through his connection with the Burial Bills, but the real grievance is that not a Colony throughout the world would have conceived the idea of nominating either Lord Granville or Mr. Morgan for his present post.—(No. 3, p. 69.)

² Responsibility must rest with supremacy. Where at present is the supremacy? In the British Parliament? Dare the British Parliament exercise it upon any self-governing Colony? You know it dares not, and if it did you can foresee the result. Von Hubner says, "I can see only one contingency in which the loyalty of a Colony might completely vanish, viz., a complete negative to some cherished aspiration of Public opinion."—(Vol. ii, p. 499.)

³ The King upon his side did his utmost to embitter the contest. It is only by examining his correspondence with Lord North that we fully realize how completely at this time he assumed the position not only of Prime Minister but of a Cabinet. Military management, the course of the war, the manner in which Government ques-

but a mere dependent *locus standi* in national matters to the Colonies, was unwilling even to admit that they could have interests apart from or which might conflict with home interests, and yet who, alien as he was, was able to impose his bigoted, narrow, anti-national will on the dull pedantic Ministers who served him.¹

On the other side were the Colonies, no longer finding it necessary to look to England for defence, harassed vexatiously and injuriously by England's commercial policy, which was directed to a monopoly of the Colonial trade, and was indeed the prime cause of the disruption,² having little or no part in English social matters, apprehensive of being dragged after England into Continental matters, which were of no immediate concern to them, resenting being taxed in the interests of those who professed to be their brothers, and yet treated them as if they were a conquered people.³ Add to this, too, that they were not Colonists in our present sense of the word; they were not the overflow of the Mother Country; they were religious communities⁴ which committed themselves to the dangers of the unknown ocean in order to exercise beyond its troubled waters those rites of religion the free practice of which was proscribed to them at home. What wonder, then, they burst the ties which held them,—and galled them while they held them,—and severed the connection with the Mother Country?⁵

tions were to be argued in Parliament were prescribed by him, and Ministers acted simply as his agents and in direct opposition to their own judgments.—(Locky, vol. iv, p. 471.)

¹ It appears from the correspondence that for about five years North at the entreaty of the King carried on a bloody, costly, and disastrous war in direct opposition to his own judgment and wishes.

Lord Barrington, who was Minister of War, disapproved of the policy of coercing the Colonies; believed the military enterprises he organized would lead to nothing but disaster, that the Americans might be reduced by the Fleet, but could never be by the Army, and yet obediently carried out the King's plan for the Government.—(Locky, vol. iv, p. 471.)

² As early as 1748 the Swedish traveller Kalm was told that within 30 or 40 years the English Colonies may constitute a separate State, independent of England—these dangerous neighbours (the French) is the reason why the love of the Colonies for England does not wholly decline.—(Locky, vol. ii.)

³ As early as 1776 Turgot wrote: "Wise and happy will be that nation which shall first know how to bend to new circumstances, and consent to see in its Colonies allies not subjects."

⁴ 20,000 Protestants left Ulster on the destruction of the woollen trade. Many more were driven away by the first passing of the Test Act, and in the loss of independence, England had no fiercer enemies than the descendants of these . . . Presbyterians, Puritans, Independents, in search of wider breathing space than was allowed them at home . . . Vexed with suits in the Ecclesiastical Courts, forbidden to educate their children in their own faith, treated as dangerous to the State which but for them would have had no existence, associated with Papists in an Act of Parliament which deprived them of their civil rights, they saw at last that the Liberty for which they and their fathers had fought was not to be theirs in Ireland.—(Froude, vol. i, pp. 269, 391; and vol. ii, pp. 130, 132.)

⁵ The King was never what we should call a really Constitutional King—his own words, which are too clear for cavil or dispute, prove this. He said that "no advantage to this country, no present danger to myself, can ever make me address myself to Lord Chatham or any other member of the Opposition." The King adopted the same line later, in 1804, with respect to Fox, and in March, 1782, when Lord North's Ministry came to an end, it is said he contemplated abdication and return to Hanover.

If we drift as we are now drifting, we shall no doubt arrive at disintegration, but disintegration will not be our goal, will be only the first stage on the road to *national effacement*. Now we, the advocates of Federation, have no intention of travelling on that road, and that is why I am here to advocate an Union, under the name of *Imperial Federation*, upon which we can rely in the future.

But supposing the course we are pursuing does lead to *Unitarianism*. Myself, though I prefer a more orthodox Federation, I have no antipathy to this *Unitarianism* (the habitual exercise of supreme legislative authority by one central power, which in our case is the British Parliament—Dicey, *Law and Constitution*, p. 127), by which I understand that somewhere in our Constitution there is an ultimate point of supreme authority or Sovereignty. *Unitarianism* has served us so well, seems so well suited to the genius of the Nation, that we may expect it to suit our offspring equally well, especially as the Constitutions under which they flourish are all based upon this underlying principle, that the ultimate authority is the expression of the influence of the citizens upon the State—is indeed the outcome of the force of Public Opinion.

It may be urged that this *Unitarianism* answers our purpose so well here in Great Britain, because the unit, the directing authority, is so immediately with us, is *we ourselves*, we, by our influence on the State, we, who are the Public Opinion, but that it will not subserve the same purpose, or at least to the same extent, in influencing and moulding the integral parts of Governments so distant from us as the Colonies, or rather of the Empire as a whole comprising the Colonies. If that be so, though it is open to doubt, let us get rid of the Unitarian principle, and adopt any other form of Federation,—or Union,—by whichever name you call it, which we may find more suitable. There is no one and only specific for Federation. The United States is generally referred to as the most perfect type, but it is by no means perfect,¹ and there are other and very different types, as the Dominion of Canada and the Republic of Switzerland.

Of the United States, Bagehot says of the Electoral College which the founders of its Constitution hoped would be composed of the wisest people in the nation, that "it is a sham without independence and without life,—no one knows or cares to know who its members are; they never discuss; they never deliberate; they are chosen to vote for a particular man, they do so vote, and they go home." "So President-making is a trade in America;"—"International Policy rests not with the President,—not with the House of Representatives, but in the Senate;"—"The President wants one course and has power to prevent any other;—The Congress wants another course and has power to prevent any other."—(Expan. Eng., pp. 153, 222, and 256.)

A very large and increasing body in all the Colonies is desirous of

¹ The Constitution of the United States is coloured throughout by political ideas of British origin, and is in reality a vision of the British Constitution as it must have presented itself to an observer in the second half of the last century.—(Maine's *Popular Government*, p. 207.)

a closer connection with the Mother Country, by whatever name that connection is called, and leagues have already been formed in most of the principal Colonies, and in many of our principal towns, but as a member of the New Zealand Legislature remarked in discussing the prospects of Imperial Federation, "Our great difficulty really is the want of the Imperial idea in the British isles, they have got into such a way of looking upon themselves as the Empire, that they have not yet awoke to the fact that there is a Greater Britain outside of Old England." No doubt this problem has difficulties of its own, immense difficulties, but the greatest of these difficulties is one which we make ourselves. It is the false preconception which we bring to the question, that the problem is insoluble, that no such thing ever was done or ever will be done; it is our misinterpretation of the American Revolution.—(Expan. Eng., p. 159.)

We, the promoters of the Federation League, aim at awaking these people, to many of whom Federation has no real meaning;—perhaps some here present have scarcely heard of it, and yet I am convinced that at this moment it is the question of most importance to Great Britain,—at any rate it is a question of absorbing interest to our kinsfolk in the Colonies.

