

WG. 5.717
A877.1
B490

DEMOCRACY IN EUROPE

FIRST VOLUME.

LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

Dhananjayrao Gadgil Library



GIPE-PUNE-003490

DEMOCRACY IN EUROPE:

A HISTORY.

BY

SIR THOMAS ERSKINE MAY, K.C.B., D.C.L.

AUTHOR OF 'THE CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY OF ENGLAND SINCE
THE ACCESSION OF GEORGE III., 1760-1871.'

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
1877.

All rights reserved.

W 6. S. M

A 877.1

3490

P R E F A C E.

No POLITICAL QUESTION of the present time excites more profound interest, than the progress of Democracy, or popular power, in European States. It gravely affects the interests of society, and the welfare of nations. By some it is regarded with satisfaction and hopefulness; by others with repugnance and dread. But all must desire to learn the causes to which it may be ascribed: how far it has contributed to the good government of States; and what have been its dangers and its mischiefs. A careful study of history, by establishing some political truths, and removing many prejudices, may conduce to the better understanding of this important subject; and, with this view, I have endeavoured to trace the fortunes of Democracy, and political liberty, throughout the history of Europe.

I have not ventured to entitle these volumes a History of Democracy, as such a work would be no less than a history of Europe itself. But, taking Democracy,

in all its aspects, as my theme, I have illustrated it from the history of those States, in which its incidents have been the most remarkable. I have investigated the causes of the political development of nations: I have studied the inner life of many republics, in ancient and modern times; and I have followed the most memorable revolutions, and the greatest national struggles for civil and religious liberty, to be found in the annals of European monarchies. While passing lightly over the beaten track of English constitutional history, I have dwelt upon those periods, in which democracy has taken a prominent place. These events are necessarily described with studied brevity: but the form of historical narrative has generally been maintained.

Most of the examples of popular power which the history of Europe affords, are those of political liberties and franchises, rather than of Democracy. But I have thought it better to use a comprehensive term, which embraces every degree of popular power, or influence, —whether in a constitutional monarchy, or in a republic.

Montesquieu has pointed out the various senses in which the term 'liberty' has been understood; and 'democracy' has acquired at least as many. As a form of government, it signifies the sovereignty of the whole

body of the people. But there are as many degrees and conditions of democracy, as of liberty ; and the term also comprehends the political power, or influence, of the people, under all forms of government. It denotes a principle or force, and not simply an institution ; and it is in this sense, that the term is to be generally understood, in this history. But it is also used in some other senses, which if not so accurate, have been sanctioned by conventional use. For example, in default of a more extended vocabulary, it is often spoken of as a revolutionary force, opposed to existing institutions, if not to law and order ; and in view of many popular movements abroad, such a term can scarcely be misapplied. Again, it sometimes refers to the humbler citizens of a State, as opposed to the aristocracy ; and, lastly, it is taken to define a particular type of democracy, such as the Athenian, the Florentine, or the French democracy. In short, the sense in which the word is used, in any case, can only be judged aright from the context.

In attempting so extended a survey of European history, I have been painfully sensible of my own shortcomings. Neither in learning, nor in leisure, could I feel myself equal to such a work : but, led on by the deep interest of the subject, I persevered, for

many years, in a task which no abler hands had undertaken.

I have not thought it necessary to multiply authorities for the well-known events, or accepted conclusions, of history : but I have freely cited the opinions of other writers,—whether in agreement with my own, or otherwise,—without allowing myself to be diverted into inconvenient controversies.

If any profession of political faith is expected from the author, as a pledge of the spirit in which this history is written, it is this :—I hail the development of popular power, as an essential condition of the social advancement of nations : I am an ardent admirer of political liberty,—of rational and enlightened liberty, such as most Englishmen approve ; and I condemn any violation of its principles, whether by a despotic king, or by an ill-ordered republic.

September 25, 1877.

CONTENTS

OF

THE FIRST VOLUME.

INTRODUCTION.

	PAGE
Study of political history	xxi
Moral, social, and physical causes of freedom	xxii
Influence of superstition upon freedom	xxiv
Influence of higher forms of religion	xxiv
Popular enlightenment the foundation of freedom	xxv
Kings and aristocracies the earlier forms of government	xxvi
Social causes of advancing freedom	xxvii
Development of popular power a natural law	xxix
Physical laws affecting freedom	xxxi
Effects of climate	xxxii
The East	xxxii
Temperate characters conducive to freedom	xxxiii
Influence of the terrors of nature upon freedom	xxxiv
Physical conditions of Europe favourable to freedom	xxxv
Society in pastoral States	xxxvi
In agricultural countries	xxxvi
Different classes of cultivators	xxxviii
Influence of mountains upon society and freedom	xxxix
Of the sea	xl
Of navigable rivers and lakes	xli
Of minerals	xlii
Democratic tendencies of town populations	xlii
Influence of race	xliii
Special causes of freedom in modern States	xlvi
Increasing power of democracy	xlvii
Free intercourse of nations	xlviii
Revolutionary movements	xlix
Freedom and enlightenment	l
Union of old institutions with popular franchises	lii

	PAGE
Constitutional monarchies	liv
Aptitudes of an aristocracy for government	liv
Public opinion	lvi
Freedom a safeguard against democracy	lvii
Large standing armies	lviii
Ecclesiastical revival	lix
Infidelity	lxi
Democratic excesses	lxiii
Communism	lxiv
International association of workmen	lxviii
The future	lxx

CHAPTER I.

THE EAST.

Contrasts between Eastern and Western civilisations	1
Marked absence of freedom in the East	2
India	3
A tropical climate adverse to the elevation of the people	7
Village communities in India	9
Persia	14
China	15
Restraints upon the power of the Emperor	17
System of education	19
Religion	20
Industry of the people	21
Causes of the absence of freedom	22
Japan	24
Egypt	25
Turkey	28
Exceptional examples of freedom	29
The Phoenicians	29
Carthage	30
The Jews	32
Their early institutions	32
The republic of Moses	33
The Jewish theocracy	35
The Jewish monarchy	36
The Jewish intellect	37
Association of intelligence and freedom	38
The Aryan races	39
Their migrations and descendants	39

CHAPTER II.

GREECE.

	PAGE
The Greeks the highest type of European races	41
Contrast between the Greeks and Eastern nations	42
The heroic ages	43
Relations of the people with the State	44
Public life characteristic of Greek society	45
Greece divided into small States	48
Decay of monarchies	49
Political reaction : the Tyrants	51
Advance of democracy	52
Different forms of government	52
The ruling class limited in Greek democracies	55
Conflict between aristocracy and democracy	56
Agricultural and town populations	57
Remarkable society of Greek cities	60
Sparta	62
Its constitution and laws	63
Contrast between Athens and Sparta	66
Athens	67
Athenian oligarchy	67
The constitution of Solon	67
The constitution of Cleisthenes	70
Ostracism	72
Reforms of Pericles	75
Payments for public services	80
Popular amusements	82
Public works	83
The theoricon	83
Athenian democracy	86
Overthrow of the democracy, 411 B.C.	88
And of the oligarchs	89
The thirty tyrants	91
Decline of Athens	93
Sketch of Athenian history	93

CHAPTER III.

GREECE—*continued.*

Review of Athenian democracy	94
National enlightenment and freedom	95
Political activity of the Athenians	97

	PAGE
Influence of birth	99
Demagogues	100
Study of oratory	101
Freedom of speech	104
Ideal of a Greek education	106
Athenian culture	107
Athens as a State reviewed	107
The Greek religion in its relations to freedom	110
Athenian franchise	115
Increasing power of the democracy	118
Payments to citizens for attendance	119
Paid advocates	121
The sycophants	122
Evils of public amusements	123
Corruption of generals and envoys	126
Greece compared with modern States	127
The Achaian league	129
Representation unknown in Greece	130
Greek colonies	131
Greek civilisation and its influence in Europe	132

CHAPTER IV.

ROME.

Difference in the genius of the Greeks and Romans	134
Geographical advantages of Italy	135
Overthrow of monarchies in Italy as in Greece	136
Institutions of the Roman monarchy	136
The public domains	137
Several classes of Roman society	138
National religion	138
Consuls of the Roman Republic	139
The priesthood	140
The senate	141
Public virtues of the patricians	143
Their ascendancy	144
Their haughty bearing towards the plebeians	145
Growth of democracy in Rome	146
Tribunes of the people	147
Laws of the Twelve Tables	148
Further advance of plebeian privileges	148
The Hortensian laws	150
The Mœnian laws	151

	PAGE
Fusion of the old and new aristocracy	152
Conquest of Italy	153
Roman and Latin colonies	154
Effects of Italian conquest upon the society of Rome	155
The Punic wars	157
Roman virtues	158
Influence of the Stoic philosophy	159
The Stoics and Puritans compared	160
Faults of the Roman character	161
Public life in Rome compared with that of Athens	162
Courts of justice	163
Eloquence and freedom	164

CHAPTER V.

ROME—*continued.*

Effects of foreign conquests upon the republic	165
Political reaction of the patricians	165
Consequences of standing armies	166
Social changes in Rome	167
Growth of corruption	168
Factions and tumults	168
Increase of luxury	169
Decline of paganism	170
Want of a middle class	170
Moral effects of the public domains	171
Dependence and corruption of the poor	172
Debtors and creditors	173
Demoralisation of slavery	173
Undue influence of the nobles	174
Tiberius Gracchus	175
Caius Gracchus	177
His democratic measures	178
The memory of the Gracchi	181
Patrician advances to the people	181
Marius: his popular measures	182
Livius Drusus	184
Enfranchisement of Italian cities	185
Publius Sulpicius Rufus, the reformer	186
Sulla master of Rome	187
His reactionary policy	187
His policy reversed by the consul Cinna	187
Proscription under Marius	188

	PAGE
Cinna consul	189
Sulla's measures as dictator	189
Novi homines	191
Rome changed into a military oligarchy	193
The two parties	193
The oligarchy	194
Pompey and the democracy	194
Overthrow of the constitution of Sulla	195
Cæsar, Crassus, and Cicero	195
Cato the younger	196
Alliance of Pompey and Cæsar	197
Cæsar's popular measures	198
His military commands and victories	198
Anarchy in Rome	199
The triumvirate of Pompey, Cæsar, and Crassus	200
The patrician party	201
Rivalry of Pompey and Cæsar	201
Cæsar crosses the Rubicon	202
His extensive powers	203
His policy	203
His constitutional and remedial laws	204
The usurper slain	205
Anarchy after his death	205
Octavius Cæsar	206
Transition from the Republic to the Empire	207
Homage paid by emperors to freedom	209
Causes of the fall of the republic	209
Rome never a pure democracy	210
Irregular forces of democracy	211
How far democracy contributed to the fall of the republic	212
Disorders quelled by the sword	212
Faults in the Roman institutions	213
Position and attributes of the senate	213
Irregular action of the comitia	214
Concentration of forces originally divided	216
Social causes of political failure	217
Demoralisation of the people under the empire	218

CHAPTER VI.

THE DARK AGES AND THE REVIVAL.

Disorganisation of European society after the fall of the Western Empire	221
--	-----

	PAGE
Barbarian conquests	221
The Dark Ages	222
Feudalism	223
Causes of social and political improvement	223
Teutonic customs	224
Greek and Teutonic customs compared	225
Relations of chiefs and vassals	226
Traditional institutions of Rome	227
Feudalism ruinous to towns	227
Traditions of Rome favoured great monarchies	228
Roman laws	228
Christianity, and the Catholic Church	229
Political precepts of Christianity	230
Spread of Christianity	232
Corruptions of Christian churches	233
Church government	234
Influence of the Church of Rome upon freedom	235
The Ascetic spirit	235
The Church and civilisation	236
The priesthood	237
The aristocracy and the Church	239
Relations of the Church to kings	239
Six centuries of darkness	249
Spiritual and secular power of the Church	241
Growing refinement of the barons	242
Chivalry	243
The Crusades	244
Their influence upon European enlightenment	244
Their effect upon feudalism	245
And upon the enfranchisement of communes	246
Struggles of towns with the barons	247
Their political influence	248
Decay of feudalism	249
Imperial and free cities of Germany	251
Growth of European constitutions	253
Revival of learning	253
Schools and universities	253
Monasteries	254
Byzantine civilisation	255
Saracen civilisation	257
The Jews promoters of civilisation	259
The Schoolmen	259
Growth of European languages	261
Revival of classical learning	261
Intellectual revival of the fifteenth century	262

	PAGE
Its services to religion	263
Revival of original thought	264
Scientific discoveries	264
Churchmen supplanting nobles in the councils of kings	265
Conflict of the Church with freedom of thought	265
The Inquisition	267
Opposition to the Church of Rome	268
The Protestant Reformation	269
Its influence upon freedom	269
Political views of Reformers	270
Lutheranism	270
Calvinism	271
Catholic reaction	271
The Reformation the commencement of a revolutionary period	272

CHAPTER VII.

