NATIONAL DECLINE

(By Professor Coleman Phillipsoph)

In a previous article I suggested some of the conditions necessary for the accumulation of national life, and the growth of a national spirit, and I pointed out the dangers of excess of nationalism as well as the dangers of lack of patriotism. I also pointed out the relationship of patriotism to these conditions as well as to internationalism.

In this article I continue my exposition of the fundamental ideas previously expressed. I think it is important to keep in mind the question of small nations, and we will turn now to the question of the small nation.

Small Nations

It is clear that what I have already said about the rise and growth of the nation of self-consciousness, of national spirit, and of the desire for freedom, does not necessarily apply to large states only. A nation may be great or may be small, but the principle stands as a fundamental truth in the life of nations.

Small nations, however, are peculiarly subject to danger. They are in a sense the victims of their own strength, for they are too weak to stand alone, but too powerful for others.

Decline of Nations

It has been said that all empires and nations rise and fall, but the decline is inevitable. If we have a previous article on the subject I can only remind you that the decline of a nation is not preordained. It is possible that it may be delayed by wise legislation or by the efforts of a people to improve their condition.

Decline of Nations

The decline of a nation is due to a variety of causes. Some of these are political, such as a change in the government, or a war. Some are economic, such as a depression in trade. Some are social, such as a decline in the moral character of the people.

Causes of Decline

I hope to deal with another time with the conditions that are necessary for the present. I take ancient Greece, which, though it had a long history, is one of the best examples of the country.

Political conditions in Greece

In the year 445 B.C., Greece was at the height of its power. It was a time of great prosperity and of peace. The Greek states were united and the people were content.

The causes of the decline of Greece

The decline of Greece was due to a variety of causes. One of the most important was the decline of the states. The states were not able to keep up with the demands of the people, and this led to a decline in the quality of the government. Another cause was the increase of population. The population of Greece was growing rapidly, and this put a strain on the resources of the state. The third cause was the decline of religious belief. The Greeks were losing faith in the old gods, and this led to a decline in the moral character of the people.

The decline of Greece was caused by a variety of causes, and it is clear that no one cause can be held responsible for it. It is clear, however, that the decline of Greece was due to the failure of the people to adapt to the changing conditions of the time.