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COMPARATIVE POLITICS

COMPARATIVE POLITICS

SIX LECTURES READ BEFORE THE ROYAL INSTITUTION
IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY, 1873

WITH

THE UNITY OF HISTORY

THE REDE LECTURE READ BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE, MAY 29, 1872

BY

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"Facies non omnibus una,
Nec diversa tamen, qualem decet esse sororum."
OVID, *Mét.* ii. 13.

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PREFACE

THE six Lectures read before the Royal Institution are an attempt to make something like a systematic application of a line of argument which has been often made use of in particular cases both by myself and by other writers. They are an attempt to claim for political institutions a right to a scientific treatment of exactly the same kind as that which has been so successfully applied to language, to mythology, and to the progress of culture. But of course they do not themselves attempt to do more than make a beginning, by applying the Comparative method to some of the most prominent institutions of those among the Aryan nations whose history was best known to myself and was likely to be best known to my hearers. Nothing more than this could well be done in a course of lectures, even if my own knowledge had enabled me to carry my illustrations over a much wider range. But I trust that others whose studies have lain in other branches of history may be led to take up the subject and to carry it on further. What I have done may perhaps be enough to show that Greeks, Italians, and Teutons have a large common stock of institutions, institutions whose likeness cannot be otherwise accounted for than by the supposition of their common primitive origin. It remains now to show how much of this common stock is common to the whole Aryan family, how much of the common Aryan stock may be common to the

Aryan and Semitic families, how much of the possible common Aryan and Semitic stock may be common to the races of the eastern hemisphere or to the whole of mankind. On none of these points have I even attempted to enlarge; I have merely pointed them out as questions to which my own inquiries naturally lead up, and which I hope may be thoroughly worked out by some of those scholars who are qualified to take them in hand.

Even within the range of the three branches of the Aryan family which I chose for special examination, the limits and nature of a course of lectures did not allow of anything more than to choose some of the more prominent instances illustrating the positions laid down, and even among these it was of course impossible to follow out any matter in all its bearings. The really practical object of a lecture is, after all, not so much direct teaching as the suggestion of points for thought and study. With this view I have, since the lectures were delivered, added a considerable number of notes and references, in which I have gone somewhat further into several points than I could do in the lectures themselves. These may, I hope, set some of my readers on further inquiries; I can hardly expect that in their necessarily desultory shape they can do much more.

I have no doubt that both in the lectures and in the notes many things will be found which have been already said both by myself and by other writers. Probably many things will be found which both myself and other writers may find occasion to say again, as often as it may be needful to put forth correct views of matters about which popular errors and confusions are afloat. There is a large class of people who pay little heed to a thing that is said only once, but on whom, when it is said several times and put in several shapes, it at last has an effect. I believe that this class is more numerous—its needs are certainly

better worth attending to—than those fastidious persons who are disgusted if they are ever called upon to hear the same thing twice. Besides this, the same fact constantly has to be looked at from different points of view, to be used to illustrate several general propositions, to be set before several classes of readers or hearers. I find also that the best and most successful writers are always those who have least scruple in putting forth the truths which they have to enforce over and over again. And I believe that their so doing is one element of their success.

To the six lectures read before the Royal Institution this year I have added the Rede Lecture which I had the great pleasure of being called on to give before the University of Cambridge last year. It was of course written before the Royal Institution Lectures were either written or designed. Without forming part of the same course, it deals with a kindred subject. Both are meant as contributions to the same object, to the breaking down of the unnatural barrier between what are called “ancient” and “modern” subjects in language, history, and everything else. If I should ever see the establishment of a real School of History and a real School of Language in the University of Oxford, I shall feel, not only that the principles for which I have been fighting for years have been put into a practical shape, but also that a step has been taken towards the advancement of really sound learning greater than any that has been taken since the sixteenth century.

Since these lectures were written I have fallen in with the work of M. de Coulanges called *La Cité Antique*, at least in the English form into which it has been thrown by Mr. T. C. Barker in his book called ‘Aryan Civilization.’ It deals of course with many of the subjects with which I have dealt, and those which it does deal with, are

of course dealt with far more fully than I have done. But the book, notwithstanding its general title, is almost wholly confined to Greek and Roman matters, and deals hardly at all with the kindred Teutonic institutions. Nor can I at all pledge myself to the author's views on all matters, as he seems too anxious to account for everything by reference to a single principle, that of religion. How much I have learned from the writings of Professor Max Müller, Mr. E. B. Tylor, and Sir Henry Maine, may be seen throughout the book. Among foreign writers it will be seen that I have drawn most largely on the great *Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte* of G. H. Waitz. It should be a matter of rejoicing among scholars that we shall soon have a companion work for our own History from the hands of Professor Stubbs.

SOMERLEAZE, WELLS,
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FLORENCE FREEMAN.

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CONTENTS

LECT.		PAGE
I.	THE RANGE OF THE COMPARATIVE SCIENCES	1
II.	GREEK, ROMAN, AND TEUTON	24
III.	THE STATE	49
IV.	THE KING	88
V.	THE ASSEMBLY	122
VI.	MISCELLANEOUS ANALOGIES	158
	BRDE LECTURE.—THE UNITY OF HISTORY	192
	NOTES TO THE LECTURES	221

INDEX

ACHAÏAN.

- Achaian League*, analogy between its constitution and that of the United States, 21; its origin and character, 59, 256; modification of democracy under, 139; nature of its assembly, 139-141; way of voting in, 144-145; analogies with Rome, 146, 148; legislation of Polybios for, 203; annexation of Sparta by, 256.
- Addison*, his use of the word Gothic, 333, 334.
- Adolf, Johann*, his Chronicle of Dithmarschen, 277.
- Adoption*, working of the Roman law of, 53, 265-266; its influence on the gens, 67; nature of at Athens, 266.
- Adrastos*, his slaughter by Agamemnon, 327.
- Adullerer*, lawfully slain, 326, 327.
- Ælfréd*, laws of, 229, 326, 328.
- Ælfwine*, wergild paid for, 328.
- Æthelberht*, effects of his baptism, 108; his laws, 328.
- Ætius*, history of, 236; nations in his army, *ib.*
- Ætolia*, city life never fully developed in, 57; its importance in later times, 59; character of its League, 256.
- Africa*, kingdom of the Vandals in, 115.
- Agamemnon*, his imperial position, 131; his relation to the Assembly, 132.

ANCUS.

- Age*, names of office expressive of, 46.
- Ager publicus*, the same as Folkland, 75.
- Agoph*, use of the word, 46; applied to the divine assembly, 131.
- Alouμνηρεia* compared with Roman dictatorship, 288.
- Akarnania*, city life never fully developed in, 57; its importance in later times, 59.
- Alaric*, his march from Athens to Rome, 37; his Roman offices, 104, 304; his repulse from Athens, 339.
- Alby*, consuls at, 18.
- Alexander* of Epeiros, 102.
- Alexander* the Great, position of, 103.
- Allen, John*, his explanation of the growth of kingship, 92; quoted, 273, 288.
- Allies*, Italian, compared with the Lacedæmonian *νεπλουκοι*, 330.
- America, British*, its relation to the United States, 52.
- Amphiktyonic League*, its constitution, 56; its witness to the early state of Greece, 57.
- Amyntas*, acquitted by the Macedonian assembly, 314.
- Analogies*, different classes of, 13.
- Ἀναξ*, use of the word by Isokratēs, 239.
- Ancient and Modern Studies*, no real distinction between, 196-198.
- Ancus*, value of his legend, 295.