THE ITALIAN REPUBLICS.

Early rise of Italian cities	273
Building of city walls	274
The feudal lords of Italy	275
Weakness of Italian sovereigns	276
Spread of republics over the whole of Italy	277
General view of their governments	277
Thought emboldened by liberty	279
Italian culture	280
Useful arts	281
Civic patriotism	282
Greek and Italian republics compared	283
Greek and Italian society	285
Rarity of eloquence in the Italian republics	287
Venice: its antiquity and early history	288
Its extended relations	290
Its aristocracy and government	291
Merits and defects of the aristocracy	292
Venice and Sparta compared	293
Pisa	293
Genoa	294
Milan	296
Florence: its favourable position	296
Florence compared with Athens	298
Its constitution	299

	PAGE
Chief Italian cities and their allies	299
Frederick Barbarossa	300
Treaty of Constance	301
Election of podestàs in Italian cities	301
Ascendency of the nobles	302
Their factious violence	302
Guelph and Ghibelline parties	303
Democracy in Florence	303
Ascendency of the mercantile class	305
Exclusion of nobles	305
Florence the leader of free republics	308
Cradle of a new aristocracy	309
Rivalry of old and new families	309
Revolt of the Ciompi	310
Democratic spirit of the republic	311
Strife of classes in other Italian cities	312
Novi homines in Rome and Italy	312
The Condottieri	314
Turbulence and ambition of nobles	315
Guelph and Ghibelline feuds	316
Influence of classical learning upon Italian liberties	317
Rome	317
Revolution of Rienzi	318
Social degeneracy of Italy	319
The Tyrants	320
Tyrannicide	321
Florence in the fifteenth century	323
The Medici	324
Savonarola	327
Fall of the Florentine republic	328
Devastation and political subjection of Italy	329
Survival of Venice	329
San Marino	330
Review of the Italian republics	330
Later fortunes of Italy	331

CHAPTER VIII.

SWITZERLAND.

Natural features of the country	333
The Alps	334
The Swiss climate	335
Geographical incidents of Switzerland	335

	PAGE
Early independence of the Swiss	335
Switzerland overrun by Northern races	336
Feudalism established	336
Growth of municipal privileges	337
Rival cantons	339
Democracy in the forest cantons	340
Its unchanging type	341
Freedom of towns	342
Struggles of the Swiss for freedom	343
Progress of confederation in Switzerland	345
League of the thirteen cantons, 1501	347
Italian and Swiss liberties compared	348
Fortunes of Switzerland compared with other states	349
Constitutions of the several cantons	350
Rule of the nobles	353
Mixed constitutions	353
Geneva	354
Democratic cantons	355
The Grisons	355
Conservative democracy of the rural cantons	356
Principles of the Swiss confederation	358
Political state of Switzerland early in the sixteenth century	360

CHAPTER IX.

SWITZERLAND—*continued.*

Social changes	361
Military service	361
Swiss mercenary troops	362
Corruption	365
Religious discords	365
The Reformation in Switzerland	366
Divisions among the cantons	366
Reformation in Geneva	367
Moral effects of the Reformation	368
The peasant war, 1653	370
Increasing prosperity of Switzerland	371
Relations of Switzerland with foreign Powers	372
Increase of oligarchies	373
Commercial and democratic cantons	376
Effects of the French Revolution	377
The Helvetic republic imposed by France	379
Heroic resistance of the rural cantons	380

	PAGE
Repugnance to French democracy	382
French oppression	382
Intervention of Napoleon, 1802	383
The Act of Mediation	385
The Federal Pact, 1815	386
Prosperity after the peace	387
Continued political reaction	387
Cantonal revolutions of 1830	388
The Jesuits	391
The Sonderbund	391
New Federal constitution, 1848	392
Political condition of Switzerland	395
Difficulties of Federal union	396
Intellectual character of Switzerland	397
Principles of a pure democracy maintained	397
Popular distrust of delegates	399
Principles of the Referendum.	399
Inconsistent with representation	400
Jealousy of the central government	401
Amendments of federal constitution	401
Permanence of the Swiss federal republic	402

INTRODUCTION.

STUDY OF POLITICAL HISTORY—MORAL, SOCIAL, AND PHYSICAL CAUSES OF FREEDOM—SPECIAL CAUSES OF FREEDOM IN MODERN STATES—UNION OF OLD INSTITUTIONS WITH POPULAR FRANCHISES—CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHIES—PUBLIC OPINION—FREEDOM A SAFEGUARD AGAINST DEMOCRACY—DEMOCRATIC EXCESSES—COMMUNISM—THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION—THE FUTURE.

THERE can be no worthier study than the history of enlightened nations, in all ages, as an illustration of the principles of government. For by such a study we may learn the most fruitful philosophy and statesmanship; and may even hope to read the momentous signs of modern political life, by the light of past events.¹ Above all is it instructive to investigate the causes which have contributed to liberty, and human progress, and the conditions under which free States have risen, flourished, and decayed. This inquiry becomes invested with additional interest, when we are able to trace a close connection,—if not an identity,—between civilisation and freedom. We are not left to the barren scrutiny, and comparison of the institutions of various countries: but are able to discover the continuous operation of

INTROD.
Uses of the
study of
political
history.

¹ Comte refers what is termed the science of history, *i.e.* the study of the laws which govern political events, first to Hobbes, and then to Bossuet (*Philos. Pos.* vi. 317); but I should rather assign it to Aristotle. This author will be often cited in the course of this work; not because I am attracted by his peculiar philosophy, but because he displays a remarkable historical insight, wholly distinct from his strange theories of the religious and social destinies of mankind.

INTROD. principles, founded on human nature, and leading to similar results in different ages, and in many States. How these results have been modified by the conditions of society, and by other local and incidental causes, is another object of inquiry not less important.

Civilisation
and free-
dom.

This study brings us into contact with the most intellectual and polished nations of the world; and introduces us to the most interesting periods of their history. The nations which have enjoyed the highest freedom, have bequeathed to us the rarest treasures of intellectual wealth, and to them we owe a large measure of our own civilisation. The history of their liberties will be found concurrent with the history of their greatest achievements in oratory, literature, and the arts. In short, the history of civilisation is the history of freedom.¹

Moral,
social, and
physical
causes of
freedom.

It has been usual to conduct controversies regarding political institutions, and forms of government, as if they were simply founded upon abstract expediency; as if monarchies and republics had been established upon *à priori* theories, and were to be judged according to their approach to some ideal polity. It is not in this spirit, that history is to be studied. If any instruction is to be gained, it will be by the investigation of the moral, social, and physical causes which have contributed to the rise, growth, and overthrow of institutions,—of despotisms, of free monarchies, of aristocracies, and of republics.² It has not been by the theories

¹ Aristotle has laid it down that, 'the more society is improved and education perfected, the more equality will prevail and liberty be extended.'—*Polit.* v. 3.

² 'L'histoire n'a point encore cessé d'avoir un caractère essentiellement littéraire ou descriptif, et n'a nullement acquis une véritable nature scientifique, en établissant enfin une vraie filiation rationnelle dans la suite des

of philosophers and lawgivers, that political institutions have been formed: but by the conflict of social forces in the several states. Freedom owes much to statesmen, who, in different ages, have laboured to enfranchise nations: it owes much to great thinkers, who have propounded broad principles of civil government, to Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Seneca,—to John of Salisbury,¹ St. Thomas Aquinas,² Marsilio of Padua,³ Milton, Locke, Montesquieu, and Edmund Burke. They have given light and guidance to the leaders of popular movements: but no laws or principles will avail, until society is ripe for their acceptance. Rulers will not willingly sur-

INTROD.

événemens sociaux, de manière à permettre, comme pour tout autre ordre de phénomènes, et entre les limites générales imposées par une complication supérieure, une certaine prévision systématique de leur succession ultérieure.'—Comte, *Philos. Pos.* iv. 282. A fine aphorism of Leibnitz is also cited by Comte, 'Le présent est gros de l'avenir.'—*Ibid.* iv. 367.

¹ See *infra*, p. 240.

² Lord Acton, in his learned and eloquent address on 'The History of Freedom in Christianity,' thus summarises the doctrines of this writer. 'A king who is unfaithful to his duty, forfeits his claim to obedience. It is not rebellion to depose him, for he is himself a rebel, whom the nation has a right to put down. But it is better to abridge his power, that he may be unable to abuse it. For this purpose, the whole nation ought to have a share in governing itself. The constitution ought to combine a limited and elective monarchy, with an aristocracy of merit, and such an admixture of democracy as shall admit all classes to office by popular election. No government has a right to levy taxes beyond the limit determined by the people. All political authority is derived from popular suffrage; and all laws must be made by the people or their representatives. There is no security for us as long as we depend on the will of another man.'—*Address*, 5.

³ This writer's views are also given by Lord Acton. 'Laws derive their authority from the nation, and are invalid without its assent. . . . In obeying laws to which all men have agreed, all men, in reality, govern themselves. . . . The monarch is responsible to the nation, and subject to the law; and the nation that appoints him and assigns him his duties, has to see that he obeys the constitution, and has to dismiss him if he breaks it. The rights of citizens are independent of the faith they profess, and no man may be punished for his religion.'—*Ibid.*

INTROD. render their power: nor can a people wrest it from them, until they have grown strong enough to wield it. The political constitution of a State will be found generally to follow its social condition,—the religion, the cultivation, the industry, the wealth, the arts, and the self-respect of its people. Such causes were the origin of the earlier historical institutions; and they still shape the destinies of the more advanced societies of modern times.

Influence
of supersti-
tion upon
freedom.

Foremost among the moral causes which repress or favour liberty, is the national religion. A superstitious faith,—inspiring awe and mental prostration in the worshippers, assigning Divine attributes to kings and priests, and abasing the people,—has ever been the potent ally and instrument of despotism. Throughout Asia, in Egypt, in Turkey, in ancient Mexico and Peru, we find the grossest superstitions associated with despotic rule.¹ A superstitious faith cannot fail to rivet the political chains of a people. It adds Divine sanction to civil authority: it strengthens power and weakens resistance: it exalts tradition above reason: it depresses the free will of believers: it lowers intelligence and perpetuates ignorance. It tends to make men slaves instead of freemen.

Influence
of a higher
religion.

Such being the natural effects of superstition, a higher and nobler faith promotes the development of political liberty. Instead of repressing thought, it raises the human mind to the contemplation of Divine truth and justice. Instead of debasing, it ennobles

¹ In all these countries 'there was the same despotic power on the part of the upper classes, and the same contemptible subservience on the part of the lower.'—Buckle, *Hist. of Civilisation*, i. 101. He ascribes this condition, however, to physical causes—of which religion was one of the results—rather than to religion itself.

the condition and destinies of man : instead of inspiring an abject terror of rulers, it holds them responsible to God for the righteous government of His people : it exalts the sentiments, quickens the intelligence, and directs the moral aims of believers.¹ Such are its aids to liberty.

INTROD.

We shall find, in the course of this history, ample illustrations of these opposite principles. On one side, we shall observe despotism allied to Pagan superstitions and corruptions of the Christian faith : on the other, we shall see liberty flourishing in union with the best and purest types of Christianity.²

Illustrations.

