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Nationalism.

A Summary of the Address Given Before the Y.M.C.A. by Prof. Morison.

I shall not endeavor to take an impartial view of the question but content myself with stating the case as it presents itself to a British Liberal who holds to the Gladstonian tradition.

It is not easy to define in a sentence what constitutes a nation. It may be racial purity, or a continuous habitation of one country and subjection to the same external influences, or historic forces such as conquest, or the operation through centuries of the rule of a strong dynasty. Or again as natural or physical forces create a national unit, literature and the influence of commanding personalities or of great events, themselves the offspring of the movement, become essential elements in the further development of nationality. A nation is the most complex political and social unit which yet remains psychologically a unit. But as Lord Acton has pointed out in a pregnant essay, when we turn to government as a factor in nationality difficulties arise. On the one hand a true nation is obviously always one that has achieved some form of government appropriate to itself; on the other hand it is possible that the instinctive, impulsive, natural elements of nationality may find themselves in opposition to some higher conscious element of national unity, the state, which potentially includes within it all that the other elements stand for, and, in addition, "an authority governing by laws, imposing obligations and giving a moral sanction and character to the natural relations of society."

For historical reasons European movements towards nationality have exhibited features mainly impulsive and natural. For dynasties, not peoples, controlled Europe before the Revolution, and it was not until Napoleon, last of the older despots, but also first of modern political forces, struck Europe like a whirlwind, and ruined the ancient dynastic edifices, that nationalism appeared. Then, in spite of Austrian conservatism and the union of despotic Europe, the forces of nationalism became supreme; and Greece, Belgium, Italy and Germany, emerged as nations. Nor has the movement yet ceased. It operates still, but now in excess, in Pan-Germanism and Pan-Slavism; and the Armed Peace is, in a sense, the natural outcome of nationality reduced ad absurdum.

But Britain, almost the first of powers to reach the natural phase of nationality, found herself pushed on by circumstances into higher realms of nationality. By reckless adventure, honest conscientious colonization, and