ANDOKIDÊS.

- Andokides*, speech of Lysias against, 332.
- Aulorra*, commonwealth of, 309.
- Angul* and *Dan*, legend of, 335.
- Anointing*, introduction of the ceremony, 107; its political effect, 108.
- Antioch*, recovered by Niképoros, 227.
- Antoninus Caracalla*, effect of his edict, 259.
- Antrusions'*, Frankish, answer to the English *Thegnas*, 167.
- Appeal of murder*, its origin and abolition, 177.
- Aquæ Sextiæ*, its influence in Gaul, 38.
- Arch*, invented more than once, 20.
- Architecture*, Greek, origin of, 227.
- Archons* at Athens, their origin and history, 96, 99, 100, 296; called kings, 297; not presidents of the assembly, 298.
- Ἀρχων Βασιλεύς* at Athens, his origin, 96.
- Arctopagos*, compared with the Roman Senate, 146; its temper, 319.
- Arês*, his wounds and possible death, 313.
- Argos*, its union with Corinth, 59, 255; history of kingship at, 96, 293.
- Aristeides*, reforms of, 162.
- Aristocracy*, primitive traces of, 41; meaning of the word, 49, 125, 242, 243; peculiarly republican, 172; nature of in ruling cities, 172-173; fertile in able administrators, 172; compared with democracy, 173; inconsistent with kingship, 174-175; different forms of its growth, *ib.*; admission of strangers to, 174; government of dependencies by, 189; misuse of the word, 243; growth of at Rome, 311.
- Aristotle*, knowledge of in the

ASSEMBLY.

- Middle Ages, 193; his doctrine of mixed governments, 238; his definition of aristocracy, 242; of the city, 246.
- Arkadia*, language of, 203, 336.
- Army*, the same as the assembly, 127; growth of, in cities, *ib.*
- Arnold, Dr.*, quoted, 244.
- Aryan* nations, their three chief races, 24; their relations explained only by the comparative method, 33; their primitive state, *ib.*; dispersion of their tribes in Europe, 35; their primitive institutions not borrowed from one another, 38; their common origin, 39, 40, 43; their early vocabulary, 40; their primitive form of government, 42, 129.
- Assembly*, various names for, 46, 312; nature of in Macedonia, 102, 134, 314; sovereign nature of, 122, 138, 155, 156; action of each citizen in, 123; representation unknown in those of cities, 124; history of among tribes, *ib.*; distinction between aristocratic and democratic, 125, 126; its identity with the army, 127; instances of military assemblies, 128; character of in heroic Greece, 130; on Olympos, *ib.*; relation of the kings to, 131-133; abeyance of in Ithakê, 132; way of voting in, 133; nature of in Molossis, 134, 144, 145; origin and character of at Athens, 136, 137; its relation to the other powers of the state, 138; character of at Sparta, 139, 315; under the Achaian League, 141; in England, *ib.*; shrinks up where representation is not introduced, 141, 143; history of among the Franks, 142, 317; nature of local assemblies, 143; nature of in Federal states, *ib.*; different forms of at Rome, 145, 146; its relations to the Senate, 147, 148;

ASYLUM.

comparison of Roman and Athenian assemblies, 148; extinction of under the Empire, *ib.*; change in the character of in mediæval Europe, 149, 150; formed of estates, *ib.*; traces of primary assemblies in England, 152, 153; at Florence, 153; in Friesland and Dithmarschen, 154; in the Forest Cantons, *ib.*; aristocratic primary assemblies in Poland and Venice, 155; presidency of in different states, 298, 299; Athenian, held away from Athens, 312; Roman, held at Veii, *ib.*; seats in, 313; attendance enforced in, 317, 318.

Asylum, meaning of the Roman legend of, 163.

Ataulf, change in his purpose, 213, 339; his conquests in Spain, 216.

Athanasius, effect of Roman greatness on, 213, 339.

Athens, origin of, 55, 56, 69; its significance in later Greek history, 59; traces of earlier inhabitants at, 69; character of the later tribes at, *ib.*; origin of the δῆμοι, 70; history of kingship at, 95, 96, 99, 289, 296; cases of military assemblies in her history, 128; true character of her democracy, 135-139; shortness of her real life, 137, 315; contrasted with the later Greek democracies, 139; with Rome, 146-148; the people called king or tyrant, 148; history of nobility at, 160, 162-164; law of private vengeance, 176; tyrannicide lawful at, *ib.*; its state in the eleventh century, 214; grants of citizenship, 254; origin of the archonship, 297; presidency of assemblies at, 298; Constantine general at, 302; military levies at, 312; submission of its armies to the assembly, *ib.*

BERN.

Attic dialect of Greek, its permanence, 203, 204.

Attica, union of its towns, 58, 253, 256; remains of earlier inhabitants in, 269; party divisions in, *ib.*

Attus Clausus, his migration to Rome, 70.

Augustus, Chlodwig so called, 304.

Ausserstand, nature of at Bern, 326.

Austria, House of, later Emperors chosen from, 308.

B.

Bajazet described as Cæsar by Timour, 213; invested by the nominal caliph, 217.

Baldier, death of, 313.

Ballot, fallacies about, 316.

Barbarians opposed to Greeks, 53; alliance with, how looked on in Greece, 245.

Barbarus, use of the word in the Teutonic codes, 260.

Basil the Macedonian, his correspondence with Lewis the Second, 230.

Basil the Second, his triumph at Athens, 215.

Βασιλεύς, origin of the word, 45; its use, 89, 286; its meaning at Athens, 96, 99; applied to the Emperors, 103, 302; dispute about the title, 230-232; its use by Hesiod, 290; by John Lydus, 301; distinguished from *τύραννος*, 307.

Βασιλισσα, wife of the king-archon so called, 294.

Belisarius, consulship of, 103, 302.

Berkeley, Lord, pays the wergild of Lord Lisle, 329.

Bern, lessons of its history, 84; character of its government, 172, 173, 189; origin of its aristocracy, 174; its dominion over its subject states, 185, 187; extends its dominion by purchase, 187; its analogy with Rome, 284; origin

BERN.

- of the name, *ib.*; *Ausserstand* at, 326.
- Bern, Dietrichs-*, or Verona, 84.
- Bicameral system*, its origin, 14, 151; necessary in a federal state, 151, 152.
- Bishops*, their position and titles in southern Europe, 73; among Celts and Teutons, 73, 74, 272; position of at Iona, 291.
- Bluntschli, Dr. C.*, quoted, 262, 284.
- Bollius*, consulship of, 103, 302.
- Bosporos*, Greek kingdom of, 205.
- Brecon*, inscription at, 329.
- Britain*, character of its history, 30; spoken of as another world, 229; effect of its insular position, 230.
- Briton*, wergild of lower than that of an Englishman, 179, 328.
- Brunanburh*, battle of, 111.
- Bulgarians*, their history, 232; Hebrew names of their kings, 340.
- Bundesstaat*, distinguished from *Staatenbund*, 256.
- Burghership*, hereditary, the foundation of the ancient commonwealths, 126, 181; forms of, in England, 182.
- Burnet, Bishop*, his travels in Switzerland, 326.

C.