I alluded before to the depression of trade, but most people are not aware from how much deeper a state of depression our Colonies have saved us. In the decade ending 1882 our exports decreased 8,000,000*l.*, viz., from 314,000,000*l.* to 306,000,000*l.*, but during that same decade our business with the Colonies increased 26,000,000*l.*, so that had it not been for the Colonies the decrease would have reached 34,000,000*l.* per annum. Well indeed for us that the Colonies came to our aid!

It has been noticed too that our trade with the Colonies is more steady than our trade with foreign countries,—and, comprising mainly articles of dress and of domestic consumption, and finished manufactures, finds employment for British labour, in trades in which Dr. Watson considers one-third of the population of the United Kingdom is employed; moreover, the same authority points out that the consumption of such articles is more than half as much again in Australia,—viz., 3*l.* 4*s.* there as compared with 2*l.* per head,—in England.

But steady and rapid as is this trade, it would receive enormous developments as our food supplies were drawn more and more from our territories beyond the seas. I took occasion to urge as long back as 1884 that by direction our food supplies might eventually be derived altogether from our own territories, and the strength of this country would be enormously increased if she were thus self-dependent.

A question often asked is, What will the Colonies gain by Federating? but the question should be rather, What will the Colonies lose if they do not Federate? In the case of Canada, Principal Grant, in reply to the question, What would Canada lose by independence? answers, Almost everything that a country needs.—(Imper. Fdr., No. 4, p. 193.) We are not inviting aliens more or less un-

willing to join us; then indeed it might be with them a question of the balance of advantages; we are urging upon our kin that they should not go out from us. This distinction is material, because evidently it may be to their interest not to leave us, though it might not be to their interest to enter into union with us; but premising that it is both inexpedient and unnecessary to balance this question with too much nicety, we may with profit devote a little consideration to it. The primary object of all Federal Unions is defence.¹ Now it may be said that if the Colonies by standing aloof should free themselves of all obligations in the matter of Imperial Defence they would free themselves from enormous responsibilities, and this is no doubt true as far as Europe is concerned, but they would remain exposed to greater perils in the event of a war of the first magnitude in which Great Britain was involved, and would rely for their existence upon the forbearance of others, for at present they are not, and for some time to come the strongest of them will not be, in a position to stand alone. Moreover, a great Empire with interests in every quarter of the globe is not likely to go to war for a merely local or frivolous object.—(Our Colonies and India. Ransome, p. 100.) In the matter of defence, then, the Colonies are no losers by closer union, while closer union means the advantages of British capital, increased security for commerce, favourable markets, and such other benefits, moral and material, as arise from membership in Great Britain, the freest, the wealthiest, the most glorious Empire the world has ever seen. This latter consideration cannot be rated as little in the scale, with some indeed it has most weight. In England we are so used to regard this membership as part of our birthright that we perhaps do not estimate the advantages and privileges attendant on it at their just value, but how they are esteemed by others is well shown by the natives of India, one of the reasons of whose wish to be enrolled in the Volunteers of India is “pride in the association with a noble Empire like that over which Her Majesty presides, and a desire to share in its glories by being numbered among its defenders.”—(Colonies and India, p. 121.) If our kinsmen beyond the seas, to use Seeley's words, “more alive to the responsibilities and dangers than to the benefits of the connection, have the heart to sever themselves from English history, from all the traditions and memories of these Islands where their fathers lived for a thousand years, it will indeed be necessary to think that England is a name which possesses sadly little attractive power.”—(Expan. Eng., p. 155.)

It is scarcely possible to discuss Federation without saying something upon the commercial aspect of the question; to many the commercial difficulty stands most in the way of Federation, and so many advocate as the first step a Commercial Union. No doubt the commercial question bristles with points of contention, and I introduce it here that you may see that it has not escaped the attention of the League. Already the advocates of Protection and Free Trade are

¹ The Australian Colonies may soon be in a position to defend their own shores, but it will be long before they are powerful enough at sea to protect their Commerce, already important and steadily increasing.

confronting one another, while a third party which calls itself Fair Trade is eager to plunge into the fray, though with regard to this party, and without pledging myself in either direction, I may say that it seems to me that they must be either Protectionists or Free Traders; upon broad principles there would appear to be no middle course: yet the commercial difficulty need not appal us, the League does not press any view upon our Provinces beyond the seas; it sees that one or other view must be right, and that that view must eventually prevail, and in the meantime it is not apparent how these Provinces, though ever so closely united with the Mother Country, will be worse off than they are at present.

Protection would tax the goods of all Foreigners, and would lead to a war of Tariffs. Fair Trade would equalize taxation on British and Foreign products in the home markets, which seems to be Protection at home strictly regulated by Protection abroad; while Free Trade would leave commerce free to follow its own paths unfettered by restrictions of any kind.

Yet Free Trade is no new consideration for our Colonies; as early as 1775 Franklin, speaking for the Colonies, said if England would abandon her monopolies and give them Free Trade, they would contribute in peace. After the battle of Saratoga, Lord North sent out Commissioners, Lord Carlisle and Mr. Eden, to America, with power to offer to the Colonists Free Trade and seats in the English House of Commons, if America desired to be represented there.—(Froude, vol. ii, p. 204.)

This much, however, with regard to Free Trade, is indisputable, and should be borne in mind,—that Tariff disputes, a fruitful source of contention, would be avoided, and that the cost of collection, about 5 per cent. generally, would be saved.

Those who favour Protection are in the habit of pointing to the United States as the most prosperous nation in the world, and as having deliberately adopted Protection. I admit the prosperity, but it is a prosperity by no means untempered, and I for one prefer this old country, however it may be burdened. In reality, whether the States are better for protection is a moot point, but that their prosperity is mainly due to it is an assumption without warrant, and in any consideration of the matter we should not lose sight of the fact that the United States are in an exceptional position; they suffice for themselves, and being under no compulsion to resort to foreign countries for any of the necessities of life, are free to make any experiments they will.

Article I, Constitution of the United States, prohibits the United States, and the several States, from laying any tax or duty on articles exported from any State, and is, Maine says, the secret both of American Free Trade and American Protection. It secures to the producer the command of a free market over an enormous territory of vast wealth, and thus it secondarily reconciles the American people to a Tariff on foreign importations as oppressive as ever a nation has submitted to.—(Pop. Govrn., p. 246, 19th June, 1886.)

We, united with our Provinces beyond the seas, should be in much

the same position, and might create any Tariff we thought advisable in our own interests, though it can scarcely be denied that Tariffs increase prices to consumers, and that limiting our trade to our own Provinces would lead to much of our carrying trade passing away from us. At present we carry about two-thirds more than is necessary for our own use.

We do not lay down any particular formula for Federation, indeed we are particular to avoid formulating any scheme of Federation: we seek by continually ventilating the subject to familiarize the minds of all at home and in the Colonies with the idea of Federation, in the hope to induce them to wish for Federation, recollecting what Bagehot, who advocated Life Peers, said, "I am afraid we shall not soon see them, but as a first step we should learn to wish for them" (p. 127, Eng. Const.); that as a consequence there shall be spontaneous action from all sides towards Federation, and that out of this action shall be evolved that form of Union which most fits the circumstances of the case. This is an amplification of Taine's idea of our Constitution, which appears in his reflection, viz., that the mainspring of Government is not this or that institution, but certain energetic and very widely diffused sentiments, which we would more shortly designate as *Public Opinion*.

