SUPPOSING the free grouping of the nations according to their natural affinities, sentiments, sense of economic and other convenience to be the final basis of a stable world-union, the next question that arises is what precisely would be the status of these nation-units in the larger and more complex unity of mankind. Would they possess only a nominal separateness and become parts of a machine or retain a real and living individuality and an effective freedom and organic life? Practically, this comes to the question whether the ideal of human unity points to the forcible or at least forceful fusing and welding of mankind into a single vast nation and centralised world-state with many provinces or to its aggregation under a more complex, loose and flexible system into a world-union of free nationalities. If the former more rigorous idea or tendency or need dominated, we must have a period of compression, constriction, negation of national and individual liberties as in the second of the three historical stages of national formation in Europe. This process would end, if entirely successful, in a centralised world-government which would impose its uniform rule and law, uniform administration, uniform economic and educational system, one culture, one social principle, one civilisation, perhaps even one language and one religion on all mankind. Centralised, it would delegate some of its powers to national authorities and councils, but only as the centralised French government—Parliament and bureaucracy—delegate some of their powers to the departmental prefects and councils and their subordinate officials and communes.

Such a state of things seems a sufficiently far-off dream and
assuredly not, except to the rigid doctrinaire, a very beautiful dream. Certainly, it would take a long time to become entirely practicable and would have to be preceded by a period of loose formation corresponding to the feudal unity of France or Germany in mediaeval Europe. Still, at the rate of ever accelerated speed with which the world is beginning to progress and with the gigantic revolutions of international thought, outlook and practice which the future promises, we have to envisage it as not only an ultimate, but, it may very well be, a not immeasurably far-off possibility. If things continued to move persistently, victoriously in one direction and Science still farther to annihilate the obstacles of space and of geographical and mental division which yet exist and to aggrandise its means and powers of vast and close organisation, it might well become feasible within a century or two, at the most within three or four. It would be the logical conclusion of any process in which force and constraint or the predominance of a few great nations or the emergence of a king-state, an empire predominant on sea and land, became the principal instrument of unification. It might come about, supposing some looser unity to be already established, by the triumph throughout the world of the political doctrine and the coming to political power of a party of socialistic and internationalistic doctrinaires alike in mentality to the unitarian Jacobins of the French Revolution who would have no tenderness for the sentiments of the past or for any form of group individualism and would seek to crush out of existence all their visible supports so as to establish perfectly their idea of an absolute human equality and unity.

A system of the kind, however established, by whatever forces, governed by the democratic State idea which inspires modern socialism or by the mere State idea socialistic perhaps, but undemocratic or anti-democratic, would stand upon the principle that perfect unity is only to be realised by uniformity. All thought in fact that seeks to establish unity by mechanical or external means is naturally attracted towards uniformity. Its thesis would seem to be supported by history and the lessons of the past; for in the formation of national unity, the trend to
centralisation and uniformity has been the decisive factor, a condition of uniformity the culminating point. The precedent of the formation of diverse and often conflicting elements of a people into a single national State would naturally be the determining precedent for the formation of the populations of the earth, the human people, into a single world-nation and World-State. In modern times there have been significant examples of the power of this trend towards uniformity which increases as civilisation progresses. The Turkish movement began with the ideal of toleration for all the heterogeneous elements — races, languages, religions, cultures — of the ramshackle Turkish empire, but inevitably the dominant Young Turk element was carried away by the instinct for establishing, even by coercion, a uniform Ottoman culture and Ottoman nationality.1 Belgium, composed almost equally of Teutonic Flemings and Gallic Walloons, grew into a nationality under the aegis of a Franco-Belgian culture with French as the dominant language; the Fleming movement which should logically have contented itself with equal rights for the two languages, aimed really at a reversal of the whole position and not merely the assertion but the dominance of the Flemish language and an indigenous Flemish culture. Germany, uniting her ancient elements into one body, suffered her existing States with their governments and administrations to continue, but the possibility of considerable diversities thus left open was annulled by the centralisation of national life in Berlin; a nominal separateness existed, but overshadowed by a real and dominant uniformity which all but converted Germany into the image of a larger Prussia in spite of the more democratic and humanistic tendencies and institutions of the Southern States. There are indeed apparent types of a freer kind of federation, Switzerland, the United States, Australia, South Africa, but even here the spirit of uniformity really prevails or tends to prevail in spite of variation in detail and the latitude of free legislation in minor

1 This trend has found its completion, after the elimination of the Greek element and the loss of the empire, in the small purely Turkish State of today, but curiously the national uniformity has been topped by the association with it and assimilation of European culture and social forms and habits.
matters conceded to the component States. Everywhere unity seems to call for and strive to create a greater or less uniformity as its secure basis.