Next to religion, we must reckon intellectual advancement as one of the causes of freedom. Superstition, indeed, is so closely allied with ignorance, and a pure faith with enlightenment, that it may sometimes be difficult to distinguish the relative effects of religious and intellectual progress. But it is mainly with the latter that we are, at present, concerned. The observation of human society, under every aspect, exhibits the influence of knowledge, and intelligent will, upon the affairs of men. The conditions of a community, or State, are not very different from those of a family.³ When the people are helplessly ignorant, they render blind

Popular enlightenment the foundation of freedom.

¹ 'The fortifying religions, that is to say, those which lay the plainest stress on the manly parts of morality,—upon valour, truth, and industry,—have had the most obvious effect in strengthening the races who believed them, and in making those races the winning races.'—Bagehot, *Physics and Politics*, 216.

² 'Les peuples du nord embrassèrent la protestantisme, et ceux du midi garderent la catholique.' 'C'est que les peuples du nord ont et auront toujours un esprit d'indépendance et de liberté, que n'ont pas les peuples du midi.'—Montesquieu, *Esprit des Loix*, livr. xxiv. ch. 5.

³ Sir Henry Maine says, 'The most recent researches into the primitive history of society point to the conclusion that the earliest tie which

INTROD. obedience, like children, to their stronger and wiser rulers; but as they acquire more knowledge and discernment, they murmur against wrongs, and are prepared to resist oppression. If they still submit themselves loyally to their government, it is no longer in the same unreasoning spirit. They are grown up; and will no longer be treated as children. Nor can rulers continue insensible to the changes which are occurring in their relations with their subjects. Mutual confidence, or conflict will ensue. In either case, the people will acquire increased influence. It may not be that the form of government is changed—that a monarchy becomes a republic, or that more popular institutions are created: but the sentiments of the people, which were formerly defied, now meet with consideration and deference.

Kings and aristocracies the first forms of government.

In the earliest stages of society, superstition and ignorance naturally prevailed; and the people were unfitted for the functions and privileges of freedom. Accordingly, we find them everywhere under the rule of kings, priests, and nobles. In the East, society has never advanced from its primitive simplicity. Superstition and ignorance still enthral the minds of the people, and despotism and priestcraft continue in the ascendant.¹ In Europe, the destinies of mankind have been widely dissimilar; and the faculties which God has given them, have been continually cultivated and improved. Deplorable superstitions have given place to

knitted men together in communities was consanguinity or kinship.'—*Early History of Institutions*, 64.

'From the moment when a tribal community settles down finally upon a definite space of land, the land begins to be the basis of society, in place of kinship.'—*Ibid.* 72.

¹ See Chap. I. *infra*.

higher forms of religion ; and ignorance has yielded to education and rational experience. As European society advanced, heroic and heaven-born kings were generally succeeded by aristocracies¹ ; who, in their turn, were constrained to share their power with the people, or to yield it to a democracy. Of this political development of society in Europe, the history of Greece and Rome,—the two most important nations of antiquity,—abounds in familiar and instructive examples.²

Intelligence alone will not ensure the liberty of a people. A nation of dreamers might still be slaves. But active enlightenment improves the social condition of a people, makes their industry fruitful, distributes wealth, raises up new classes of society, creates varied interests ; and changes the entire character of the state.³ The government of a State follows its general social condition,—material, as well as intellectual ; and it is to the relative forces of different classes, that we must look for the determination of political supremacy. Increasing wealth and resources, arising from commerce, manufactures, and industry,—necessarily associated with enlarged intelligence,—have disturbed the

INTROD

Social causes of freedom.

¹ 'With these differences, however, that in the East aristocracies became religious, in the West civil or political, the proposition that a historical era of aristocracies succeeded a historical era of heroic kings may be considered as true, if not of all mankind, at all events of all branches of the Indo-European family of nations.'—Maine, *Ancient Law*, ii.

² See Chapters II. III. IV. and V. of this history. 'Political liberty was, in ancient times, almost restricted to cities like Athens and Rome, where public life, and art, and all the intellectual influences that were concentrated in a great metropolis, could raise the people to an exceptional elevation.'—Lecky, *Hist. of Rationalism*, ii. 229.

³ 'Deux qualités paroissent requises, avant toutes les autres, pour rendre les hommes capables de conquérir la liberté : la force individuelle, et la force sociale.'—Sismondi, *Hist. des Rep. It.*, i. 402.

INTROD. balance of power in States, originally governed by a king or aristocracy, and largely increased the political influence of the middle and industrial classes.¹ The great varieties of constitutions in many States, and in different periods of their history, may be traced to the proportionate social influence of the classes of which they were composed. A powerful aristocracy, when it has lost its exclusive power, may still maintain a very large, if not a preponderating, influence in public affairs. Its intrinsic power may be unimpaired: its wealth, its territorial possessions, its moral and intellectual elevation, may be greater than at any former period; and these characteristics will ensure, in any State, and under any form of government, an enduring political power. In the earlier stages of such a State, when other sources of influence were undeveloped, such attributes were naturally all-powerful; and under new conditions of society, they must continue to be an essential power. Whether they still give ascendancy, or only a considerable share of the general political sovereignty of the whole community, will depend upon the relative progress of the several classes of society. Hence the variety of institutions which have formed themselves, throughout the history of Europe. Ostensibly the conceptions of statesmen and lawgivers, their first cause was the social condition of the people. The operation of these principles may be studied, with peculiar interest, in the history of Greece;² of ancient

¹ 'Depuis que les travaux de l'intelligence furent devenus des sources de force et de richesses, on dût considérer chaque développement de la science, chaque connaissance nouvelle, chaque idée neuve, comme un germe de puissance, mis à la portée du peuple.'—De Tocqueville, *Démoc. en Amérique*. Intr. 4.

² See Chaps. II. and III.

Rome;¹ of the Italian republics;² of the Netherlands;³ INTROD.
and of England.⁴

This constant development of popular influence, as the result of the intellectual and material progress of nations, must therefore be accepted as a natural law. Such a law, like other laws which shape the destinies of man, is to be reverently studied, and accepted without prejudice, as a beneficent influence designed for the general benefit of society. Let us not be too prone to condemn, or to dread it, as a social danger. Rather let us learn to interpret it rightly, and to apply it, with careful discernment, to the government of free States. If it be a law that the progressive civilisation of a nation increases the power of the people, let that power be welcomed, and gradually associated with the State.⁵ The same cause which creates the power, also qualifies the people to exercise it. In a country half civilised, popular power is wielded by a mob; in a civilised community, it is exercised by the legitimate agencies of freedom,—by the press, by public discussion, by association, and by electoral contests. If ignored, distrusted,

Develop-
ment of
popular
power a na-
tural law.

¹ See Chaps. IV. and V.

² See Chap. VII.

³ See Chaps. X. and XI.

⁴ See Chaps. XVIII. — XXII.

⁵ 'Vouloir arrêter la démocratie paraîtrait alors lutter contre Dieu même, et il ne resterait aux nations qu'à s'accommoder à l'état social que leur impose la Providence.'—De Tocqueville, *Démocr. en Amérique*. Intr. 6.

And again, he says, 'Les législateurs conçurent le projet imprudent de la détruire, au lieu de chercher à l'instruire et à la corriger, et sans vouloir lui apprendre à gouverner, ils ne songèrent qu'à la repousser du gouvernement.'—*Ibid.* 8.

'There is no use mincing the matter: unless the world goes back, democracy must go forward. The will of the people must more and more prevail. We cannot prevent numbers ruling; we can only persuade them to rule well.'—Mr. W. E. Forster's Address, as Lord Rector of the University of Aberdeen, November 24, 1876.

INTROD. defied, or resisted by rulers, it provokes popular discontents, disorders, and revolution: if welcomed and propitiated, it is a source of strength and national union. To discern rightly the progress of society, and to meet its legitimate claims to political influence, has become one of the highest functions of modern statesmanship.

Illustrations from English history.

Of both these political axioms, the history of England presents instructive illustrations. The Stuarts failed to recognise the advancing force of the commonalty in social power, and religious earnestness; and clung obstinately to the principles of absolutism in the state, and in religion. They were blind to the conspicuous signs of their own remarkable times; and one of that misguided race forfeited his life, and another his crown, to this political blindness. At a later period a more discerning policy has been signalised by the most striking results. Modern English statesmen have recognised the advancing intelligence and social power of the people; and have taken them into active partnership with the State. Nor has this confidence been ill requited. The crown and aristocracy, the wealthy, the cultivated, and the middle classes have maintained their legitimate ascendancy in the State; and they rule with the moral force of a united people.

From French history.

The same moral may be drawn from the blood-stained history of France. The Bourbons were as blind as the Stuarts, to the social forces which an advancing civilisation was developing in their noble country. They continued to govern, in the eighteenth century, as they had governed in the sixteenth. Everything was changing around them: a new society was growing: new opinions were being formed: new political exi-

gencies demanded the most watchful care. But they saw none of these things, until it was too late. They maintained the greatness of the monarchy, the splendour of the court, and the invidious privileges of the nobles: but they ignored the advancing power, and accumulating needs of a neglected people. At length, Louis XVI. perceived, but too plainly, the urgent claims of his subjects, and the alarming necessities of the State. The people were suddenly called into council, in the States-General, without experience, without preparation, without foresight, without any of the resources of statesmanship; and, in reforming the manifold abuses of an absolute monarchy, they precipitated a democratic revolution.¹

INTROD.

Such being the moral and social conditions affecting political progress, we may now consider the influence of certain physical laws in arresting or advancing that development of society, which is conducive to freedom.

Physical laws affecting freedom.

Montesquieu has traced, with luminous precision, the influence of climate, soil, and geographical position, upon the laws and government of nations.² Buckle has examined, with extraordinary learning, and fulness of illustration, the physical laws affecting civilisation.³ His generalisations are bold and masterly; and while some of his conclusions are open to controversy, many of them will scarcely be disputed. He may sometimes attribute too much effect to the operation of physical laws, to the exclusion of moral causes; but any philosophy would be imperfect, which failed to assign to such laws a considerable influence, in forming and

¹ See *infra*, Chaps. XII. and XIII.

² *Esprit des Loix*, livr. xiv., xvii., xviii.

³ *Hist. of Civilisation*: General Introduction.

INTROD. modifying the social conditions of different races of mankind. The operation of such laws is no new theory: but has been accepted by writers of all ages, from Homer and Aristotle to Taine¹ and Buckle.

Effects of climate.

Thinkers who are most inclined to narrow the effect of physical laws upon morals, will not deny the influence of climate in modifying the character of men;² and we propose, very briefly, to point out the manner in which the political institutions of different countries have been affected by their climate, soil, and other geographical incidents.

Tropical climates conducive to despotism.

History and observation alike attest that tropical regions have been the everlasting abodes of despotism: where kings, chiefs, and priests have governed, from time immemorial, without control; and where the people have been unresisting subjects and slaves.³ Temperate climes alone have been the homes of freedom. This fact is the more remarkable, as the earliest civilisations arose in the hottest climates. Here we should naturally have looked for a concurrent progress, in the social and political condition of the people. In other lands, civilisation and liberty have advanced together: but throughout the East, and in

¹ 'Trois sources différentes contribuent à produire cet état moral élémentaire,—la race, le milieu, et le moment.'—*Hist. de la Litt. Ang.* Intr. 22–33.

² 'Climate and physical surroundings, in the largest sense, have unquestionably much influence: they are one factor in the cause, but they are not the only factor; for we find most dissimilar races of men living in the same climate, and affected by the same surroundings; and we have every reason to believe that those unlike races have so lived as neighbours for ages.'—Bagehot, *Physics and Politics*, 183.

