DEMOCRACY

IN THE

OLD WORLD AND THE NEW

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BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE SUEZ CANAL, THE EASTERN QUESTION
AND ABYSSINIA," "EGYPT, INDIA, AND THE COLONIES," ETC.

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PREFACE.

THE account contained in these pages of some facts connected with Democracy in the Old World and the New is laid before the reader without the least wish to advocate or deprecate any conclusions which may have or be supposed to have a bearing on party strife. Statements derived from sources believed to be unimpeachable are adduced as to plain matters of fact, and any opinions advanced rest, it is hoped, on sufficient evidence as to the matters with which they have to do, and not on adventitious relations with other topics.

Democratic and Socialistic tenets sometimes

act in alliance with each other, and sometimes are diametrically opposed. To judge aright as to the operation and prospects of Democracy in the Old World and the New, nothing is more requisite than to have a well-defined understanding of the nature, working, and tendencies of Socialism.

The present writer has long felt that writings and speeches and talk generally having to do with Socialism were apt to be very inaccurate, and, in proportion to the degree in which they were so, confused, and, so far as they were not as a consequence inconclusive, to be misleading. He has enjoyed opportunities, from communication with well-informed and eminent individuals, of being led to appreciate some salient points, on which a right comprehension of the topics alluded to mainly hinges.

He has been solicitous to treat the matter with the precision which alone entitles any statement to be regarded as a real thing, in knowledge or in science, which terms are in effect

and literally synonymous; both are too frequently employed to cover looseness in argument and inaccuracy of ideas; but in seeking to arrive at deductions of serious import, nothing, he conceives, is worthy of much attention as a foundation of belief and of action which *cannot be proved to be true*, whether by processes familiar to exact science, of late largely made available in literary pursuits by many distinguished men (including Sir H. S. Maine), whose labours have thrown floods of light on many social questions, or in any other way.

The reader's attention is particularly invited to the definition of Socialism, given in conformity with the views entertained by M. De Laveleye; to the description of the nature of socialistic tenets in 1849, as set forth by M. De Beaumont; to the views of Baron Von Keteler; and to the working of things in America, and especially to the action of the Supreme Court of the United States. The present writer hopes he has made available some facts not previously

brought prominently into connection with discussions on Socialism.

He has by no means been desirous to find fault with socialistic tendencies, when they are justified by the circumstances of the case, whatever they may be, as *e.g.* in the instances of some charitable provisions for the relief of distress. Nor is he prepared to find fault universally with what is called "State Socialism," as put forward by Prince Bismarck and others, which must simply be looked on as a mass of details, to be judged of according to the merits of those details.

The present writer feels that it is completely established by modern experience and investigation, that the main hope of society must rest on the prevailing influence of a sound education. Its influence may be a prevailing one, even though this education is confined to comparatively small numbers of the inhabitants of any country, including sound instruction generally, as of course the acquisition of all valuable in-

formation must, on which are to be based public enlightenment and the ability to appreciate reliable principles or grounds of action. Evidently, when Democracy—the power of the people—exists in its plenitude, there can be no other safeguard. Under forms of government not Democratic, Democracy, though possibly possessed of great force, can hardly be said to exist in its plenitude. If, in any nation, a reaction has been brought about in consequence of popular excess, so that the principal authority is lodged with some saviour of society, such as it not long since became the fashion to talk of, a Democracy in its fullest sense can no longer be said there to subsist.

No lesson is more impressively conveyed to us by the teachings of all ages, than that if a population desire to preserve among their own community the power of making their own laws and regulations for self-government—to maintain, in fact, among their own community a Democracy, "they must be a law unto themselves."

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DEMOCRACY

IN THE

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CHAPTER I.

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DEMOCRACY in the Old World and the New will, we may rest assured, make itself largely and perhaps chiefly felt, for good or for evil, by the action it takes with regard to the rights of

property. Property or money, which is one form of property, in civilized countries represent most things, and is represented by them, and moral considerations not less than material well-being depend on property and money to an extent not easily to be estimated. Discussions having reference to them and to the maintenance and progress of civilization cannot be kept apart.

In modern times, and among populations of European race, the features characterizing attacks on property have pretty generally been recognized as being more or less of a Socialistic stamp. These have been brought into prominence by popular movements; usually by movements of a Democratic type. There is no necessary connection, however, between Democracy and Socialism, but since, as just stated, in modern times, and among populations of European race, the features characterizing attacks on property have pretty generally been recognized as being more or less of a Socialistic stamp, to give some particulars regarding Socialism must conduce to clearness of apprehension.

Some facts regarding Socialism at this moment particularly demand attention. It has largely to

do with what remains of the feudalism mainly based on landed property, which is now passing away, or has passed away, throughout most parts of Europe, inasmuch as Socialists maintain that the only rightful source of revenue is labour, and that rent and profit are abuses, even when they arise from acquired property, and yet more so when property has been inherited. That this is a portion of the creed of Socialists we learn from M. De Beaumont, whose statement (conveyed in conversation to M. Senior) was made above thirty years ago (in the year 1849). M. De Beaumont, from his position as a man of letters, as likewise from his experience and discrimination in public affairs, was entitled to speak with authority on any topic of this sort. Inherited possessions are often of feudal origin, and the system of laws, taken as a whole, is still in some parts of what we denominate the Old World to a great extent feudal in character. Any such system would be effectually obliterated by a socialist revolution, and Socialism being quite capable, in the event of one occurring, of sweeping away the entire framework of existing institutions (as completely as was ac-

complished by the march of revolution in France), its bearing on what at the present day survives of feudalism in some European lands is one of the most noteworthy features of our age. Socialism has also largely to do with the democracy, each day more and more overspreading the most advanced nations, and its relations with democracy will hardly be confined, even principally, to Europe, though they are perhaps not unlikely there pretty much to take permanent shape, so far as they may not already have done so.

Feudalism has ever been characterized by feelings of loyalty and of mutual trust, and by mutual relations of dependence. It has, for the most part, grown up along with rights to the ownership of land, and has become connected with ideas as to birth, which in the earlier as well as in other stages of society have largely pervaded many races, however differing in other particulars; and in some instances it has in no small degree contributed so to mould society as to cause it to assume what has, with more or less propriety, been termed an aristocratic type, that is to say (attaching to the word

"aristocratic" its strict meaning), it has contributed so to mould society as to lodge power in the hands of those who, with more or less propriety, might be called the best. Those with whom in feudal times power has been lodged have always, at any rate, been ready enough as a class to maintain that they had a right, by reason of public service performed by themselves or their ancestors, to the station they occupied. To enter into the merits of this creed, or to discuss how far, as compared with aristocratic pretensions which may have had to do with feudalism, moral and intellectual distinction ought to have conferred, or in point of fact did confer, on classes or individuals claims to public estimation, is here needless. The object merely is, to a certain extent, to trace the working of causes which have brought about momentous results. One rudimental difference between society in Europe and in America is to be found in the circumstance, that while the rights of property in land are at least as firmly rooted in America as in Europe, they are in the western world commonly associated with an ownership democratic

in its origin, whereas in Europe they have very much arisen out of the feudal system, and have been associated with the legislation, usage, and Sentiment which, taken together, have been known as Feudalism. This difference, more than most things, has affected the habits of life, that is to say, the manners (employing that phrase in its widest acceptation), on the opposite shores of the Atlantic. Feudalism, in degree, still subsists in various European countries, but in our day possesses little of its former strength and influence. Feudalism and the democratic ownership of the soil are alike certain to be abrogated by an unrestrained progress of Socialism (should there ever be any such progress), opposed as it must be to the rights of property. Well worthy of attention as are the struggles of Socialism with European institutions more or less in their nature partaking of feudalism—imperial, monarchical, aristocratic, or democratic as they may be—it seems likely, if we are to judge from the past, to receive effective and lasting checks quite as decisively in America as on this side of the ocean. Several or individual ownership must be

looked on as being the most universally fundamental institution of society, and it accordingly obtains in every civilized nation. The special institutions of each civilized nation—imperial, monarchical, republican, aristocratic, or democratic—are all incidental to this one.

It would appear from a recently published article by M. De Laveleye,* that in 1854 Louis Reyband, who was the inventor of the word "Socialism," when writing on Socialists in the "Dictionnaire de l'Economie Politique," considered that Socialism was dead. At present, however, says M. De Laveleye, it is to be found flourishing and in force in most European countries; and he adds, the red spectre haunts the imagination of all, and it is a very general belief that we are on the eve of a great social cataclysm. Though this may be an exaggeration, it is nevertheless certain that Socialism, in a variety of forms, has spread most extraordinarily of late. In a violent form it has been adopted by town labourers, workmen in factories, etc., and is now spreading in the country. M. De Laveleye seemingly holds that it may justly be defined as

* *Contemporary Review*, April, 1883, pp. 561–572.

being *an aspiration towards the amelioration of society, the great aim of which is to equalize social conditions, while it endeavours to effect this through the medium of the law or of the State.* The aim, he observes, of Socialism is equality; but it will not admit that liberty alone could lead to a reign of justice. This may be accepted as a truthful definition, but Socialism as thus defined might not strike every one as being likely to be associated with the evils and horrors frequently accompanying the development of its tenets, and of attempts to act on them. Attempts to equalize social conditions can of course be made, by seeking to confiscate property, by favouring collective as opposed to individual ownership, and in many other ways; the best comment is conveyed by the events which have occurred in numerous well-known instances, when the ordinary condition of things prevailing among civilized human beings has been, for the moment, superseded by the predominance of socialist notions.

In a scientific form, as we learn from M. De Laveleye, Socialism has penetrated into the domain of political economy, and is upheld

by professors in nearly all the universities of Germany and Italy; while under the form of State Socialism, it may be found in the cabinets of sovereigns; and under a Christian form it has been accepted by Catholic priests; and, more generally still, by the ministers of different Protestant denominations.

When socialistic theories gain possession of a suffering population, they are apt to provoke outbreaks like the insurrections of Jack Cade and Wat Tyler in England, and of John of Leyden in Germany.

During the years which witnessed the American Declaration of Independence and the French Revolution, the sovereignty of the people and the equality of all men were loudly proclaimed. Equality in political rights inevitably leads to a claim for equality of social conditions; and it is unlikely in most cases that the bulk of the population should, in any prosperous nation, be at once sovereign and miserable. As both Aristotle and Montesquieu insist, democratic institutions are based on a supposition of social equality, and now the strange fact merits attention, that when pretty nearly equal rights are accorded in

the most advanced communities to all men, the position of the artisan and labourer has more than ever become a dependent one.

M. De Laveleye, from whom what has been here stated bearing on socialistic tenets is taken, with such alterations as appeared requisite, assigns reasons for this, when speaking of a gradual change, commencing at the close of the last century, in the economic conditions of civilized society.

"The ceaseless accumulation of capital increased many fold the means of production and the quantity of goods produced, but at the same time it enslaved labour. Machinery multiplies its marvels, but it does not belong to the hired workman, who is its slave, instead of being its master. Things were not thus formerly. Thanks to the corporations then established, labour was property. It has now become a merchandise, the price of which rises or falls according to the demand, and which at times finds no purchaser. Wages are often higher than they were formerly, but they are always uncertain. When a stoppage, resulting from a crisis which the workman can neither foresee nor prevent, takes from him

all means of subsistence, there is no one to provide for his immediate wants. He is a free agent; he has been paid his wages, and must manage as best he can."

In modern times effects on any considerable scale have almost invariably been produced by united action. Bad tendencies have been freely, and not always with strict accuracy, attributed to the body of opinion usually spoken of as Socialistic, which may, in a general way, be described as consisting *in doctrines favouring common or collective, as distinguished from several or individual ownership of property.* This description fairly represents the body of opinion alluded to, and entirely accords with the ideas apparently entertained by M. De Laveleye, viz. that Socialism is *an aspiration towards the amelioration of society, the great aim of which is to equalize social conditions, while it endeavours to effect this through the medium of the law or of the State.* To promulgate and render preponderating socialistic doctrines (which to some extent can occasionally be done, as during the French Revolution, by laying hold of property), is the object kept in view by Socialists; and there have

been those who would assert that Socialists are apt to be persons who have nothing, and wish to go shares with those who have something. Questions as to property, especially when of the socialistic type, have very frequently indeed, both in ancient and modern times, led to violent collision between those whose interests clashed; but it would be unreasonable to affirm that no desirable course of public action can, in any degree, be associated with ideas favouring common or collective, as distinguished from several or individual ownership of property. The bestowal of charity may easily have to do with them, and whether any course is a desirable one to pursue depends on the facts of each case; to impute as necessarily connected with these ideas proclivities such as those culminating in events which have, of late, startled the world, would be unwarranted.

We ought to remember, if we attach to the word "social" its literal and primary signification, that social action infers companionship, and none who duly apprehend the never-to-be-forgotten truth that ideas, if they are to move mankind, must derive weight from the co-

operation of numbers, will underrate the strength of multitudes adequately organized. As to this, it matters not whether the aim of a movement is to overthrow a dynasty, to seize on property, or to carry out any favourite project having reference to ordinary legislation. Human effort resembles gunpowder: the effort of the individual is as the explosive power of a single grain; the effort of the multitude as that of an aggregate of grains. In either case this power can be controlled or regulated by employing suitable means; but in dealing with the energy of a multitude, men must deal with the energy of complex passion, growing out of diverse tempers and views, and either to control or regulate demands tact, judgment, and decision.

That some of the special dangers which have for many years threatened most European realms have arisen out of socialistic doctrines, is demonstrated by the course of events, the ultimate issues of which cannot as yet, in their fullest scope, with perfect accuracy be reckoned upon in all details, though the character of not a few of their aspects has become unmistakable.

Attacks on property, whether made by in-

dividuals or by multitudes, have very often indeed in modern Europe been instigated by socialistic ideas ; and inasmuch as most contests (there are not wanting those who would declare all since the world's creation) have in reality been between the " Haves " and the " Have nots," the fact that they have been thus instigated places it beyond doubt that to socialistic ideas is attributable a vast proportion of the risks against which, at the present day, it chiefly behoves us to provide.

Those known as Communists, Nihilists, and International Society men, frequently more or less entertain socialist opinions, modified according to circumstances. The Paris Communists took their name from the Commune of Paris, and so far as their views were based on its legal rights and on the reminiscences appertaining to it, there was nothing specially objectionable about them, though illegal proceedings and violence were far from being unheard of in the communal history of that city. But on assuming, to the extent the so-named Paris Communists did, the socialist type, on the fall of Napoleon III. they showed themselves to

be insensible alike to the sacredness of human life, to the rights of property, and to national sentiment, destroying even the monuments of national renown. The word "Communist" acquired a signification associated with socialist notions, and with what had been done; but some have felt that the name "Communard" might more fitly be employed to designate any one claiming connection with the ancient Paris Commune, so far as such connection was meant to be alluded to. The advocacy of common ownership, so far as the Paris Communists did advocate it on the overthrow of the French Empire, was naturally associated with the term Communists, and to bring about in various classes a common ownership was an aim widely cherished among them, but had no necessary connection with the annals or nature of the Commune of Paris, which no further of necessity favoured common ownership than municipal bodies must in one sense do, who possess property in a corporate capacity, and have to take account of their own common ownership in transacting their business. This, obviously, is a totally different matter.