In the Colonies is an "ever-growing conviction of the impossibility of continuing in the same groove. The old machinery is worn out and must be replaced by new." But this much we do assume, that any League must be based upon *Representation*¹ of some form or another. It is so manifestly unreasonable to ask human beings to interest themselves, especially to the extent of self-sacrifice, in concerns in the administration of which they have no share, that we not only assume, but press, that they shall be admitted to a share in Imperial Representation. It is not for me to indicate how this may best be effected; it may be in the House of Commons; it may be in the House of Lords; it may be in the Privy Council; or it may be in a Council of Delegates from the Colonies, sitting under the Presidency of the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Difficulties attend the adoption of any of these, but the difficulties are not insuperable; modifications in the existing Houses will be needed, but modifications, nay reforms, are already insisted upon by many acquainted with their working, as absolutely necessary for both Houses even now; the tendency of the present seems to be towards placing local matters in the hands of localities themselves, in which case there may be no advantage in having so many members in the House of Commons, and thus room may be found for representatives of the Colonies in an assembly which will busy itself with none other but Imperial concerns. Who, too, can say what form reform of the House of Lords may take? Not improbably a more limited number of Peers, representative Peers and life Peers. Bagehot, discussing

¹ "Taxation the Colonies in 1767 would not submit to while unrepresented in the British Parliament" . . . "From authority to impose a tax, the step to despotism was short."—(Froude, vol. ii, p. 133.)

Lord Palmerston's proposal¹ to create Peers for life, says "the expedient was almost perfect;" thirty or forty such men added judiciously would have given "the House the very element which it needs so much, the most accomplished men in each department might have been added to it" (*Eng. Const.*, pp. 122, 124);² at any rate the present House of Lords is not so in unison with the nation as its well-wishers desire that it should be.

In matters such as this of Federation, the hardest class to reach, and unfortunately it is the most numerous class, is the waverers,—the despondent, and the indifferent. What is to be said to them? To the despondent we would say that their spirit is not the spirit which led our forefathers to the acquisition of these Provinces beyond the seas;—is not the spirit which will enable us, their children, to maintain indissoluble the connection with them;—is not in short the spirit which has built up our Empire,—is not the spirit with which to encounter and to overcome difficulties. Upon them we would urge a more steadfast, a manlier policy,—we would urge that difficulties are not lessened by avoidance or by despondency,—that, on the contrary, by constantly pondering them and turning them over in our minds, we shall become familiar with them, that familiarity will beget confidence in our ability to deal with them, and that confidence will issue in success.

But what is to be said to the indifferent?—The indifferent may be indifferent either from ignorance or from apathy. The indifferent from ignorance we may educate, by "incessantly popularizing the principle" (of Federation) "by writing and speaking" (Bagehot, *Eng. Const.*, p. 149), we may induce a spirit of curiosity which cannot but be beneficial. But the indifferent from apathy,—who are content with the existing condition of things,—who find it easiest to have no opinion,—who will not be at the trouble of following their fellow-men, so long as the exertion of following is more grievous than the penalties attaching to the isolation of indifferentism;—what of these? Of these indeed, unless from mere listlessness or the wantonness of indifference they lend themselves to unscrupulous and self-interested objectors, we need take little heed. If they are not for us, at least they are not against us, and even they may be roused to go with the stream, or if not roused may drift with the stream; yet whether they are or no is of little consequence, they are not the stuff of which men are made, they certainly are not the stuff of which the aggregation of men, which we call Empire, is formed.

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To every individual of the sons of men there comes a time of

¹ The creation of Life Peers might be rendered more effectual by the removal from the Peerage of unworthy Peers: this is not an absolute innovation. In Edward IV the Duke of Bedford, Geo. Nevil, lost his Peerage on account of poverty.—(Foreyth's *Cicero*, p. 91.)

² The rejection of this proposal was due to Lord Lyndhurst, and thus "the House of Lords rejected the inestimable, the unprecedented opportunity of being tacitly reformed."

choice, it may be sooner or it may be later, but it comes at least once during his lifetime; sometimes the issues before him are not very clear, sometimes they are unmistakable; but however that may be, the whole of his future career depends upon his choice.

As with individuals so with nations, to the inexorable rule of fate is no exception:—the present, we, the advocates of Federation, are convinced is the time of choice for this, our Nation:—the issues are unmistakably before her—the handwriting on the wall is large and clear—so clear, indeed, that she can scarcely avoid reading,—and, reading, ought not to go wrong.

The individual who leads his life isolated, apart, wrapped up in self, soon ceases to be of account among his fellow-men; so no nation can live entirely absorbed in its own affairs, least of all can Great Britain, with interests far off, far asunder, in all parts of the world; it is puerile—ought I not to say senile?—to suppose it. Great Britain live apart, in isolation? Why her whole course of policy, past as well as present, proclaims that she cannot—that intercourse is her very breath of life!

If this be so, why should the League intervene? Because what is everybody's business is too often nobody's business; because the present is an age when too many find their own affairs sufficient for their whole concern—when from mere lack of initiative, cessation of energy may ensue. Our kinsfolk abroad want far less rousing than we at home; they have far more inquisitiveness than we have, are far more incessant in action. Already people in the Dominion of Canada are saying that the time is ripe for a choice between Federation and Independence, and this not from unfriendly motives, but actuated by the most pious and filial feelings towards the Mother Country. Independence, in their present stage of adolescence, would probably end before manhood is reached in annexation to the nearest Great Power; Federation is, we think, an end more worth striving for. With his mind fixed on the British Constitution, an eminent writer¹ says: "If the new communities of the colonized world have to choose a Government, they must choose one in which all the institutions are of an obvious evident utility," and, subject to its power of adaptability to altered and to altering circumstances, the Government of the United Kingdom appears to me to answer best this description. This, however, I may, for myself, say: I commenced some months back to study more closely than I had hitherto done the Constitution of the United States, under the impression that it was the best adapted to the needs of a free—let us say the Anglo-Saxon—race. I find in it many points of excellence, but I find in it also great anomalies—greater even than in our own Constitution,—anomalies not sanctified as in our Constitution by prescription. I find further in it a rigidity which presents many and great elements of danger; and my conclusion, my deliberate conclusion, is, that its excellence is in spite of itself, and through the people, of whom the writer already quoted says: "The Americans extol their institutions, and so defraud

¹ Bagehot.

themselves of due praise." "If they had not a moderation in action singularly curious where superficial speech is so violent, if they had not a regard for law such as no great people has yet evinced, and infinitely surpassing ours, the multiplicity of authorities in the American Constitution would long ago have brought it to a bad end."

The conclusion I draw is, that our race can adapt itself to many, to any, modifications of representative Government, and that there are no inherent objections to the Federation at which we aim; in that Federation lies the true development of the nation, upon that Federation rests the prolongation of the nation's life. What nobler incentive to exertion for each and every individual of the nation than the worthy prolongation of the nation's life? It is well to fix our thoughts upon this—to aspire ever to a higher ideal! We have seen the fate of nations habitually wrapt up in their poor selfish present, and by their fate we should take timely heed. We cannot rest as we are—we dare not go back; but we may, we *must*, go forward! The future is before us! Let us go forward towards it in no unworthy spirit; then, whatever the result, we shall leave ourselves little to regret. Yes, the future is ever man's goal! What are the words of the Seer? "Think not mournfully upon the Past—it is gone. Wisely improve the Present—it is thine. Go forth to meet the Future, without fear and with a manly heart." Noble words, and true to all time. What a glorious future! As we lift our thoughts towards it, we may well feel our hearts aglow within us. Standing here, with my thoughts lifted towards Federation, I dare affirm, without fear of contradiction, and with no feeling of unfriendliness towards other nations, that in the union of the English-speaking races rests the best hope for the future of the world. Join with us then, we beseech you, now, while there is opportunity, in our endeavour to render that Union close and indissoluble.