- Cæsar*, his desire to be king, 287.
- Caius, Emperor*, restores the comitia, 319.
- Caliphate*, its analogy with the Empire, 216-217.
- Camena*, opposed to the Muses, 338.
- Canaan*, kings of, 109.
- Canterbury*, archbishops of, spoken of as popes, 229.
- Capitol*, use of the name at Toulouse, 17, 223; at Köln, *ib.*
- Capitouls*, magistrates of Toulouse, 223.
- Cavalry*, connexion of the word with chivalry, 47

CITY.

- Celts*, character of their history, 32; the vanguard of Aryan migration westward, 34; their position in Europe, 234.
- Century*, equivalent to the hundred, 75; assembly of centuries at Rome, 145.
- Ceorl*, opposed to *Eorl*, 162.
- Cerdic*, permanence of his house, 114.
- Chalons*, battle of, branches of the Aryan family engaged at, 36.
- Chaonia*, abolition of kingship in, 101.
- Chapters*, growth of oligarchy in, 316.
- Charis, Charites*, origin of the word, 5, 6, 221.
- Charles of Anjou*, his conquest of Marseilles, 205, 336.
- Charles the Great*, his union of the Roman Empire and the German kingship, 104; his imperial titles, 230.
- Cherson*, Greek commonwealth of, 205.
- Chery Chase*, notice of, by Addison, 334.
- Chlodwig*, consulship of, 104, 304.
- Christianity*, its Semitic origin, 28; the religion of the Roman Empire, *ib.*; opposed to exclusive privileges of birth, 107; influence of the Greek tongue on, 206.
- Cicero*, plebeian augur, 164.
- Cild*, use of the word, 240.
- Cities*, formed by the union of villages, 57, 251-253; their history in England and elsewhere, 83, 129; French and English, compared, 249, 250.
- Citizenship*, nature of, in Greece, 58; first freely, then sparingly granted, to strangers, 181; grants of at Athens, 253; at Sparta, 254.
- Cittadini* at Venice, their position, 161.
- City*, one form of the state, 52; Greek conception of, 53, 54; formed of *gentes*, 58; idea of,

CLANS.

- never fully developed among the Teutonic nations, 65.
- Clans*, nature of among the Celts, 65-66; compared with the Roman *gentes*, 261.
- Classical*, bad effects of the distinction implied in the name, 194-195.
- "*Classical*" languages, true way of studying, 217-219.
- Claudia gens*, its origin, 70.
- Claudit*, their admission at Rome, 174; their migration, 270.
- Claudius, Emperor*, his speech on the gradual extension of Roman citizenship, 62, 63, 259.
- Clergy*, their position as an estate of the realm, 14.
- Clientage*, its nature at Rome, 168-169.
- Colonies*, Greek, their extent, 204, 205; their relation to the mother country, 329, 331.
- Comitatus*, its Teutonic form modified by Roman ideas, 112; a common Aryan institution, 166; its history among Greeks and Teutons, 167; groundwork of modern nobility, 167, 170; slighter traces of at Rome, 168; its connexion with clientage, 168, 170, 326; nature of in Macedonia, 169; implies a king or personal leader, *ib.*; its connexion with vassalage, 324.
- Comitia* at Rome, forms of, 145; way of voting in, 145, 318; restored by Caius, 319.
- Commons, House of*, origin of, 150.
- Commune*, equivalent to the *mark*, 75; its position in Switzerland, 183-185.
- Comparative method*, its results, 196.
- Condominium*, instances of in Germany and Switzerland, 186.
- Confederation*, German, springs out of the kingdom, 116.
- Confederations*, their nature in later Greece, 60; nature of their as-

CYNING.

- semblies, 124; military assemblies more usual in, 128; bicameral system needed in, 151, 152.
- Constantine*, general at Athens, 103, 302.
- Constantinople*, its origin, 207; position of in mediæval imagination, *ib.*
- Consul, Consulship*, uses of the names, 18; at Alby, 18, 223; origin of at Rome, 98; kingly powers of, 100, 243; consulship held by the emperors, 103; its revived dignity in later times, *ib.*; checks on its power, 147; definition of by Dionysios, 243; origin of at Toulouse, 223; held by Theodoric, 301; by Boëtius and Belisarius, 302.
- Coole, Mr. H. C.*, his view of Roman institutions in England, 284.
- Corinth*, its union with Argos, 58-59, 255; oligarchy of the Bacchiads at, 297; her relations to her colonies, 331.
- Coronation*, meaning and effect of the rite, 91.
- Councils*, not necessarily formed with regard to birth, 158.
- Ccz, Mr. G. W.*, quoted, 221.
- Coze, Archdeacon*, his travels in Switzerland, 326.
- Crusaders*, their jurisprudence in the East, 223.
- Culture*, application of the comparative method to, 8; name wanted for its study, 10; its relations to the other sciences, 11.
- Curia*, an union of *gentes*, 67; answers to the Spartan *ᾠβή*, 68; and the Teutonic hundred, 75.
- Curtius, Ernst*, quoted, 225, 265, 268, 269.
- Cyn, kin, cynecyn*, connexion of the words with *cyning, king*, 44, 105, 106, 305.
- Cynehlaford*, 325.
- Cyning, king*, origin and cognates of

CYPRUS.

the name, 44, 105, 106; its connexion with *ganaka*, 305.
Cyprus, Frank kingdom of, 223.

D.

Dante, his treatise *De Monarchia*, 306.
Dawkins, Mr. W. B., quoted, 233.
Dead languages, no such thing, 196.
Démétrios Poliorkétes, Athenian flattery of, 215, 340.
Democracy, primitive, traces of, 41-42; definition of, 125, 138; form taken by, in Mediæval Italy, 153; government of dependencies by, 189; description of by Periklès, 315; its history and character at Athens, 136-139; compared with later Greek democracies, 139; modified under the Achaian League, 141; pure democracy not applicable to a large state, 140-143.
Δῆμος, at Athens, originally village communities, 69, 268; their local character, 70.
Δῆμος, uses of the word, 56, 251.
Denmark, despotism lawful in, 228; its relations to the Duchies, *ib.*
Dependencies repeat the institutions of the mother country, 16; government of, 189, 247; their relations to the mother country, 329.
Diadem, use of, 103; introduced by Diocletian, 303.
Dictatorship, nature of at Rome, 100, 287; perpetual, distinguished from kingship, 90.
Diétrichsbern, name of Verona, 284.
Dimock, Mr. J. F., quoted, 338.
Diocletian introduces the diadem, 303.
Diôn Chrysostom, his definition of aristocracy, 242; his theory of kingship, 289, 302.
Dithmarschen, retention of the old freedom in, 78, 154; local nomenclature of, 263; its history, 277.

EMPIRE.

Dominion, looked on as property, 186, 187.
Dorians, antiquity of their three tribes, 267.
Δυναστεία, nature and instances of, 297.

E.

Ealdor, *Ealdorman*, origin of the title, 76; chiefs of the tribe, 76, 106; give way to kings, 106; return to their government, 109.
Earl, *Eorl*, *Jarl*, Scandinavian, 110, 111; history and meaning of the word, 167, 323; immemorial nobility of the *Eorlas*, 159, 162; give way to the Thegns, 166, 170.
Edom, Dukes of, 109.
Ehu, *Eoh*, cognate with *equus*, 240.
Ἑλληνία, origin of the word, 239.
Elis, foundation of, 57, 251; language of its inscription, 336.
Elizabeth, *Quæen*, her English descent, 309.
Ἑλλην, use of the name, 227.
Emperors, origin of their powers, 50, 112, 288; union of the various magistracies in their hands, 103; kingly language how far applied to, 103-104; alone called monarchs, 110; contrast between the earliest and latest, 120; their dealings with the senate and assembly, 149; retention and imitation of their titles, 213; their consulships, 292; their tribunician power, 292, 300; their solitary position, 303.
Empire, its effect on the city and the provinces, 63, 64; its effects in Germany and Italy, 87; open to all baptized men, 89; united with the German kingship, 104; effects of its union with the Frankish kingdom, 116; lawyers' theory of its origin, 307; becomes purely elective, 308; then practically hereditary, *ib.*

ENGLAND.

