

**FEDERATION, COLONIAL AND BRITISH,  
BEING AN EXPOSITION OF THE  
FEDERAL SYSTEMS OF SWITZERLAND,  
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,  
CANADA AND GERMANY**

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**C. STUART-CANSELL**

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# FEDERATION, COLONIAL AND BRITISH.

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*Being an Exposition of the Federal Systems of  
Switzerland, the United States of America,  
Canada and Germany,  
in aid of the formation of suitable Constitutions for  
the effectuation of Australasian and British  
Federation, with suggestions as to many  
direct and indirect advantages.*

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BY C. STUART-CANSELL,

BARRISTER-AT-LAW, OF THE INNER TEMPLE AND SUPREME COURTS  
OF NEW SOUTH WALES, QUEENSLAND AND TASMANIA; AND  
FORMERLY JUDGE OF THE WESTERN DISTRICT COURTS  
OF NEW SOUTH WALES.



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## PREFACE.

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The object of this little work is to arouse public interest in a subject of vital importance to the British peoples; whether of one hemisphere or the other. In view of what other nations have done, the British must Federate or fall back in the race. With Federation they will preserve pre-eminence, without it they can never hold their place. Germany with its forty millions of Federated peoples threatens British trade, and America with its sixty millions, who know the value of unity, already outrivals Britain in many productions and industries.

Two great questions depend upon British Union. Defence and Trade. Federation, and Federation only, can secure the integrity of the British Dominions. Federation, and Federation only, can preserve the trade of the British peoples for themselves. The most favoured nations should be those of their own possessions. These ends secured, then, trade following the British alliance flag will secure developments, over Dominions exceeding 10,000,000 of square miles, which can never be approached by any save the United States, themselves British in race, and rivals only in progress.

Colonial Federation is a large, important and needful part of Union, but British-Colonial Federation can alone secure Colonial safety and a continuity of British supremacy. On the other hand British or Colonial indifference will court destruction of British trade and disintegration of the British possessions.

And yet the movement has but limited support on either side of the world. The Britisher and the Australian-Britisher are equally too intent upon the profits of their own daily concerns to see how nearly the question affects them. One threat of a common foe would doubtless find them united to a man for defence. But a little enquiry would show them, why and how, other great nations have federated, and with what better effect, even for the purposes of defence, than a mere hasty alliance could give. To assist this enquiry, an epitome is here presented of so much of the histories of those countries which have developed their own federation as will teach us what to adopt and what to reject.

Upon a wise determination of these points will depend whether the British peoples maintain their position or degenerate into an inferior power. Every man, aye, and every woman, should study the question—the great question of the day—and conventions of the peoples should alone decide.

C. S. C.







# FEDERATION,

## *COLONIAL AND BRITISH.*

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The federation of the Australasian Colonies having been brought into prominence by proposals for a fitting scheme, the publication of an Exposition of the various methods of Federal Union now in operation and capable of development, seems to be the necessity of the hour.

And more especially so, because, while no question of greater importance ever engaged the attention of the present generation, there is perhaps no proposal of equal weight which is so little understood, even by some who affect to lead upon the question.

Much misunderstanding of the matter has been induced by the terms, Colonial and Imperial Federation, being commonly treated as identical. Few seem to realize the truth, that though allied subjects, they are actually distinct. And yet, while, so distinct, that either might exist without the other, they are nevertheless the natural complement of each other. Unfortunately however, the whole subject has been so much discussed under the title of "Imperial Federation" as to have favoured objections which would otherwise never have been raised.

Some look upon it therefore as covering a scheme, by which much of the parliamentary rights and privileges of each colony to govern itself, will be taken away and given to an Imperial or at least a Federal Senate, forgetful of the fact, that no such sacrifice can be enforced save with their own assent.

Some regard it with favour, but with only a vague idea of the advantages it will give, or of the unreasonable price at which, if initiated under bad counsels, it may perhaps be purchased.

Some look upon it with disfavour but for no more weighty reason, than that they possess an overweening confidence in the power of their own particular colony to bear its own burdens and protect itself against any foes.