The CHAIRMAN (Lord Carnarvon): Gentlemen, before I call upon any one to address this meeting on the very interesting paper that we have just listened to, I think it right of me to say that I have received a telegram from Captain Colomb, who read a very interesting paper here upon a cognate subject at a recent meeting. Captain Colomb is engaged at this moment in one of those Parliamentary contests in which so many of our fellow-countrymen are now engaged, and he telegraphs to me to say it is a great disappointment to him to be unable to attend here to-day to carry on what was then understood, I believe, to be the promise of an adjourned discussion on his paper. Under these circumstances he hopes that though of course the meeting to-day may take into account his paper in the discussion upon that which we have just heard from Sir Charles Nugent, on the other hand that the door will be left open to him by a further adjournment, which seems to be very reasonable, a few days hence, when his own electoral labours will be completed, to enable him to say a few words on the paper that he then read to you. I think now my best course will be to invite discussion from those who are here present. I understand we are favoured to-day with the presence in this room of some of my Colonial friends, if I may be allowed to call them so, and if there be any of them here who would desire to speak on this subject, which so closely touches them, I am sure it would be the wish of this meeting to hear them in the first instance.

General BRAY, C.B.: My lord and gentlemen, I hoped very much to-day to see a great number of Colonists present to discuss this most interesting question in fact the burning question of the day before the whole British Empire.

would not have risen had it not been that for the last two years I have taken a great interest in this matter, and knowing a good many Agents-General and leading Colonists in England, I have discussed the matter in various ways and directions. I have heard a great many of their opinions, and have been able to form opinions of my own, and come to certain conclusions. From the admirable lecture to which we have just listened, a thoroughly statesmanlike exposition of the whole question, I gather certain things, and the first thing is, that Federation is in the air, and that it must come, and the sooner it comes the better. The only difficulty is how it is to be made to come. The Colonists are for it, you are for it, and everybody is for it, and it is only the difficulty which surrounds the subject which prevented it coming before now, and which at the present moment is keeping it back. But those difficulties unquestionably can be surmounted, will be and must be surmounted, and the way to do it is to approach this question carefully, and with the assistance of the most able men in this country, taking into their confidence all the leading Colonists in London who are able to give the opinions of the peoples whom they represent on this most important question. This year will be known in the future as the "Colonists' year:" there are so many of them here, and they are all watching the political movements going on at this particular moment, to see how they will affect them. Federation, though greatly desired, is surrounded with much difficulty, and is not considered by some practical at the present moment. The reasons are these, that each Colony, Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, Queensland, Cape Colony, Canada, has its own Parliament, its own military force, and all the elements of government which exist in this country. These Colonists are represented in London by Agents-General. That is a name which does not give the people of this country an idea of what the duties of these gentlemen are: they really in point of fact are Ambassadors from the Colonies to the Government; they represent the feelings and wishes of the Colonies on every question, social and political. These men, therefore, are the go-between, who tell the Government in London what are the wishes of the Colonies upon all the questions which affect them. There are also the questions of Imperial policy and mercantile policy. Both questions have been carefully touched upon by Sir Charles Nugent, but the Imperial question is absolutely the one that affects the Colonies and the Empire more than any other, because at the present moment they all look to England more for the Imperial policy than anything else, that which affects them most, and in which they are almost totally unrepresented. The Imperial question is this. I will give you an instance: the point that touches every Colony connected with this country:—Is Ireland to be destroyed, separated, or abandoned? That point is an Imperial question for the Colonies; it goes straight to the heart, and affects their position in every possible way. I am only taking it as an instance; if Ireland were separated, this country, the centre and head of the Empire, would be weakened too. The weakening of the heart of the Empire would weaken the connection of the Colonies in every direction. The Turkish question at present, which is a very great European question also, affects directly the interests of the Colonies, because if the Imperial Government in London were to make war with Russia, they would be directly affected. They would be put to enormous expense, they would have to defend themselves and to be defended. That is another instance in which the Imperial policy affects the Colonies and the British Empire. The third is a minor one, which sprang up the other day, and caused a very great sensation in the Australian Colonies, that is the question of the New Hebrides. A Colonist said to me lately, "You, in England, are thinking of nothing but your elections; there is not a Colonist in Australia who is thinking of anything but the New Hebrides, and how it will affect them." It is absolutely necessary that in some form the Colonists should have some control or voice in the Imperial policy of the British Empire. That is the main point that affects them. Now in Australia itself there are several countries, all having their Parliaments, all perfectly separate, and some of them very jealous one of the other. It has been mooted that they should federate, and Federation has been distinctly sought in this paper. What are the objects of Federation? Defence, external policy, extension of territory, international communication, regulation of commerce, prosecution of justice, extradition of criminals, and protection of copyright. Those Colonists find the greatest difficulty in federating together on the spot, and several leading

Colonists have told me that they do not want to confederate together. What they want to do is to draw the lines closely together, and to be bound tightly with the Government of London. That is their idea of Federation. The Tariff question affects the Colonies acutely. If they had no Tariffs they would have smaller revenues. The Tariff and the Imperial policy are the main questions that they have to consider, and I trust the able lecture which has been delivered will bring forth good fruit; and show to the Colonies that we are with them in every way, and wish for Federation too; and will bring about this Federation the moment they show us how it is to be done, and how this great Colonial and Imperial question is to be solved in the best interests of the Colonies, and to the increased strength of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and the whole British Empire.

MR. RUSDEN: I did not come to speak in this theatre; I came here merely to hear the English opinions on this point. I was aware that Sir Charles Nugent, with whom I am a colleague in the Imperial Federation League, felt very strongly on this matter, but I thought he would bring before us the Imperial view, so that it might be considered by this audience. I did not think a Colonist would be called upon here to express any opinion. I may remark with reference to allusions to the Australian Tariffs, that it is not quite correct to say that the Colonial Tariffs are all arranged with regard to protection. There are some of the Colonies which themselves consider free trade highly. That they do arrange their revenues so as to get a good deal of help from the Customs duties simply for revenue and not for protection, is absolutely a fact known to all of us, but there are very few of them who have arranged them with a view to protection, in order as they think to increase local production. The great question of Federation is being warmly considered throughout every Colony, as well as in England, but the great difficulty, it occurs to me, will be in England itself. Has England lost the old power to organize a Government? If she has, we may blow this scheme to atoms. If she can rise again as a country with power of self-government, power of management, power of enterprise all over the world, then it may be done, but if she is to call upon the Colonies to dictate a scheme, the difficulties may prove insuperable. Doubtless no scheme can be adopted which the Colonists cannot agree to; but if England is to be supine under the hand of a demagogue, and to say that she has lost her power of government, lost her sagacity, then you may give it up, but if you will thoroughly consider this matter and organize and show that you have the spirit of your forefathers, then no doubt the Colonies will help you.

