

the national character deteriorate. Neither dignity, elevation of sentiment, nor refinement of manners is cultivated. Still more fatal consequences, the very ark of the nation is carried periodically into heady fights; for the time being, the citizen has no country; he has only his party, and the unity of the country is constantly imperilled. On the other hand, a despotism is based entirely on the element of authority.

To unite those elements, in due proportions, has been and is the aim of every true statesman. Let the history of liberty and progress, of the development of human character to all its rightful issues, testify where they have been more wisely blended than in the British Constitution.

We have a fixed centre of authority and government, a fountain of honour above us that all reverence, from which a thousand gracious influences come down to every rank; and, along with that fixity, representative institutions, so elastic that they respond within their own sphere to every breath of popular sentiment, instead of a cast-iron yoke for four years. In harmony with this central part of our constitution, we have an independent judiciary instead of judges—too often the creatures of wealth, adventurers on the mere echoes of passing popular sentiment.—And, more valuable than even the direct advantages, are the subtle, indirect influences that flow from our living in unbroken connection with the old land, and the dynamical if imponderable forces that determine the tone and mould the character of a people.

“In our halls is hung armoury of the invincible knights of old.” Ours’ are the old history, the misty past, the graves of forefathers. Ours the names ‘to which a thousand memories call.’ Ours is the flag; ours the Queen whose virtues transmute the sacred principle of loyalty into a personal affection.