The object of socialist movements may be to give effect to socialist doctrines through means of the multitude, while the success of those movements is in a great degree due to the planning and original arrangements of but a few. We ought ever to remember that, whether emanating from many or from few, ideas, as before observed, if they are to move mankind, must derive weight from the co-operation of numbers.

The persons called Nihilists, who have recently attained such notoriety in Russia, are usually considered to have socialist tendencies, in conjunction with various strong types of belief, or rather negations of belief. Little advantage can arise from endeavouring to ascertain their beliefs or negations of belief, but it is important to note the agreement of some of the forms of popular combination in favouring Socialist designs. The International Society men, devoting as they do attention to questions regarding labour, have in conspicuous instances mixed them up with political strife, and frequently adopt socialist tenets, as decidedly political, in whatever sense we use the word,

as any which could be specified. The movements of the International Society, however, are not identical with those of Socialists as such, and its members have occasionally evinced only scant sympathy with those doctrines which oftenest actuate movements recognized as being socialist in their essence. English members seldom have gone to the same length in their notions relative to property as those of continental birth.

A Socialist is the opposite of an Individualist. He would give more place than is usually accorded to associative principles in economical arrangements. The Individualist considers that the principles on which rests individual (sometimes spoken of as several) property, as likewise self-interest and competition, should be carried out to their utmost extent, and on these bases the present order of things is, for the most part, rudimentally founded.

The relations established by the present industrial organization between the capitalist and the workman have been very clearly explained by Mr. James Nasmyth (whom M. De Laveleye cites) in evidence laid before a Committee of

Inquiry into Trades Unions. Mr. Nasmyth showed that it was to the interest of industry that many workmen should seek employment, because when that is the case, the price of labour, and consequently the cost of production, falls. He added that he had often increased his receipts by replacing able-bodied men by apprentices. When asked what became of the workmen he turned off and their families, he replied, "I do not know. I left their fate to the natural laws which govern society."

M. De Laveleye remarks, in speaking of the universal competition which, as he says, is now unchained, "This competition is the cause of all progress; it is the great force of industrial activity, the source of our power. But it is productive of an endless agitation, of permanent uneasiness, and of general instability. No one is satisfied as to his lot; no one feels secure as to his future. The rich burn to acquire greater riches, and he who labours to live fears the loss of his daily bread. Every man is free, and all fulfil their destiny; there is no class set apart, no inaccessible trade; equality exists, and is the more irritating because every man may aspire to all.

There are more bitter awakenings, as more lofty dreams are indulged in. All may climb to the highest step on the ladder, but few reach it; those who remain below curse those who are above them, while coveting their place."

Competition, according to Sir Henry Maine, was in the early stages of social progress not merely the principal cause of advancement, but also the great force which welded together the component parts of infant and insignificant communities. It is interesting to notice how much more vast are its effects on the mighty nations of our own day.

As a specimen of socialist doctrine set forth during the Middle Ages, it is not amiss to quote the words of a priest in England in the fourteenth century, named John Ball, whose reputation became well-known as given by Froissart.

"Good people, things cannot and will not go well in England till all shall be in common; that there be neither lord nor vassal, but we shall be all united. To what good are those we call lords masters over us? Why do they hold us in bondage? And if we be all descended from the same father and mother, Adam and Eve,

how can they show themselves better than we, save only in that they spend what we earn? They are clothed in silks and camocas, in velvets and furs, while we wear the poorest cloth. They have their wines, their savoury dishes, good bread and cakes, while we sleep on straw, and live on rye-bread and water. They have their manors and palaces which they enjoy in idle luxury, while we labour in the wind and rain to earn a scanty nourishment, and yet it is our labour that gives them their plenty."

M. De Laveleye, who cites this extract in another publication, having devoted attention to Socialism, is well entitled to express opinions which must command at any rate careful consideration, regard being had to his literary eminence; but the present writer is not aware that he has propounded any remedy for the difficulties, both present and prospective, of which he has treated. Mr. Nasmyth supplies weighty evidence as to facts, and those who have to deal with these facts will make their own deductions. M. De Laveleye considers that civilized states are at war, either openly or secretly, one with the other, draining their

populations by unlimited armaments, and retaining for military service the flower of the nation's youth; that there are crushing debts everywhere—national, provincial, and communal—in all about £6,000,000,000, bringing in a revenue of from £300,000,000 to £350,000,000, taken from the necessitous, and serving to allow an ever-increasing number of people to live on their incomes and do nothing; and that there are everywhere enormous budgets, quite out of proportion with the advantages accruing thence to the people.*

These are the things most fitted to bring about a widely spread acceptance of socialistic tenets. Public burthens produce nearly the same effect in circumscribing the amount of income available in the hands of a community as does a low productive capacity in the soil, or a low productive capacity of their industries generally, and inflict those hardships on the poor and struggling which render men desirous of new things—the Roman phrase for designating persons intent on revolutionary change.

According to M. De Beaumont, who in 1849

* *Fortnightly Review*, April, 1883, p. 561.

was speaking to M. Senior more particularly with reference to Socialists in France, the Socialist party was then like the Protestant Church, an aggregate of many sects, each holding some peculiar doctrines, but all agreeing in some others. The points of faith in which they agreed were, that poverty and excessive toil resulted from human institutions, and could be prevented by a more equitable distribution of wealth, and by restricting the hours of labour; that the only lawful source of revenue was labour; and that rent and profit were abuses—abuses even when arising from acquired property, and yet more so when property had been inherited, (allusion, to which doctrines in connection with M. De Beaumont's statement has been already made). That the steps to be taken towards the suppression of these abuses were, first, the abolition of the national debt, which would instantly restore to the community about six milliards; secondly, the abolition of the rent of land, the occupier being turned into the owner, or where the farm is too large for a single owner, the excess being divided among the peasants who have no land; thirdly, the *impot*

progressif sur la fortune presumée, by which means all taxation was to be thrown on the rich, and in proportion to their wealth,—this, he said, as the most direct road to equality of fortune, was the most approved Socialist claptrap at the elections; fourthly, that the Government should enable the workmen to act without capitalists, by supplying them with capital to be managed by themselves; fifthly, that the Government should provide employment for those out of work, allowance in aid of insufficient wages, and pensions and asylums for the aged, and foundling hospitals and schools for the young.* M. De Beaumont is in fairness to be relied on, as giving a trustworthy account of Socialism at the time when he spoke.

All these points of faith favour interference with the fundamental principle of several or individual property, viz. that its owner is entitled to the enjoyment of it as being set apart for *him*. Any interference of this sort is inconsistent with several or individual ownership, and acts in the direction of bringing about a return

* Senior's Journals, "Life in France and Italy," London, 1871, vol. i. p. 136.

from an artificial condition of existence to one of nature or (in the usual acceptation of the phrase) of savagery. The reader's careful attention is invited to this fact, for it is to be desired that accurate conceptions should be entertained as to the incontrovertible truth, that the condition of things necessarily following from infringements of the principle of property, when largely carried out, is inconsistent with the higher degrees of civilization. None can deny that the abolition of a national debt would be an interference with the principle of property; that the abolition of the rent of land would be so; or that the *impot progressif sur la fortune presumée* would be such an interference as would quickly cause movable capital to make to itself wings. That the State should enable workmen to act without capitalists by supplying capital to be managed by themselves, and should provide employment for those out of work, are matters which Governments who choose to spend the requisite amount can easily test by experiment. The issues of such experiments have assuredly not hitherto been encouraging; but to dwell in these pages on the lessons

learnt in France and other countries is uncalled for. What has chiefly to be noted is, that taking by taxation money from those who have it to give to those who have it not, is as much a transfer of property as the abolition of a national debt or of the rent of land. These devices all aim at bestowing money or property, set apart for others by operation of law, or as the reward of industry, on persons destitute of these possessions; at bestowing on them, in fact, whether as members of the community or otherwise, shares of money or property as decidedly as if the shares were to be held in common land belonging to some savage tribe, among whom the institution of individual or several property had never taken root.

There are many ways of leading to a distribution among others, in various shapes, of what appertains to individuals, which can be accomplished by taking it through the instrumentality of taxation, or of confiscation (whatever form it assumes), and vesting the proceeds in the community at large, as effectually as by abolishing a national debt or the rent of land. A distribution of this kind might, for the moment, so far

as it operated, create a common or collective, as distinguished from an individual or several ownership.

The tiller of an allotment, or occupying tenant of a cottage, will ever be disposed to lend a ready ear to those who tell him he is entitled to his holding, and ought to make a manly effort to attain, as his advisers might say, the rights of man. Any common or collective ownership, or equal proprietorship of small landed possessions created by those who may have had the power to do so in any country, has proved to be inefficient in giving effect on any considerable scale to the principles on which it was based, in so far at least as that the equality of all never has been long preserved. Numerous efforts have been made to call such descriptions of ownership into existence by Mr. Owen, of Lanark, for example, and by various religious bodies, which have terminated in failure. We must remember that the seizure in the first instance of property is what is chiefly of moment, far more so than the bestowal of it on persons to whom it may be given by the public authorities after being confiscated ; that

is to say (according to the original meaning of the term), made the possession of the public at large. The keeping of property in the hands of those on whom it might be bestowed can never have much to do with the seizure of it, nor yet can any question as to its management by owners in common, if that were attempted. What men of sense ought principally to attend to is, to guard against tendencies leading to confiscation. The word has a very definite signification in ordinary use, as well as when we consider its derivation, and is perfectly understood by classes to whom it has unhappily become familiar.

Whether the rights of man which might be talked of were to be enjoyed by persons in common, or as possessing in individual ownership what was in the occupation of each, would be comparatively of trifling importance, though amongst the greater number of those engaged in attacks on property, in the event of a scramble taking place, the inclination might not improbably be to seek to retain for their own use and benefit whatever they themselves had to do with.

People may talk of inevitable laws, according to which, if men possessed equal shares of either common or individual property, the equality would not last a fortnight. This, however, will hardly restrain, from taking hold on what does not belong to them, a multitude who know and care nothing about inevitable laws, and would declare that, inevitable or not, those in existence had lasted too long. The populace will endeavour to compass their ends (whatever they for the moment are) by the exercise of political franchises, or by any other means they have available. Brute force, to an adequate extent, they never have available, unless the employment of it is associated with systematic political action. When it is not so associated, the strongest influences—those which could from the outset decide the final outcome of any great contest—never have been lodged with the bulk of a nation, from the days when the Roman populace seceded to the Mons Sacer till now. When a multitude, acting systematically and under able guidance, wield effective political power, they will scarcely regard talk about inevitable laws. Cupidity tempts most persons,

and arguments favouring its indulgence are more easily found than refuted, when the decision rests with those who deem their interests to be involved. The delegate and election manager will, in too many quarters, meet with willing audience, when urging that there is inherent in every one a right to have, either in common or individual ownership, the ground he occupies, or when advocating the abolition of a national debt, or any other of the socialist aims already referred to; all tending, in the first instance, *to bring about ownership, by classes or by the nation at large,* of property previously set apart for those enjoying it in conformity with the laws at the moment existing. As a general rule, political power acquires property, if property has not acquired political power, or has lost it. This has been strikingly shown by the annals of Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, Germany, France, England, and America.

CHAPTER II.

Results recently obtained from Investigation connected with the Archives of Antiquity and of Allied Topics, according to "Comparative Method"—Sir H. S. Maine's Deduction as to "Several Property" and its History, and that of Civilization—Russian Communes—Herr Bedel in German Parliament—Prince Bismarck (spoken of in Note)—Voltaire and French Revolution—Weishaupt and German Illuminati—Disraeli on Revolutions of 1848—German Press at that Period—Lassaile—Von Keteler—United States—Plutology—De Tocqueville on Democratic Government—Democracy and Socialism—Christianity and Socialism.

THE present distribution of landed property in this country cannot, we may rest assured (that is to say, unless we set aside all history), be maintained if political power passes into the hands of those who seek for a division of the soil, or for legislation founded on doctrines similar to some of those before specified, by M. de Beaumont, as being points of faith with Socialists.

The results attained during recent years from study of the archives of antiquity, and of the principles on which were based ancient laws, habits, and institutions, cause many of the questions of the present day to assume an entirely novel aspect. The importance of the results attained by investigation, according to "the comparative method," has surprised all acquainted with them; they are such results, however, as might have been looked for by any one who attached due weight to the undoubted fact that through means of thus, in fitting instances, conducting investigation, science is capable of being augmented pretty nearly in proportion to the success of modern research generally, and not with reference only to the immediate object of that research. This success has been unprecedented, and the results have been unprecedented.

Sir Henry S. Maine has most advantageously employed this method of investigation in ascertaining the principles on which were based ancient laws, habits, and institutions, and he emphatically observes that no one is at liberty to attack several property and to say at the

same time that he values civilization. He adds that their histories cannot be disentangled, and that this circumstance alone irrefragably demonstrates the suitableness of the institution of property to the exigencies of human nature.

In the rural communes of Russia, containing a large proportion of its population, the pasturage and arable land belong to the entire commune, not to individuals. The commune, as a whole, enjoys unlimited authority in distributing the soil, and in making allotments;* it has to make various payments in taxation and otherwise, and is not necessarily to be regarded as absolutely owning the land. The rural commune is organized on principles which, to some extent, cannot fail to be recognized as being those of Socialists, the body of opinion spoken of as socialistic consisting, as has been stated, in doctrines favouring common or collective, as distinguished from several or individual, ownership of property. The fact, nevertheless, that the rural Russian commune is organized on principles which, to some extent, cannot fail to

* *Contemporary Review*, August, 1880, p. 913. Article by Rev. Moritz Haufman, "Nihilism in Russia."

be recognized as being those of Socialists, by no means infers the disturbance of proprietary rights vested in any one. In the rural Russian communes, socialist doctrines have been extensively acted on without inferring confiscation (with what amount of beneficial effect need not here be discussed). If the consequences, as regards productive industry, of the system of management pursued in a rural Russian commune are unsatisfactory enough, we ought always to bear in mind that the seizing of private property, and the apprehension that it will be seized, and the practical confiscation of it by unwise imposts, are the things connected with a desire to favour common ownership which most rapidly ruin a nation. A common management of the property appertaining to a village commune, even if not calculated to conduce to prosperity, need not bring about ruin. The common management, it is to be observed, of land belonging to a village commune in Russia (small as may be the reasons for congratulation afforded by its effects) is likely to succeed better in actual working than new-fangled and untried devices adopted with a view to give

effect to mere theories, in Western Europe or elsewhere.

Institutions usually most lead to prosperity, when, instead of being novel inventions, they have been tested and fortified by experience.