THE HON. H. HOLBROOK: I have listened with very great attention to the very admirable lecture of Sir Charles Nugent's, which contains a great deal for serious reflection on the part of Colonists. Now I come from British Columbia, the nucleus of whose population was furnished by the corps that Sir Charles Nugent came from—the Royal Engineers—and from them has emanated a really loyal and true community in that far distant country on the Pacific coast. We also know the great assistance that the noble lord sitting now in the chair gave in assisting us in being confederated together, for without his able assistance we should not have been the powerful Dominion that we are at the present moment. Now I might say as regards British Columbia, we were a Crown Colony, and his lordship was in office when we were a Crown Colony, and he assisted us in being confederated with the rest of the Dominion. But we had great difficulties. We were dependent nearly entirely on San Francisco, and we saw that the time had arrived when it was almost an impossibility to get emigrants to settle amongst us; we therefore found it our interest to join Canada. A Convention was formed and delegates came before the Dominion of Canada. We came into the presence of one whom Canada honours, whom Canada looks to as her greatest light—that is our noble Premier, Sir J. A. Macdonald—and whose great scheme, which was to cut the Gordian knot of your Eastern difficulty as regards Egypt, was the formation of a railway from ocean to ocean as a means of protection to your commerce in England. I may say with regard to the Colonies generally, we are about having a Convention at which delegates will sit representing some 250,000,000 of loyal British subjects, loyal to their Queen and loyal to their flag. They honour and esteem their Queen, they honour and esteem the flag, and they are proud of being amongst you. But although we claim loyalty, we do not want to make ourselves more loyal than you

are in Great Britain: but we claim equal rights, one flag, one country, and one nationality. We claim that as Colonists; and Sir Charles Nugent touched on this point in the very admirable lecture that he has laid before us showing the difficulties that there are in forming Confederation. Now Federation with England is a necessity. Here are your births over your deaths something like 410,030, and you have only sent to Canada 32,000 and to Australia 48,000. You are increasing your population and you must find outlets for them. Now in Canada we have land larger in extent than the whole of the United States, and only 5,000,000 on it, and I have told you we are loyal and true to our Queen. And when I say loyal and true to our Queen, it is no lip service. We have an army of 40,000 that can be increased to 300,000, and a reserve of sailors of something like 60,000, and with that nucleus we can show a bold front and all join together in one mass in Imperial Confederation. Australia can do the same as ourselves; we can render Great Britain impregnable. As I have said, we sent delegates to Canada to carry out the plan of Confederation with British Columbia; that will have to be done here, and the present Conference is a means. As regards your Tariff and protection, go to the Colonial Exhibition and see the prosperity of Canada in her manufactures; but you want our men, you want our statesmen amongst you; you want their counsel, and it is only through a Committee and the proper men being appointed that you can get their counsel. Whether it will be in the House of Lords or whether it will be in the Consultative Council, it is for heads greater than mine to think about, and for statesmen such as the noble lord who is now presiding over us.

Mr. FRANC S. BRERETON: With your permission, I should like to make a few remarks, and I propose to confine myself as much as possible to opinions and statements made in the first page of Captain Colomb's very admirable paper—opinions and statements which I think go to the root of Federation. I think there are two well-known facts—facts which are generally admitted that it would be well to bear in mind: one is the military fact, that the strength of a fortress is but equal to its weakest part; the second might be called the maternal fact, for few mothers can believe that their child has become a bearded man and is free from their control. Captain Colomb says the main features of Imperial Federation are the unity of Empire and the development necessary to preserve it. The first he goes on to say is based on the present and universal acceptance of the declaration that it is to the mutual material advantage of all parts of the Empire to be united. I should like to have added a word or two to that and said it ought to be, because I am afraid we shall have presently to consider as to whether the present connection between the mother country and her Colonies is to the mutual material advantage of all parts of the Empire. The statement raises the question as to what are the mutual material advantages at the present time. Colonel Colomb says that Imperial Federation has to do with facts commercial, political, naval, and military. Let us take the first. The facts commercial—what are they? As for the mother country, her mutual advantages I do not question, and therefore I won't say more of that. I believe she has enormous advantages. But how is it with the Colonies; what are their commercial advantages? Have they any more advantages now than if they were severed? Have they any more advantages than an ordinary foreign country? Have they any more advantages than the United States of America? I apprehend they have none. I apprehend if you go to our Colonial cousins and ask them, they will tell you they have none; they will tell you that practically they are foreign nations; that if they were severed to-morrow, so far as their commerce goes, they would be able to deal with England on exactly the same terms, that is, on the most-favoured-nation terms; they have nothing better than that. They will tell you the mother country is constantly entering into commercial treaties with foreign nations, by which she binds herself not to give her children better terms than she does foreigners; that at the present moment she is about to close a treaty of the same kind with Spain, but slightly different from former ones, because I believe, as a rule, in former treaties we had the power of closing them at the end of the year by a year's notice, but this treaty is to be for six years; to bind us to a state of things of that kind is not wise. I think our Colonial friends may well say England by these treaties with foreign nations is selling their birthright. Therefore I hold that, so far as commerce goes, our Colonies actually have no advantage.

The next question is political: I think that has been answered already. A gentleman has told you here that the Colonies are liable to defend themselves in case of war, and yet they have no word in Imperial politics. The Federation League have not told us how or in what manner they propose to federate. How that is to be done is not for a humble individual like me to suggest. I had hoped in coming here this evening we might have heard it; I had hoped the Federation League would have been able perhaps at this meeting to put before us a scheme—a scheme not put forward by the Government of England, but put forward by the League, and then probably another League might have been made in the Colonies to consider and improve that scheme, and eventually to hand it to the Government of this country to propose to the Colonial Governments. The next question is naval and military. The paper of Captain Colomb's demonstrates beyond question that so long as the Colonies belong to the mother country, Federation for defence is an actual necessity; but at the same time I am afraid our Colonial brethren might take this paper and read it as an equally strong proof why they should sever from the Empire, because it shows them the necessity of protection, against what?—a war entered into by England—a war entered into by the English Government—a war possibly caused by the want of backbone in an English Foreign Minister. Therefore I hold that this paper, admirable as it is, is also a proof to our Colonies why practically they should sever. I submit that so far as commerce, politics, and army and navy matters are concerned at the present time, the Colonies have no beneficial interest in the connection. How is it proposed to give that beneficial interest in the future? I apprehend that commerce is the main way—the only way would be by commercial treaties, which would be beneficial to our Colonies. That would recognize our Colonies as being our children, which would enable them to trade with us upon terms better than the most favoured nation, better than foreigners, better than Russians, Germans, French¹. But a one-sided policy of free trade stands in your way; the question is, Federation of the Empire on the one side, free trade on the other. History tells us that nations are like men; they have childhood, youth, manhood, their prime, and old age and decay. Is England in her old age? Is she on the verge of decay? or is she only a child that has barely learnt to walk and has yet to run? I submit, with all deference, that it depends upon the two questions—will you have Federation and renewed national life, or will you have one-sided free trade and senile decay? You cannot have both; because if you do, then the foundations of your Empire will be only laid upon the quicksand of sentiment instead of upon the rock of mutual advantages. At the present time the questions of free trade and confederation have been before the country; how fares it with both? Five or six years ago I do not suppose you would have found a hundred men who would have dared to have said a word against that great one-sided free trade: if a man did, it was with bated breath. But what is it now? There is a powerful league called the Fair Trade League. Go right and left all over the country, and you will hear the word in all men's mouths. Go in amongst our working classes and what will they say—"A one-sided free trade has taken the bread out of our mouths." When we speak to the man and say, "Look at the loaf you have—it only costs 4d." "What matters that, sir, I have no labour—no work; I have not a penny to buy it with; I would sooner pay 6d. for the loaf and have employment all day." Those views and opinions are spreading all over the land. I am not going to do more than call attention to the question at issue before the country, and to say that, so far as I am capable of judging, one-sided free trade has had its death-blow, and a few years hence it will be a thing of the past. With regard to Federation, five years ago it was hardly heard of; now, wherever you go you hear of it. It might be said that five or six years ago the bar of iron out of which it is proposed to forge the Fede-