England, continuity of its political history, 30; no true Roman element in, 31, 85; ambassadors from at the court of Justinian, 36; the Teutonic constitution begins afresh in, 79; modification of the *mark* and the *gau* in, 80; union of its several kingdoms, 81, 113, 117; growth of the cities hindered by stronger national unity, 83; position of in general Teutonic history, 86; origin or history of kingship in, 106, 113; continuity of the royal succession in, 114; continuity of assemblies in, 149, 150; no true nobility in, 150; powers of Parliament in, 156; effect of feudal ideas in, 168; its relation to India, 185.

English, their relation to other Teutonic nations, 29; their three homes, 31; the Teutonic constitution brought by them into Britain, 78.

English language, Romance elements in, 282.

Epeiras, the older condition of Greece continued in, 57, 102; its importance in later times, 59; history of kingship in, *ib.*; becomes a Greek commonwealth, 102.

Ephors, presidents of the Spartan assembly, 299.

Estates, their nature in England and France, 14; representation of, 149, 150; system of, broke down in England, 150.

'Eraipoi, answers to the English *gesiðas*, 166, 169.

Eternal, title of Rome, 28.

Eupatrids, *Athenian*, their nobility immemorial, 160; its probable origin, 162, 321; loss of their political power, 163; still preferred for high offices, 165.

Exeter, position of in English history, 84, 85, 284.

FROUDE.

F.

Fehde, feud, right of, 326.

Feudalism, its origin and working in France and England, 168; growth of, 223.

Filioque, interpolation of, 337.

Finlay, Mr., origin of his history, 227; quoted, 336.

Fins, position of, in Europe, 234.

Five Boroughs, confederacy of, 84.

Flamens at Rome, always patrician, 164.

Florence, parliaments of, 153.

Folkland, the same as *ager publicus*, 75.

Foreigner, meaning of the word in English boroughs, 182.

Forest Cantons, retention of the old freedom in, 78.

France, its origin, 116; strictly hereditary character of its crown, 117, 289; effect of feudal ideas in, 168.

Franchise, various forms of in England, 182, 183; how attained in boroughs, 183.

Franks, their place among Teutonic nations, 81; history and division of their kingdom, 110, 115; growth of the power of their kings, 116; union of their kingdom with the Empire, *ib.*

Freeman, various classes below, 160, 161.

Freemen, their history in English boroughs, 182.

French, Kings and Dukes of, 216.

French language, Teutonic element in, 281.

Friesland, retains its primitive assemblies, 154.

Friithigern, his titles, 306.

Froude, Mr. J. A., his account of university studies, 340.

GALATIA.

G.

- Galatia*, Greek influence on, 206.
- Ganaka*, connexion of the word with *king* and *cynning*, 106, 107, 305.
- Gau*, its relation to the shire, 76, 279; the territory of the tribe, 76; authorities on, 276; name not known in England, 279.
- Gaul*, Teutonic character of its later political institutions, 82; Greek and Roman civilization in, 237.
- Gemeinde*, equivalent to the *mark*, 75; their position in Switzerland, 183-185.
- Generals*, powers of, at Athens, 99; their special power in war times, 128.
- Tévos*, *gens*, or *clan*, use of the word, 46; its special importance in ancient Italy, 62, 65; its various forms, 65, 66; community of blood its original idea, 66, 264; modifications in later times, 67; its abiding importance in Rome, 68; its connexion with tribes and *δῆμοι*, 70; names of *gentes* in England, 66; its form as a village community, 75; at Rome, compared with the Celtic clans, 261; with the German *geschlechter*, 262; hereditary character of, 267.
- Gentilis*, Cicero's definition of, 264.
- Germany*, its history modified by its connexion with the Empire, 29; changes in after the time of Tacitus, 78; history of the cities in, 84; growth of the modern kingdoms of, 90, 286, 287; its kingdom sinks into a confederation, 116; modern Empire a revival of the kingdom, 116, 308.
- Geschlechter*, German, answer to the Roman *gentes*, 262.
- Gentilas*, answer to the Greek *ἑταῖροι*, 166.
- Gibbon*, quoted, 227.

GREEK LANGUAGE.

- Gibeon*, a free city, 109.
- Giraldus Cambrensis*, germs of comparative philology in, 332, 333.
- Gladstone, Mr.*, his defence of the ninth book of the Iliad, 286.
- Goddesses*, presence of, in the divine council and assembly, 130, 131.
- Gods*, children of, unknown in the Italian mythology, 96, 295; conception of in Greece, 130; their council and assembly, 130; death of in Scandinavia and Greece, 313.
- Gothic*, use of the word, 194.
- Goths*, history of their kingdom in Spain, 115; preservers of Roman monuments, 228.
- Graubünden*, retention of the old freedom in, 78; dominion of, over the Valtelina, 188.
- Greece*, its physical character, 25, 225; common origin of its inhabitants with those of Italy, 33, 35; early political institutions of, 42; its pre-historic state, 55, 56; growth of city life in, 56; federal period in, 59; no true national life in, 60, 61; effect of the Persian wars on, 60; its colonies, 61, 203, 205, 226; connexion of its mythical and its historic state, 82; nature of early kingship in, 92, 130, 131-132; its influence on the East, 205, 206; on Rome, 206; on Christianity, 206, 207; on the Byzantine Empire, 207; its modern revival, 207, 208; its indirect influence on modern times, 209; motherland of the Asiatic Greeks, 225; traditions of non-Aryan nations in, 250; nearness of its great cities, 257.
- Greek church*, its character and permanence, 207.
- Greek language*, ignorance of, in the middle ages, 193; its special connexion with Latin, 204; its relation to modern languages, 198;

GREEK NATION.

- its history, 203-207; permanence of its Attic dialect, 203, 204; its use in Sicily, 205; in the East, 206; at Rome, *ib.*; its relation to Christianity, 206, 207; knowledge of, in the thirteenth century, 333.
- Greek nation, modern*, origin of, 206; its difficulties, 207, 208.
- Greeks*, their progress and history, 25-27; a nation as contrasted with barbarians, 53; feeling of brotherhood among, 245.
- Grimm, Jacob*, quoted, 272.
- Grote, Mr.*, his defence of Athenian democracy, 136, 250, 251; quoted, 265, 268.

H.

- Hadrian*, his archonship at Athens, 99, 298.
- Hannibal*, compared with Buona-parte, 244.
- Hannibalianus*, called Rex, 304.
- Haris*, etymology of the word, 6, 221.
- Harold Harfagra*, Norway united under, 111.
- Heathen*, origin of the name, 73, 271.
- Hebrews*, judges of, 109.
- Henry III.*, Emperor, first king of the Romans, 104.
- Henry VIII.*, of England, an elective king, 142.
- Heptarchy*, name and thing unknown, 110.
- Hereditary succession*, its introduction, 108.
- Heretoga, Herzog*, equivalent to ealdorman, 76; answers to the Dux of Tacitus, 276.
- Hesiod*, his language as to kings, 290.
- Hill-forts*, growth of, into cities, 55, 249, 250.
- History*, how to be studied, 199-201, 217-219.
- Homer*, his true parallels, 195.