At a sitting of the German parliament (March, 1880), Herr Bedel, stated to be the leader of the moderate fraction of the Socialists (who should be an authority on the existing position of socialist matters), expressed himself in a speech deserving of notice. The present writer is not aware whether he does or does not admit that Nihilists hold doctrines favouring common or collective, as distinguished from individual or several, ownership, according to the general supposition; but he does admit that all German Socialists, whatever fraction they might belong to, must be Revolutionists, now that legal agitation had been prohibited under the Socialist Act. Wherever he went, he said, he found himself tracked by detectives, and prevented from holding meetings. Socialists, no doubt, were Atheists too; but was not Frederick the Great an Atheist? He did not dispute the view taken by the Zurich journal, *Social Democrat*, of

the murder of the Czar. "But Russia was an altogether abnormal country, and what might be done there could have no application to other latitudes, least of all to Germany. Considering the active part taken by the Ultramontane members of the German parliament in promoting international measures against Russian refugees, he must remind these pious gentlemen that their Church had dabbled more than once in the murder and assassination of sovereigns." "Aristocrats too," he moreover observed, "who might have adorned the right side of this house, had done as much. Ravaillac had been praised for his deed; Clement XIV. had been forcibly removed for dissolving the Jesuits." * And he further added that Sand, who killed Kotzebue, the Czeck, who fired at Frederick William IV., and Culm, who levelled his pistol at Prince Bismarck, were no Socialists. The ideas of Socialists, unquestionably, on some

* *Standard*, April 1. No recent measures adopted by Prince Bismarck appear materially to affect this statement. If in bringing forward legislation which is spoken of as State-socialism he is now entitled to be reckoned a State-socialist himself, that probably has not lessened the animosity of those who were Socialists previously, nor affected their position.

points often do not, in many respects, materially differ from those at various periods entertained by others; but however this may be in each case, it is important duly to regard the facts already stated having reference to these ideas; to recollect that they have before now been an exciting cause of tumultuous violence and outrage, and may be so again, when allowed full scope; and to bear in mind that we are authorized by ample evidence to look on the body of opinion spoken of as socialistic as essentially consisting *in doctrines favouring common or collective, as distinguished from several or individual, ownership of property.* Its features and modes of action from time to time vary.

So early as the year 1726, Voltaire had formed the design of establishing a confederation, with the intention of eradicating all Christian faith. Speculations which had been loosely floating in literary circles were embodied into a system by himself, D'Alembert, Frederick of Prussia, Diderot, and their coadjutors. In 1776, Weishaupt founded the subsidiary, and afterwards conjoined, sect of the German Illuminati.

The French Revolution was the outcome of

this project of Voltaire and his associates. Christianity having been interwoven with European institutions to the extent of being in most countries an essential part of them, this attack on it, wherever for a moment successful, involved alterations as sweeping as any that could now be effected by any success of Socialists. The changes in men's modes of thought and in the accustomed order of things, for a time at least, were fundamental; and the changes in property were violent and vast, more particularly in France, when the Jacobin faction assumed a preponderance in the conduct of affairs. Those most prominent in the French Revolution in many things resembled the Socialists of our own day; both would, for example, for ever talk of liberty, equality, and fraternity, though perhaps not always formulating these words into a public cry, or in any serious or practical manner proposing liberty, equality, and fraternity as the great ends to be attained.

The passage from the common or collective to the several or individual ownership of land being a step taken by every people, as it grows out of the savage state into civilization, must

be looked on as a progress in the civilization, that is to say, in the degree of advancement attained by that people, and many of the arts of life have hinged upon it. Any general passage, on the contrary, from the several or individual to the common or collective ownership of the soil would be a relapse from civilization into the savage state; it must interfere with the foundations on which society rests, and with the production of human sustenance. We may safely assume, however, that there will never be any such general change in the ownership of land, and that the way in which Socialism principally endangers the well-being of a nation is by rendering property insecure. The institution of property consists in setting apart for some what would else be enjoyed by all, and it is worth noticing that the history of its establishment is traceable with considerable minuteness, in the accounts handed down from very early times, of the mark system in Germany; that is to say, of the system pursued as regards the mark or district appropriated and *marked* out by each community. The setting apart of land, as of all other descriptions

of property, is *requisite, if industry is to be rewarded; and if industry is not to be rewarded, it will not be pursued, and, on the occurrence of any serious check to industrial occupations, human sustenance can no longer be so amply provided for as during periods of prosperity:* so that those who live by manual labour must experience the bitterness of penury, as indeed they will in degree do whenever a sense of insecurity takes hold of the public mind, and precisely in proportion to the intensity of the apprehension entertained.

Strictly speaking, any interference with the rights of property contravenes the principle of property, *which is, that its owner is entitled to its enjoyment as being set apart for him;* any such interference is inconsistent with several or individual, as distinguished from common or collective, ownership, and acts in the direction of bringing about a return from an artificial condition of existence to one of nature or (in the ordinary acceptation of the term) of savagery, and, to the extent of its operation, lessens productive power. All interferences with the rights of property exhibit features of similitude.

The socialist movements and doctrines of the present day can, for the most part, be seen to have intimate relations with the ideas promulgated by those engaged in the French Revolution of 1789, till they were overmastered by the general sense of French society, when enlightened by a dearly purchased acquaintance with their practical working.

In 1852, Mr. Disraeli, than whom no higher authority on the subject can be named, stated,* that existing society has chosen to persecute the Jewish race, which should, as he observes, furnish its choice allies, and that the consequences may be traced in the last outbreak of the destructive principle in Europe. Extirpation of the Jewish religion, whether in the Mosaic or in the Christian form, the natural equality of man, and the abrogation of property are proclaimed, he remarks, by the secret societies who form provisional governments, and men of Jewish race are found at the head of every one of them. The people of God cooperate with Atheists; the most skilful accumulators of property (he means, of course, in

* Life of Lord George Bentinck.

the Old World) ally themselves with Communists; the peculiar and chosen race (to employ his emphatic words) touch the hand of all the scum and low castes of Europe. And all this because they wish to destroy that ungrateful Christendom which owes to them even its name, and whose tyranny they can no longer endure. The present writer entertains no desire either to adopt or to criticize Mr. Disraeli's well-known views as to the people to whom he belonged being a natural aristocracy among mankind. What he would note is the fact, that the Israelitish body were intimately associated with the disturbances of 1848, and that this throws light on a great deal having to do with these disturbances, and especially with their anti-Christian character, so far as that was developed.

Mr. Disraeli goes on to say, that when the secret societies, in 1848, surprised Europe, they were themselves surprised by the unexpected opportunity, and he considers that so little capable were they of seizing the occasion, that had it not been for the Jews, imbecile as were the governments, the uncalled-for outbreak would not have ravaged Europe. But the fiery

energy and the teeming resources of the children of Israel sustained for a long time the unnecessary and useless struggle. In England, the case was different; society, as he justly remarks, did not there persecute the Jewish race.

The writer of these pages has reason to know, that at that era of revolutions, and subsequently, the German press was largely in their hands; and it was pointed out to him by Baron von Keteler, who held the see of Mayence, and from his position was entitled to speak with weight on the subject, that the Israelitish body were subversive in their tendencies precisely to the extent of endeavouring to pull down whatever in the constitution of society was opposed to them, but that otherwise their proclivities were conservative. These two facts bear out Mr. Disraeli's views. The connexion of men of Hebrew extraction with not a few of the socialist organizations of the present day is equally recognizable as in those cases he alluded to, and throughout the latter part of his life his prescience was in nothing more evinced than in his appreciation of the danger to be apprehended from those secret societies,

whose proceedings, he declared (as it now appears with too much of terrible truth), might culminate in the taking of life by the arm of the assassin. To maintain that all who belong to them are imbued with socialist doctrines, would be to assert too much. Still, it is none the less worthy of observation that socialist movements and doctrines can, for the most part, be easily seen not merely to have intimate relations, as already stated, with the ideas promulgated by those engaged in the French Revolution of 1789, but furthermore to have at least as intimate relations with revolutionary troubles of more recent date. The facts glanced at having reference to the Jewish race forcibly indicate the connexion between ideas hostile to Christianity and the revolutionary troubles of 1848, precisely as at the outbreak of the great French Revolution.

Whatever may be the working of secret societies strongly imbued with Socialism, the mere favouring of socialist opinions is no proof, universally and at all times, of subversive designs, or of Atheism, though when Herr Bedel made the speech in the German parliament be-

fore referred to (March, 1880), he considered that all German Socialists, whatever faction they might belong to, must be Revolutionists now that legal agitation had been prohibited under the Socialist Act, and that Socialists, no doubt, were Atheists too, though why he stated this to be so did not appear. In Germany, Lassaille would have established productive associations of labourers through means of capital supplied by the State, and no one can imagine there is anything very desperate in this project, whether it is deemed impractical or impracticable, or not; while Von Keteler's deeply rooted attachment to the rights of property did not prevent him from wishing to make the formation of productive associations a scheme of the Church, and to appeal for contributions, with a view to providing the requisite capital, to Christian philanthropy and a sense of duty. How capital was to be obtained in connexion with the ends proposed, to any extent worth thinking about, never indeed appeared, but the conceptions of Lassaille and von Keteler merit attention; they exemplify the innocence with which ideas may possibly be entertained

which are calculated to find acceptance with Socialists. To discuss, however, the special theories and crotchets of those generally who cherish socialist aspirations forms no portion of the design of the present writer; he seeks to trace the action of socialist doctrines in some of the various circumstances they have to do with, have had to do with, and may have to do with: any mention of the names of individuals is no more than incidental, useful, and even necessary, as it may be that they should be mentioned. Prince Bismarck himself once thought the State, which laid out large sums for agricultural experiments, might spend something in giving co-operative associations a fair trial.

In the United States, the preponderance of public sentiment and of the strength of society is so complete, and the resolution to preserve inviolate order and the rights of property so decided, that capital and its investments are at least as safe as in any other portion of the globe. Americans know that this state of things pays, and beyond all question it has had a great deal to do with the unprecedented prosperity which

has already enabled our American "kin beyond sea" to pass us in a canter in the creation of wealth, as, judging from a remarkable article contributed by Mr. Gladstone to an American periodical, was apparently anticipated by him when he penned it. In America, "Plutology," that is to say the science of wealth, would seem to be better understood than elsewhere, for nowhere else has wealth accumulated with such rapidity, or on such a scale of magnitude, as of late in America. The term "Plutology" is employed by Mr. Mongredien in a publication entitled "Free Trade and English Commerce" (*London*, 1881, p. 43), which ranks high with Mr. Bright and the Cobden Club. Mr. Bright's friends, whatever they think of American notions as to protection, would not depreciate this science, its importance, interest, or attractiveness. Our transatlantic relatives evidently know most about it, and about its practical application.

We need not minutely dwell on the multifarious subversive projects of either the last or the present centuries. What has principally to be noted is, that, as already stated, the features characterizing attacks on property have pretty

generally been recognized as socialistic in their nature. The socialist type apparently is apt to be assumed by attacks on property in our own day, whereas, formerly, as *e.g.* in those following the Norman invasion of England, it was frequently absent. There would seem to be every probability that, at least among English-speaking peoples, where, so far as we can see, the institutions of our English Alfred and respect for free opinion are likely always more or less to prevail—on the bulk of the population becoming convinced by experience that the carrying out of socialist dogmas is inconsistent with their welfare, and more especially with the welfare of those living by manual labour—the power of the people, that is to say the democratic power, will suffice to overcome, and be exerted to overcome all efforts to give effect to them.

A democratic government naturally favours the material welfare and the enjoyments of the people at large. De Tocqueville felt that if it were deemed useful to turn man's intellectual and moral activity to the necessities of national life, and to employ it for producing national well-being, a democratic government should be

established. Democratic rule is directly actuated by self-interest, and accordingly is essentially opposed to socialist theories, interfering as they do with the accomplishment of its aims; and this opposition, often existing dormant among classes half unconscious of its presence, ever and anon crops up and puts forth its strength, on being aroused to activity by the current of events or the violence of popular excitement. The Paris Communists were suppressed by the French democratic government, and suppressed with a continuous and unrelenting rigour proportioned to the sense entertained of the loss and shame brought about by the occurrences accompanying the fall of Napoleon III., which were largely, though perhaps not invariably with strict justice, attributed to the Communists.

The scenes enacted in Paris by persons who took part in socialist projects shocked the feelings of our age, and were terminated by the functionaries of a republican government, whose measures were pretty much in accordance with the sentiments at that moment dominant in France. The circumstance that these function-

aries talked about liberty, equality, and fraternity had very little to do with the matter. The scenes enacted were not only abhorrent to the ideas habitually entertained by civilized men, but were, moreover, injurious to the interests of the mass of French citizens.

Democracy, consisting as it does (according to the literal meaning of the word) of the power of the people, asserts the right of a self-reliant nation to liberty—to liberty comprising not alone personal freedom, but likewise the civic capacity of individuals to take their share in the conduct of affairs; and it further asserts the right of each citizen to justice.

Alike in ancient and modern nations, those possessing refinement and polish are selfish as others. Wealth centres in a few, and greed and ambition follow. Great fortunes grow up, and the inevitable contrast arises between rich and poor. Envy will ever more or less render men desirous of change, and large masses of citizens too often are prone to look to the State to provide them with victuals and amusement. The mob run after the leader who flatters most, promises most, and most lavishly feeds their

appetites. To feed their appetites is a project favoured by socialist tendencies, for it enables the multitude to enjoy the good things of life in common and collectively. The aim is at all times essentially the same, though with numerous modifications; it has equally been the feeding of the appetites of the multitude, whether food has been given by the charitable organizations of the present day, by the legal machinery of poor laws, or by those who in ancient times bestowed on the Roman populace the "Panem and Circenses." Practices of this kind contributed to the downfall of Rome of old, sapping as they did the springs of industry, and causing free citizens to be supplanted by slaves; notably so in Italy, where, from various causes, the tillers of the ground were swept away by the forced importation of African corn to provide largesses for the inhabitants of the metropolis. The slaves introduced in lieu of the free peasantry were only superseded by the new order of things established under new rulers; the free peasantry, the former cultivators of the soil, never were restored. In politics it is, for the most part,

comparatively easy to create, and still more so to destroy; but to restore—to reinfuse the vigour of youth and pristine energy and virtue—is an achievement which statesmen, when compelled by necessity, may indeed seek to accomplish, but will mostly seek in vain.