The first uniformity from which all the rest takes its start is that of a centralised government whose natural function is to create and ensure a uniform administration. A central government is necessary to every aggregate which seeks to arrive at an organic unity of its political and economic life. Although nominally or to begin with this central government may be only an organ created by several States that still claim to be sovereign within their own borders, an instrument to which for convenience’ sake they attribute a few of their powers for common objects, yet in fact it tends always to become itself the sovereign body and desires always to concentrate more and more power into its hands and leave only delegated powers to local legislatures and authorities. The practical inconveniences of a looser system strengthen this tendency and weaken gradually the force of the safeguards erected against an encroachment which seems more and more to be entirely beneficial and supported by the logic of general utility. Even in the United States with its strong attachment to its original constitution and slowness in accepting constitutional innovations on other than local lines, the tendency is manifesting itself and would certainly have resulted by this time in great and radical changes if there had not been a Supreme Court missioned to nullify any legislative interference with the original constitution, or if the American policy of aloofness from foreign affairs and complications had not removed the pressure of those necessities that in other nations have aided the central government to engross all real power and convert itself into the source as well as the head or centre of national activities. The traditional policy of the United States, its pacifism, its anti-militarism, its aversion to entanglement in European complications or any close touch with the politics of Europe, its jealousy of interference by the European Powers in American affairs in spite of their possession of colonies and interests in the Western hemisphere, are largely due to the instinct that this separateness is the sole security for the maintenance
of its institutions and the peculiar type of its national life. Once militarised, once cast into the vortex of old-world politics, as it at times threatens to be, nothing could long protect the States from the necessity of large changes in the direction of centralisation and the weakening of the federal principle. Switzerland owes the security of its federal constitution to a similarly self-centred neutrality.

For the growth of national centralisation is due to two primary needs of which the first and most pressing is the necessity of compactness, single-mindedness, a single and concentrated action against other nations, whether for defence against external aggression or for aggression upon others in the pursuit of national interests and ambitions. The centralising effect of war and militarism, its call for a concentration of powers, has been a commonplace of history from the earliest times. It has been the chief factor in the evolution of centralised and absolute monarchies, in the maintenance of close and powerful aristocracies, in the welding together of disparate elements and the discouragement of centrifugal tendencies. The nations which, faced with this necessity, have failed to evolve or to preserve this concentration of powers, have always tended to fare ill in the battle of life, even if they have not shared the fate long endured by Italy and Poland in Europe or by India in Asia. The strength of centralised Japan, the weakness of decentralised China was a standing proof that even in modern conditions the ancient rule holds good. Only yesterday the free States of Western Europe found themselves compelled to suspend all their hard-earned liberties and go back to the ancient Roman device of an irresponsible Senate and even to a covert dictatorship in order to meet the concentrated strength of a nation powerfully centralised and organised for military defence and attack. If the sense of this necessity could covertly or overtly survive the actual duration of war, there can be no doubt that democracy and liberty would

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2 The Roosevelt policy and the difficulties it encountered illustrate vividly the power of these two conflicting forces in the United States; but the trend towards the strengthening of the federal case, however slow, is unmistakable.
receive the most dangerous and possibly fatal blow they have yet suffered since their re-establishment in modern times.3

The power of Prussia to take the life of Germany into its grasp was due almost wholly to the sense of an insecure position between two great and hostile nations and to the feeling of encirclement and insecurity for its expansion which was imposed on the Reich by its peculiar placement in Europe. Another example of the same tendency was the strength which the idea of confederation acquired as a result of war in England and her colonies. So long as the colonies could stand aloof and unaffected by England's wars and foreign policy, this idea had little chance of effectuation; but the experience of the war and its embarrassments and the patent inability to compel a concentration of all the potential strength of the empire under a system of almost total decentralisation seem to have made inevitable a tightening up of the loose and easy make of the British Empire which may go very far once the principle has been recognised and put initially into practice.4 A loose federation in one form or another serves well where peace is the rule; wherever peace is insecure or the struggle of life difficult and menacing, looseness becomes a disadvantage and may turn even into a fatal defect, the opportunity of fate for destruction.