ITALY.

- Hors*, titles formed from its various names, 46, 47.
- House of Lords*, its judicial power, 320.
- Hundred*, equivalent to the curia and the *ἄβη*, 75; made up of marks, 76; authorities on, 275; its nature, 276.
- Hungarians*, their history, 234.

I

- Iberians*, position of, in Europe, 234.
- Ida* begins kingship in Northumberland, 111.
- Iliad*, question of the genuineness of its ninth and tenth books, 286.
- Ilios*, foundation of, 56.
- Imperium*, effect of the doctrine of, 243.
- India*, its relation to England, how far *perioikic*, 185.
- Ine*, laws of, 328.
- Ing*, Teutonic patronymic ending, 262.
- Interrex, interregnum*, origin of the names, 94; office always patrician, 165, 291.
- Inventions*, cases of their independent occurrence, 20.
- Iona*, abbots and bishops of, 291.
- Ionic Tribes*, nature of, 268.
- Ireland*, repetition of English institutions in, 16.
- Isokrates*, his definition of democracy, 238; his exhortations to Philip, 245, 248.
- Italy*, common origin of its inhabitants with those of Greece, 33; early political institutions of, 42; city life less developed in, than in Greece, 61; its history largely federal, 62, 63; its institutions more primitive than those of Greece, 64; influence of the *gens* in, 65; Teutonic character of its mediæval polity, 82, 83; its

ITHAKE.

parallel with ancient Greece, 83; development of the cities in, 84; modern kingdoms in, 90, 282; nature of its mediæval democracies, 153; extent of Greek colonization in, 226; comparative rarity of great cities in, 257; origin of its ancient towns, *ib.*

Ithaki, many kings in, 94, 111; no assembly held in, during the absence of Odysseus, 132.

J.

Jarl, Karl, and Thrall, legend of their creation, 162.

Jerusalem, assizes of, 16.

Joseph the Second, last king of the Romans, 104, 304.

Judah, hereditary succession of its kings, 289.

Judges among the Hebrews and Goths, 109.

Judicial Power, gradually separated from the legislative, 156, 157.

Julian, his use of the Greek language, 206.

Jupiter, Ælfred's account of, 305.

Jus imaginum, at Rome, 165.

Jus Latii, meaning of, 258.

Justinian, his historical position, 36; extent of his empire, 235.

K.

Kallikratidas, Greek patriotism of, 246.

Kemble, F. M., quoted, 252, 262, 272, 273, 276, 280, 311.

Kent, assembly of, at Pennenden Heath, 317.

King Archon at Athens, 294.

King of the Romans, history of the title, 104.

Kingdom, made up of shires or *pagi*, 76; formed by the union of smaller states, 109; division of, 110; territorial theory of, 112; German,

KINGSHIP.

its revival, 116; growth of, in Germany and Italy, 286, 287.

Kings, represent the national stage of growth, 90, 106; difficulty of defining, 88; Romance and Teutonic names of, *ib.*; their position in ancient Greece, 92, 289; limitation on their authority, 93; their position at Sparta, Argos and Athens, 95, 96, 98; their oath in Molossia, 102; their position in Macedonia, *ib.*; at Rome not divine, *ib.*; Teutonic kings, Roman offices held by, 104; how chosen, 104-105; description of, by Tacitus, *ib.*; descendants of Woden, 105; origin of the name, 105, 106-107; unknown among the Old-Saxons, 106; ecclesiastical coronation of, 107; its political effects, 108; beginning of hereditary succession among, *ib.*; great numbers of in early times, 109-111, 306; clothed with imperial ideas, 112; changed into territorial lords, *ib.*; changes in their titles, 112, 307; difference of their powers, 113; their relation to their ministers, 113, 117; English, subject to the law, 114; growth of their power, 116; traces of their election in England, 153; election of in Poland, 155; prosecute crimes in the name of the commonwealth, 177, 180; imperial titles borne by in England, 230; their sacred character, Christian and heathen, 288; their power granted by Zeus, 289; succession of in Judæa and France, *ib.*; how spoken of by Hesiod, 290; cut down to priestly functions, 291; name applied to the Athenian archons, 297.

Kingship, distinction between its power and its titles, 49, 117; put into commission at Rome, 117; general idea of, 90; its religious

KIRK.

character, 91, 107; lawyers' theory of, 91-92; its original character, 92; evidence of its existence at Rome, 94, 96; its elective character, 97; modification of in city states, 98; history of at Sparta, 98, 292, 293; at Athens, 99; opposite reasons for its abolition at Rome and at Athens, 99, 296; continued in Epeiros and Macedonia, 101; its German form united with the Roman Empire, 104; displaces the earlier rule of Ealdormen, 106; its origin and continuity in England, 106, 111, 113, 114; modifications of in later times, 112; its various shapes, 113, 287; modified by the settlement of the Teutonic nations within the Empire, 115; in Germany absorbed by the Empire, 116; its elective character in Germany, *ib.*; strictly hereditary in France, 117; its position in modern times, *ib.*; survival of in the American president, 118; distinguished from royalty, 119; inconsistent with aristocracy, 174; why not held for a term, 287; temporary revivals of, 288; survivals of in Greece, 291; duration of at Argos, 293; Greek definition of, 297; decline of in Mercia, 310.

Kirk, Anglian form of *church*, 232.

Kleisthenés, his arrangement of tribes and *Démoi*, 269.

Kleomenés restores the Spartan kingship, 98.

Kleón, accident of his promotion, 164.

Kodras, the archonship continued in his family, 99.

Köln, capitol at, 223.

Korkyra, her relations to Corinth, 331.

Kyklôpes, traditions of, 250.

LEX REGIA.

L.

Lacedæmonian Confederacy, way of voting in its Assembly, 318.

Laconia, position of the *ἡπειρώται* in, 161.

Landesgemeinden, in Uri and other cantons, 29; time of holding, 310.

Languages, various ways of spreading, 18-19.

Lappenberg, J. M., quoted, 274.

Latin language, its special connexion with Greek, 132; its place in universal history, 209-211; its early, its classical, and its mediæval forms, 209, 210; the tongue of law and dominion, 210; its ecclesiastical position, 210, 211; continued in the Romance languages, 211-218; how to be studied, 218.

Latins, position of, 259.

Law, power of, in England, 114.

Law, Roman, abiding influence of, 83; its influence on Teutonic kingship, 111, 116; the great work of Rome, 210, 211.

Lawyers, their theory of kingship, 112.

Learning, Revival of, in the fifteenth century, 192; its good and bad side, 192-195.

Legends of Greek heroes in Italy and Germany, 33; value of at Rome, 295, 296.

Le Mans, growth of the city, 250.

Leotychildés, his taunt to *Démarratos*, 296.

Lewes, battle of, poem on, 338.

Lewis, Sir G. C., on the Presidency of Deliberative Assemblies, 299.

Lewis the Second, Emperor, his argument about *ῥῆξ* and *βασιλεύς*, 231.

Lex Hortensia, its effect, 244.

Lex regia, effect of the doctrine of, 243.

LIKENESSES.