In many lands men are familiar, through means of long-continued usage, with practices to some extent in accordance with socialist notions (as in the instance of giving poor-law relief), which those who originated them never dreamed of carrying out to their extreme development. To give poor-law relief, as in this country, must be recognized as being, theoretically and in degree, a proceeding socialist in its nature (conferring as it does a portion of the income of the comparatively well-to-do on those who are pauperized), as decidedly as the giving of largesses of corn in ancient Rome; the payment of rates levied for their relief makes available for the use of the poorer populace a portion of the public wealth; the means of the producer are diminished precisely as in giving these largesses. Grants of relief to the inmates of a workhouse are not, indeed,

open to the same amount of unfavourable criticism as the granting of out-door relief, since few, save the really destitute, are likely to enter one, and the practice is thus to a great extent checked; but all poor-law relief is in strictness opposed to the principles of economic science, and is only justifiable on the ground that it accomplishes practical good, and is a kind of insurance against the evils certain to arise from the abandonment of distress to the miseries incident to it when unalleviated in its direst extremities. British ratepayers have hitherto as effectually kept within bounds the granting of poor relief, as small owners of land and others owning possessions of all sorts, both small and large, have invariably put down in the United States, at Pittsburg and elsewhere, mobs hostile to the rights of property. Alike in England and in America, all courses of action in any degree based on doctrines which are socialist in their essence have as yet been restrained within narrow limits.

The weightest problem of the future, at least among English-speaking peoples, evidently is, *how far democracy can afford safeguards against*

the mischiefs to be apprehended from the development of Socialism?

The bridling throughout the world of Socialism by democracy will mainly depend on the prevalence of a public opinion convinced that disaster is to be apprehended from its predominance, and the vigour and intelligent direction of public opinion can only result from a widely spread and useful education, which shall have enabled those in whose hands rests political power, whoever they may be (probably the bulk of the people), to arrive at sound conclusions as to matters of universal concern.

Democratic strength, it is to be observed, may be exerted in restraining Socialism, either alone, as perhaps we should consider was the case in France on the suppression of the Paris Communards, or in conjunction with monarchial, aristocratic, republican, or other forms of power, according to circumstances.

Christianity has rendered it far more possible than heretofore for popular impulses to be guided aright, and the Christian spirit leads men to perceive that the State exists for the benefit of all; that it exists, not on the

bases of the political systems of Greece and Rome of old, under which, since citizens were not unfrequently provided with the means of support and with amusement, Socialism must so far be held more or less to have flourished, but on those of personal responsibility and liberty; while it at the same time requires that neither any advantage for society as a whole nor any other object shall be sought for otherwise than in accordance with Christian morals. True, the early Christians had at one time all things in common, and at various times peculiar sects have endeavoured to bring about community of possessions and profits; but the command, "Thou shalt not steal," has ever been felt by the Church in all its branches to be of binding authority. This command has powerfully supported the rights of property throughout Christendom, and indeed far beyond its limits, and was felt by the eminent prelate (Baron von Keteler) whose views have been already cited, and who may be looked on as having been long the head of what was known as the Catholic party in Germany, to have accomplished more in fortifying those rights than all else ever

said or written. Aspirations subversive of the rights of property have at no period long or extensively prevailed, wherever the Christian spirit has been paramount, but to bestow charity has, in numerous classes of instances, been deemed a Christian duty. This is a widely different matter, however, from admitting the recipients of charity to be entitled to claim, on the ground of legal obligation, what is spontaneously dispensed. No one believes that the developments of Socialism among the Paris Communards derived much of their strength from Christian sentiment. These and more or less similar developments have, in truth, at various times in France, generally been associated with lines of action emphatically hostile to Christian institutions; and the murder of whole hosts of the French clergy (including that of two Archbishops of Paris) indelibly stamps their real character on three at least of the revolutionary tumults of modern times.

The appreciation of the fact that there is no dangerous opposition between what is inculcated by Christian precepts as to the exercise of charity and a fitting and necessary determina-

tion on the part of those who value civilization to uphold the rights of property, is essential to a right understanding of some of the gravest considerations having to do with any estimate relating to proclivities towards Socialism among modern Europeans or their posterity.

CHAPTER III.

"Italy and her Invaders," and Heresy of Caius Gracchus—No Equality where Disparity of Wealth — An Englishman cherishes Personal Liberty, a Frenchman the Idea of Equality—Cobden—Permanence of Chinese Institutions—In England, People disposed to recur to Precedents—Inclination to revert to the Past in the United States — Supreme Court — Land in Ireland — Supreme Court in Canada—Conservative Principles in Constitution of United States and among American Population — Danger from Criminal Classes—Sack of Rome by the Goths—Paris and the Communards—Socialistic Tenets in France—*Bourgeoisie*, Landowners, Workmen.

ALL over Europe, the colonies still included within the British Empire, and the United States, the tide of affairs flows permanently in the direction of democracy, and we must remember that democratic institutions may or may not be accompanied by republican forms of government. As before observed, the weightiest political problem of the future, at least among English-speaking peoples, evidently is,

how far democracy can afford safeguards against the mischiefs to be apprehended from the development of Socialism? Those who most cherish faith in the potency of a widely spread and useful education will most incline to believe it can do so effectually. Very practical questions arise. The chief one has been pointedly put in a recent work (Hodgkin's "Italy and her Invaders," London, 1880), and contains an instructive reference to the fate of Rome, from which are to be gathered lessons capable of a thoroughly practical application. The passage had best be inserted.

"Will the great democracies of the twentieth century resist the temptation to use political power as a means of material self-enrichment? With a higher sense of duty than has been shown by some of the governing classes which preceded them, will they refrain from jobbing the commonwealth? Warned by the experience of Rome, will they shrink from reproducing, directly or indirectly, the political heresy of Caius Gracchus, that he who votes in the forum must be fed by the State? If they do, perhaps the world may see democracies as long-lived as the

dynasties of Egypt or of China. If they do not, assuredly now, as in the days of our Saxon forefathers, it will be found that he who is 'giver of bread' is also lord. The old weary round will recommence, democracy leading to anarchy, and anarchy to despotism, and the national workshops of some future Gracchus will build the palaces in which British or American despots—as incapable of rule as Arcadius or Honorius—will guide mighty empires to ruin, amidst the acclamations of flatterers as eloquent and as hollow as the courtly Claudian."

There never can be said to be equality amongst the members of a community where there is disparity of wealth, where one man is in affluent and another in humble circumstances. Mr. Hodgkin alludes to the fact, never to be forgotten by any of English race, that in the days of our Saxon forefathers it was found that he who was "giver of bread" was also lord. And the vain endeavour that there shall be equality by reason of precluding, through means of legislative action, the existence of disparity of wealth has, at all stages of their progress, for

the most part specially characterized socialistic movements, when intended to overturn established institutions. Equality, indeed, in the eye of the law there often is in many countries, as regards many questions of personal rights and of social standing, but the cases are by no means identical. Even in the democratic republics of the United States and of France, any assertion that there is universal equality in the eye of the law or in any other sense, with reference to personal rights (including of course rights connected with property, as personal rights very frequently indeed must be) or social standing, would be quite unwarranted. In these republics are to be met with official designations carrying with them respect, and the whole framework of law and of society confers on the favoured individuals, whoever they may be, honour, standing, and weight, which lead to the gaining of the most coveted objects of ambition, whatever they are. If in any nation the honour, standing, and weight that belong to some do not belong to all (and it is needless to remark they cannot belong to all), to talk about equality is futile and deceptive.

What an Englishman cherishes is personal liberty; the poorest cottager feels his personal liberty is sacred, and cares little for equality. Cobden declared, he "would rather live in a country where this feeling in favour of liberty is jealously cherished than be without it in the enjoyment of all the principles of the French Constituent Assembly." * The Frenchman talks about equality, and cherishes the idea of it, though his nation has not unfrequently set aside all notions of either the name or the reality of equality, and though equality in France, as regards honour, standing, and weight, at no time has become a prevalent fact.

No constitution of things can be permanent, unless based on right—all else is transitory, and depends on the shifting notions of the hour, whatever they may be. The dynasties of Egypt and of China, like all polities ever established among men in any degree civilized, were so far based on right, that they recognized the institution of several or individual property, and socialist tendencies never found the same favour as in ancient Rome, or in many portions of

* Morley's "Life of Cobden," vol. ii. p. 137.

modern Europe (though they can hardly be said to have gained in any nation at all advanced in civilization, even for a moment, complete supremacy); and this fact, that they never found the same amount of favour, goes far towards accounting for the immobility of the laws and habits of Egypt and China. Persons who desired revolution, such as the individuals and classes we so constantly hear of during the closing years of the Roman Republic, as seeking to enjoy the property of others, never possessed paramount power among the Egyptians and Chinese.

Aided by our vastly increased acquaintance with China, judiciously directed research has discovered an amply sufficient reason for this comparative absence of socialistic tenets, and for the remarkable immobility of Chinese institutions and society. It appears that, very long ago,* Chinese rulers, who had associated the feelings of loyalty and attachment to themselves with popular sentiment, promulgated a system of laws and morals which became intimately

* *North American Review* for 1880, p. 211, *et seq.* Article on Permanence of Chinese Institutions, by S. W. Williams.

connected with the mental habits and social observances of the bulk of the population. In the year B.C. 1122, some distinguished men overthrew the Shang dynasty, establishing their own family in its stead, and writings handed down with the sanction of their authority became the standards of constant reference. Their empire, however, fell into a condition resembling that of France after the decease of Charlemagne, through the strife of feudal kings, and Confucius and Mencius arose in the fifth and fourth centuries. Seeing that the people were lapsing into barbarism, they taught them political ethics, and fortified their own precepts by the well-known instructions so handed down. Confucius and Mencius thus obtained support from their countrymen, while the experience of the intervening centuries enabled them to enlarge their range of thought and discuss all the functions of a State. The paramount and lasting influence of the Chinese classics over the Chinese, as compared with the neglect in other nations of the ideas of Cyrus, Solomon, Plato, and others, plainly is attributable to the prevalence at a remote epoch of popular education among the

inhabitants of what those dwelling in it love to call the Celestial Empire. Literary men were elevated above warlike pursuits, and the way was prepared for adopting the system of competitive examination in selecting for office, which originated about B.C. 150.

Confucius caused his countrymen always to look backwards—to a past rich in experience and in the fruits of ripe intellectual culture: this disposition to look backwards was totally inconsistent with inventions instigated by socialist aspirations. The Chinese settled their hierarchy of rank long since, as likewise the distribution of wealth throughout their country, and never have evinced much disposition to alter either by means of revolutionary change. With many nations the disposition is constantly to look forward to a future dependent on eventualities, the nature of which can be but imperfectly comprehended. But to look backwards can lead to no good result, unless right conclusions are thus arrived at. The Chinese consider that to arrive at right conclusions is secured by a continual reference to their classical writings, and certain it is that socialistic tenets are not much favoured by these writings, so that the national

mind has never exhibited any great proclivities in that direction. *There is no need to express admiration for Chinese institutions; all here desired is to explain the noteworthy circumstance that socialistic tenets do not prevail in China.*

Education having existed extensively in very early times, and selection for office on account of literary attainment having been established at a very remote period, we can easily comprehend that the reasons for the uniformity and endurance of Chinese national polity are to be sought for in the teachings of their sages and rulers, and in the nature of the institutions which have grown out of those teachings. The Chinese, it is to be observed, have maintained democratic habits under a purely despotic theory of rule, and their government has respected the rights of its subjects by placing them under the protection of the law.

When it is well understood that a nation is certain in the main to look backwards to the experience of the past, there is comparatively little difficulty in, to a considerable extent, forecasting the fortunes of the future. And this is true, in degree, of other nations besides the Chinese.

The teachings in practical morality of the Nine Classics, as they are styled, came to be regarded as of the highest authority. Previously to the year B.C. 202, a struggle of forty years had destroyed all the feudal kings and aristocracies, and left a clear field for the emperor to select the best men. He naturally looked to the *literati*, whose studies in these classics had fitted them somewhat for carrying precept into practice; and the examinations for office are still confined to subjects drawn from these books. Strictly speaking, no religious system is taught in them, for the purpose is to inculcate the highest morality and the best government, as founded on human experience.*

Europeans often deem the Chinese *literati* unduly given to self-satisfaction at being the interpreters of what they consider a perfect system of polity; but without discussing its merits, all right-minded men will admit that to feel the importance of having a perfect system implies an appreciation of the bearings of the national system of polity on the vital interests of their race. Perfection in a system of polity,

* *North American Review* for 1880, p. 208.

though made up of many small things, itself is not a small thing, and the effort (whether it succeeds or fails) to attain it is deserving of honour.

We may notice that the institution of several or individual property could not well receive stronger sanctions than those relating to it in Chinese legislation, and that the mischiefs necessarily attending inroads upon it would, of course, at once affect the democratic community at large, and especially those literary men who form the governing class, and from their position must be injured by public misfortune. No wonder, therefore, that socialistic tenets never found favour among "the black-haired race." So far as the present writer is aware, no one in China is known ever to have held, in the most remote degree, any doctrine analogous to what Mr. Hodgkin terms the political heresy of Caius Gracchus, that he who votes in the forum must be fed by the State, nor acting on such an imagination to have ever tried to job the commonwealth. Had any one essayed the attempt to carry out such a doctrine, he would quickly have been checked, not

only by the force of opinion among the literary and governing class, but also by the democratic instinct of the population, who could not fail to appreciate the fact that thus to make away with public revenues in which all were interested was entirely opposed to those ideas, habits, and maxims which, above all other things, they were ever ready jealously to guard, as affecting the welfare of the "Central Flowery Land." Thus they speak of the much-loved country of their ancestors, and anxiety for its prosperity is by no means based on sentiment alone, for in seasons of adversity taxes are sometimes remitted throughout extensive districts, thus imposing on other districts the necessity to contribute all the more to provide for national expenditure.

In ancient Egypt there was pretty much the same disposition to recur to the past that meets our eyes in China. It was there markedly connected with an oppressive religious ceremonial. In Asia generally, there is at this moment the same dislike of new things, when contrary to previously existing usage, though not invariably to an equal extent, as in China; and it is quite

sufficient to preclude all probability of oriental populations entering on the paths of western reforms and progress. They may have their own reforms and progress, but these will hardly exhibit any great similitude to those of a western type.

In England, people have always been disposed to recur to precedents afforded by law, practice, and the lessons of history, though not to the same extent as in China. This disposition, while it ordinarily has aided in maintaining sobriety of judgment, has nevertheless on some occasions been overborne by party prepossessions not being fortified by institutions possessing any other strength than that derived from the vigorous sense and sound feeling of the community at large. These, however, have for the most part sufficed to secure to social order and to the British constitution a permanency seldom to be met with, and almost unprecedented under a mixed form of government.

The most conspicuous example among a western population of an inclination to revert to the past being fortified by other strength

than that derived from the vigorous sense and sound feeling of the community at large is presented by the United States. Americans generally are quite prepared to revert to the past, in so far, at least, that they do not lack the determination at all hazards and at any sacrifice to stand by the form of polity bequeathed to them by their fathers. In the United States the Supreme Court is empowered to restrain all action inconsistent with the inviolability of property and of contracts. It has many other jurisdictions, and its efficiency in a great measure arises from its capacity for direct action through the instrumentality of the officers appointed to carry out its behests in every part of the Union.* The Supreme Court has fulfilled its high functions during the entire period which has elapsed since the meeting of the first Congress under the Constitution of 1769, and much of the constitutional law which it regulates and guards has been formed by it.