³ See Chap. I. Montesquieu, *Esprit des Loix*, livr. xiv. ch. 4; xvii. ch. 3, 6. 'La servitude politique ne dépend pas moins de la nature du climat, que la civile et domestique, comme on va faire voir.'—Montesquieu, *Esprit des Loix*, livr. xvii. ch. 1.

other hot climates,—however much learning, poetry, INTROD. philosophy, and the arts may have flourished,—there has been no social and political advancement for mankind. Why is this? It cannot be due to accident: nor will the superstitions of these countries, however detrimental to human progress, suffice to explain the permanent stagnation of Eastern society. A people, advancing in intelligence and influence, would have outgrown them. But the physical conditions of tropical life are opposed to social development. A hot climate and a fertile soil multiply the means of subsistence, and foster the rapid growth of population. The wants of the multitude are few and easily gratified. A loose cotton garment, a meal of rice, or Indian corn, and a draught of water, a dwelling of the simplest fashion, designed for the free admission of the air, rather than for protection against the climate, are all their needs. There is no check to the increase of their numbers. Hence follow cheap labour, and a low and unimproving condition of society.¹ Nor can it be doubted that great heat is enervating alike to the minds and bodies of men,—disinclining them to vigorous thought and action, and disposing them to a languid acquiescence in their accustomed lot.

In colder climates all these conditions are changed. The bounties of nature are less prodigal:² men labour hard to win them: their wants are multiplied, and more difficult to satisfy: their food, clothing, and dwellings are more costly. Hence the growth of population is

Temperate
climates
conducive
to freedom.

¹ Buckle, *Hist.*: General Introduction, 36-98.

² 'Ainsi, le gouvernement d'un seul se trouve plus souvent dans les pays fertiles, et le gouvernement de plusieurs dans les pays qui ne sont pas.'—Montesquieu, *Esprit des Loix*, livr. xviii., ch. 2.

INTROD. checked : the value of labour is sustained : the people share in the distribution of the wealth of the country ; and the general condition of society is improved, and progressive. Industry and invention are encouraged by due rewards ; and rich and powerful classes arise, who claim their share in the government of the State. The organisation of such men also differs from that of dwellers in the tropics. Their strength and spirit are braced by a temperate climate, by constant labour and enterprise, and by the hope of social advancement. And these are the qualities which arouse resistance to oppression, and fit men for the enjoyment of freedom.¹

Influence
of the
grandeur
and terrors
of nature
upon
freedom.

Connected with climate and the geographical features of a country, one other influence must not be omitted. Where nature assumes its grandest and most awful forms, men have generally been most prone to superstition. Impressed with a deep sense of their own weakness and insignificance, they bow down, with terror, before their gods, whose majestic powers are ever present, and whose vengeance they have been taught to dread. Amidst overhanging precipices, the threatening avalanche, the swollen torrent, and thunder and lightning, a mountain peasant may well be prepared for his doom. Earthquakes, hurricanes and pestilence appeal, no less terribly, to the fears and imagination of helpless men. It is the lot of many, ever to gaze upon rugged mountains, crowned with eternal snow, and reaching upwards to the heavens ;

¹ ' Cette force plus grande (dans les climats froids) doit produire bien des effets : par exemple, plus de confiance en soi-même, c'est-à-dire, plus de courage ; plus de connoissance de sa supériorité, c'est-à-dire, moins de désir de la vengeance ; plus d'opinion de sa sûreté, c'est-à-dire, plus de franchise, moins de soupçons, de politique et de ruses.—Montesquieu, *Esprit des Loix*, livr. xiv., ch. 2.

or volcanoes vomiting forth flames and burning ashes ; or wide impetuous rivers ; or a rock-bound coast, the sport of storms and clouds ; or a boundless desert, or tangled forest ; and how can they fail to humble themselves before the awful and mysterious powers of nature and of God.¹ With a reasonable faith, and an intelligent comprehension of physical laws, such phenomena as these exalt the imagination, and arouse the soul to the highest religious emotions. But with superstition and ignorance, they encourage an awe-stricken worship, or helpless fatalism. Instead of raising men above themselves, by the contemplation of the wonderful works of their Creator, they inspire abject fears and moral abasement. Without self-respect, or assurance of the high destinies of man, there can be no striving for social and political progress.

INTROD.

Terrors of nature dispelled by religion.

Europe being comparatively free from the more fearful of these natural phenomena, and the forces of nature being more easily subdued to the control and use of man, the influence of these causes has been generally less felt, than in the seats of earlier civilisations.² And in this circumstance we may discern one, among many concurrent causes, of the higher development of European religion, civilisation, and liberties. Some writers may have attached undue importance to this consideration : but no investigation of the

Physical conditions of Europe favourable to freedom.

¹ Buckle, *Hist.* i. 107-119. 'In early ages, men were frightened of "the world;" the spectacle of nature filled them with awe and dread. They fancied there were powers behind it, which must be pleased, soothed, flattered, and this often in a number of hideous ways.'—Bagehot, *Politics and Politics*, 55.

² 'The tendency of the surrounding phenomena was, in India, to inspire fear ; in Greece, to give confidence. In India, man was intimidated ; in Greece, he was encouraged . . . In Greece, nature was less dangerous, less intrusive, and less mysterious than in India.'—Buckle, *Hist.* i. 127.

INTROD. causes of social and political progress, could pretend to completeness, which failed to weigh seriously the influence of the terrible and mysterious aspects of nature, upon the destinies of mankind.

Society in
pastoral
States.

Analogous to the influence of climate, is that of the character of the soil and its cultivation. Where a country consists mainly of vast pastures, a feudal society of chiefs and dependants has generally been found. Large tracts of land being in the hands of a few proprietors, and a scanty population being engaged in tending the flocks and herds, the elements of a free and progressive society are wanting. To which we must add another cause pointed out by Aristotle,¹ that in such countries war has generally been carried on by cavalry, which is the arm of the rich and not of the poor. Those who defend their country and maintain its independence are supreme in its government; and thus an aristocracy is the natural constitution of a pastoral State.

In agri-
cultural
countries.

The same causes operate, in a less degree, in countries mainly agricultural. But there we find conditions favourable to the growth of classes independent of the proprietors of the soil, and capable of acquiring political rights. In the tilling of the soil, a larger population is engaged than in pasture: the land is generally divided among a greater number of proprietors; and a considerable class of farmers are spread over the country, forming an intermediate order between the landowners and the peasantry. And, to supply the needs of a large agricultural community, towns spring up, in which merchants, tradesmen, and artificers, add to the independent and progressive elements of society. Thus, although

¹ *Polit.*, vi. 3.

an agricultural society is generally conservative, true to its old traditions of loyalty, and bound up with the interests and sentiments of the proprietors of the soil, history presents many examples of agricultural democracies. Of these, the most conspicuous are the ancient republics of Greece and Rome in their earlier stages, the more modern republic of Switzerland, and the great agricultural democracy of the United States of America.

INTROD.

The political character of an agricultural State will generally be found to vary according to the classes of persons by whom the land is owned, and its cultivation conducted. Large estates let to tenant-farmers, and tilled by hired labourers, are naturally favourable to the predominant influence of the landowners. Again, this influence is greater where the custom of tenancies at will, or from year to year, prevails, than where long leases are granted to tenants. The *Métayer* system, so common in France and Italy,¹ under which the peasants pay a certain portion of the produce of their holdings to the owner, in return for the use of the land, and the whole or part of the stock, identifies the cultivators still more closely with their landlords, and secures the paramount influence of the lords of the soil. Other systems of cultivation, which have favoured the occupation of small portions of land, by peasant tenants, like the Irish cottiers and Indian ryots, have necessarily ensured the helpless dependence of the cultivators of the soil. But where the land is subdivided among numbers of small proprietors, a class is created, independent of the great landowners, and whose interests may be different, and even antagonistic. If

Different
classes of
cultivators

¹ In Italy the *Métayer* tenancy is known as *Mezzadria*.

INTROD.Peasant
proprietors.

their estates are large enough to require the hiring of labourers, they will probably side with the greater proprietors : but if they can be cultivated by the owner and his family, with occasional help from others, a class of peasant proprietors arises, whose social position and interests would range them with the people rather than with the nobles. Such were the old yeomen, and forty-shilling freeholders of England,—now approaching extinction,—and the ‘statesmen’ of Westmoreland and Cumberland.¹ Of this class also are the proprietors of the greater part of Switzerland, of considerable portions of Norway, the Netherlands, Germany, France, and Italy, and of nearly the whole of the Northern States of the American Union.

Small
holdings.

The political characteristics of peasant proprietors are generally determined by the extent of their holdings. Where these are sufficiently large to ensure a good livelihood, with some means of saving, there is no society more sturdy and independent, or more inclined to assert their political rights ; and of this class are the proprietors of Norway, Switzerland, and the United States. But where the lands are unduly subdivided, and the proprietors, becoming impoverished, are driven to other employments to eke out a subsistence, their condition is little better than that of hired labourers. They are ignorant, dependent, and prone to superstition ; and are generally found to follow the nobles and priests, rather than to associate themselves with the people. Such are a numerous class of peasant proprietors in France, and some other parts of the Continent.²

¹ See Wordsworth's *Scenery of the Lakes*, for a description of this interesting race.

² A sketch of the peasant proprietors of different parts of Europe,

It must further be observed that where numbers of small proprietors associate themselves, in a common cause, to resist oppression, or to advance their own interests, they enjoy facilities of intercourse and union, not very different from those of the inhabitants of towns.

INTROD.
Association
of small
proprietors.

But whatever the distribution of the soil among owners, and whatever its system of cultivation, there will generally be found more inertness of mind, more aversion to change, and more incapacity for social and political progress, in agricultural than in town populations.

General
character
of agricul-
tural com-
munities.

Such being the general influence of climate, soil, and cultivation, upon the social development and political destinies of nations, other geographical and natural conditions must be taken into account. Of these the most important are mountains and the sea.

Other
physical
influences.

The influence of mountains upon the character of the people is everywhere recognised.¹ In hot climates, the elevation of a mountain range exempts the inhabitants from those conditions which surround the population of the plains. The climate itself is more temperate; the soil less fertile; the difficulties of subsistence are greater; the obstacles to an undue increase of numbers are multiplied; and the hardships and endurance of mountain life endow men with strength, courage, and independence. Accordingly, mountain tribes, even in tropical regions, are qualified for freedom. But other causes are adverse to the growth of free States. Agriculture is difficult, and extended commerce impossible, upon the mountains. No new classes can, therefore,

Influence of
mountains
upon so-
ciety and
freedom.

with extracts from many interesting authorities, will be found in Mill's *Principles of Political Economy*, book II., ch. vi. vii.

¹ La liberté 'règne donc plus dans les pays montagneux et difficiles, que dans ceux que la nature semblait avoir plus favorisés.'—Montesquieu, *Esprit des Loix*, livr. xviii., ch. 2.

INTROD. arise among these ancient tribes: but the old relations of chiefs and warlike followers are perpetuated. Their energies are devoted to constant wars, feuds, and predatory raids upon their neighbours. Such men cannot be submissive slaves, like their brethren of the plains: but we may search among them, in vain, for examples of the regulated freedom of more civilized States.

Characteristics of mountain races.

In temperate climates, the characteristics of mountain life are well known. The men are brave, hardy, industrious, and frugal. Their straitened industry can rarely raise them above the condition of peasants. They are removed from the civilising influences of the outer world: they have little culture: they are, perhaps, narrow and bigoted in their faith: there is nothing progressive in their contracted society: but their manly independence forbids oppression, and nourishes an indomitable love of freedom. The influence of such physical and moral qualities, in perpetuating the political freedom of a mountain race, has received the most conspicuous illustration in the memorable history of the Swiss cantons¹,—a history scarcely less fruitful of instruction, than that of the renowned republics of ancient Greece.

Influence of the sea upon freedom.

The sea has ever exercised an extraordinary influence upon the general and political development of nations.² It has been associated with maritime adventure, commercial enterprise, the progress of civilisation and the arts, and a spirit of political freedom. The sea promotes the growth of different classes of society,—

¹ See Chaps. VIII. and IX.