¹ The United States of America receive from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland over 50,000,000*l.* per annum for food products, which by commercial treaties with our Colonies on protective duties on products from foreign countries, might be transferred to our Colonies, and thereby a great material advantage given to them.

ration of the Empire was laid before the furnace of public opinion. At one time it got a little hot, and the next it got cold. A kick would send it into the furnace, or, on the contrary, send it in the other direction. About a year and a half ago that kick came, practically caused by a whisper—an electric whisper—what might almost be described as a stage whisper, that grew in magnitude as it travelled—a message that left the Antipodes as a whisper and arrived in England as a shout, which proclaimed that the Colonies were prepared to join England in protecting herself. That kicked the bar into the fire, and there it is; able and willing men have their hands at the bellows. These papers that we have heard are a proof not only of their ability, but of their power and increasing energy. Are you willing to lend a hand? Are you willing, when the iron is hot, to forge it? Are you willing to put your shoulder to the wheel and drive out that one-sided free trade which stands in the way of Federation, and are you prepared to create in its stead a rock of mutual beneficial advantage, which would lay the foundations of a great Federated Empire?—an Empire whose strength would be sufficient to secure peace and prosperity for its people, and an Empire which in years to come would grow into a power which even the most sanguine of men have never dreamt of.

Captain CURTIS, R.N.: Sir Charles Nugent has said that the British imports exceed the exports by 187 millions; this surplus is explained by the English capital invested abroad; the country is paid in freight and merchandize. History also teaches us that countries do not live alone by a carrying trade, manufactures, or commerce: they should be, as nearly as possible, self-supporting, such as America, for instance. I do not know whether there are many landed proprietors here, but those that have their lands going out of cultivation would no doubt like to see fair trade, a certain protection put on wheat so that it should not be less than 40s. a quarter. No one could grumble at that. Of course the bakers and butchers, not the consumers, get the benefit of the present low prices. We have heard of the herring curer who wrote to Sir Robert Peel to say he was a free trader in everything but his own commodity, viz., cured herrings, and it is so with every one. In the case of foreign countries which have no money invested abroad, their exports pretty well balance each other. I was at a discussion at the Colonies the other day about the emigration of children. We are all indebted to Miss Fry, Dr. Barnardo, and others, who interest themselves in sending out these poor children. The Colonists say: "Send us children with good characters." I should say, let the Colonies have groups, that is families.¹ Moreover, every man who leaves this country, whom the unions have driven abroad, competes with the mother country. In this country a man who can and will work has his labour limited. He should have what he can earn. Rome fell when she began to import her corn from abroad and allowed her own land to go out of cultivation. In our own time Italy is draining the Pontine Marshes. In England if you go into rural districts it is distressing to see the decrease of population; men flocking to the towns, and many becoming paupers. They sell all their goods and come up to town and pay 5s. or 6s. for a room, whereas in the country for 1s. or 1s. 6d. a week, they have a good cottage and garden and wholesome air.

Colonel ANDREWS, R.H.A.: Sir Charles Nugent in his preliminary remarks alluded to possible jealousies that must not be allowed to obstruct the question of Imperial Federation, but he would doubtless agree with the proposition that it would be desirable to remove any *reasonable* cause of jealousy on the part of either the mother country or a dependency. One such cause exists in the present depreciated and unstable value of silver, whereby a most unfair protective advantage is conferred upon some Colonies and our great possession of India, at the expense of our home manufacturers and corn growers; and as commercial interests have a strong bearing on the subject, it may not be considered out of place in any dis-

¹ It is desirable that families should emigrate direct from the rural districts and not flood the towns. Some arrangement between the governing bodies and those of the Colonies might be arranged to place them where they may be self-supporting and repay any sum advanced to help them; in that way a constant touch and good feeling would be maintained with the mother country.

tution of this question of Imperial Federation to urge that steps should be taken by Parliamentary inquiry towards re-establishing the stability of silver, the result of which would be to supply a much-needed stimulus to our home manufacturers by relieving them and our agricultural classes from a source of *unfair* competition, dependent not on the cheaper and better producing powers of the dependency, but on the fluctuating and depreciated value of coin.

Admiral the Hon. E. R. FREMANTLE: I am not inclined to contravene or dispute the statements that have been made by the last two speakers. I think it would be a pity if we should allow this discussion to diverge into questions such as free trade and protection, or the depreciation of silver, however important they may be of themselves. I think our friend who spoke so ably with respect to the advantages which the mother country gets from her Colonies and the lack of advantages which the Colonies get from the mother country, rather overlooked one or two points which are to be made in favour of the present connection. He compared the Colonies to the United States, and he seemed to overlook altogether the fact that the United States has very large independent establishments and is obliged to maintain a large diplomatic service, and also a considerable establishment of ships, and to spend a considerable amount of money for the protection of its trades. All that is done extremely efficiently for the Colonies by the mother country. I am not speaking now of the naval part of the protection, but in so far as the diplomatic part is concerned, I think that is well done, and I hope it is efficiently done by the representatives of Her Majesty in foreign parts of the world. If the Colonies were to separate from England they would have to do that for themselves, and to undertake a considerable expense. I think that is a question which has been to a certain extent overlooked. We have been told this is a question of Imperial policy, and undoubtedly a question of Imperial policy is one which is not likely to be overlooked by the Colonies. I was inclined to say that one quotation made in the extremely able lecture which we had the pleasure of listening to from Sir Charles Nugent might be read in two ways, when he says, "climates, not men's minds, by travelling vary." I think we might to a great extent dispute that. It has been made an accusation against a great number of people who live in this country that they do not travel, and that they do not understand in what Great Britain's Empire consists,—in fact that we are too parochial in our tendencies. Now I think that those who belong to the Colonies have a very clear idea that this great country is a great Empire. I think even those people in this country who go through the Suez Canal, and make possibly a holiday trip to Australia, come back with very enlarged notions of the greatness of this great Empire, and therefore I am inclined to say that that quotation made by Sir Charles Nugent may certainly be read in both ways, and I think our conceptions of this great Empire are enlarged very considerably by travelling. On the question of Imperial Federation I am quite sure that all those who were present at Captain Colomb's lecture, and those present to day, must be convinced that that is a necessity. I do not think we here have any "craven fear of being great," and I do not think we need consult any other countries as to whether we confederate for our own advantages or not. The question which has interested me is that I think some attempt should be made towards finding a practical solution of this great difficulty—how confederation is to be effected. I listened carefully to Captain Colomb's able lecture, and as far as I recollect the only thing he said on that point was that he thought that if some of our statesmen and some from the Colonies sat round a table, they would find a reasonable scheme. It was a very easy thing to say. No doubt there was a great deal of truth in it, but at the same time that does not advance us very far, and I think we have not advanced very much further to-day. We have been informed of the commercial difficulty, and that unquestionably is a very great one. I do not wish anyone to suppose that I underrate that difficulty; on the contrary I rate it so very highly that, having said that, I shall proceed to avoid it altogether for the present, because my wish is if possible to give some intimation as to how some attempts might be made towards the commencement of Federation. There are very few of us here present who have not read something at least of that charming book written by Mr. Froude,—"*Oceana*"—and we know very well that he thinks that some sort of Federation might be com-