The existence in any nation of a judicial court supreme over all other authorities is a recogni-

* A leading case as to its capacity for direct action is that of "Postmaster against Early."—Wheaton.

tion on the part of that nation of the principles of justice and of the principles of public policy placed under its protection.

When the property of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia was sought to be confiscated, on separation from Great Britain being brought about, this was prevented by the existence of the powers lodged with the Supreme Court.

Under Chief Justice Marshall the court vindidicated the authority of the federal judiciary over both State tribunals and State legislatures. The decision in the case of Dartmouth College broadly asserted the authority of the Supreme Court to annul State laws repugnant to the laws of the United States. The New Hampshire legislature had passed an Act invading and practically annulling the charter of the college. The State Courts affirmed the validity of this law, but the Supreme Court set it aside, as violating the provisions in the constitution prohibiting legislation impugning the validity of contracts.

In Marbury against Madison, the principle was established that the court had jurisdiction over the executive branch of the government,

to compel it to perform ministerial functions in accordance with law.

The decision in McCulloch against Maryland involved a vital question as to the powers of the State and general governments. A branch of the United States bank had been established at Baltimore, and the Maryland legislature passed a law taxing it. The bank maintained that the law was repugnant to the constitutional powers of the general government. Marshall held the question to be one of absolute supremacy between the powers of Maryland and those of the general government. "If the States," he said, "may tax one instrument employed by the Government in execution of its powers, they may tax any and every other instrument —the mails, the mint, patent rights, and judicial processes to an excess which would defeat all the ends of the general government. The American people," he declared, "did not design to make their Government dependent upon the States." *

American feeling is strong, in support of the

* The *Century*, December, 1882. Article by E. V. Smalley, p. 177.

execution of the decisions of the Supreme Court. No one would dream of opposing them, when finally pronounced. Most fully and unreservedly does public opinion endorse the language of Chief Justice Marshall, when affirming that the American people did not design to make their Government depend upon the States.

The authority of the Canada Supreme Court, a few years ago, having precluded the possibility of an apprehended withholding of compensation from landowners in Prince Edward's Island, on steps being taken affecting their property, their interests became the subject of provincial legislation, which granted the compensation.

For the United Kingdom at large there is no such Supreme Court. Parliament is beyond control in such matters—theoretically, at least.

In England, during Anglo-Saxon and early Norman times, the King's Court (whether known as the Wittenagemote or by any other appellation) may, to some extent, have been supreme above all other authorities; but subsequently to the era of Magna Charta, at any rate, there has been no such supreme tribunal.

Every community, in any degree civilized, if

uncontrolled by outside pressure, feels responsibility for its actions, which is much the same thing as to say that its men of thought feel it. Menenius Agrippa did so, when the Roman populace made their secession to the Mons Sacer; Confucius did so, when promulgating his doctrines in China and basing them on the standards of morality handed down from what were spoken of as the classic ages of Chinese history; Somers did so, at the period of our own Revolution, when he drew up the Bill of Rights, founding it on the well-ascertained precedents of English jurisprudence.

The passing of the Land Law Act of 1881 must plainly have been out of the question had such a court existed in the United Kingdom. There is no need to discuss the desirableness of passing this Act. One of the things expressly kept within the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of the United States is the upholding of the law of contracts.

Even if the Land Law Act of 1881 had been passed, notwithstanding the existence of such a court in the United Kingdom, and in despite of the influence inferred by its existence on the

course of legislation, one of the effects of that Act could not fail to have been that compensation would have been made to the vested interests interfered with, but more probably the knowledge that a liability to make compensation would be incurred might have protected vested interests from being interfered with by passing the Act. As things stand, national faith has been affected, particularly in the case of purchasers from the Encumbered Estates Court in Ireland, which often guaranteed to them a right to make a rise in their rents, (of which rise they were deprived by this Act). The ultimate results of national faith being affected are never manifested in a day. Those already developed are serious beyond all previous imagination, and seem likely to develop themselves with an ever-increasing gravity.

So long as the Supreme Court exists in the United States, clothed with its present prerogatives, Socialism never can become predominant. *The thing is impossible, for its predominance would imply that no court really to be called supreme was there to be found.* And whenever persons in the United States desire to oppose

Socialist movements inconsistent with the rights of property, they can do so by reverting to the principles already sanctioned by the Supreme Court, precisely as can be done in China by reverting to the principles sanctioned by the Chinese classical writers and by Confucius.

To constitute a judicial Supreme Court for the British Islands is obviously above all things needed, if efficient safeguards are to be created for the rights of property. The United States, when framing their constitution under the auspices of Washington, profited by experience gained from the teachings of all history. Canada has followed this great example, and it remains to be seen whether our public men are equal to the exigencies of their time.

American citizens will scarcely abolish their Supreme Court, for they know it to be the surest defence of public and of private rights, and these run no risk of being abandoned by the multitude of small landowners and by those generally who are interested in the preservation of order. The force in the hands of these classes so completely preponderates as to set aside all ideas in the minds of rational men of

any change in the institutions of the United States being carried out by violence. In the United States, the legislative authorities possess no powers save those conferred on them by the constitution, and each State is forbidden by the constitution to pass certain laws or do certain acts. The duty of annulling any infringement of these limitations of power rests with the Supreme Court and such inferior courts as Congress may from time to time ordain and establish ("Constitution of United States," art. iii. sec. 2). This authority is called into activity by cases to which individuals, public bodies, corporations, States, or the United States are parties. The point of unconstitutionality is raised by the arguments on such cases.

No alteration in the constitution of the United States can be effected otherwise than in accordance with its fifth article, which renders any alteration extremely difficult: such, for example, as would be legislation in favour of interfering with contracts, or which might interfere with the sections to be found in Article 1, forbidding the granting of titles of nobility by the United States or by any particular State; or with the

guarantee given by the United States to every State in the Union of a republican form of government and protection against domestic violence. The fifth article runs thus :—

"The Congress, whenever two-thirds of both houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose amendments to this constitution, or, on the application of the legislatures of two-thirds of the several States, shall call a convention for proposing amendments which, in either case, shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of this constitution, when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States or by conventions in three-fourths thereof, as one or the other mode of ratification may be proposed by the Congress."

The difficulty of effecting alterations in the constitution has operated as, in the strictest sense, a conservative principle, or ground of action, with those who have been opposed to change; when the proposers of alterations fail to obtain the requisite consents, their proposals must prove abortive, and, till alterations are brought about, the Supreme Court will at all times check the infringement of legal

rights. The civil action of the supporters of order (small landowners and others), including all, in fact, who feel that their personal interests as well as those of their country are involved in upholding the security of property, is likely always to equal in efficiency their armed support of order, which they are ready to afford in the last resort. They will ever revert to the principles established by the constitution till good reason is shown for abrogating its provisions. They will revert to these principles established by the wisdom of those distinguished men who, on the separation of the United States from Britain, moulded their institutions with as much energy of conviction and of purpose as could be applied to giving shape to their own forms of polity by the most zealous disciples of Confucius, or by Englishmen the most attached to inherited birthrights handed down from the days of Magna Charta.

A court supreme above all other authorities is a sort of artificial conscience in a nation. Such a court can, as has been shown by the American experiences already alluded to, restrain sovereign states, and, while presenting an insur-

mountable barrier to popular excess, is, from the very nature of things, endued with the great prerogative of being able to lead the public mind to comprehend and value and in all respects appreciate the principles of justice and constitutional principles generally, as applied in each particular instance, and thus, in asserting these principles, to render available democratic strength for their maintenance.

Macaulay anticipated the arrival of ravagers more terrible than the Huns or Vandals, when the so-termed dangerous classes of modern society in civilized nations should break loose. This prediction has already been fulfilled by the enacting on their part in most European countries of previously unimagined horrors, and very specially by what occurred on the subjugation of Paris by the Communards for a brief space on the fall of Napoleon III. It has been supposed, as far as records handed down from ancient times supply means for forming a judgment, that their triumph in the French metropolis brought about more havoc and rapine and criminal excess than followed from the sack of the capital of the Cæsars by the Goths. The

Romans spoke of their northern foes as barbarians, but some of the peoples they thus designated were distinguished by virtues which contrasted favourably with the vices induced by luxury and other causes of degeneracy; and all the world over, the dangerous and depraved classes are far worse in type than the community of which they form part, taken as a whole. Macaulay judged correctly—men, like the Paris Communards, when unrestrained, are more terrible than were any of those populations which swarmed from their great northern hive and overwhelmed Rome.

The excesses of the dangerous and depraved classes, whether they do or do not assume a socialist character, have been and will be effectually bridled wherever there are numerous small landowners. Of these, some millions are to be met with in France, and there, as elsewhere, they develop strong conservative instincts. Socialistic tenets in France meet with some acceptance in large towns, but throughout the rural districts they are not regarded with favour.

The *bourgeoisie* dislike them as decidedly as landowners, and workmen, when they feel they

possess a stake in the existing order of things, seem indisposed to risk it. The assertion has been confidently made, as regards Paris, that *not one workman enjoying a participation in profits took any part in the acts of the Commune.**

It would be as reasonable to imagine that socialistic tenets, inimical to the rights of property, are likely to find favour with democratic small landowners in France or America, or with other classes among their people who are opposed to revolutionary spoliation and apprehensive of its attendant disasters, as that they are likely to do so with the democratic Chinese population. Democratic instincts are (and from the nature of things ever will be) sensitively alive to the danger which may arise to the interests with which they are connected from the prevalence of those tenets.

* *Contemporary Review*, November, 1882, p. 725. Article by A. L. Walker.

CHAPTER IV.

Mr. Kay's Statements as to Landed Property—Check on Revolutionary Movements in 1848—In Germany, Switzerland, and France, Revolution similar to that of France in 1789 impossible—Conservative Instincts of Peasants—These and like Instincts in Persons of Substance Resident in Towns developed along with growth of Democracy.

SOME statements made in Kay's "Free Trade in Land"—a work of high authority—merit attention. The facts he adduces as to the effects produced in France and elsewhere by the creation of a body of numerous proprietors, and the extent to which his observations were carefully conducted, warrant us in considering that his conclusions carry with them that kind of certainty which belongs to exact science. The induction of the particulars to be taken into account has been complete.

Mr. Kay tells us,* that in Germany, Switzer-

* Kay's "Free Trade in Land," p. 287.

land, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Norway, and France, the *peasant proprietors* and the inhabitants of the smaller provincial towns will never be insurrectionary, whilst the present subdivision of land continues. Every peasant feels that his social condition and well-being depend wholly and solely on his own exertions. He knows that if he does not acquire land of his own, and if he does not better his condition, it is entirely his own fault. He knows that no law impedes him or diminishes the return of his labour; that no class is favoured more than his own; that he can ask for no social change, unless it be less taxation and improved education. He feels, therefore, that change cannot benefit him socially, and that it might possibly deprive him of some of the advantages he now enjoys. He is, therefore, averse to sudden changes of all kinds. He is naturally, and from motives of self-interest, a supporter of a strong peaceful government. He is averse to war, because war costs money and entails heavy taxation. The French *peasants* have gradually, within the last thirty years, been becoming more and more pacific, owing to the effect of the subdivision of property.

The people of several of the greatest French and German towns are still as warlike as ever. The war party and the revolutionary party in Germany are formed of the inhabitants of the great towns; in Switzerland, the people of the small provincial towns and of the rural districts are eminently pacific and conservative in their tendencies.

Mr. Kay, on whom the present writer feels safe in relying for these particulars, informs us that he was constantly told in Germany, prior to the outbreaks of 1848, that if political changes were ever effected, they would originate with the people of the larger towns, and not with the *peasantry*. Mr. Kay states that he remembers in particular a very intelligent man in Rhenish Russia, at Elberfeld, saying to him, "The peasantry are so adverse to political commotion, and so interested in public tranquillity, on account of their being the owners of the land, that they will never endeavour to effect any political changes, however much they may dislike the present political thraldom.* They feel that they are well and cheaply governed,

* The conscription, at any rate, is terrible thraldom, even if there is nothing else to be so designated.

and that they have no *social* advantage to gain by a change; that they have property which might be considerably injured by public riots, and that they might themselves lose some of that freedom of labour which they now enjoy."

Mr. Kay says he travelled with a banker of Berne, just after the invasion of Lucerne by the people of Argovie, and that he assured him that nothing was to be feared from the *peasants*. He informed him that only just before the *peasants* of the canton of Berne had sent a deputation to the Council of State of the canton, to tell them that if the Radicals of the city ventured to engage in any insurrection against government, or in any unconstitutional proceeding, they would instantly arm in defence of public order, and would assist the executive officers with their united strength.

Mr. Kay considers that a revolution like the French revolution of 1789, in Germany, Switzerland, or France, is now impossible.

"A great town may now and then rise in insurrection, and may indulge in the excitement of riot and street warfare, but anything like a bloody general revolution is quite impossible."

"What," asked Mr. Kay, "has induced the Governments of Russia, Saxony, Bavaria, etc., and indeed of all the German countries, to grant universal suffrage so willingly to their people? Simply this. That these Governments knew that the whole of the peasants were strongly conservative by instinct and disposition; that they were the steadiest of all the supporters of public order and of a firm government; that the people of the towns were the most democratic, and that to grant the suffrage to them and not to the peasants would be to put themselves in the hands of the Anarchists, and to deprive themselves of the powerful and certain support of the intelligent body of the peasant proprietors.

"Urged by these views, these Governments have not attempted to limit the number of the electors by adopting a property qualification, but have admitted the *whole* people to the electoral privileges. They could not have adopted a more conservative policy; for they have, by this means, enabled the peasants to swell the numbers of the Conservative party in the chambers, by sending thither representatives of their own feelings and principles."

There is room, however, for doubting whether to admit the whole people to electoral privileges would be a conservative policy in the sense in which Mr. Kay employs the term, in countries where great prizes tempt the cupidity of those in the humbler walks of life, particularly if there are vast territorial estates belonging to an aristocracy or a church which they may seek to plunder, as is specially the case in England, and has been the case in countries where such estates have been swept away. To admit an entire people to electoral privileges evidently can only be prudent when they are likely prudently to avail themselves of these privileges. And the probability of this depends on very many circumstances, for the most part varying in their nature in each instance. The German Governments Mr. Kay refers to knew, as he says, that the whole of the peasants were strongly conservative by instinct and disposition, and accordingly believed they could be relied on.

The fact is emphatically to be noted that conservative instincts on the part of peasants are above all other things opposed to Socialism,

and that they manifestly will, in the main, be developed side by side with the growth of democracy, whether that growth of democracy is in cities or in rural localities; conservative instincts on the part of persons of substance resident in towns are likewise, as in the case of peasants, developed side by side with the growth of democracy, as has been witnessed both in France and America; and, of course, wherever power increases day by day in the hands of the people, *that infers a growth of democracy, whether those who wield the power inhabit rural or urban districts.*

CHAPTER V.