² 'Les peuples des isles sont plus portés à la liberté que les peuples du continent.'—Montesquieu, *Esprit des Loix*, livr., ch. 5. But hé attributes this fact to other causes than the influence of the sea.

merchants, traders, shipowners, seamen, and artificers. Their several callings quicken their intelligence and increase their wealth : their intercourse with foreign lands enlarges their knowledge and range of thought. Their interests require protection, and their growing power asserts itself in the councils of the State. As in a country mainly agricultural or pastoral, the influence of landowners is supreme, so in a maritime State must the influence of the commercial classes prevail.

INTROD.

The operation of these causes has been illustrated by all history. Even Asiatic races settling upon sea coasts, removed from the influences of a tropical climate and Eastern customs, have exhibited social progress and freedom, unknown in the plains of Asia. The Phœnicians and Carthaginians broke from the traditions of their aboriginal stock, and founded free commonwealths, renowned in history. The shores of the Mediterranean were the birthplace of European liberty ; and, from an early period of Western civilisation, were crowded with Greek and Italian republics. The Netherlands and England are examples of the union of maritime activity and political freedom, in modern times.

Illustrations.

In a less degree, the like results are brought about by navigable rivers and inland lakes. Commerce is there on a more contracted scale, and intercourse with foreign lands is comparatively rare. But trade and industry are encouraged, towns spring up, large populations are brought together, wealth is accumulated, new classes of society are formed ; and the elements of social and political power are multiplied. The lakes and inland navigations of the Netherlands largely contributed to their commercial and industrial prosperity, and to the growth of those remarkable cities, which

Navigable rivers and lakes.

INTROD. were the seats of municipal sovereignty, in the middle ages.¹

Minerals.

Similar results follow the discovery of minerals, and particularly of coal and iron. Manufactures are established, population and wealth are increased, considerable towns are multiplied; and a new society arises, prepared to contend with nobles and landowners, for its share of social consideration and political influence. Nowhere has the growth of mineral wealth and industry had so remarkable a bearing upon political development, as in our own country.²

Democratic tendencies of town populations.

Wherever cities and large towns have grown up, the inhabitants have inclined more to democracy than their fellow-countrymen in the provinces. They have been less under the influence of social and physical causes adverse to the development of freedom. They have had their own interests to protect, their own municipal affairs to administer. Their intelligence has been quickened by their varied occupations, and by a more extended intercourse with other men, than falls to the lot of tillers of the soil. They have been able to combine more readily for the attainment of common benefits; and association and discussion have trained them for the political duties of citizens. Hence, throughout the wide range of history,—in Greece, in Italy, in France, in Spain, in Germany, in the Netherlands, and in England,—we find, in cities, the earliest and the most memorable examples of freedom and self-government.³

¹ See Chap. X.

² See Chap. XXII.

³ For further points of difference between country and town populations, see Buckle, *Hist. of Civilisation*, i. 344-347; Lecky, *Rationalism in Europe*, ii. 369 *et seq.* *Infra* i. 247-249, 251.

The last physical cause of social and political development, which need here be noticed, is that of race. The history, and social and political characteristics, of the different races of mankind have lately become an important and popular study¹; and in the politics of Europe, wars and revolutions have sprung from the sympathies of race and nationality. Some eminent writers attribute to the influence of race, most of the distinctive peculiarities of nations, in religion, in government, in literature, and in art:² while others, no less eminent, and particularly John Stuart Mill³ and Buckle,⁴ contemptuously ignore it altogether. A controversy upon this broad question, would be beside the purposes of this history. It will be sufficient to explain to what extent the influence of race is recognised, in the course of these historical inquiries.

INTROD.

Influence
of race.

We find many varieties or races of mankind:⁵ we trace their history: we observe their characteristics; and it were blindness to overlook those peculiarities of mind and body, which affect their social and political development. These races have migrated, from distant lands, to their present homes: bringing with them not only physical qualities, due to the climate, soil and geographical situation of their birth-place, but their religion, their traditions, their language, their customs, and their institutions.⁶ Those who attach least importance to

Varieties of
mankind.

¹ Max Müller, Pictet, &c.

² e.g., Gervinus, Curtius, Freeman, Motley, and Taine.

³ *Principles of Political Economy*, i. 390.

⁴ *Hist. of Civilisation*; General Introduction, i. 37.

⁵ 'Il y a naturellement des variétés d'hommes, comme des variétés de taureaux et de chevaux, les unes braves et intelligentes, les autres timides et bornées.'—Taine, *Hist. de la Litt. Angl.* Intr. 23.

⁶ 'Une race, comme l'ancien peuple Aryen, éparse depuis le Gange jusqu'aux Hébrides, établie sous tous les climats, échelonnée à tous les

INTROD. physical diversities of race will, at least, admit the influence of traditional and hereditary sentiments. And this history will present striking illustrations of the aptitude of some races for religious enlightenment and political freedom; and the disposition of other races to cling to ancient superstitions and forms of government. So many other causes may have contributed to these results, that we must guard ourselves against any hasty conclusions concerning the influence of race: yet some remarkable coincidences, at least, demand attention.

The Ger-
mans or
Teutons.

The inert and unprogressive character of Asiatic races has been already noticed. And in Europe, some races have been distinguished by those qualities which win and assure freedom: while other races, not less brave in war, nor less ingenious in the arts of peace, have yet been wanting in that self-assertion which commands liberty. Conspicuous were the differences between the Germans and the Gauls, as described by Cæsar. The former were the freest people of antiquity; their polity the most democratic. Every public act was that of the assembled people. They elected their chiefs and magistrates: they had a voice in the administration of justice: they declared peace or war, by acclamation. Even their religion was distinguished by its freedom. They worshipped the unseen God without temples, and without priests. Their faith was popular and spontaneous: no creeds were enforced by law; priestcraft was unknown amongst them.

degrés de la civilisation, transformées par trente siècles de révolutions, manifeste pourtant dans ses langues, dans ses religions, dans ses littératures, et dans ses philosophies, la communauté de sang et d'esprit, qui relie encore aujourd'hui tous ses rejetons.'—Taine, *Hist. de la Litt. Ang.* Intr. 23.

How strikingly different was the condition of the contemporary Gauls! Nobles and priests were the rulers; and the people slaves. The lords of the soil led their vassals to battle, electing one of their own body as leader. The people tilled the soil, and fought their masters' battles: but formed no part of the State. In religion, their lot was even more unfortunate. Governed by the ferocious priesthood of the Druids, they were offered up, by thousands, as sacrifices, to bloodthirsty deities, and pursued by awful punishments, for neglect of any of the barbarous rites of their mysterious faith.

INTROD.

The Gauls
or Celts.

The distinctive characters of these early races may be traced in their descendants, for many centuries, through the history of Europe. Holland was peopled by Frisians, Batavians, and other German races; and its glorious struggles for civil and religious liberty are among the most memorable events in the history of European nations.¹ Belgium, which was chiefly inhabited by Celtic races, submitted more readily to foreign conquests, and to religious subjection.²

Holland
and
Belgium.

England, peopled by Saxons, and other Teutonic tribes, has been the historic home of freedom.³ France, peopled by Celts, has been oppressed by despotism, or given up to frenzied democracy. Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, whose populations are German and Scandinavian, have been renowned for their free, and even

England,
France,
and other
Teutonic
and Celtic
countries.

¹ See Chap. XI.

² According to Motley 'the Batavian republic took its place among the leading powers of the earth; the Belgic provinces remained Roman, Spanish, Austrian property.'—*Hist. of Dutch Republic*, i. 18.

³ Scotland and Ireland, however, are mainly Celtic. The former has been animated by as strong a spirit of freedom, and has displayed the same powers of self-government, as England. The latter has been too much disturbed by factions to enjoy the full benefits of liberty; but its destinies may yet be more fully developed.

INTROD. democratic, institutions. Spain and Portugal, whose people have a large infusion of the blood of the Gauls, while enjoying some ancient franchises, have fallen short in the race of freedom.

Germany. On the other hand, Germany, the European birth-place of the Teutonic races, has not herself been conspicuous for political freedom. The free cities of the middle ages, indeed, presented striking examples of municipal liberty :¹ but nowhere have emperors and kings been more powerful, or feudalism more firmly established. It was in this Teutonic land, however, that the revolt against the Church of Rome commenced, which proved one of the most active causes of the advance of European liberties. And of late years, the general movement of European society, having extended to the several German States, has introduced constitutional freedom and popular institutions.²

Special causes of later development of freedom.

These several causes, moral and physical, have constantly contributed to the arrest, or development, of civil liberty, in the different States of Europe. But, in modern times, other special causes have also promoted a general increase of popular influence. The revival of learning, the invention of printing, and other useful arts, geographical discoveries, and above all, the Protestant Reformation, awakened the minds of men, throughout Europe, to freedom of thought in politics and religion ;³ and an impulse was given to democratic forces, which has continued, with ever-increasing power, to our own age. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, religion became the great moving force in

¹ *Infra*, vol. i. 250-232.

² *Infra*, vol. ii. 245, 276.

³ *Infra*, vol. i. 253-272.

European politics, and in the advancement of civil liberty. The leading events which followed this general uprising of European society, were the revolt of the Netherlands from the despotic rule of Catholic Spain: the Puritan revolution, which brought an English king to the scaffold: the milder revolution of 1688, which assured the liberties of England:¹ the foundation of a vast federal republic in America, by English colonists; and lastly, the momentous French Revolution.

All these events proved the increasing power of modern democracy; and the latter, in its terrible and protracted convulsions, may be said to have revolutionised Europe. The revolutionary wars of the first republic,² and the empire³ shook the thrones of emperors and kings, and disquieted their people with democratic sentiments. The three days of July 1830 aroused revolutionary movements, and political excitement, throughout the entire community of European nations.⁴ The revolution of 1848, acting upon a more advanced and sensitive society, passed like a tempest over Italy, Austria, Hungary, and Germany.⁵ England,—not unmoved by revolutionary movements abroad,—was able to direct the popular forces of this stirring period, to the regeneration of a free State.⁶ She reformed her own ancient institutions, upon popular

Increasing
power of
democracy.

¹ At this period was also published Locke's treatise on civil government, which, according to Hallam, has been 'fertile of great revolutions, and perhaps pregnant with more.' . . And again, 'silently spreading its root over Europe and America, it prepared the way for theories of political society, hardly bolder in their announcement, but expressed with more passionate ardour, from which the great revolutions of the last and present age have sprung.'—*Hist. of Literature*, iii. 435-438.

² *Infra*, vol. ii. 174, 179, 203, &c.

³ *Ibid.* 216, 217.

⁴ *Ibid.* 245.

⁵ *Ibid.* 272-278.

⁶ *Ibid.*

INTROD. principles; and she reconstituted her distant colonies as democratic republics. Even Spain, with her stagnant and unenlightened population, has since had her revolutions; and has tried the futile experiment of a democratic republic.

Russia.

Russia alone, among the great States of Europe,—being far less advanced in civilisation,—has hitherto escaped the shock of political revolution; but she is passing through critical social changes. The emancipation of the serfs,—for which the Emperor Alexander is entitled to immortal fame: the new character which her village communities have since begun to assume: the extension of local self-government: the want of a stable middle class between the nobles and the peasantry: the deeply-rooted corruption of the administration: the spread of European thought in her society: the growth of nihilism, communism, and secret societies: the passionate Panslavonic sentiments of the people,—first stirred by the friends of democracy, and since encouraged by the ambition of her rulers; and the rapid impoverishment of the country by exhausting wars,—all portend considerable changes in the autocratic polity of the empire.¹

Free inter-
course of
nations.