Some regard it as promoted by sister colonies who see in it a means of keeping out British goods, by imposing heavy duties thereon, and then by a system of intercolonial free trade, to compel the purchase of their own manufactures at advanced prices.

And some fancy they see in the proposal, a scheme on behalf of and in the interests of the Mother Country, by which her rulers hope to resume a supremacy, which she long since most generously relinquished.

Of all these objections none are more absurd than this last. The Mother Country has freely given her Colonies full ownership of their lands and the privilege of self-government under their own independent parliaments and she is glad to be relieved for ever, of the responsibilities of directing their local affairs.

The Mother Country has really no interests which are antagonistic to those of her Colonies. Imperial interests, about which sometimes, much is vaguely urged, as if they were matters exclusively advantageous to Britain, are really chiefly centered in the preservation of its commerce, and that necessarily includes the commerce of its enormous and widely scattered dominions. In this duty, Imperial and Colonial interests are reciprocal and their joint action, is a fitting subject for Federal Union.

The unemployed capital of the Mother Country, in swelling colonial investments by constantly increasing millions builds up new industries and develops new resources. Her merchants, in importing the varied products of her illimitable possessions must enrich Colonial producers. Her countless ships, which are ever passing between her shores and those of the young nations she has founded, bear to and fro, tens of thousands of her peoples day by day, and rich freights, the products of her mills and works, in profitable exchange, for those of her colonial lands and mines. In that enormous trade, larger than was ever realized at any prior time, within the history of the world, we may see the solid and enduring interests, not less valuable to her colonies, than to herself, which bind them together in the golden bonds of mutual profit. This trade which now totals beyond a thousand million pounds in each year, is destined to a prodigious enlargement in the future.

But the riches which comprise this trade, afloat and ashore, and in which she and her colonists are mutually interested, would

afford grand prizes to the rapacity of an enemy. They therefore need to be assured of protection, both at sea and on land. Suppose war to break out, and, unless known to be well prepared, break out it will and just perhaps when it is least expected,— what disasters, what stagnation of trade, what losses will then ensue not only to British merchants but to Colonial producers? And those losses, great though they will be to England, will be greater still to Colonial enterprise. To the merchant princes of the Mother Country, the heaviest losses of even a prolonged war would be but a small part of their great wealth: to Colonial interests they would be overwhelming. For this reason and for this reason alone, even if all others were deemed insufficient, is both Colonial and Imperial Federation needed; since nothing short of that, can secure adequate powers of defence.

But the title of "British Federation" is greatly to be preferred to that of "Imperial", because the prefix Imperial is misleading, as seeming to many, to imply an intention of the Crown to reassume in part, the Government of Colonial affairs. No one who has perused the proposals, of the men of mark, who constitute the "Imperial Federation League," will believe that the Crown desires to take away one jot of the present independence of the Colonies. Still, it cannot be too strongly urged that the word "Imperial," implies a drawing of all together, under one head, which is very different to an union for special purposes only. It savours too much of sovereign power, to sound pleasantly, in the ears of those, who have now the right to govern themselves and know how to value the privilege. And as association of ideas, has much influence in the formation of public opinion, a word, which may but only seem to support the suspicion of ill-wishers, and so invites opposition, is best avoided.

For these reasons it is a matter of regret to many loyal supporters of an United Empire, that the broader and more truly august title of "British Federation League, for promoting an Union of all British races" was not chosen; and it would be well to amend it now. Such amendment would remove the unfounded doubts of many and give a great impetus to the cause.

The British public, by whom the political constitution of the Australian Colonies is still but imperfectly understood, will better appreciate the spirit of this suggestion, if they bear in mind, that those Colonies have each so long enjoyed, the practically unrestricted right to govern themselves, in accordance with the laws of their own separate parliaments, that it may be accepted as certain, they will never yield to the supremacy of any Federal Council or Senate, or even to the Mother Country, one iota of those rights of Self-government, which they have received as her generous gift, beyond what is absolutely necessary to secure an approved system of Federal Union—British and Colonial,