Prince Bismarck and the Prince Consort on Parliamentary Government—Magnitude a Measure of Political Appreciation—Mass Meetings urged by Mr. Gladstone to drown the Voice of Parliament and take Foreign Policy under their control—Political Pre-eminence mostly infers Pre-eminence generally—Immediately rests with Political Organizations, ultimately with the Force of Public Opinion—The "Wire-Puller"—The "Caucus"—The "Phalanx"—Literary Action creates Opinion—Mr. W. E. Forster a "Professional Politician"—The "Machine"—Russell on Grey and Fox—Corruption previously to American War of Separation — Burke's Definition of Principles of True Politics—Mr. Trevelyan on Political Life—Duke of Argyle's Simile — Chatham, Burke, Rockingham, Fox, Grattan, Washington, Franklin, not the Stuff Delegates are made of.

AMONG ourselves parliamentary government has ceased to be characterized by its former efficiency. Prince Bismarck recently observed that its golden age was over in England; and not long before his decease, the late Prince Consort would seem to have entertained a suspicion that this might soon prove to be so, for he declared that it was

on its trial. This growing weakness in constitutional countries (there would be no difficulty in proving the fact from a large enumeration of instances) is the usual consequence of democratic progress, the envy inseparable from which ever tends to dwarf statesmanship and favour mediocrity. In a democratic State, where the people learn to manage their own affairs, there is more freedom and a better education (a sound education, in accordance with the prevalent ideas, being naturally prized in a well-established democracy) than if they were to devote themselves to carrying out grand policies, or than if, as a rule, their most influential public men were to try to emulate the two Pitts or Richelieu, and the people are not on this account the less prosperous. Much solid good can doubtless be brought about, as hitherto, under the parliamentary system, even should the gravest apprehensions now entertained be realized, and we may feel well assured that a democratic nation in which order is firmly rooted will invariably above all other things attach weight to the belief which can never fail to find favour in their eyes, that the happiness, enlightenment,

and morality of the people ought to be the chief objects aimed at by wise government. They may be led away by passion, or by the violence for the moment of distorted sentiment, but a democratic nation are very apt indeed to estimate correctly plain practical matters. Without looking further than to our knowledge of what has occurred on the European Continent and in the United States, every one must see that persons in comfortable circumstances and possessing a stake in the welfare of their native land are by no means prone to imagine that national happiness, enlightenment, and morality can be advanced by invasions of the rights of property, by setting aside the lessons to be gathered from history, or by encouraging national rivalries and armaments, which cost money and bring about warfare ; and war, it is to be borne in mind, when unjustified, is now felt by most civilized human beings to be the greatest of blunders and of crimes. Reputations and men of overshadowing pre-eminence may not improbably in special instances, notwithstanding any general tendency towards mediocrity, be associated with democratic leadership. They

often have been so associated, but such association will hardly again take place under our modern parliamentary system, which, under a democratic *régime*, more and more tends to dwarf both reputations and men.

Magnitude daily becomes more and more a measure of political appreciation, especially on the western side of the Atlantic, and possibly in times to come statesmen may be able to give effect to patriotic effort directed towards advancing the happiness, enlightenment, and morality of large portions of mankind, equally as at any previous epoch ; partly, perhaps, by reason of agencies as yet undreamt of, such as new political organizations or alliances, which are certain to assume shape and character and force according to the exigencies of the times, and partly as the result of the novel intellectual and material resources at their command. The abolition of slavery in the United States presents an example of what may be done by democratic leaders, but never could have been said to be in any considerable degree due to anything akin to action carried on under what is spoken of as the parliamentary system. Franklin, Grattan, and

O'Connell each in his day used democratic strength for accomplishing vast projects, and the attainment of none of these was principally brought about by any line of conduct pursued in Parliament or in any representative assembly. The press in America, and the Volunteer and Catholic Associations in Ireland, in these cases mainly contributed to determine the final issues arrived at. Democracy, we should bear in mind, when endeavouring to estimate it aright, while it takes counsel for the well-being of the people, and with this view seeks to secure national happiness, enlightenment, and morality, has not invariably circumscribed its aspirations even within those wide limits ; and though democracy, as far as we can judge, is commonly unfavourable to the prospects of individuals reaching the highest degrees of eminence, democratic energy, in the future as in the past, may on particular occasions, and probably under circumstances to some extent unprecedented in their nature, be associated with distinguished achievement.

In the United Kingdom, as likewise in our self-governing colonies still attached to the British crown, and in the United States, the force of

public opinion ultimately inspires, directs, and in all respects governs. It quickly makes its impress apparent in the conduct of all departments. The Parliament of 1874 yielded an obedience to Lord Beaconsfield, not usually accorded to a British Minister, and mass meetings were urged by his rival, Mr. Gladstone, to drown its voice, and take foreign policy under their control. The machinery set in motion was successful; it prevented Lord Beaconsfield from fully giving effect to his views relating to Eastern affairs. Parliament has thenceforward commanded less reverence, and similar machinery has since, with similar results, been employed for the accomplishment of other objects, aided and methodized by experience acquired in America, where the energy of politicians had been more occupied than at home in carrying out political organization as an accompaniment of democratic progress.

Political pre-eminence, for the most part, infers pre-eminence generally. The success of any one who has to do with bringing to a successful issue, through the intervention of some legislative assembly, any line of policy honoured

by his fellow-citizens is a very great and a very real thing, and the honour associated in men's minds with the policy is extended to himself. While honour of this kind was rendered to those who worthily represented their constituents, it was in this country, and indeed throughout far wider regions, recognized as a solid and one of the highest objects of ambition ; but from the moment when, more or less, representatives have been superseded by delegates, honour of this description has unquestionably been less sought after.

The habits of obstructing business, of late so notably developed in some parliamentary bodies, assuredly have not conduced to any increase of the respect meted out to them, very much, of course, because of the diminution thence resulting in capacity for the discharge of duty ; but in the United Kingdom, at all events, the chief cause why Parliament has, during recent years, commanded less reverence than formerly, lies in the fact that its political pre-eminence is largely a thing of the past. Political pre-eminence immediately rests with the political organizations which practically direct the House of Commons, and ultimately with the force of public opinion.

Literary action every day more and more creates public opinion, and its force can be accurately measured, for it consists in the power of the ideas entertained to move mankind, and this is ever, from the nature of things, made manifest by events. On both sides of the Atlantic, the literary action, which in the main forms opinion throughout the ranks of the public at large, while it principally emanates from the application to everyday topics of the highest ability, from which it takes its best and most prevalent type, is brought home by periodical publications and the weekly and daily press to all classes. The merit of these periodical publications and of the weekly and daily press is, indeed, very varying; and it is to be observed that, eminent as is the ability often displayed, it is the outcome of this literary action as a whole, far more than that of individual exertions, which deserves attention, as exhibiting before the world the effects of the invention of printing—so far as they have up to the present moment been unfolded—effects already emphatically visible in the moulding of the national mind among all communities of civilized men.

Doubtless it is important that political power should only be in the hands of those who will use it well, and this is pretty nearly equivalent to saying that it should only be in the hands of those who have education such as to qualify them to do so ; but there obviously is more likelihood that general public opinion will arrive at trustworthy conclusions than that any one class of voters will, if want of education or any other circumstance renders them unreliable. Whatever may be the probability that particular classes will judge impartially where prejudice is excited, there is ground for hope that public opinion will, in the main, suffice to guide aright those with whom political power may be lodged, in almost any conceivable case, in English-speaking communities. They have a fair start, and we are authorized to hope that freemen, who are in a position to appreciate the lessons in good sense and public virtue handed down by the annals of their race, will never descend to the abasement inferred by the uncontrolled ascendency of corrupt influences. The power of money may occasionally, as well as that of literature, originate political action, and with perfect

propriety. The shareholders in a railroad corporation, for example, large or small, may most legitimately, by all suitable means, endeavour to safeguard their own interests, precisely as landowners, large or small, always take care to do so. This is quite a different matter from the exercise by any one of power over a body outside which he is placed.

It is open to the leading public men of the future, as one of the greatest triumphs of political genius, so to mould the public opinion of our great democracies as to ward off the ills to be apprehended from an undue and extreme development of socialistic tenets; such a development, that is to say, as would threaten civilization, though in minor measure trial has proved that, whether wise or unwise, there is nothing very desperate about them; but meanwhile, whatever is to be said of those possessed of conspicuous literary talent who devote it to public affairs, the honour formerly accorded to successfully and without stint carrying out useful lines of public policy is now, for the most part, frittered away between the wire-puller and the delegate, and general sentiment places neither as high as the statesmen of former days.

Mr. Gladstone's plan of using public meetings for the purpose of imposing a policy on government was before long turned against himself on a question regarding the Suez Canal; and similar plans, varied a good deal both in character and in name (the name "Caucus" being chiefly associated with liberal proceedings), each day find greater favour with persons of almost all parties.

True, the public man of the future may include in his course of proceeding action in political organizations, such as the "Caucus" or the "Phalanx" (a rather favourite term with some who adopt Conservatism as a party cry), and also action in parliamentary assemblies, as his predecessors have done in most free countries; but *unless he himself originates the movement of the public mind, he can only be in the position of being bound to execute its behests, conveyed probably by the wire-puller, unless, indeed, he is a wire-puller himself.* The facts before our eyes have rendered it clear that whatever creates and shapes public opinion at the present day confers political pre-eminence, while the events recorded in modern history, even to a greater extent

than those of ancient times, have amply demonstrated that, as before stated, political pre-eminence infers pre-eminence generally. It does so alike in the cases of nations and of individuals. In the case of the former, it is only another name for superiority; and where individuals are concerned, common sense tells us that the power conferring it, whether that of a monarch, a multitude, or a legislative assembly, can confer many of the things most valued, including wealth, as well as the attainment of social and political aims. Ambition, as a passion, assumes various forms; the desire for its gratification, more than most desires, leads great minds astray. They are apt to feel that its gratification is to them everything, *while the object of ambition is itself comparatively nothing.* Hume inclined to hold—we may perhaps say seems to have been pretty well persuaded—that a young lady at her first ball will frequently experience as vivid delight as an orator on hearing the plaudits called forth by his most admired exhibition of eloquence. In each instance the passion of ambition is gratified. The parallelism is complete, and could not be more

clearly illustrated by examples sought out from the biographies of the most celebrated of those who have been distinguished in political action.

It is not amiss to examine a little both the machinery and the motives instrumental in bringing about the political action of our own day, and of the democratic times seen by all to be near at hand. But whatever machinery or motives appear likely to be the most potent, we must ever recollect that the main causes of the events of any age commonly are only in a secondary degree affected by isolated effort of any description whatsoever.

Mr. W. E. Forster is reported to have said to a gathering of young men at Aberdeen, "I am a professional politician, and it is probable some of those who hear me will devote themselves to the same pursuit." Whatever may be thought of the politician class in the United States, Mr. Forster, at any rate, brings the politician class straight to the front, in declaring that he belongs to it. In identifying himself with it, all will admit he expresses himself with a candour and an absence of circumlocution becoming to a public man of the first rank, and even if

amused at the introduction among ourselves of the phrase "professional politician," every one will further admit that he "nothing extenuates, nor sets down aught in malice." Possibly he might seek to make some distinction between the politician class in England and America, but whatever difference may be found in details, the public every day comes more and more to the conclusion that they are essentially similar in nature.

The doctrine has been maintained that in the United States the method of appointment to civil office is inconsistent with civil service reform—that it is so faulty as to admit of no amendment, but must be wholly set aside. It is reproachfully termed "the machine."* Whatever its merits, on the working of "the machine" elections in the United States are supposed in ordinary times principally to depend. The number of the holders of civil office, and of those aspiring to civil office, is immense. Of postmasterships alone there are many thousands, and these change with changes of Government. The larger influences of literature, of capital

* *North American Review*, January, 1882, p. 40.

when making its weight felt throughout extensive districts and classes of the population, and occasionally of political motives of a general nature (such as was a desire to effect slave emancipation, or to assert the rights of individual States in curtailment of the powers claimed by some for the commonwealth as a whole, or *vice versâ*), avail themselves of the working of "the machine;" and the persons representing these influences are obviously with some justice, and not necessarily with any idea of giving offence, since the expression only describes what they really do, spoken of as pulling the wires which direct its movements.

Lord Russell considered that the names of Grey and Fox might well be used to incite public men to look to the welfare of their country as the object of all their exertions.* No one could better judge.

* Numerous other names among ourselves might also be thus used, as likewise most of the greatest names connected with the establishment of the independence of the United States, and those of many who have subsequently attained the highest distinction on the western side of the Atlantic. But the welfare of their country is not, of necessity, the sole object with worthy men in public life; *e.g.* it cannot be so with lawyers, who must think of their profession.

There is some advantage in estimating as accurately as we can the condition of things as regards the politician class on both sides of the Atlantic. Grey and Fox were not delegates, were not initiated in the mysteries of the Caucus and the Phalanx, and Wire-pullers were not in their days recognized as persons of importance. The underlying motives of much of the action alluded to in the *North American Review* do not appear from anything stated as to the working of "the machine." They lie deeper. So do the principles—the grounds of action—on which reform can be brought about, if any such there are ; and probably any which prove potent in America would prove potent in British communities elsewhere. So far as depends on the political ascendency of sound sense and public virtue, we may hope such principles will never be deficient in either force or vitality ; but the most momentous question practically is how to give them effect.

Previously to the revolt of the American colonies, corruption even more prevailing at home than in the colonies had seriously impaired the well-being of the British Empire ;

it soon, literally, in degree destroyed the British Empire, to the extent of causing it to cease to exist throughout those portions of America where it was put an end to on the Liberal principles of William III. being carried out by Washington, Franklin, and their associates. That their principles—their grounds of action—were identical, was a great truth fully recognized by Fox.

In the very midst of the reign of corruption in Great Britain, in 1761, the creed of the leading Liberals was embodied in one sentence by Burke, "The principles of true politics are those of morality enlarged, and I neither now do, nor ever will, admit of any other."

