

religion, than any of the great empires of antiquity. Comparing it with modern great territorial dominions, it is next in extent to British North America, the United States, Russia, and China. But it is far more fertile and forty times as populous as the first; it has four times the population of the second; three times that of the third, and stands second only to the last. Africa has a greater area, but a less population. Europe, excluding Russia and Scandinavia, has about the same area and population, but not an equal diversity of race, religion, or language. It has an area thirteen times that of Great Britain and Ireland, and almost eight times their population. It is rich in natural endowments—in stupendous mountains, great rivers, fertile plains, and can produce almost anything in abundance that human ingenuity and civilization may demand, while its inhabitants generally are industrious, peaceful, and intellectual. It is eight thousand miles away from our own coasts, and fourteen thousand as it has usually been reached. We went there with no thought of conquest and possession. History proves that we did not dream of these, and that not seldom we have shrunk from forward movements with dismay. The people are alien to us in almost every feature of nationality—in race, language, color, religion; and yet with apparently the most inadequate resources, and no strain but twice, on our power, we have marched on absorbing kingdoms, States, tribes, until directly or indirectly our empire includes one sixth of the human race, speaking a hundred different languages and dialects. And these great nationalities and numerous tribes are governed with marvellous ease and with the slightest display of forces.

Such is India physically and racially; but since it is our purpose to describe what is being done for its conversion to the Christian faith, it is advisable to state its present leading religious features.

The aboriginal races are least known, and differ widely from one another, but yet more from the great cults around them. In number they probably exceed the entire population of British North America, Australia, and New Zealand.

The Hindus are almost as numerous as all Protestants and members of the Greek Church combined, or the aggregate populations of France, Germany, Austria, Italy, and Great Britain. They are united by the supposed ties of a common origin, mythology, and caste; but the twelve or fourteen great clans and nationalities into which they are separated differ in language, physique, and mental idiosyncrasy from each other almost as much as do the great nationalities of Europe.

Next in order of time come the Mohammedans—one fifth of the entire population of the empire and more than one fourth of the Mohammedan world. All who profess Islam in Turkey, Persia, Arabia, and the five States of Northern Africa fall short of the number of their co-religionists in India. Their simple dogmatic faith gives them great coherence and unity, though in origin and race they differ greatly, for while the moiety of them are of distinct foreign origin—descendants of the long procession