The free intercourse of nations, in the present age, facilities of travel and postal communication, the publicity of State affairs, and the universal expansion of the press, have brought the different States into so close

¹ The remarkable work of Mr. Mackenzie Wallace abounds with illustrations of these social changes. See also Herten, *Le Monde Russe et la Révolution*; and *Du Développement des Idées révolutionnaires en Russie*; Count Münster, *Political Sketches of the State of Europe from 1814 to 1867*; Schédo-Ferrotti, *Études sur l'avenir de la Russie*, and *Le Nihilisme en Russie*. *Fortnightly Review*, August, 1868 (Nihilism in Russia); Grant Duff, *Studies in European Politics*; and *Political Survey*, 32.

a contact, that the common sympathies and interests of mankind pulsate through the whole of European society. Hence the rapidity with which revolutionary movements have spread from one country to another. But such movements have assumed different forms, according to the natural and geographical incidents of each country, the character of the people, the condition of society, and the laws, customs and traditions of the state. France stands alone, as an example of wild democracy, sweeping away laws and institutions, with blind rage; and wading through torrents of blood, in pursuit of visionary schemes of a democratic or communistic republic. In other countries, the people have revolted against their rulers: there have been popular violence and bloodshed, and even civil war: but they have resulted in constitutional freedom, not in democracy. Kings have lost their crowns; dynasties have been changed: but monarchies have survived; and aristocracies have retained much of their former influence. Mediæval institutions have been popularised, and brought into harmony with the spirit of modern freedom. Many of these popular conquests have been won at great cost. Where blood has not been shed, there have been bitter strifes: classes have been exasperated against one another; and society has been convulsed by factions. Yet has the gain been notable. Wars have been among the greatest scourges of mankind: but they have advanced civilisation; and revolutions, which have disturbed the peace of many lands, have secured liberty and popular contentment.¹ Democracy,

INTROD.

Revolu-
tionary
move-
ments.

Constitu-
tional
freedom
acquired.

¹ 'It is war that makes nations. Nation-changing comes afterwards, and is mostly effected by peaceful revolution, though even then war, too, plays its part.'—Bagehot, *Physics and Politics*, 77. 'The conflict of nations is, at first, a main force in the improvement of nations.'—*Ibid.* 83

INTROD. associated with the State; has been at once satisfied and controlled.¹ Confidence has been established between rulers and their people; and nations have set forth upon a more hopeful career of prosperity and usefulness.²

Influence
of freedom
upon
enlighten-
ment.

Throughout the greater part of Europe, society has attained that degree of advancement, that a large measure of political freedom is essential to its well-being. It is the breath of social life. It gives vitality and strength to the citizens of free States: it stimulates the education and enlightenment of a people. Who can doubt the uses of political life in the cultivation of every class of society? They have been conspicuous in every period of history,³ and are patent at the present time. Compare the nobles of Italy,—illiterate,

¹ 'Pour contenir et régler la démocratie, il faut qu'elle soit beaucoup dans l'état, et qu'elle n'y soit pas tout; qu'elle puisse toujours monter elle-même, et jamais faire descendre ce qui n'est pas elle; qu'elle trouve partout des issues, et rencontre partout des barrières.'—Guizot, *Démocratie en France*, 59.

² De Tocqueville, naturally appalled by the peculiar forms of French democracy, took a more gloomy view of the future of Europe. He wrote: 'Le livre entier qu'on va lire a été écrit sous l'impression d'une sorte de terreur religieuse produite dans l'âme de l'auteur, par la vue de cette révolution irrésistible, qui marche depuis tant de siècles, à travers tous les obstacles, et qu'on voit encore aujourd'hui s'avancer, au milieu des ruines qu'elle a faites.'—*Démoc. en Amérique*, Intr. 6.

³ 'Contrast the free States of the world, while their freedom lasted, with the contemporary subjects of monarchical or oligarchical despotism: the Greek cities with the Persian satrapies; the Italian republics and the free towns of Flanders and Germany with the feudal monarchies of Europe; Switzerland, Holland, and England, with Austria, or ante-revolutionary France.'—Mill, *Repr. Govt.* 57.

⁴ 'All the great movements of thought in ancient and modern times have been nearly connected, in time, with government by discussion. Athens, Rome, the Italian republics of the middle ages, the commons and states-general of feudal Europe, have all had a special and peculiar influence, which they owed to their freedom, and which States, without that freedom, have never communicated.'—Bagehot, *Physics and Politics*, 166.

indolent, and purposeless,—with the enlightened and active peers of England, who take the lead in every good and useful work. Compare the middle and working classes of Italy and Spain with the same classes in England and America. Everywhere it will be found that politics form the main education of a people. And what do they teach? The whole people are now invited to assist in the councils of their statesmen. They are free to discuss whatever concerns the government of the State,—religion, political science, history, the laws, the social condition of the people, and the diplomacy of foreign powers. How wide a range do these questions embrace, in the whole field of human knowledge! Who can fail to be enlightened by the study of them? And political studies surpass all others in the interest they excite, and the earnestness with which they are pursued. They form part of the daily life and conversation of the citizens of a free State. Books may be laid aside or read with languid inattention: but the stirring interest of public affairs arrests the thoughts, and stimulates the faculties of the most inert. Freedom is the best of national schoolmasters.

It has often been maintained, indeed, that while freedom calls forth the active and practical qualities of men, it is unfavourable to science and to reflective and philosophical thought. It has been said that the period of political decline in Greece was distinguished by its most eminent thinkers, Plato and Aristotle; that the Augustan age of Rome succeeded the fall of the republic; that the Elizabethan age followed the era of the Reformation; and that the stagnant reign of Queen

INTROD.
How far it
affects
science.

INTROD. Anne was the birth-time of modern English literature. But each of these periods of intellectual fertility had been preceded by great political struggles, in which oratory and free discussion had stirred all the faculties of men. Demosthenes, in Greece; Cicero, in Rome; the Protestant reformers of the sixteenth century, and Pim, Eliot, Hampden, Milton, and the Puritan preachers of the seventeenth, in England, had prepared the way for the literature of more tranquil times. And what period of European history is to be compared with the last half century, for scientific discoveries and inventions, for bold speculations in philosophy, for historical research, and original thought? There is room in the world for contemplative thinkers, as well as for politicians; while the awakening of the general intelligence has enlarged the sphere of their teaching, and encouraged their pursuit of abstract truth. An inert society is no fit school for genius or fruitful learning. It is not among fellows of colleges, or dwellers in cathedral towns, that we find the leaders of modern thought.

Union of
old institu-
tions with
popular
franchises.

Wherever the safeguards of old institutions, and a settled society, have been respected, the general aspects of popular freedom have been hopeful. The government of a State should be the representative of all the elements of its society; and political changes are most effective, when they are but the development of past experience. And in this spirit have the institutions of most European States been re-cast. Monarchies have stood their ground against democracy: but they have become constitutional. Aristocracies have retained a power inseparable from their wealth and social influence: but have been stripped of many invidious privi-

leges. And in most States they are still foremost among the statesmen and leaders of the people. The theories of philosophers who have extolled the excellence of mixed institutions,¹ have thus been exemplified in the recent political history of Europe. INTROD.

¹ Aristotle dwells with satisfaction upon the union, in the same commonwealth, of the freedom of a democracy, the wealth of an oligarchy, and the high birth and breeding of aristocracy. 'Ἡ γὰρ εὐγένεια ἐστὶν ἀρχαίος, πλοῦτος καὶ ἀρετή.—*Polit.* iv., c. 6. Elsewhere he says, 'The safety of every free government requires that the greater part of the citizens should enjoy a certain weight in the administration; otherwise the majority must be dissatisfied; and where the majority are dissatisfied, the government will soon be overthrown.'—*Polit.* iii., ch. 7; and again, see *Polit.* v., ch. 9. See also Polybius, *Hist.*, Pref. to Books vi. and vii.

According to Cicero, 'this alone can with propriety be called a commonwealth, where the interests of the whole people are connected, and the government is conducted with the sole view of promoting the common good.'—*De Republica*, i. ch. 31.

Again Cicero says, 'There remains that last species of government which is the best of all, viz. that which is moderated in its action and steadied in its course by the due admixture of all the three simple forms of monarchy, aristocracy, and popular power.' And again, 'I greatly prefer a form of government that is composed, as it were, by the fusion and combination of all the three.'—*De Republica*, i. ch. 29, 35.

But Tacitus, while approving of such a form of government, says, 'Laudari facilius, quam evenire, vel, si evenit, haud diuturna esse potest.'—*Annales*, iv. 33. In reference to this view of Tacitus, Lord Acton says, 'The experiment has been tried more often than I can tell, with a combination of resources that were unknown to the ancients,—with Christianity, parliamentary government, and a free press. Yet there is no example of such a constitution having lasted a century. If it has succeeded anywhere, it is in our favoured country, and in our time, and we know not yet how long the wisdom of the nation will preserve its equipoise.'—*Address on 'The History of Freedom in Antiquity.'*

Sir James Mackintosh says, 'The best security which human wisdom can devise, seems to be the distribution of political authority among different individuals and bodies, with separate interests and separate characters, corresponding to the variety of classes of which civil society is composed, each interested to guard their own order from oppression by the rest: each also interested to prevent any of the others from seizing an exclusive, and therefore despotic power; and all having a common interest to co-operate in carrying on the ordinary and necessary adminis-

INTROD.

Constitutional monarchies.

Monarchies continue to give unity to great States. They command the traditional reverence of society:¹ they are centres of authority, and political organisation: they unite different classes in the administration of affairs; and they give security and permanence to the institutions of the country. But the personal rule of monarchs has generally given place to the responsible councils of their most powerful and able subjects,—whether nobles, or men of the people.

Aptitudes of an aristocracy for government.

It is well that nobles have still held their place in the service of States. They have some qualities peculiar to their order. In early life their natural courage is strengthened by games, by manly sports and horsemanship. The traditions and habits of their order teach them how to govern men; and political power falls naturally into their hands. Their councils are prompt, bold and spirited. Their proud fortunes raise them above the hesitation and dread of responsibility, which are apt to oppress men of humbler lot. Such are the qualities which have made capable and vigorous statesmen, in all ages. Great in war and diplomacy, bold and resolute in council,—often leaders of the people,—nobles have ever taken an eminent place among their countrymen.

tration of government. . . . I feel my own conviction greatly strengthened by calling to mind, that in this opinion I agree with all the wise men who have more deeply considered the principles of politics,—with Aristotle and Polybius, with Cicero and Tacitus, with Bacon and Machiavel, with Montesquieu and Hume.¹—*Discourse on the Law of Nature and Nations*, 40 *et seq.*

See also Tremeneere, *Political Experience of the Ancients*, 1852; *Political Experience from the Wisdom of the Ancients*, 1853; and *infra*, vol. i. 55 *et seq.*

¹ The touching motto of the King of Denmark is, 'The love of the people is my strength.'—Prince George of Denmark's speech on accepting the crown of Greece, June 1863.

But these very characteristics, which have fitted them for command, have in many States shaken the duration of their power. Proud and defiant in their temper, they have been too ready to disregard the feelings of the people, and slow to perceive the growth of popular influence. Hence a people increasing in power have often been brought into conflict with the nobles. Sometimes they have overthrown them, as in the Greek states of antiquity : sometimes the struggle has continued for ages, with varying success. Sometimes, as in ancient Rome, and in England, the people have been gradually admitted to a considerable share of political power, and have divided with the nobles the government of the country.¹ And the like result has been attained, more suddenly, in several Continental States. This latter combination has secured the most fortunate results for the State. The lofty spirit of the nobles has given force and daring to the statesmanship of their country : while the power of the middle classes has restrained their imperious temper, modified their policy by a more prudent and conciliatory spirit,² and protected the interests of the community from any excesses of aristocratic rule. And the union of these classes, in the administration of affairs, has given the utmost force and concentration to the national will.³

INTROD.

Their conflicts with the people.

¹ According to Comte, 'The English aristocracy is the ablest patriciate the world has seen since the Roman Senate.'—*System of Positive Polity*, iv. 428 (Congreve's translation).

² Gervinus says 'The middle class has seldom proved itself capable of political rule. As a separate body, it is neither ambitious, nor has it the leisure for the occupation, nor the inclinations or habits to assert its political position with the hand of power. To which it may be added that they are far more dependent upon the fourth class, and separated by a much narrower channel from it, than they themselves were formerly from the nobles.'—Intr. to *Hist. of 19th Century*, 128.

³ The same author says, 'In the present day, as in the sixteenth century,

INTROD.

Public
opinion.