Mr. Trevelyan considers that in those days the prizes within the parliamentary arena were too tempting—the pressure from without, under a system of representation nothing better than illusory, was too fitful and feeble—for statesmen to find their interest in turning from the chase after incomes and ribands to the pursuit of undertakings which might promote the welfare of the people. "Parties," said Lord Mansfield, in 1767, "aim only at places, and seem regard-

less of measures." "The cure," wrote George Grenville, "must come from a serious conviction and right measures, instead of annual struggles for places and pensions." Unfaithful to the nation when in office, politicians no longer pretended to be true to each other in opposition. Amidst the turmoil of selfish ambitions and rival cupidities which were seething around him, a man did not venture to rely on others, and soon ceased to merit that others should rely on him.*

Mr. Trevelyan is himself one of the most prominent of those who, through the instrumentality of literature, has proved that a grasp of principles, endued with innate force in connexion with parliamentary action, can do much towards fashioning public sentiment. Like his eminent uncle, Lord Macaulay, he would appear far to prefer literary, whether political or non-political, pursuits to those of party politics, provided these latter are made to hinge on parliamentary life. His must be accepted as an unexceptionable testimony as to how far they are, if unaccompanied by further avocations, worthy to engross the attention of a man possessing liberty

* Trevelyan's "Fox," p. 112.

of choice. Referring to a passage in an essay of Bacon's, "Certainly great persons had need to borrow other men's opinions to think themselves happy," Mr. Trevelyan observes, "So said a famous student who, to his cost, was likewise a Minister of State; and the truth of the saying will hardly be questioned by a modern servant of the Crown who knows what it is to sacrifice health and sleep, books, art, field-sports and travel, who during four days in the week enjoys no social relaxation beyond the whispered hope of a 'count out' exchanged with an overworked colleague, and who looks for no material recompense over and above a precarious income, half of which is spent upon perfunctory festivities that consume the few poor evenings which the House of Commons spares, and the other half barely replaces the capital that has been lavished on the elections of a lifetime. But those received commonplaces about the sweets of office, which are little better than bitter irony when applied to the councillors of Queen Victoria, meant a great deal in the ears of a statesman who had the privilege of serving her grandfather." *

* Trevelyan's "Fox," p. 115.

In estimating the future working of democratic influences with reference to socialistic tenets, *we must have regard to the circumstances affecting not only the people, but also their leaders*, who are pretty much what circumstances make them. Enough, it is hoped, has been brought before the reader to justify conclusions as to the consequences to be anticipated from their working as respects these tenets. *Each day more and more exhibits the force of public opinion acting as the mainspring of political movement*, and enables the world to realize the fact that public men, so far as action in legislative assemblies is concerned (to use a simile probably destined to immortality, and of late much in vogue, employed by the Duke of Argyle), sometimes, even if individually "beautiful creatures," worthy of all admiration, like jelly-fish, have no ability to resist the current by any strength or firmness of their own. If they possess strength or firmness, it is chiefly or entirely derived from the power, interest, or organization, whatever it may be, which delegates them to the legislative assembly. This is fully to be comprehended only on taking a view of the position of public

men and of their objects of ambition, on which things a good deal of light is thrown by Mr. Trevelyan.

All feel with the Roman poet, that the man who is just and tenacious of purpose will not be shaken in his solid resolves by the ardour of citizens clamouring for what is base and bad, nor yet by the frown of the monarch urging his behests. Such a man as was contemplated by Horace could hardly be of the stuff delegates are made of. Chatham was not, who neither flattered the popular impulses excited against America nor the arbitrary prejudice of George III.; nor was Burke, Rockingham, Fox, Grattan, Washington, Franklin, or any one of the American patriots of the highest mark who established the independence of the United States, all of whom, in their several spheres on the opposite sides of the Atlantic, and not always in connection with the proceedings of any legislative assembly, in essentials exhibited the same type of character.

There is no need to enter into any further enumeration of individuals who have served their country wisely and well, or further to

dwell on the novel modes of political action which have arisen during recent years. Enough has been here adduced to demonstrate by very numerous instances that, in times not far remote, *energy, when adequately supported by influences exerting their own proper force, and not merely dependent on political manipulation,* has been able to accomplish aims deserving of conspicuous appreciation alike from contemporaries and from posterity. The measure of approval accorded will, in most instances, very much be determined by the nature of the means employed in attaining those aims.

CHAPTER VI.

Democracy Conservative or Revolutionary, according to Circumstances—Secret Societies—Prospects of Civilization—Tendencies of Democratic Legislation—Athenian and Roman Democracies, and Democracies in France and the United States — Socialism opposed to Individualism in the Case of Corporations as of Individuals—Democracy is capable of development along with Monarchical, Aristocratic, and Republican Forms of Government—Democracy may co-exist with Monarchy, Aristocracy, or Plutocracy — Democracy competent to counteract Socialistic Tenets—Lord Elgin—Public Men of the Future—Sir William Blackstone and the British Constitution.

DEMOCRACY, employing the word in its primitive acceptation as denoting the power of the people, is ever Conservative, when the people enjoy legally established rights, franchises, and property. When they do not enjoy these it is revolutionary, and tends to overturn the institutions and the individuals supposed to hinder its development. The German Governments prior to 1848 were thought to do so,

and democracy pretty generally overcame them, but found its check in various opposing forces. The legally established rights, franchises, and property now enjoyed by vast masses of the population render, we may safely conclude, any recurrence of the events of 1848 quite out of the question, whatever other forms revolution may assume; and socialist movements are every day more and more brought into collision with these established rights, franchises, and property, and therefore with democracy. That socialist movements at present most arise in towns, at this moment the principal centres of democratic influence, perhaps tends to render this collision all the sharper, but is not, apparently, a matter of moment.

The effect of secret societies in fostering and giving shape to local and national discontent is, unquestionably, often important; and, on the other hand, secret societies are by no means rarely called into existence by the prevalence of discontent. Action and reaction in this case are mutual, and cannot be set aside in estimating the causes of popular movements; but they in no wise interfere with the general results arising

from the ingrained proclivities of each portion of the population.

According to Mr. Kay, the Government of Louis Philippe had completely estranged the affections of the small landed proprietors throughout France. In the hour of necessity, therefore, although they did not rise against the Government, they would not rise in its defence, and consequently it fell. The shopkeepers of Paris, too, refused to fight for it. Since the Revolution, however, which brought about the fall of Louis Philippe, the peasant proprietors have uniformly shown themselves the friends of order. In the insurrection of June, 1848, they flocked to Paris by thousands, and shed their blood in defence of Cavaignac, and for the sake of public tranquillity.

Experience has demonstrated, as in remarkable instances already alluded to, that the most lasting institutions are those associated with a disposition in the national mind to look back, in order to derive benefit from the teachings of the past, rather than to make trials in the way of change from a love of new things. A balanced system would seem to be seldom

fitted permanently to endure, as was apparently suspected of old by the few great men who had a sort of vision that a mixed system, somewhat resembling what we are familiar with as the British constitution, might best fulfil the purposes of government. Experience has further demonstrated that while *socialistic tenets, when extensively developed, fatally tend to the disintegration and ruin of a nation, they can in modern times be largely and, for most practical purposes, adequately restrained by the control of supreme courts, like those of the United States and of Canada, aided by the conservative strength of property, especially if belonging to small landowners.* But the efficiency of all such action, whether on the part of courts or of proprietors, must, from the nature of the case, depend on the presence and preponderating influence of public virtue. If men have not the courage of their opinions, and sufficient firmness of principle and of purpose to cause them to guide their conduct by their convictions, those convictions are of all the less worth.

Each day, in civilized countries, the action of the State more and more is the expression of

public opinion. Action, whether of the State or of the individual, is determined by opinion, for this, while often itself derived as well from previous mental operations as from the aspect of facts, sets in motion the force of mind, and ultimately, as a consequence, that of muscle. Opinion is formed by the causes which create and mould it; and the action, accordingly, of the State as of the individual, is brought about as the result of those causes. Thus, the probabilities of the future relating to Socialism, as affected by the courses of public action referred to, can be estimated with a good deal of accuracy.

In conjunction with what has been forcibly urged by Mr. Hodgkin, as already stated, with regard to the prospects having to do with the great democracies of the twentieth century, we should do well to bear in our recollection that corruption is opposed to preservation, and that the derivation of the words denotes that corruption is closely allied with destruction. It is diametrically the opposite of that manly virtue (consisting, according to the classical ideas of Greece and Rome, of the worthy attributes of

man) which, above all other things, cultivates the sense of duty. More than in any other form of polity is manly virtue indispensable in a democratic one to the well-being of the people; for in proportion to the fulness of democratic power is freedom from external restraint, and as a consequence more than in any other form of polity are tendencies towards corruption fatal.

In every age inordinate luxury has frequently accompanied corruption, has caused it, and been caused by it. Inordinate self-seeking and self-indulgence are felt by all rightly judging individuals to be utterly at variance with the inspirations of manly virtue and with the habits created and shaped by those inspirations. "By necessaries I understand," says Adam Smith, "not only the commodities which are essentially necessary for the support of life, but whatever the custom of the country renders it indecent for creditable people even of the lowest class to be without. All other things I call luxuries." Senior declares that a carriage is a decency to a woman of fashion, a necessary to a physician, and a luxury to a tradesman; and "Le superflu chose tres necessaire" is a phrase of Voltaire,

which, as well as Senior's definition, may be accepted as showing that the commodities of life are to be judged of as to the degree in which they are luxurious and superfluous, by reference to the station and circumstances of those possessing them. The accounts of the extravagant luxury of many nations often at first strike us as incomprehensible, chiefly by reason of the strange forms it seems to assume when measured by the ideas of persons to whom any particular type of it is unfamiliar. Luxury reached, doubtless, as high a pitch in Rome of old as it ever has done anywhere, and we may safely conclude that the luxury of New York, Paris, and London cannot easily be surpassed. In each instance the type varies, but we know for certain that, whatever be its amount in modern times, it differs in character from anything witnessed in Nineveh, Babylon, or ancient Rome, being modified by the prevalence of Christian morals among the more cultivated races of mankind, by their prevalence where the Christian faith is professedly accepted by the bulk of the population as the guide of conduct, and furthermore by their influence throughout that

yet wider sphere, where the humanizing effects of that faith are principally manifested as accompaniments of the outcomes of conquest, commerce, and intellectual advancement.

We need dwell no further on the connection between inordinate luxury and corruption than to observe that fatal as this connection proved to be in the democracies of antiquity, whether republican or imperial in their form, overcoming as it did public honesty, simplicity of habits, and singleness of purpose, there is no reason whatever to suppose it will not be equally fatal in our vast and wealthy modern democracies, unless counteracted by virtue, both public and private, based on and in alliance with patriotic sentiment and reliable principles of action.

Well, therefore, does Mr. Hodgkin ask with reference to the great democracies of the twentieth century, "*With a higher sense of duty than has been shown by some of the governing classes which have preceded them, will they refrain from jobbing the commonwealth? Warned by the experience of Rome, will they shrink from reproducing, directly or indirectly, the political heresy of Caius Gracchus, that he who votes in*

the forum must be fed by the State?" In other words, are the socialist dogmas once adopted in Rome to be adapted or repudiated? On what is done about this will hinge the fortunes of the most advanced and most progressive portions of the human race, including the entire fraternity of English-speaking peoples. Augmented experience, more effective education, and enlarged intelligence must unquestionably render the great democracies of the twentieth century from day to day increasingly alive to the mischiefs to be apprehended from socialistic excess, and to the necessity, in the interests of the people, for maintaining the rights of property.

Experience justifies us in assuming that when public order is overthrown by force, unbridled passion is pretty certain to manifest itself in violent excess, and that reaction will thus be brought about. Any such excess, at the present day, will usually, in Europe and many other parts of the world, be of a socialist type, and when anarchy supervenes, anarchy will lead to despotism. To avert such eventualities is a worthy aim of statesmanship, and while provid-

ing the safeguard of a widely spread and useful education, at the same time by all suitable means to strengthen the conservative forces of the commonwealth (employing the word "conservative" in a large sense) ought to be the desire of those most competent to derive benefit from the lessons of history.

Nothing can be better ascertained than that, as an effect of the insecurity of property and consequent paralysis of industry, wage-earners who live by manual toil are the first to suffer, as also that they are those who suffer most, and most severely, and most helplessly and hopelessly, all which facts a widely spread and useful education enables them perfectly to comprehend; that is to say, provided the education is to the extent now prevailing in some countries, which confers a capacity to comprehend whatever affects public interests, according to received standards of opinion, as in Canada and the United States, without speaking of any other proficiency. Neither in Canada nor in the United States are wage-earners likely to attach any undue importance to the words "liberty," "equality," and "fraternity," nor to em-

brace tenets subversive of the established order of things. Indeed, when a railroad corporation in the United States is anxious to disparage attempts made in the interests of the public to control its operations, its advocates frequently incline to impute communist ideas to their opponents, meaning thereby, that to interfere with the property of a railroad corporation is an application of doctrines favouring common or collective, as distinguished from individual, ownership, because the property of the company, or of the persons composing it, is sought to be injured, they would assert, for the advantage of the entire community. An imputation of Socialism or Communism, when sustained, would probably, in either Canada or the United States, prove fatal to any proposal dependent for success on public opinion.

Wage-earners form the most influential class in most democratic nations, and their strong inclination to consult what they imagine to be their own interest is manifested by their trades-union proceedings, and their strenuous support of protection to native industries. There is no necessity to consider whether they judge cor-

rectly; what is important to note is, that these lines of action find favour in their eyes, and that they are usually prepared to act just as vigorously when the welfare of the nation to which they belong is concerned as when questions bearing on class discussions present themselves. All classes in all nations will act conformably with those varying influences which at the moment chiefly affect them, and the best security that these influences shall be of a wholesome nature is to be found in the enlightenment flowing from practically beneficial instruction. This alone can render it possible for masses of persons to arrive at safe conclusions regarding the affairs either of the classes of which they are members or of the nation at large. The views entertained by masses are apt to gravitate towards some central point, and to a certain extent to be correct, even independently of those masses possessing, as is fairly to be presumed, an average amount of intelligence. Extravagances and crotchets are set aside in the approach to this central point, while at the same time the favourite doctrine, whatever it is, towards which as towards a central point views

generally tend, is intensified by the effect produced by mind on mind; in England, very much through means of the tall-talk of the ale-house, and perhaps of temperance hotels, and mechanics' institutes and clubs of various kinds, in nearly equal measure. In every country similar effects manifest themselves, wherever persons principally congregate. In each instance it will be found to be a remarkable and prevalent fact, that *public sentiments, as they grow in intensity, feed on themselves.* Washington would appear to have habitually borne this in mind, and to have been deeply impressed with a conviction that the existence throughout extensive districts of distinctive class or local interests largely shapes opinion.

The multitude, when they have embraced conclusions maturely formed, seldom are induced by mere argument to deem them unfounded, especially if they are held, truly or untruly, to have been tested by a fair trial. When thus tested, those cherishing them enjoy the benefit to be derived from the most effective of all educations, that of circumstances; *experientia docet.* It would be difficult to persuade Canadian

manufacturers, who consider they have been raised from extreme depression to prosperity by a protective system, that this system had been all along merely characterized by folly; and it would be equally difficult to convince those of the United States that the legislation for a long series of years which, they feel, has created the industries in which they are engaged, had been from its commencement a stupid error. We need not discuss the merits of protection; the thing to be thought of is, that the manufacturers of Canada and the United States can scarcely be expected, in the absence of new facts, to be induced by mere argument to give up the courses of policy which have met their approval, and from which they believe they have derived advantage.

