

a whole can retain the leadership of the world. But meanwhile the growth, the grouping, the inter-relations of the heirs of the Roman Empire have provided incessant problems for the two thousand years since. It is an acute crisis in this movement which is now upon us.

For though the hegemony of one State in the world has passed for ever, there is still somewhere a leading force in the world's progress, a nucleus of stronger and more civilized nations who contain among them the fruits of man's evolution in far greater abundance and better diffused than among the remaining less-advanced peoples of the globe. There is a vanguard, which may lead if it will.

A concert of leading nations, bound one to another by links of high achievement in science and the arts of life, in political organization and outlook on the world, pressing on in friendly rivalry to greater strength and prosperity for themselves, while guiding and helping the more backward races,—this has been the generous ideal of multitudes of thinkers in all ages ever since the break-up of the Roman Empire destroyed the temporary hope of a world-wide civilization, diffused from one centre. It has taken various colours in successive epochs. The Catholic thinkers of the Middle Ages saw it in the light of a religious unity binding the most distant and diverse nations in a common hope under a common head. The better minds of the Renaissance, such as those who inspired the testament of Henri IV, saw it as a political alliance of independent States under enlightened rulers. The eighteenth century conceived the notion of free national democracies handing on the light to peoples sitting in the darkness and the twilight. But again and again the vision has been broken and hopes dashed to the ground by disasters