

THE GREATNESS OF ENGLAND.

The interest in the development of English history and in the growth of the English character lies in the fact that England has so far best solved the problem of just government. That she has in fact done so appears to be proved by the almost universal consent of nations. This consent is shown by the practical adoption of forms of government and methods of administration, first wrought out on English soils, by all nations which for the past century have taken their place in the line of human progress.

The problem presented by Roman history, is so far the simpler, because we can trace its historical development, until the work of human progress for which Rome toiled is taken up by other hands. The English character and English history present harder problems, because English history has not yet run its course. The future is still veiled from our view.

National character is a very complex product. Racial elements, the influence of external events, the growth of internal institutions, all combine in determining the final result. The aim of statesmen in ancient times was the establishment of order, the formation, therefore, of a strong central executive. Rome ultimately accomplished this, but in the process exhausted the forces of the State. But the lesson was not forgotten. The idea of a strong central power was the aim of all European nations during the middle ages. How to preserve that power, what is the source of it, how to limit it, on what does it ultimately depend for its continued existence and efficient working, are the questions which English history tries to answer. The final resultant of the diverse lines of struggle, political and social (the two factors are never wholly identical) is at any given epoch, the national character.

The growth and the security of the liberty of the individual, the possession by all of an equality of rights are the special contribution of the Teutonic people. The struggle of ideas here implied, the idea of power and the idea of liberty, has had a fair field and no favor in England alone of European countries. This is the distinct note of her nationality. Upon the