The pressure of peril from without and the need of expansion create only the tendency towards a strong political and military centralisation; the growth of uniformity arises from the need of a close internal organisation of which the centre thus created becomes the instrument. This organisation is partly called for by the same needs as create the instrument, but much more by the advantages of uniformity for a well-ordered social and

3 Even as it is, the direction of the drive of forces tends to be evidently away from democracy towards a more and more rigid State control and regimentation.
4 As yet this has only gone so far as equality of status with close consultation in foreign affairs, attempts at a closer economic cooperation, but a continuation of large wars might either according to its fortunes dissolve the still loose or compel a more coherent system. At present, however, this possibility is held back by the arrival of true Dominion Status and the Westminster Statute which make federation unnecessary for any practical purpose and even perhaps undesirable for the sentiment in favour of a practical independence.
economic life based upon a convenience of which life is careless but which the intelligence of man constantly demands,—a clear, simple and, as far as the complexity of life will allow, a facile principle of order. The human intelligence as soon as it begins to order life according to its own fashion and not according to the more instinctively supple and flexible principle of organic order inherent in life, aims necessarily at imitating physical Nature in the fixity of her uniform fundamental principles of arrangement, but tries also to give to them, as much as may be, a uniform application. It drives at the suppression of all important variations. It is only when it has enlarged itself and feels more competent to understand and deal with natural complexities that it finds itself at all at ease in managing what the principle of life seems always to demand, the free variation and subtly diverse application of uniform principles. First of all, in the ordering of a national society, it aims naturally at uniformity in that aspect of it which most nearly concerns the particular need of the centre of order which has been called into existence, its political and military function. It aims first at a sufficient and then at an absolute unity and uniformity of administration.

The monarchies which the need of concentration called into being, drove first at a preliminary concentration, a gathering of the main threads of administration into the hands of the central authority. We see this everywhere, but the stages of the process are most clearly indicated in the political history of France; for there the confusion of feudal separatism and feudal jurisdictions created the most formidable difficulties and yet by a constant centralising insistence and a final violent reaction from their surviving results it was there that they were most successfully resolved and removed. The centralising monarchy, brought to supreme power by the repeated lessons of the English invasions, the Spanish pressure, the civil wars, developed inevitably that absolutism which the great historic figure of Louis XIV so strikingly personifies. His famous dictum, “I am the State”, expressed really the need felt by the country of the development of one undisputed sovereign power which should concentrate in itself all military, legislative and administrative authority as against
the loose and almost chaotic organisation of feudal France. The system of the Bourbons aimed first at administrative centralisation and unity, secondarily at a certain amount of administrative uniformity. It could not carry this second aim to an entirely successful conclusion because of its dependence on the aristocracy which it had replaced, but to which it was obliged to leave the confused debris of its feudal privileges. The Revolution made short work of this aristocracy and swept away the relics of the ancient system. In establishing a rigorous uniformity it did not reverse but rather completed the work of the monarchy. An entire unity and uniformity legislative, fiscal, economic, judicial, social was the goal towards which French absolutism, monarchical or democratic, was committed by its original impulse. The rule of the Jacobins and the regime of Napoleon only brought rapidly to fruition what was slowly evolving under the monarchy out of the confused organism of feudal France.

In other countries the movement was less direct and the survival of old institutions even after the loss of their original reason for existence more obstinate; but everywhere in Europe, even in Germany and Russia, the trend has been the same and the eventual result is inevitable. The study of that evolution is of considerable importance for the future; for the difficulties to be surmounted were identical in essence, however different in form and extent, to those which would stand in the way of the evolution of a world-state out of the loose and still confused organism of the modern civilised world.

5 Note the absolute culmination of this drive in Germany in the unprecedented centralisation, the rigid standardisation and uniformity of the Nationalist Socialist regime under Hitler.