There is yet another political force, in every State, which dominates over the councils of kings and senates. This is the mysterious and inexplicable force of public opinion. It was recognised in the States of antiquity : it stirred the inert society of the middle ages : it received a signal impulse from the invention of printing and the Reformation ; and, in modern times, it has acquired extraordinary power from the rapid circulation of intelligence, the constant intercourse of society, the freedom of public discussion, and multiplied facilities for the communication of thought. From its very nature, intangible and irresponsible, yet is it able to determine the policy of States, in opposition to statesmen and parliaments. It is potent everywhere ; but its force is naturally greatest in free States, where its expression is without restraints ; and where governments are most sensitive to its promptings. As it controls the will even of despotic rulers, it is one of the greatest forces of democracy : but it speaks with the voice of the nation,—not of the multitude.¹ It is generally directed by the intellectual classes : by statesmen and orators, by political parties, by the ablest writers in the press, and by influential leaders of opinion, in the capital and in the provinces. There is often a conflict between the views of different classes : sometimes the capital, and the people move in masses.' 'It is this peculiarity which makes the greatness of our times.' 'The reputation of this century does not depend as much on the quality and high cultivation of the individual, as on the quantity, the extent, the spread of cultivation among the many.'—*Ibid.* 124.

¹ Perhaps I may be excused for citing my own words, in regard to public opinion in England. 'Public opinion is expressed, not by the clamorous chorus of the multitude, but by the measured voices of all classes, parties, and interests. It is declared by the press, the exchange, the market, the club, and society at large. It is subject to as many checks and balances as the constitution itself : and represents the national intelligence, rather than the popular will.'—*Const. Hist. of England*, ii. 420.

the cultivated portion of society, are at variance with provincial and popular impulses. And it is not until a general unanimity, or a clear preponderance, of opinion has been pronounced, that the national judgment is accepted. Sometimes it may represent the force of numbers: but more often it embodies the prevailing sentiment of all classes of society. Public opinion, thus formed, modified and corrected, instead of being dreaded like the threatening shouts of the populace, may be deferred to as the matured judgment of the general council of the nation. It may overrule a government: but it may also protect it against wanton and mischievous popular movements.¹ Democratic in its origin and character, it may associate itself with the State, and afford it the most powerful encouragement and support.

INTROD.

Public opinion is, at once, the guide, and the monitor of statesmen. The essential conditions of a good government are:—that it shall be in accord with the traditions and general sentiments of the people: that the rulers shall be unable to act, for any length of time, in opposition to the wishes of the majority of the people; and that every class shall have the means of exercising as much influence over their rulers, as will ensure a due regard to their several interests, and a reasonable confidence that such interests are not neglected. These conditions are best secured by public opinion; and if they be fulfilled, the will of the government is also the will of the people, which is, at once, the strongest and the safest polity for a State.

Its uses in the government of a State

The advance of popular freedom is also to be con-

Freedom a safeguard against democracy.

¹ See *infra*, vol. II., chapter xxii.; and the author's *Constitutional History*, chapters ix. and x.

INTROD. sidered from another point of view. It has resulted from the general progress of society, and from resistance to misgovernment. But if the growing wealth and intelligence of society are adverse to absolute or irresponsible rule, are they not equally opposed to the extreme development of democracy? Rich and educated members of society, if powerful in resisting the domination of a monarch or of a nobility, are no less powerful in withstanding the political ascendancy of other classes. Hence the first tendency of national progress is to overcome narrow forms of government, and to favour liberty; while its later tendency is to associate itself with the State, and to become the firmest of all barriers against democracy. Of this principle England offers a striking example. The wealthy manufacturers, and the middle classes, were the most strenuous supporters of Parliamentary reform in 1832, and of all the liberal measures which followed that popular triumph. But since the accumulated abuses of former times have been corrected, they have displayed conservative instincts, scarcely less marked than those of the proprietors of the soil.¹

Large
standing
armies.

While democratic movements have been rife throughout Europe, the rivalry and ambition of the great Continental States have led to the raising of enormous standing armies, and a costly military organisation. This policy has, undoubtedly, arrested the development of democracy. The military spirit has been encouraged; and armies mainly designed for foreign wars, of defence or aggression, are bulwarks against internal disaffection. Standing armies are naturally

¹ See *infra*, vol. ii., ch. xxii.

viewed with jealousy, in free States; and the great military monarchies of Europe have thus opposed themselves to the progressive spirit of the present age. INTROD. But it may be open to question whether this reactionary policy may not ultimately precipitate revolutions and democracy. The prodigious cost of vast armies, the intolerable burthens of conscription, the injury they inflict upon industry, and their unpopular demonstration of force, combine to cause national sufferings and discontent, to alienate the people from the government, and to provoke revolutionary sentiments. Where the people have acquired political power, will they submit to be led, like sheep, to the slaughter? will they not rather cry aloud for peace to their homes and honest industry?¹ In States mainly pastoral and agricultural, the warlike spirit of rulers will encounter little resistance; but as commerce and manufactures are extended, industrial interests may be expected to prevail over military ambition.

Another check to democracy during the revolutionary period, since 1830, has been caused by an ecclesiastical revival, in many parts of Europe. The Church of Rome has received some crushing blows in Italy and Germany; and the free spirit of modern thought has shaken her hold over the more cultivated minds of her own communion. But she has recovered much of her former power in France, in Spain, in Belgium, and in Southern Germany. She has been active in making

Ecclesiastical
revival.

¹ 'Tous les divers moyens généraux d'exploration rationnelle applicables aux recherches politiques, ont déjà spontanément concouru à constater, d'une manière également décisive, l'inévitable tendance primitive de l'humanité à une vie principalement militaire, et sa destination finale, non moins irrésistible, à une existence essentiellement industrielle.'—Comte, *Philos. Pos.*, iv. 713.

INTROD. converts, and extending her influence, in Protestant lands. But this revival has been signalised by dogmas, miracles, and pilgrimages, fitter for the dark ages than for the present era; and by denunciations of modern science and thought, which mark her narrow and unchangeable creed. A Church which teaches in the spirit of the eleventh century, and spurns the highest intelligence of an advancing society, cannot exercise an enduring influence over the political development of Europe, while it repels many earnest friends of liberty.¹

Church of
England.

A similar revival has occurred in the Church of England. There is no Church in Christendom so zealous in the religious and secular instruction of the people, and in all good works: but the zeal of some of her clergy has lately been taking a direction not free from danger. If she would keep her hold upon the affections of the people, the present revival must not be that of Laud, and the High Church bishops of Charles I. There must be no more leaning towards Rome. Neither the Church of Rome, nor a Romanised Church of England, can create a general reaction of religious thought, in a progressive age. It is vain to seek the revival of bygone forms of faith.

Religious
moderation.

The world has changed, and the general spirit of religious thought has changed with it. The more enlightened Catholics deplore the reactionary policy of the Holy See. The great body of English Churchmen, true to the Protestant spirit of the Reformed Church, revolt against the revival of Romish doctrines and ceremonies. Other sects are not less opposed to a return to

¹ 'Les hommes religieux combattent la liberté, et les amis de la liberté attaquent les religions.'—De Tocqueville, *Démoc. en Amérique*, Intr. 15.

their ancient ways. Puritanism has lost much of its austerity and fanaticism. No such Puritans are to be found, in any sect of nonconformists, as the sour zealots of the age of Cromwell. Nonconformists are still alienated from the Church, and religious dissensions are as bitter as ever : but the majority of enlightened Christians have emancipated themselves from the superstitions and religious extravagance of former times. Religious reaction is alien to the prevailing sentiments of the present age. Meanwhile, every creed in harmony with the rational judgment of society maintains its accustomed influence ; and an enlightened faith has never proved itself unfriendly to freedom.

INTROD.

It is to the union of religious moderation with civil freedom, that we owe the rapid advance of toleration, freedom of worship, and religious equality in modern times. In England, this just and generous policy has been accelerated by the numbers and influence of Catholics and dissenters, who have been strong enough to crown with success the efforts of liberal statesmen, in reversing the penal laws of former ages, in which toleration was unknown, alike to Catholics, to Churchmen, and to nonconformists.

Religious
toleration.

In presence of a general religious revival, the growth of infidelity cannot be overlooked. Throughout the history of the world, mankind have been more prone to superstition than to unbelief. Paganism lost its hold upon the more enlightened minds of antiquity : but its place was taken by a purer faith, which was soon corrupted by new superstitions. Again, when the Christian faith was assailed by the Revolution in France, the wild infidelity of the revolutionary party was speedily followed by a religious reaction, and by the revival of

Infidelity

INTROD. the spiritual power of the Church of Rome. And lastly, in England, while the clergy have been denouncing the increasing scepticism of our age, there has been a remarkable revival of religious zeal and earnestness. But it cannot be denied that, during the last century, while superstition has been continually declining, various forms of unbelief have been gaining ground,—more particularly in France and Germany. A few words may suffice to explain how far this change of religious thought is likely to affect the progress of democracy.

Its relations with democracy.

France is the only State in which infidelity has been associated with democracy and revolution. In England, the public liberties were maintained, in the seventeenth century, by the Puritans,—the most devout of all classes of Englishmen. The scoffing infidels were to be found among the courtiers of Charles II., who derided the preaching and praying of the Roundheads. And again, during the political progress of the last fifty years, which in any other State would have amounted to revolution, the earnest nonconformists,—the religious descendants of the Puritans,—have been among the firmest supporters of the popular cause. Never has that cause been tainted by unbelief. Throughout the history of Europe, since the Reformation,—in France, in the Netherlands, in Germany, in Hungary,—political liberties have owed much to the Calvinists,—the severest school of Protestant reformers. And, lastly, to the old Puritan spirit, was mainly due the revolt of the American colonies, and the foundation of the great federal republic of the United States. In France, infidelity was allied with revolution, not with liberty: in every other State we find an earnest faith associated with freedom.

By whom favoured,

Many of the turbulent leaders of democracy and

communism avow their hostility to churches, and to religion : they preach revolution in the state, in the church, and in society. These agitators have found numerous supporters among working men in the populous cities : but they are repudiated by all friends of liberty and order. Notwithstanding a more general freedom of religious thought, scepticism is to be chiefly found among German professors, French wits and men of letters, and English cynics and dilettanti. Such men are generally ranged on the side of power : they have no leaning towards popular movements : they are dreamers, speculative thinkers, abstruse writers, clever talkers, but not men of action. They are more prone to discourage freedom, than to foment revolutions. Meanwhile, all ranks of society, and especially the middle classes, are true to the faith of their forefathers ; and it is to religion, not to unbelief, that we must look for the support of rational and well-ordered liberty.

INTROD.

While rational liberty has been gaining ground in many European States, its principles have been discredited by the violence and dangerous designs of democratic and socialist factions. One of the most repellant characteristics of the extreme democratic party, throughout Europe, is its irreverent spirit. Without veneration for the religion, the history, or the traditions of their own country, without respect for its great men, they are possessed by an overweening confidence in themselves. Without toleration for the opinions, or regard for the interests of others, they pursue their own objects with obstinate resolution. They seem to hate their own governments more than a foreign enemy. Their patriotism displays itself in the abuse of their rulers. In every international dispute, their own country is in the wrong. All who are not with them

Democratic
excesses.

INTROD. are against them, and are reviled as corrupt and wicked. Such a spirit naturally repels many noble minds, otherwise earnest in the popular cause, and confident in the people. As the frantic democracy of the French revolutionists of 1793 outraged the sober friends of liberty, throughout Christendom, so the disciples of that school in France and other countries,—red republicans and communists,—have since alarmed the higher and middle classes, who are now associated with the government of their country; and have become the strongest defenders of property and order, against the excesses of democracy.

Com-
munism.

