

**THE RELATIONS OF THE  
ADVANCED AND  
THE BACKWARD RACES  
OF MANKIND; PP. 1-45**

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The Relations of the Advanced and the Backward Races of Mankind; pp. 1-45 by James Bryce

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**JAMES BRYCE**

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THE ROMANES LECTURE

1902

*The Relations of the  
Advanced and the Backward  
Races of Mankind*

BY

<sup>Bryce</sup> JAMES BRYCE, <sup>was correct</sup> D.C.L.

HONORARY FELLOW OF ORIEL AND TRINITY COLLEGES

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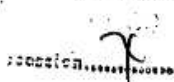
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IN the paeans that were chanted when at the opening of a new century the achievements of the century preceding were reviewed, it was chiefly the progress of the physical sciences, the enlargement of knowledge, and the control obtained over the forces of nature that filled our thoughts. But the exploration of the area, with the ascertainment of the character and resources, both actual and potential, of the globe we inhabit, was a scarcely less notable result of the nineteenth century. In one aspect it was even more remarkable, because it represented the all but final closing of one great chapter of history, the completion of one great task which Man had to do. Scientific knowledge will, we may hope, go on increasing steadily and rapidly. But the exploration of this earth is now all but finished. Civilized man knows his home in a sense in which he never knew it before. He knows how high are the mountains and how deep the seas, what are the currents that keep the ocean in salutary unrest, and what the winds which bring rain or heat

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with them, and those movements of the tide wave which the ancient poet longed to comprehend

Qua vi maria alta tumescant  
Obicibus ruptis rursusque in se ipsa resident.

He knows what soils are fertile, what climates genial, and (to a large extent) where mineral wealth is to be found. Moreover he knows the inhabitants of the earth, and not only the Races as they are, but the conditions which have determined the progress of each of them in the past and may affect them in the future, their natural aptitudes, their habits of industry or indolence, the features of the land wherein each dwells, and the influence of those features upon the increase or decay of population, upon the forms which industrial effort takes. Much, no doubt, still remains to be ascertained, for further discoveries in the sphere of biology may render regions healthy which have been heretofore haunted by disease, as further investigation of the forces of nature may plant industries in spots hitherto neglected. Still, broadly speaking, a point has been reached at which the conditions likely to affect the relative development of the various branches of mankind have become so far known, that students may begin to deal with them in a positive and practical way. They have passed from the chaos of conjecture into the cosmos of science.

With this incomparably fuller and more exact knowledge of the families of Man there has come a far closer and more widespread contact of those various families with one another, and in particular of the more advanced and civilized races with the more backward,



a contact so much closer and more widespread than ever in the past that it may be deemed to mark a crisis in the history of the world, which will profoundly affect the destiny of all mankind. It is of the phenomena of that contact and the problems which it raises that I propose to speak to you to-day. Upon some points it is too soon to advance any positive conclusions, for the data are still insufficient. But data are daily accumulating, and though the time has not yet arrived for answering certain momentous questions, the time has arrived for formulating them. As the mists rise, the outlines of the landscape begin to appear, and we may venture to ask in what direction the movement of humanity will tend, and by what paths the obstacles that seem to bar or encumber its advance will be surmounted.

To describe the phenomena of race-contact in our own time as marking a crisis may seem a strong expression, for such contact has been never interrupted since our palaeolithic ancestors roamed hither and thither in search of wild fruits or wild creatures. There have been epochs, such as that of Alexander the Great, or that of Attila, or that which followed the discoveries made by Christopher Columbus, in which there was a great impingement of some peoples upon other peoples which created new relations between them by way of conquest or settlement. But our own time stands eminent and peculiar in this, that it marks the completion of a process by which all the races of the world have been affected, and all the backward ones placed in a more or less complete dependence upon the more

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advanced. India, Northern Asia, almost the whole of Africa, Madagascar, the Indian and Polynesian archipelagoes, and the Philippine Islands now own civilized masters of European stock, as do all the aboriginal races of America. Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, Siam, and in a sense even China, are now overshadowed by European Powers, and prevented from passing under the control of some one or more of these only by the jealous vigilance of the others. The same forces or motives have worked to bring this result about which induced the conquests of earlier days. But two new factors have been more active and pervasive than ever before—the desire of civilized producers of goods to secure savage or semi-civilized consumers by annexing the regions they inhabit, and the rivalry of the great civilized States, each of which has been spurred on by the fear that the others would appropriate markets which it might win for itself. The process has been much swifter than was desirable in the interest of either conqueror or conquered. But we can now see that it became inevitable, so soon as the progress of science had prodigiously increased the cheapness both of production and of transportation.

The completion of this World-process is a specially great and fateful event, because it closes a page for ever. The conditions that are now vanishing can never recur. The uncivilized and semi-civilized races cannot relapse into their former isolation. In passing under the influences of civilized Powers they have indeed given to the world a new kind of unity. They have become in a new sense economic factors in its

progress, and they must affect more powerfully than before the economic conditions of labour and production among the advanced races. It is hardly too much to say that for economic purposes all mankind is fast becoming one people, in which the hitherto backward nations are taking a place analogous to that which the unskilled workers have held in each one of the civilized nations. Such an event opens a new stage in World-history, a stage whose significance has perhaps been as yet scarcely realized either by the thinker or by the man of action, because the historical thinker sometimes overlooks the present in his study of the past, while the man of action may be so much occupied by the present as to forget what the past has to teach him.

I do not, however, propose to-day to discuss this new economic stage, but rather the conditions which precede it and will give a character to it, viz. the phenomena that attend the contact of the civilized and uncivilized races, whether by way of conquest, or of trade, or of settlement on the same ground.

We may pass by the question of what constitutes racial difference, merely observing that stress must not be laid upon linguistic affinities; nor need we inquire how far the present backwardness of a race indicates inferior natural capacity, being content to take the existing state of things as we find it. Let us go straight to the facts and problems which the contact of diverse races brings into being.

When two races differing in strength, that is to say, either in numbers, or in physical capacity, or in mental capacity, or in material advancement, or in military