- Likenesses*, different classes of, 15, 19.
Lincoln, history of, 284.
Lion, name and history of, 233.
Lithuania, antiquity of its language, 195, 335.
Liti, position of, 161, 311.
Loaf-eaters, compared with clients, 326.
Lombards, fall back on the government of dukes, 109.
Long, Mr. G., quoted, 265.
Lords, House of, its origin, 150, 151; its judicial powers, 156.
Love, Mr. R., his view of University studies, 341.
Lübeck, its analogy with Carthage, 284.
Lucan, his flattery of Nero, 213.
Lyliadas, his history, 202.
Lydus, John, his distinction of Emperor, King, and Tyrant, 301.
Lykabo, slain by Achilleus, 327.
Lykia, way of voting in, 144, 145; history of its confederation, 202, 258.
Lysias, his position at Athens, 254.

M.

- Macedonia*, the older condition of Greece continued in, 57; constitution of, 102, 135; its historical position, 101; history of kingship in, 102; character of Macedonian kingdoms in Asia, *ib.*; imperfection of its history, 135; influence of Greece on, 206; growth of city life in, 253; names and working of the Assembly in, 312, 314.
Maccenas, his verses, 261.
Magis, nature of, 274.
Magistrates, greater power of, in aristocratic states, 139; in federal states, *ib.*; powers of in Italian cities, 153.
Maine Sir H. S., quoted, 243, 250, 259, 261, 265, 272, 275, 279.

MIXED GOVERNMENTS.

- Manor*, its connexion with the *mark*, 279.
Mantineia, foundation and history of, 57, 252, 253.
Marcus Aurelius, his use of the Greek language, 206.
Marius, Caius, 166; his election to the consulship, 166, 322.
Mark, Markgenossenschaft, Teutonic form of the *gens*, 75, 273; its history and nomenclature in England, 79, 262; its assembly continued in the parish vestry, 153; authorities on, 272; common occupation of land in, *ib.*; cases of in the East, 275; lost in the parish and the manor, 279.
Marzfeld, its working, 142.
Massalia, its influence in Gaul, 38, 205, 237; conquest of, by Charles of Anjou, 205, 336.
Maurer, G. L., quoted, 273.
Mayor, introduction of the title, 224.
Medebn, Ætolian assembly held before, 313.
Megalopolis, foundation of, 57, 251.
Menestheus, the first demagogue, 289.
Mercia, its gradual incorporation with Wessex, 310.
Metellus, his language to Marius, 322.
Méroukoi, Greek, their position, 126, 182, 253; answer to English foreigners, *ib.*; to Swiss *niedergelassenen*, 183-185; their special tax, 254.
Michael, Emperor, addresses Charles the Great as *Basileus*, 230.
Middle Class, specially English, 171.
Military service, universal duty of, in early times, 127.
Mill, history and cognates of the word, 4, 221.
Ministers, their relation to the Crown, 117.
Mixed Governments, views of ancient writers on, 238.

MOGULS.

- Moguls*, analogy of their empire with that of Rome, 216.
- Molossis*, position of the kings in, 102.
- Mommsen, Th.*, quoted, 257, 263, 269, 270, 295.
- Monarch*, use of the word, 110.
- Monarchy*, primitive traces of, 41; distinguished from kingship, 110.
- Mortot* family, their admission at Bern, 174.
- Mosaic Law*, right of private vengeance limited by, 177; principle of *talio* recognized by, 178.
- Mul*, wergild paid for, 328.
- Müller, Max*, quoted, 12, 221, 222, 233, 239; his view of the word *cyning*, 305.
- Müller, O.*, quoted, 268.
- Mund*, answers to the Roman *Potestas*, 75, 275.
- Mundi Dominus*, title of mediæval Emperors, 308.
- Municipalities*, Roman, influence on mediæval Europe, 85-86.
- Mythology*, scientific and unscientific treatment of, 7.
- Mythology, Comparative*, its relation to comparative philology, 4, 7; to the study of culture, 11.

N.

- Nævius*, his epitaph, 337; his position in the history of the Latin language, 209; his Saturnian lines, 338.
- Nation*, one form of the State, 52.
- Nationality*, definition of, 53, 54; oppressed nationalities, 246.
- Nationalrath*, Swiss, its constitution, 152.
- Naturalization*, contrast as to, between different ages, 126-127.
- Neale, Mr. J. M.*, quoted, 338.
- Nibley Green*, battle of, 328.
- Niebuhr*, his view of the *gentes*, 264.
- Niederglassener*, Swiss, answer to the Greek *μέτροικοι*, 183-185.
- Nobilis*, meaning of, at Rome, 165.

OLIGARCHY.

- Nobility*, none in England, 150, 170-171; various origins of, 159, 160; nobility of office supplants nobility of birth, 159, 165, 166; immemorial among the Teutonic nations, 162; history of at Athens, 162-164; at Rome, 164-165; plebeian form of at Rome, 165, 166; modern, its origin in the *Comitatus*, 170; nature of in France, 172, 173.
- Nomen*, use of at Rome, 68; its political importance, 266.
- Nomenclature*, diversities of in kindred tongues, 43; analogies in, 46, 47; Roman and Athenian compared, 263, 266.
- Non-Aryan Races*, analogies of their institutions, 37.
- Norman Conquest of England*, its effects, 113.
- Northumberland*, formation of the kingdom of, 111, 281.
- Norway*, united under Harold Harefaga, 111.
- Novus Homo*, at Rome, 166.
- Numa*, Greek element in his legend, 96; its value, 295, 296.
- Nürnberg*, patrician families at, 326.

O.

- Ὀβελ*, their nature and duration at Sparta, 68, 268.
- Odoacer*, his patriciate, 301.
- Odysseus*, his dealings with the kings before Ilios, 111; legends of in Germany, 233; how described by Ælfred, 313.
- Offices*, various names of in kindred tongues, 45-46.
- Old Man of the Mountain*, his description, 47, 241.
- Old-Saxons*, their retention of the old freedom, 78; their federal union, 78, 276; kingship unknown among, 106; three orders among, 321.
- Oligarchie*, growth of at Venice, 320.

OLYMPIAS.

- Olympias*, claims a trial before the Macedonian Assembly, 314.
Opposition speakers, existence of in the Homeric Assembly, 133.
Ὀπυεῖνες at Athens, 266.
Ottomans, called Romans in the East, 260.
Oxford University, way of voting in Convocation, 316.

P.

- Pagan*, origin of the name, 72.
Pagus, equivalent to *Gau* or *Shire*, 76; mediæval definition of, 246.
Papacy, its witness to Roman permanence, 213.
Parish, its connexion with the *Mark*, 75, 279.
Parliament, its origin and growth in England, 13, 149, 150; action of at Florence, 153, 320.
Parthenon, its use as a Christian church, 214.
Patria, use of the word, 55.
Patria Potestas, its connexion with the *Mund*, 75.
Patricians, use of the name in the German cities, 85; origin of their privileges at Rome, 160, 163, 321; gradual loss of them, 164, 165.
Patriciate of Theodoric, 301; of Odoacer, *ib.*
Πατρις, use of the word, 55, 248.
Patronymics, use of in English local nomenclature, 66, 262; practical effect of their use, 68.
Peerage, English, its origin and nature, 170-171; its existence inconsistent with nobility, 170, 171.
Pelops, no authority in Homer for his Lydian origin, 288.
Pembroke-shire, local nomenclature of, 262.
Περίστρα, Thessalian, position of, 311.
Peregrini, distinguished from *Cives*, 258.

POSEIDŌN.