menced through the Navy. On his arrival at Adelaide he is shown a little ship which his Colonial friends point out as their naval defence. He thinks that is very poor work,—it is only a little painted toy, it may look very smart but is no use for modern warfare,—and he says they would do much better to pay their money and to subscribe towards the maintenance of our Imperial Navy. I am obliged to digress into these particulars because there is a great point in that. Mr. Froude thinks it is simply a question of paying the money. I am quite aware the Admiralty would give us another version of that,—that this great desire to be joined to the Imperial Navy and to see the same flag, the flag of England, waving over the ships which they have assisted to pay for,—that this is a very natural, a very proper and very Imperial desire, but I think the Admiralty would say, and I believe truly, that the Colonists will wish to see something for their money. That is what the Admiralty will say,—when they subscribe in this way 50,000*l.* or 100,000*l.* a year, they will want to see their 100,000*l.* There will be certain people, whether from Adelaide, Melbourne or Sydney, who will say, “We have paid 100,000*l.* towards the Imperial Navy, where are the ships?” “They are protecting British interests in the Fijis and other places.” “Oh, but the Fijis do not pay for them.” I think that is the practical difficulty. Now I wish to explain how that may be got over. It appears to me it would be quite possible for ships which are intended to be used in our various Colonies to be practically paid for by the Colonies, that is to say, those ships that are for harbour use. Assume for the same argument that that little squadron which we have now at Melbourne, commanded by a Post Captain in the Navy, and which consists of one ironclad and a couple of gunboats, and a few torpedo-boats, if that were considered the harbour defence of that Colony, the ships not to be moved away except by permission of the Colonial Government, but that they were to all intents and purposes Imperial ships, the Admiralty manning them and appointing the Officers to command this Colonial branch of the Imperial Navy, it seems to me that would meet our difficulties to a very great extent. They would then have the benefit of the Imperial Admiralty superintendence, they would have Imperial Officers, the Imperial flag, the Imperial discipline, and that nevertheless the Colony would see something for its money. Of course these vessels not being used for the South Seas, and not being as a general rule taken away from their Colonies, I can quite understand we should still have to pay for the ocean service as it were, but that is a matter of detail subsequently. It might be arranged that in addition to that the Colonies should be good enough to make a grant towards the Imperial Navy which was going to the South Seas. It seems to me some course such as that might be adopted, and that so we should obviate the difficulty which would naturally arise. The question of the flag is an extremely important one. We often talk sentimentally and we often talk figuratively of one flag. It means a great deal, and the one flag is one thing which the Colonists would like to see flying over the men-of-war which come to their ports. I wish distinctly to convey that that is the whole point of what I propose now, it is that the flag should be flown over ships manned from the Imperial Navy acting under the orders of the Admiral on the station, but with an understanding that they should not be moved away from that Colony without the assent of the Colonial authorities. I look forward then to that one flag being something which would be making a start, and that start would be made by the Imperial Navy. I refer once more to “*Oceana*,” and recollect how Mr. Froude tells us that the success of our Colonial Empire is due to the Navy, and if I have spoken at greater length than I intended with reference to detail, it is because I think detail has not been sufficiently considered. I propose then to begin with one flag, and under one flag we should have one policy and one Empire.

The CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, I see the warning hand of the clock, and those who are accustomed to these discussions tell us that we must bring these proceedings, interesting as they are, to a close. Before doing so perhaps I shall have leave to make a very few remarks, and first of all let me say how sure I am that the heartiest thanks of this meeting will be given to Sir Charles Nugent for the extremely able and interesting paper which he has read to us. As to the question before us to-day, we are carrying on an adjourned discussion upon Captain Colomb's paper, which we are, so to speak, interweaving with the subjects which

arise under Sir Charles Nugent's paper, and those two papers together form, as it seems to me, a very homogeneous and complete subject-matter for consideration. The discussion this afternoon has, perhaps, ranged rather more over the political and commercial side of the question than over the military, but in this theatre it must never be forgotten how very much a part of this matter the naval and military consideration must be. I would venture to put before this meeting as clearly as I can that there are two aspects to be considered—first of all the naval and military aspect, and, secondly, the question of Federation itself as connected with that naval and military aspect. Let me say a very few words on the first of those. I would urge that the naval and military aspect is at the present day one of vital importance. Sir Charles Nugent touched upon it with reference to that gravest of all questions, our food supply from over the sea, the diminishing power of this country to keep its population in time of war, the incalculably enormous value of the carrying trade to us in a commercial aspect, and the risks that that carrying trade would be exposed to in time of war. He did not, however, dwell upon one other point which must never be lost sight of—the wasteful and ruinous character of naval and military scares at times when war is supposed to be threatening. Gentlemen, I have had, I am sorry to say, some experience of what those scares are, and I wish that any words of mine could convey to the country not only the gross impolicy of leaving matters alone up to the point when it becomes necessary to improvise fortifications and to devise military and naval expedients at the last moment under pressure of war, but also the ruinous character of those expedients when they are devised—money often thrown away, and even worse, because at the conclusion of the whole matter things are left in a position in which statesmen and Governments are tempted to rely upon these temporary expedients that have been devised until a fresh and perhaps still greater danger arises. Now, during the last year and a half or two years something has been done in the way of military fortification in our distant stations. I am quite aware that a considerable amount of money is being spent at Hong Kong and Singapore, but when credit is taken for that, let me remind this meeting that it is done almost entirely at the present moment at the expense of the Colonies themselves. England has, as far as I know, contributed extremely little to that outlay. We shall of course provide the armaments, but as far as I know the armaments are not in position, and the greater portion of the expense is being incurred by the Colonies themselves. Precisely the same thing may be said of two great and responsible and self-governing Colonies, Victoria and New South Wales. There, by the vigour and energy of those noble Colonies, very great and useful works are being undertaken, not one hour too soon, and a large sum of money has already been expended; but that has been entirely and solely at the expense of the Colonies, and, as far as I know, we have not subscribed one shilling towards it. I do not complain of that; it is right. If I had time to argue it, I should say that the Colonies are wise in spending that money on their self-defence; but, on the other hand, that we are bound also to give them all the assistance of our fleet in that part of the world. I might go further and say, if time allowed, how much remains of almost vital consequence which is left undefended both at home and abroad. I will not touch upon the home question, but I do say with the deepest sorrow that in spite of everything that has been urged by those who are familiar with this subject, the Cape still remains absolutely unfortified. Now, if there is any one single outpost of the British Empire in which the defence of our enormous Colonies is wrapped up, it is the Cape of Good Hope. The Suez Canal is doubtless of very great importance, but I believe there are many who will agree with me that enormous as the value of the Suez Canal is, the importance of the Cape is at least equal to it. For that nothing whatever has been done in spite of argument and earnest appeal. It is not that this Institute has to be blamed in that respect, for within these walls the voices of most eminent Officers have been lifted up on this subject; it is not the fault of the military or the naval profession, they have spoken out in no doubtful terms, it is not the fault of the press, they have exposed our dangers and difficulties over and over again. Nor can I take the blame to myself, for having been Chairman of the Defence Commission abroad,