By far the most mischievous and dangerous fanatics of European democracy, are the socialists and communists. But as their wild schemes for the reconstruction of society, are repugnant to all the principles of liberty, and to the eternal instincts of mankind, they must not be confounded with the recognised principles of political democracy. The highest ideal of a democracy is that which secures to every citizen equality before the law, freedom of person, freedom in the family, freedom of conscience, freedom of opinion, freedom of speech, freedom of trade, freedom of labour, freedom of property, freedom of action when not injurious to the State or to society, a share in the election of his rulers, and in the making of the laws by which he is governed, and in the voting of taxes which he is called upon to contribute: which provides that the enlightened will of the majority shall be the rule of all, while none shall be restrained, but for the general good; which, combining the strength of a whole people, has for its first object, security for the rights and liberties of every member of the State.¹

¹ 'Non in ullâ civitate, nisi in quâ summa potestas populi est, ullum domicilium libertas habet.'—Cicero, *De Republicâ*; Mill, *On Liberty*.

But such an ideal of freedom is decried by communists as 'individualism.'¹ Their scheme utterly ignores liberty. The individual man is no more than a mechanical part of the whole community: he has no free will, no independence of thought or action. Every act of his life is prescribed for him. Individual liberty is surrendered to the State. Everything that men prize most in life is to be taken out of their hands. Their religion, their education, the management of their families, their property, their industry, their earnings, are dictated by the ruling powers. Such a scheme of government, if practicable, would create a despotism, exceeding any known in the history of the world. It was one of the evils of the religious creed of the dark ages, that the dignity of human nature was abased, until the nobler aspirations of men were humbled to the dust. In civil life, communism aims at the same abasement of the human character. But in the one case, men at least humbled themselves before God: in the other, they are required to prostrate themselves before their equals among men, for the sake of an arbitrary scheme of government, in which all are called upon to sacrifice their liberty, for the remote and speculative good of the community. 'For the sake of equality,' said Mably, one of the earlier masters of this school, 'the State ought to be intolerant.'² And in this scheme of affected equality, the higher natures are subjected to the lower. According to Louis Blanc, 'De chacun suivant ses facultés: à chacun suivant ses besoins.'³ In other words, no man is to profit by his own strength, abilities,

INTROD.

Tyranny
of com-
munism.Its depres-
sion of
higher
natures.¹ Louis Blanc, *Hist. de dix Ans*, ii. 277-282.² *De la Législation*, 1776: livr. iv. ch. 4.³ *Hist. de dix Ans*, iii. 109, 110.

INTROD. or industry; but is to minister to the wants of the weak, the stupid, and the idle. To want much and to do little, would be the aim of the communist economy. The experience of our own poor laws would furnish a fitting comment upon such principles.

Higher
aims of
society
proscribed.

The natural effect of such theories would be to repress the energies of mankind: and it is their avowed object to proscribe all the more elevated aims and faculties of individuals, and all the arts and accomplishments of life. Babœuf even denounced intercourse with foreigners, as dangerous to principles of equality.¹ While critics of communism have shown that equality could not fail to deprive nations and society of their highest distinctions,—of genius, of learning, of the arts, of invention, of cultivated taste and manners,²—its professors have not shrunk from confessing their jealousy and hatred of those aspirations, which have ever been the pride and glory of mankind.

How such
theories
have been
reduced to
practice.

Doctrines so repugnant to any existing scheme of society, and to human nature, might be regarded as the visions of some eccentric Utopia. But the dreams of philosophers, in ancient and modern times,³ were to be reduced to a terrible reality in France. It was too late to construct an ideal community, with the general consent of its individual members. Society was already established upon the basis of property, and public and

¹ Pièces saisies à l'arrestation de Babœuf, publiées en 1848.

² Heine, writing from Paris, in 1840, thus spoke of the communists, 'Truly only with fear and trembling can I think of the time when those dark iconoclasts shall attain empire: with their horny hands they will break up those marble statues so dear to my heart: they will shatter all those fanciful playthings and gewgaws of art, which poets loved so much: they will cut down my laurels and plant potatoes there,' &c.—*Spectator*, June 10, 1871.

³ See *infra*, vol. ii. 323.

private rights ; and the communists were resolved to subvert it. Whether by social contracts, or progressive taxation, or prohibitory laws against accumulation, or a legislative division of property, or by force, the aim of all alike was the redistribution of property, for the common enjoyment of the community.

INTROD.

In the first revolution, the political principles of communism were so widely spread through the mass of the working classes, and received so much recognition, that their dangerous power continued to threaten every successive government;¹ and is still the dread of France and of Europe. Its dangers, becoming more formidable in every revolution, culminated in the brief reign of the Commune, in Paris, in 1871,² which revealed the power of the communist party, and the disastrous operation of their subversive principles.

Com-
munism in
the revolu-
tions of
France.

Meanwhile, the social theories of communism assumed a new revolutionary character. It had been the aim of the early revolutionists to overthrow thrones and aristocracies, in order to ensure liberty and equality. It was the further aim of the communists to crush capitalists and the middle classes.³ Communism was accepted by working men as a revolt against capital. It was in this spirit, that they took part in the revolutions of 1830,⁴ of February, 1848,⁵ and in the terrible insurrection of June, in the same year.⁶ For a time, they were utterly routed and cast down. The strong rule of the second empire left them no hope of a successful

Com-
munism
and work-
men.¹ *Infra*, vol. ii. 283-291.² *Ibid.* 321.³ 'Pense-t-on qu'après avoir détruit la féodalité, et vaincu les rois, la démocratie reculera devant les bourgeois et les riches? S'arrêtera-t-elle maintenant qu'elle est devenue si forte, et ses adversaires si foibles?'—De Tocqueville, *Démocr. en Amérique*, Intr. 6.⁴ *Infra*, vol. ii. 248.⁵ *Infra*, vol. ii. 283-285.⁶ *Ibid.* 290.

INTROD. resistance in France; and at length they resolved to advance their ends, by a general combination among the workmen of Europe.

The Inter-
national
Society.

An 'International Association of Workmen' was accordingly established in 1864, for mutual defence against employers of labour, in all countries. But it was not enough to combat the power of capital, by combinations of working men. Capital itself was their natural enemy, and must be overcome. It had made workmen slaves; and it was now their turn to subject it to their own uses. Socialism and communism were uppermost in their councils. All rights of property were to be confiscated, in the interests of the many. They declared that the emancipation of labour, in all countries, was the end to which every political movement should be subordinate, and that it was their duty to recognise the rights of man and of citizen.¹ War was thus declared against capital; and societies of workmen were affiliated in all parts of Europe. Newspapers supported the movement, and proclaimed its objects, with even less reserve than its leaders. *L'Egalité* warned the *bourgeoisie* that they were about to be swallowed up, and that the triumph of the workmen, upon the ruins of capital, was at hand.² *L'Internationale* contended for the collective proprietorship of the soil, co-operative workshops, and the exclusive taxation of the rich.³ The same journal affirmed that the working classes had overthrown the nobility, merely to put the *bourgeoisie* in their place, and that the domination of the *bourgeoisie* was the slavery of the *prolétariat*.⁴ This journal, at another time, stigmatised the aristocracy and

¹ Oscar Testut, *L'Internationale*, 4.

² *L'Egalité*, Jan. 23, 1869.

³ *L'Internationale*, March 27, 1869.

⁴ Sept. 5, 1869.

the *bourgeoisie* as wild beasts, and declared a social revolution as the aim of the Association. INTROD.

Congresses were held at Geneva, Brussels, Basle, and elsewhere, in which the principles of the Association were boldly avowed. At the congress at Brussels, in 1868, the President, Eugène Dupont, declared—‘The clergy say we wish neither government, nor army, nor religion. They say truly; we wish no more governments, for they crush us with taxes; we wish no more taxes; we wish no more armies, for they massacre us; we wish no more religions, for religions stifle intelligence.’¹ The congress at Basle, in 1869, declared that society had a right to abolish individual property in the soil, and restore it to the community; and that it was necessary to exercise that right.² Inter-
national
congresses.

Local sections of the Association also, from time to time, published their sentiments to the world. The Marseilles section, in April, 1870, wrote: ‘Let the state, the church, and the *bourgeoisie* combine for a work of imposture and ignominy,—the avenging people will confound them in a common ruin.’³ In the same month, the workmen of Lyons, addressing their countrymen, bid defiance to capital and to employers of labour, and promised to the working classes possession of the soil, the mines, and the workshops. ‘Henceforth no employers; none but workers.’⁴ Local sec-
tions of the
Inter-
national.

¹ Oscar Testut, 14.

² *Ibid.* 10.

³ *Ibid.* 81.

⁴ *Ibid.* 93. ‘In the trial of communists by the Correctional Tribunal of Lyons, in April 1874, evidence was produced in proof of the dangerous doctrines of the prisoners. One of them had said, “God and property can only make tyrants and slaves, and that is why I declare against both.” In a pamphlet entitled *Social Liquidation*, it was written, ‘Massacres ought to be the sole thought and occupation of the working man, whose interest it is to rid himself completely of those who live by his labour;’ and other evidence to the same effect was given.—*Times*, May 30, 1874.

INTROD.

Their mischievous activity.

The leaders of this mischievous Association were the chief promoters of the movement of the Commune of Paris in 1871; and their dangerous activity has continued to disquiet many European States. They have found little favour among the working men of England;¹ and elsewhere they have been rigorously repressed, as dangerous conspirators against the peace of society, and the rights of property. Proudhon, one of the apostles of communism, in a memorable phrase, denounced property as theft;² and every government, every proprietary class, and all friends of liberty and order, have combined to put down his disciples as robbers. Whatever disorders may spring from this wide-spread conspiracy, society will be strong enough to repress and to punish them.

The future.

It is not the province of history to forecast the future; but some instruction may be gathered from the lessons of the past. All the causes of progressive popular influence, in the government of States, are in full and ever-increasing activity. All the causes which retard and control that influence, are being constantly impaired or modified. The intercourse of nations accelerates the action, and multiplies the forces of popular movements. Hence it may be inferred, that States not yet reached by democracy, will soon feel its power; and

¹ In a report of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, in 1873, 'the council could not shut their eyes to the fact that the International Working Men's Association has departed from its original design, by having degenerated into a political society, who, through its leaders, have been permitted to be used as the mouthpiece of the disaffected from all parts of Europe, and therefore from this fact decide against any representative from our society attending the congress' (at Geneva). Other associations of English working men evinced the same alienation from the International society.—*Times*, Sept. 6, 1873. See also *infra*, vol. II. 470.

² 'Propriété, c'est le vol.'

that States already under its partial influence, must be prepared for its increasing force and activity.¹ But as the progress of democracy is the result of general social development, an advanced society, while commanding a greater share of political power, will, at the same time, protect the State from democratic excesses. If the latter should anywhere prevail, for a time, they will be promptly repressed: but their brief triumph will endanger public liberty and encourage political reaction. The natural advancement of society will be checked; and even a revival of absolutism may be endured, for the sake of peace and order. It should be the aim of enlightened statesmen to prepare society for its increasing responsibilities, to educate the people, to train them in the ways of freedom, to entrust them with larger franchises, to reform the laws, and to bring the government of the State into harmony with the judgment of its wisest citizens.²

¹ He must indeed be an enthusiastic republican, who can agree with President Grant: 'It is my firm conviction, said he, that the civilised world is tending towards republicanism. The government and, through their representatives, the people of our great republic, are destined to be the guiding star of all other countries.' (Inaugural Message to Congress, March 4, 1873.)

This sanguine forecast was followed by another, even more improbable. He added 'As commerce, education and the rapid transition of thought and matter, by telegraph and steam, have changed everything, I rather believe that the great Maker is preparing the world to become one nation, speaking one language, a consummation which will render armies and navies no longer necessary.'

² Instruire la démocratie, ranimer, s'il se peut, ses croyances, purifier ses mœurs, régler ses mouvements, substituer, peu à peu, la science des affaires à son inexpérience, la connaissance de ses vrais intérêts à ses aveugles instincts; adapter son gouvernement aux temps et aux lieux; le modifier suivant les circonstances et les hommes: tel est le premier des devoirs imposés de nos jours à ceux qui dirigent la société. Il faut une science politique nouvelle à un monde tout nouveau.—De Tocqueville, *Démoc. en Amérique*, Intr. 7.