- Pergamos*, rise of, 203.
Periklēs, nature of his influence, 139; his description of democracy, 315.
Περίοικοι, their position, 161; instances of, in mediæval and modern Europe, 185-188; differences in their practical position, 188, 189; compared with the Italian allies, 330.
Persians, their military powers, 234.
Philology, Comparative, its relations to the other comparative sciences, 2, 7, 11; germs of in Giraldus and Roger Bacon, 332, 333.
Philētās, condemned by the Macedonian Assembly, 314.
Φράτρα, φρατρία, φράτωρ, use of the words, 46; answer to the Latin *curia*, 67; and the Teutonic *hundred*, 75; cognate words, 240.
Φυλοβουσιλεύς, origin of their office, 295.
Pippin, patriciate of, 104.
Plebs, at Rome, its origin, 70, 165; offices gradually thrown open to, 164; origin of plebeian nobility, 165; opposed by Sallust to *nobilitas*, 322.
Poland, nature of kingship in, 89; aristocratic primary assembly in, 125, 155, 320; approach to aristocracy in, 174; its position under the Jagellons, 232; character of its constitution, 238.
Polemarch, his position at Athens, 100.
Πολιτεία, use of the word by Aristotle, 238, 242.
Politics, Comparative, definition of, 12; its object, 23.
Polybios, his special position and experience, 202-203; his legislation, 203; his language, *ib.*
Pontificate at Rome opened to Plebeians, 164.
Poseidon, his position in the divine assembly, 131.

POTIDAIA.

- Potidaia*, her relations to Athens and Corinth, 331.
- Presidents* of republics, modern notion of, 117; position of, in the United States, 118; tendency to lessen their powers, 119.
- Printing*, invented more than once, 20.
- Provincials*, position of, 258.
- Prudentius*, his position in the history of the Latin language, 209.
- Prussia*, its analogy with Sardinia, 287.
- Πρωτεύεις*, use of the name, 295; their presidency of the Assembly, 298.
- Purchase* of territory, rare in ancient Greece, 186; cases of, in mediæval Europe, 186, 187.
- Pyrrhos* of Epeiros, 102.

R.

- Rætia*, confederations of, 232.
- Rambert, M.*, quoted, 310.
- Ramnes*, their origin, 70; oldest name of the Romans, 295.
- Ravenna*, historical position of the city, 212; Greek inscriptions at, 336.
- Regia*, applied to the house of the Emperor, 104, 303.
- Regina*, applied to wives of Emperors, 104, 303; to the wife of the *Rex sacrorum*, 294.
- Regnum*, applied to the Empire, 104, 303.
- Reiks*, force of the word in Gothic, 239.
- Religions*, various ways of spreading, 18.
- Representation*, necessary in a large state, 143-145.
- Representatives, House of*, its constitution, 151.
- Residence*, counts for nothing in city commonwealths, 253.

ROME.

- Responsibility*, distinguishes king and magistrate, 297.
- Rex*, origin and cognates of the name, 44; Emperors never so called, 104, 304.
- Rex sacrorum, Rex sacrificulus*, original nature of his office, 95, 291.
- Ρῆξ, use of the title, 231.
- Rhodes*, duration of its independence, 258.
- Rice*, its cognates, 239.
- Rienzi*, titles taken by, 304.
- Roderick*, called King of the Romans, 260.
- Roger Bacon*, his account of the Romance languages, 332.
- Romæi*, meaning of the form, 232.
- Ρωμαῖος, use of the name, 227, 260.
- Romance Languages*, their origin, 82-83.
- Romans*, connexions of their good and bad points, 52.
- Rome*, her progress, 27; source of her greatness, 28; in what sense eternal, *ib.*; her relation to the Teutonic kingdoms, 31, 83, 212; conservative character of her history, 50; the greatest example of the city-commonwealth, 62; gradual extension of her citizenship, 62, 63, 227; failure of her municipal system, 63, 149; importance of the *gentes* at, 67; local nature of her tribes, 70; more nearly a nation than Greece, 71; history and nature of kingship at, 94, 96, 97; change from kings to consuls at, 98, 297; power of magistrates at, 100, 103; abiding influence of her law, 83; growth of the Emperors, 103; restoration of kingship at, 104; military assemblies unknown at, 128; way of voting in the assemblies at, 145; analogies with the Federal period in Greece, 146; character of her political parties, 147; relation of the powers of the state

ROMILIA.

in, 147, 148; origin of the patri-
cians at, 160, 162, 311, 321;
gradual loss of their privileges,
164, 165; their nobility gives way
to that of office, 165, 166; slight
traces of the *comitatus* at, 168;
clientage at, 168-170; law of
private vengeance at, 176; tyran-
nicide lawful at, *ib.*; law of
talis at, 178; her true position in
universal history, 198, 209, 212;
influence of Greece on, 206;
special nature of her influence,
210, 213; Eastern parallels of its
later history, 216; long retention
of her titles, 216, 260; character
of her early legends, 232; feelings
of her citizens and subjects during
the Hannibalian war, 245; its
origin, 258; growth of aristocracy
at, 311.

Romilia gens, its insignificance, 296.

Romulus, Greek element in his
legend, 96, 295.

Root, a new one impossible, 6.

Roum, Sultans of, 260.

Royalty, modern notion of, 119.

Russia, cycle in its history, 232;
absolute power in, 307.

S.

Salamis, Athenian senate and as-
sembly at, 312.

Samos, action of the Athenian fleet
at, 312.

Sardinia, its analogy with Prussia,
287.

Sarmatians, their alleged presence
at Châlons, 237.

Saturnian metre, mediæval revival
of, 209.

Savigny, F. C., quoted, 317.

Savoy, Northern, its conquest by
Bern, 188, 330.

Scabini, Schöffen, growth of, 317.

Scandinavia, character of its his-
tory, 30, 87; its kingdoms un-
touched by late revolutions, 228.

SLESWICK.

Scaaf, son of Noah, 306.

Schmid, Dr. R., his views on the
mark, 275.

School of History, needed at Oxford,
341.

Science of Language, its results, 8.

Scipio, an exile at Liternum, 55, 248.

Scirgimdt, traces of, 153.

Scotland, growth of, as an artificial
nation, 52.

Sleelands, Frisian, 277.

Seleukia, its history and constitu-
tion, 300.

Semitic languages, their relation to
the Aryan, 38, 237.

Senate, Achaian, often acts as the
Assembly, 140.

Senate, Athenian, a specially demo-
cratic body, 319.

Senate, Roman, history of, 50; com-
parison of Rome and Athens,
146; mode of appointment to,
147; its relations to the Assem-
bly, 147-148; its position under
the Empire, 149, 319.

Senate in the United States, its con-
stitution, 151; its special powers,
152.

Senioriesa, title, 240.

Servius, value of his legend, 295.

Shire, its relation to the *Gau* or
Pagus, 76, 277, 278; made up of
hundreds, 76; origin of the name,
80, 279; nomenclature of, in
England, 279, 280.

Sicily, battle-field of East and West,
204; permanence of the Greek
language in, 205; no part of the
Italian kingdom, 287.

Slavery, nature of, 126, 310; its
origin and character in early
times, 161; history of, in Eng-
land, 321.

Slavonic nations, their relation to
the Eastern Church and Empire,
32; their past and future, *ib.*

Sleswick, its relations to Denmark,
228.

SMITH.