and having sat on that for three years, together with some most able colleagues, and having expended an enormous amount of time and trouble over the subject, I have been compelled in the name of that Commission to protest against the negligence that was bringing this Empire into extreme danger. But the constitution of Government, of Parliament, and of public opinion is such that great questions are put aside for little ones, subjects of merely passing and ephemeral interest are allowed to usurp attention; there is a terror of spending 1,000*l.* now, when 100,000*l.* may be required a few months afterwards to redeem it, and above all there is a total absence of that continuity of policy without which the stability of Government cannot be insured. Well, that is the military and the naval aspect of the matter stated very shortly; now, let me say a few words on the second branch of the question, Federation, and how far that is interwoven, so to say, with military and naval considerations. I can assume the truth of what has been urged here this afternoon of the many and varied difficulties which beset this question. Admiral Fremantle said that he had hoped that a complete and actual scheme of Federation would have been laid before us. Gentlemen, I have heard this subject too long and too often discussed to indulge the hope that any actual scheme can be laid before us in a few hours' discussion; it is full of difficulties, and those difficulties are alike theoretical and practical. But I will venture to lay down three or four propositions: the first is this, that in my conscience I now believe the time has come when the bonds of England and her Colonies may be drawn much closer and tighter, but what this closeness should be in the way of political constitution I do not at this moment undertake to say. It would require a long time to define it or to approach it, but I say the time has come when those bonds should be more closely drawn. And in the next place I do not believe that there is any real or practical obstacle in the way. It was but a few weeks since that I was talking to a man of great Colonial authority and experience, Sir Alexander Stewart. It was, perhaps, the last political conversation in which he engaged, and I, without breaking any of the confidences of private talk, may at least say this much, that I think he agreed with me in believing, as I said, that the time had come for Federation, but that it was necessary to approach it by degrees and cautiously, that we must not in fact hope to devise at once a scheme that would provide for every condition and requirement, and that we must be prepared to go on tentatively step by step winning our way by solid, but at the same time by very gradual progress. And, thirdly, I will lay down this, that the complete defence of your coaling stations and your outposts abroad has, in the altered conditions of modern warfare, become absolutely essential for your Colonial no less than for your English commerce. Gentlemen, the conditions of war have greatly changed. Strangely enough, the conditions of attack and defence have been moving almost in parallel lines, and as one has advanced a little ahead of the other, so the other has in turn taken the lead. In one respect it may be described as favourable, and in another respect as unfavourable to us. But the one single condition which never can be lost sight of is that steam, and that which engenders steam, the supply of coal, has become the main factor in the commercial, political, military, and naval sum with which you have to deal, and unless those stations are adequately defended, there is no security for Colonial commerce any more than there is for English. But that can be done. The Commission of which I was Chairman proved that it could be done effectively, and at the same time at a moderate expense. And, fourthly, I would say that the feeling for a closer connection in these respects is one growing in the Colonies quite as much as it is in England, and I can speak on these points from the experience unfortunately now of a good many years. My whole public life has been, so to speak, colonially trained. When I went into the Colonial Office, as I think my friend Sir Charles Nugent has been kind enough to recall, as an Under-Secretary in 1854, I remember well what the feeling was then. I think indeed as Under-Secretary for the Colonial Office it was my business in those days to lay before the late Lord Derby the estimate for the first Colonial man-of-war that was ever sent out, I believe, the "*Cerberus*" at Melbourne. At all events, I remember well what the feeling was in 1859; I remember that what is now considered as commonplace could not then have been said. I remember again the state of feeling as to

the relations of the Colonies and the mother country when I was Secretary of State in 1867-68, and I remember noticing how great the advance had been. I remember again in 1874, during the time I held office as Colonial Minister, how many things it was possible to propose and to do which ten years earlier would have been impracticable. And, lastly, I remember what the feeling was as shown to me, and to the Commission of which I was Chairman from 1879 to 1882, and again how great the move in public feeling was. When my mind travels back over those four successive stages of Colonial experience I can only sum it up in this, that there has been an enormous advance of Colonial feeling in the direction which I have indicated, as indeed there has been in England on the same subject. And now, fifthly and lastly, I would say, that viewing as I do this Imperial Federation as the object to be secured, but perhaps not to be secured at once by any one Colonial chart or scheme complete in all its parts, but rather to be won by discussion and argument and step by step, I believe that there is no one measure which more directly tends to the object we have in view than that of military and naval defence. Military and naval defence seems to me at this moment the key-stone of Imperial Federation, and those who desire, as I do from the bottom of my heart, Imperial Federation, will keep their eyes steadily fixed upon that question of military and naval defence, because sure I am that that is the first, the most obvious, and the most expedient step to take in that direction. I say the most obvious and the most direct because the objections to it are none at all, the advantages of it are manifold, visible, almost tangible, and it is free from many of the complications which come in in so many other aspects of this large and grave question. Admiral Fremantle touched in this respect on one very interesting point—the different terms upon which we should enter into partnership, so to say, with some of those great Colonies in naval matters. I should take up a great deal too much of your time if I were even to argue that one single point. I will only say I have often and often considered it, and although I fully admit that there is the difficulty that these Colonists who have paid for their ships might be dissatisfied if they saw those ships taken away to a distant part of the Empire, still I do not look upon the difficulty as at all insuperable. I believe it can be overcome, and I would even say on that one particular point that it must be remembered that it often happens that the fortune of a war is debated, not on the particular point of the frontier on which the inhabitants would desire the battle to take place, but it may be fought 100 miles or even 500 miles distant; that in fact the fortunes of New South Wales might be decided at the Fiji Islands in time of war. That is a self-evident proposition, and no military or naval man would for a moment think of disputing it. It might be that the great battle of the campaign might be fought 1,000 miles off, and possibly in that case every Australian ship not only should be there, but would desire to be there on the spot to take part in it. There are many ways in which a partnership can be carried out. It might be by the Colonists themselves providing the ships; it might be by the Colonists providing money contributions; it might be by a closer union between this country and the Colonies, such as already been begun through naval cadetships, and which I hope may be carried through much further; and generally, I may say, I subscribe to what Admiral Fremantle has said, in desiring to see the Colonial and English Navy identified, living, sailing, fighting under one and the same flag. As regards the military side of the question, I believe for my own part that there are excellent materials in point of men in these great Colonies; all that they need is organization and discipline, and that organization should be, I hold, provided by the mother country; it alone can supply it. It is not to be had on the spot, and it can be supplied without any great expense or any great trouble by us. In the same way there are at this moment no adequate supplies of arms or ammunition or ordnance, and it seems to me wrong that distant Colonies should have to depend entirely upon Woolwich and Elswick in these matters. And now I have said enough on this subject; I will only close by saying this, that I believe there ought to be an understanding and co-operation with these great Colonies. An understanding I believe would prevent any serious obstacle if it be approached in the right spirit. Co-operation we have lately had ample evidence will be given by our great Colonies the moment it is needed. Both Canada and New South Wales

during the Egyptian campaign amply proved it. I, for one, therefore, believe heartily in Imperial Federation; I believe in it from its military, its political, and to a certain extent from its commercial side. I acknowledge the difficulties, but I believe that they can be overcome, and I rejoice when I see in a great and important Institution like this, which naturally exercises great weight, to listen to the opinions that we have heard which have been expressed in no faltering terms, and with no uncertain sound.

Admiral Right Hon. Sir J. D. HAY, Bart.: I hope the meeting will allow me to propose that we offer our thanks to Lord Carnarvon for having presided over us. We have been very fortunate to-day not only in the lecturer, but in the Chairman. The words they have spoken I think will do much to cement the union between the Colonies and the mother country if that be needed, and also to carry forward the great work of Imperial Federation which we all desire.

Admiral Sir E. FANSHAW: I beg leave to second the resolution. We have always felt it to be of great advantage to this Institution when, on the occasion of an important lecture, such as the one of this afternoon, we are favoured with the presence of an eminent statesman in the chair, and we feel this most emphatically upon this occasion. We have to thank Lord Carnarvon not only for taking the chair and regulating our proceedings, but also for giving us a most interesting historical description of the progress of the Federation question with the Colonies in its most important aspect—namely, the military and naval defence of the British Empire. I am sure the discussion of this afternoon will be received with the greatest interest by the two professions which this Institution represents.

The CHAIRMAN: I am very much obliged to you for the compliment that has just been paid to me. It has been a matter of great interest to me to be present this afternoon.