- Smith*, Mr. Goldwin, quoted, 303.
Socii, position of, 258.
Solar theory, how far sound, 7, 222.
Soldiers, no distinct profession in early times, 127.
Solón, effect of his legislation, 162.
Spain, Teutonic character of its political institutions, 82; Gothic kingdom in, 115; speedy growth of Roman civilization in, 237; recovery of its southern part by Justinian, 308.
Sparta, formed out of villages, 57, 252; its unwilling union with the Achaian League, 59; history of kingship at, 95, 98, 292; grants of citizenship at, 254; its kings compared with the Roman consuls, 293; classes of the unfree at, 311; proceedings of the Assembly at, 315.
Speeches, how far trustworthy in classical history, 259.
Staatenbund, distinguished from *Bundesstaat*, 256.
Ständerath, Swiss, its constitution, 151; its necessity, 152.
State, conception of as a city, 52; as a nation, *ib.*; Greek conception of, 54.
Stesichorus, quoted, 234.
Sthenelaidas, Ephor, puts the vote in the Spartan Assembly, 316.
Strangford, *Viscount*, quoted, 335.
Summons, *right of*, how dealt with by lawyers, 150.
Survivals, doctrine of, 9, 222; of kingship, 94, 97.
Sweden, four estates in, 149; approach to aristocracy in, 174.
Switzerland, its constitution copied from that of the United States, 21; growth of as an artificial nation, 52; common neglect of its history, 118; form of the Federal executive in, 119; constitution of the two Houses of the

TEUTONS.

- Assembly, 151; freedom of the Forest Cantons, 154; their assemblies, *ib.*; working of the present constitution, 184; instances of *reploucoi* in, 186; effects of the French invasion of, 187; treatment of the common bailiwicks, 189; position of the Romance cantons in, 228; origin of the confederation, 235; use of the name, 284; importance of its history, 330.
Syssel, equivalent to *Gau* or *Shire*, 76.

T.

- Tacitus*, his views as to mixed government, 42, 238; his picture of the early Germans, 42, 104; trustworthiness of his *Germania*, 239; his report of Claudius' speech, 259.
Talio, recognized by the Mosaic and Roman law, 178; how regulated in England, 178, 179.
Territorial idea of kingship, 112; titles, *ib.*
Teutonice, use of the word by Giraldus, 333.
Teutons, their separation from the other Aryan stocks in Europe, 35; their institutions more primitive than those of Greece and Italy, 64; the idea of the city never fully developed among, 65, 73; relations of their history to that of Greece and Italy, 71, 82; their tribes grow into nations, 72, 79; their slower but surer growth, 74; first description of them by Tacitus, 74, 75; carry their institutions into the conquered countries, 78, 79; their institutions the groundwork of modern European society, 82; modification of their institutions through Roman influences, 82,

DEGENLIC.

- 83, 115; position of cities among, 83.
- Degenlic*, use of the word, 324.
- Thegn*, analogies with, in other nations, 166; origin and growth of the order, 166, 167; change in the meaning of the word, 167, 323; supplant the Eorls, 156, 170.
- Theodoric*, his consulship and patriariate, 103, 301.
- Θεγάροντες, answer to the English *pegnas*, 166.
- Thersills*, how dealt with in the Homeric Assembly, 133.
- Thierry, Augustin*, quoted, 223.
- Thirlwall*, Bishop, quoted, 337.
- Thiudans*, origin and cognates of the name, 44.
- Thros Estates*, popular error about, 222.
- Thucydides*, character of his history, 227; witness of his Preface, 251.
- Tiberius* at Capree, 55.
- Timbrian*, use of the word, 233.
- Tithing*, authorities on, 275.
- Titienses*, their origin, 70.
- Toulouse*, its capitol and magistrates, 17, 223.
- Towns*, various classes of, in England, 283.
- Tribes*, Dorian, 68, 69; local origin of at Rome, 69, 70, 269, 270; their later character at Athens, 70, 269; formation of new tribes at Rome, 70, 271; their relation to the *Gau*, 77; temporary union of, *ib.*; assembly of, at Rome, 145.
- Tribunes*, their power at Rome, 147.
- Tribunitia potestas*, chief source of the imperial power, 103, 300.
- Tylor, Mr. E. B.*, quoted, 12, 222, 328.
- Tyrannicide*, lawful at Rome and Athens, 176.
- Tyrant*, meaning of the name, 101.

VIERLANDE.

U.

- Undersaten*, use of the word, 330.
- Unfree*, position of, 311.
- United States*, analogy between its constitution and that of Achaia, 21; their relation to British America, 52; constitution of the two Houses of Congress, 151.
- United Provinces*, origin of their confederation, 235.
- Unterthanen* answer to *πεπλοκοι*, 188.
- Urbs Aeterna*, use of the name, 228.
- Uri*, its possession of dependencies, 188; bull of, 223.

V.

- Vallatina*, its history, 188.
- Vandals*, history of their kingdom, 115.
- Vassal*, origin of the word, 324.
- Vassalage*, origin and growth of, 167; its connexion with the old *comitatus*, 324, 325.
- Veti*, Roman assembly held at, 312.
- Vengeance*, private, origin of criminal jurisprudence, 175; gradually regulated by the commonwealth, 176; Hebrew, Greek, Roman, and English legislation on, 326, 327; regulated by the *wergild*, 178-180.
- Venice*, its unbroken connexion with ancient times, 82, 283; Great Council of, 125, 188, 320; position of the *cittadini* at, 161; origin and character of its nobility, 167, 174; nature of its government, 172-173; its relation to its subject states, 185.
- Verona*, name of, 284.
- Vestry*, parish, represents the assembly of the *Mark*, 153.
- Vierlande*, district of, held in *condominium* by Lübeck and Hamburg, 186.

VILLAGE.

- Village*, a stage between the family and the city, 261.
Village communities, a form of the *Gens*, 66, 75, 262; first recorded state of the Teutonic nations, 75.
Villains, position of, 161, 311.
Voting, early ways of, 133.
Voting-papers, use of at Rome, 260.

W.

- Wager of battle*, its origin and abolition, 177.
Waltz, G. H., quoted, 239, 240, 274, 275, 276, 288, 311, 317, 322, 324.
Wallis, retention of the old freedom in, 78; dominion of Upper over Lower, 188.
War, private, gradually limited by law, 176-180; late case of in England, 180.
Ward, Mr. A. W., 342.
Warren, Mr. J. L., quoted, 336.
Washington, Capitol of, 17.
Wergild, a common Aryan institution, 175, 178; grows out of the right of private vengeance, 175-178; notices of in Homer, 178; Old-English legislation on, 178, 179; between nation and nation, 179; late instance of, in England, 180.
West-Goths, extent of their kingdom, 236.

ZÜRICHGAU.

- West-Saxons*, growth of their kingdom, 81; fall back on the government of Ealdormen, 109; confederate Under-kings among, 110; permanence of their royal house, 114.
Whiteside, Chief Justice, his views on Switzerland, 308.
William the Conqueror finally unites the English kingdom, 113; effects of his legislation, 170, 171.
William Rufus, his theory of the royal supremacy, 230.
Witenagemot, an assembly of all freemen, 141; shrinks into a small body, 141, 145; continued in the House of Lords, 150; its ancient powers, 156.
Woden, forefather of the Teutonic kings, 105, 305, 306; looked on as a man in Christian times, 107.
Wurm, C. J., quoted, 330.

Z.

- Zeus*, his power in the Assembly of the Gods, 130, 131; twofold conception of him, 132.
Zeuss, K., quoted, 278.
Zürich, origin of the city, 284.
Zürichgau, local nomenclature of, 263.

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