In Europe, nations live in dread of each other, and equally in dread of movements amongst themselves, and in terror have equipped more potent armaments than any ever before known. The cruel strain induced by compulsory service on those who win their livelihood by industry is not easily to be imagined by those to whom it is not familiar, and even by those to whom it is

familiar can only be realized by looking at facts. Rulers make all things bend to the keeping up of warlike preparations. Taxation increases, while the ability to bear it diminishes. Life becomes hard to those who live by labour, and discontent arises, and is wrought up to a climax in individual cases by the action of mind on mind, as also by the operation of secret societies. A humane treatment of the poor may accomplish much in preventing the adoption of wild resolves, and where destitution is cared for, things will work all the more smoothly. Fanaticism, of course, is inconsistent with sound reason, but sound reason has small chance of influencing the masses of any people when they are without hope and feel they have nothing to lose. A weak creature, like a cat, will turn in desperation, but not till driven against a wall; and where misery and despair are intense, socialist excess is usually to be looked for in Europe. The unrelieved distress of masses causes fanaticism, and fanaticism causes crime.

If the hardships of life are bitter, if the evils originating in grief, poverty, illness, and pain are greater than can be borne with fortitude and

resignation by the bulk of mankind, it is to be remembered that a desire to alleviate them is, with most persons, an attribute of the heart. This may frequently best express itself in voluntary acts. It never can, with any propriety, permanently do so through means of legislation alone. When an act is performed as a matter of legal obligation, it is not, so far, performed as a matter of benevolence. Few dangers are at this moment more menacing than those growing out of the habit of attaching undue weight to sentimental appeals in favour of sentimental legislation. Nations, like individuals, should be just before they are generous; well-known truths, sanctioned by universal experience, more especially as to the necessity for maintaining the rights of property, should be respected as being things not to be tampered with. The disastrous consequences of any tampering with them will, for the most part, quickly enough affect the welfare of the entire community, and very particularly, and in the first instance, the welfare of those who have to support themselves without aid from capital previously amassed.

Charity is twice blest; it is blest in its effects

on those who give and on those who receive, in cultivating kindly sentiment. But the bestowal of bounty in any shape by a branch of the civil administration produces no such benefit. It cannot, from the nature of things, be in accordance with the apostolic teaching, "If any man will not work, neither shall he eat," and though, in degree, a departure from the strictness of this rule is allowable, and effects practical good, it is scarcely conceivable that such departures should not pretty generally interfere with the rights of industry, as well as with the rights of property, as everything must do which prevents their finding their proper level. To enable paupers through means of assistance meted out by Poor Law Guardians to compete with independent workmen (as was long done under the English Poor Law), and thus to saddle the support of paupers on ratepayers, interferes alike with the rights of industry and the rights of property.

The bestowing of poor-law relief, constituting as it does a sort of insurance against tumultuous violence which might threaten property, may produce benefit as inducing security ; yet still is the establishment more or

less extensively of a common and collective ownership of a right to this relief—an ownership totally differing in character from several or individual ownership. All such bestowing of relief, however it may be sought to be justified as inducing security, is opposed to the dictates of what has hitherto been recognized as economic science; that is to say (so far as, independently of adventitious circumstances, it alone is concerned), it is opposed to the dictates of truth, since science is the knowledge of truth. Knowledge and science are in effect convertible terms.

If the whole of the means of any one were taken by public authority and put into a common purse or fund, this, according to the literal and ancient meaning of the phrase, would be confiscation; and in degree it is quite as truly confiscation to take a portion and put it into a common purse or fund for the relief of poverty. When a house is accidentally burnt, its value is lost, unless the house has been insured; and if it has been insured, the premium on the fire policy is lost; but there can be no difficulty in coming to the conclusion that, though there will be loss in both cases, great

evils can be avoided alike by maintaining a system of poor-law relief, and by paying to keep up a fire policy. The part of prudence is to be wise in time. In England, where poor-law relief is presumed in legal theory to make loss of life from starvation impossible, those depending on unskilled manual labour for the most part regard the provision secured to them in this shape as a safeguard against want in illness and old age, and incline to dwell on their title to it, and on other legal rights, far more than on notions about liberty, equality, and fraternity, and the innate rights of man, or on subversive projects of any description whatsoever.

Mr. Winn Knight, M.P. for West Worcestershire, at one time secretary to the Poor Law Board, speaks in a paper of comparatively recent date of the true cause of the Chartist risings of 1837, 1838, 1839, as being a struggle to stop outdoor relief, long persisted in by the early Poor Law Commissioners of Somerset House. Than Mr. Winn Knight no higher authority on this subject can be named, and what he states must be accepted as proving, by a most painful demonstration, the strength of the influence

exerted by the poor-law system on the indigent classes affected by it. The experience gained through means of these outbreaks enables us, in some degree, to estimate its extent.

In this country, party conflict has fortunately not obscured the perception amongst any order of persons of the duty appertaining to all, to co-operate to the utmost of their ability in promoting the welfare of their native land; and the philanthropic efforts to elevate the needy and depressed, which have of late formed so large a part of our public action, are often, doubtless, somewhat socialist in their aspect, so far as they tend to confer this world's goods on those who have them not. The character of these efforts may certainly bear the socialist stamp as distinctly as does our system of poor-law relief; but this constitutes no reason why they ought to be condemned, provided that, without taking this into account, they are justified by their merits and by circumstances. To elevate those classes on whom fortune has not smiled, to present, so far as practicable, opportunities to all for helping themselves, and to lessen the ills which press on large portions of our population,

are objects of policy second to no others in importance, and are ends worthy to be sought after by each individual who appreciates their magnitude.

Among recent writers, no one more than M. Taine is entitled to speak with authority of things in France According to M. Taine, "Quels que soient les grands noms, liberté, egalité, fraternité, dont la Revolution se décore, elle est par essence, *une translation de la propriété;* en cela consiste son support intime, sa force permanente, son moteur premier et son sens historique." *

* Socialistic legislation already sanctioned by Parliament, cannot fail to be moulded and affected in all sorts of ways by a centralized and graduated Bureaucracy, and thus to aid in building up what is with strictest propriety to be designated as "State Socialism" (if any system of the sort ever is built up in this country), such as seems to have found favour with Prince Bismarck and other Ministers of State at various times. But whether such legislation consists in giving poor-law relief, in giving food along with elementary education, in providing houses for the populations at the public expense, in the compulsory cultivation of land, or in fifty other things which might be named, the transfer of property or of money's worth is as much its essence as it was, according to M. Taine, the essence of "La Revolution" in France. The compulsory of cultivation of land, we may presume, would cause loss of money, else it need not be compulsory.

Imperialism, or the giving effect to principles of imperial policy, ever has been associated with military force and with the subordination of mankind to that force—it was so in the days of the Roman prætorian guards ; it is so now—and nothing is more remarkable in our own day than the intolerable pressure induced by imperial armaments. This pressure is, without the least exaggeration, *intolerable;* it cannot be endured, and will assuredly, in some way or other, be brought to an end—perhaps by bankruptcy, perhaps by revolution, perhaps by war and mutual exhaustion.

That mere repression carried out by Imperialism can, in most instances, obliterate tendencies to socialistic excess seems improbable. Along with a widely spread and useful education, imperial power may indeed occasionally accomplish a good deal ; but inasmuch as, according to present appearances above all other things, the strain often induced by Imperialism gives rise to socialistic proclivities, the advantageous effects, under a form of polity fitly to be designated as Imperialism, of a widely spread and useful education would, in most cases, too possibly be

minimized. To be largely beneficial in its political consequences, such an education must be accompanied by reform, wherever there is crying need for reform. To render the multitude in any such case, through means of instruction, increasingly appreciative of the evils brought about by those set over them, can scarcely conduce to contentment, as regards their national institutions; and at this moment the political evils weighing down the most numerous populations are generally considered chiefly to press on national resources and happiness, in those countries where Imperialism prevails.

As already observed, according to present appearances above all other things, the strain often induced by Imperialism gives rise to socialistic proclivities. The second French Empire, its system, and the pressure induced by it, had a great deal to do with moulding Socialism into its modern shape, and the Napoleonic dynasty perished in a convulsion which was socialistic in its nature. Before the German Emperor had long worn his imperial crown, he was confronted by the presence in his legislature of Socialists. And in Russia, the very palace of

the late emperor was undermined, and he himself, not long afterwards, was assassinated in the midst of his guards.

The reader's attention is again requested to the great fact, that the weightiest problem of the future, at least among English-speaking peoples, manifestly is, *how far democracy can afford safeguards against the mischiefs to be apprehended from an unrestrained development of Socialism?* On this depend the prospects of civilization; its scope, type, and influence. There is not, so far as we can judge, any other ground for rational hope than what is presented by the enlightened intelligence of mankind, acting through the instrumentality of the power of the people, that is to say, of democracy; any other ground of rational hope which may seemingly once have existed, exists no more.

It is to be remembered that a democratic nation in which order is firmly rooted will, above all other considerations, attach weight to the belief which can never fail to find favour in their eyes, that the happiness, enlightenment, and morality of the people ought to be the chief objects aimed at by wise government. All tending to benefit

the commonwealth will be favoured by democratic legislation, when based on sound principles and a worthy appreciation of facts; *decision as to what does so must obviously presuppose the consideration of every great question which presents itself, such consideration not being limited to debating the means of resisting attacks on property, e.g.* it will comprise questions about currency, protection, and foreign policy. That it cannot exclude these follows from the very nature of things. Should Socialism ever for a moment triumph, this would infer the triumph for the moment of those who obtained, without compensation, the possessions of parties theretofore enjoying them by virtue of legal sanctions; socialistic principles would have triumphed over individual rights and that individual energy to which civilization is mainly due, and over what had been accomplished in creating wealth and well-being. The Athenian and Roman democracies afforded full scope to individual character, and the having secured in France a *carrière overte au talent*, marks the kind of equality established by the democratic empire of the Napoleons. Democracy in the

United States primarily derived its strength from individual independence and the spirit of freedom ; and the experience more particularly of the municipal corporations of New England proves that an effective way to put down and provide against local grievances is to invigorate local popular bodies, so that each invasion of public rights shall be checked under the pressure of popular opinion, while this popular opinion, formed and kept alive by the working of local institutions, is available for shaping the counsels of the community at large. Socialism would uproot or nullify all these local bodies, so far as rendering property a matter of common ownership and bringing about a general change of laws could do so, and is as utterly opposed to individualism in the instance of each municipal corporation (say in New England) as to individualism in the case of each individual owner of property who might be spoiled by the application of its doctrines.

The nation or State in its collective and, we may say, corporate character is the one *sovereign* agent for material, moral, and social ameliorations; and democracy always has deemed the duty

of the State to extend to dealing with questions specially affecting the food, housing, health, culture, and amusement of wage-earners, sometimes adopting measures more or less socialist in their aspect, as was the devoting of public funds to providing the *panem et Circenses* in Rome of old, and as is the giving of poor-law relief in England; and it is pretty certain to continue to look on this as emphatically the duty of the State, perhaps caring equally for the bulk of the people generally. Wage-earners, in every nation under heaven, are producers of wealth, and in them naturally resides the amount of influence inferred by that fact. In any community, all possessed of power, to whatever class they belong, will quickly find themselves interfered with by whatever mars general prosperity.

No great gift of prophecy is needed to assure us that to the extent stated democratic tendencies will in future exhibit features similar to those which have characterized them throughout all time. Where affected by varying interests or forces, they may not always bring about results unvarying in their type. Most demo-

cracies, for example, have been well inclined to act in foreign affairs; but it would be rash to attempt to say how far this course is likely to be pursued, either in the British Islands or the United States. The United States Government sometimes has decided to do so, and sometimes to refrain, in compliance with Washington's strongly expressed sentiments in favour of maintaining neutrality.

Democracy—the power of the people, it is to be borne in mind—is capable of being developed alike under or side by side with monarchical, aristocratic, and republican forms of government. The principles, or grounds of action, growing out of or necessarily belonging to it are not invariably much affected by these forms. It frequently is an efficient element of vigour and activity in the State under all of them. When unconciliated and uncontrolled, if it becomes predominant, it usually overwhelms all opposition, but in numerous cases a *modus vivendi* (to employ a strictly appropriate phrase) is arrived at between it and other powers firmly rooted in national sentiments and habits; *e.g.* with aristocracy in England and in ancient

Rome; or with monarchy, as in England and China; or with plutocracy, as in England, ancient Rome, France, and the United States. The condition of things thus brought about may endure, as we know from experience, very long indeed.

The power of the people, *i.e.* democracy, will ever be competent in any nation fully to counteract subversive tenets so soon as the ills threatened by them are generally understood by the enlightened intelligence of that nation. These ills are more watchfully and persistently guarded against in the United States than perhaps anywhere else, though spasmodic exertions to repress outrage have been occasionally carried out on a more extensive scale when measures of precaution are not habitually taken in time. The habitual taking of such measures in the United States is very much owing to the presence of numerous small landowners, but also to the overwhelming weight of property, both real and personal, largely aggregated in immense masses. In useful political education, and accordingly in capacity to appreciate political facts and ten-

dencies, the population of the United States must be admitted to be in advance of most of their contemporaries ; and in seeking to form an opinion with regard to the future, as to how far democracy can afford safeguards against the mischiefs to be apprehended from an unrestrained development of Socialism, we may gather instruction from observing that it does afford such safeguards under our own eyes in America.

That its excesses can be curbed and kept within strict bounds has thus been shown to be possible ; the curbing and keeping of them within strict bounds in each case in future times must obviously depend on the circumstances of each case, and on the influences brought to bear on it.

In accordance with the figure of speech known as Metonomy, a population directed by the power of the people, *i.e.* by its own power—by democracy—is often spoken of as a democracy, and its principles of action, its modes of thought, and its social habits exhibit the democratic impress. The late Lord Elgin, a shrewd observer, from an entry in his journal under

date December 17, 1857, seems to have considered that the secret of governing a democracy, was at that time understood by men in power, and that it consisted in never interfering to check an evil until it had attained such proportions that all the world saw plainly the necessities of the case; that then any amount of moral or material power could easily be obtained, but that if interference were attempted at an earlier period, neither thanks nor assistance would be forthcoming. Evils are incident alike to democracy, aristocracy, monarchy, and all human institutions. Strange indeed will it be if the public men of the future, who are enlisted in the ranks of those anxious to maintain order, the rights of property, and the framework of civilization, do not plainly perceive that by waiting (provided they can do no better) till the evils certain to be brought about by a development of Socialism, if for the moment unrestrained, have attained such proportions that all the world can, as Lord Elgin says, see the necessities of the case, they will get any amount of moral or material force they require. They may not, of course, be great statesmen, even though they should occupy high

place, but presumably they are likely to be endued with ordinary discernment.

No one of the issues to be decided by the course of events is more important than this—as to whether, in times to come, throughout those lands where constitutional rights are rudimentally based on the maxims of Anglo-Saxon law, each person is to have secured to him the liberty so to use his own rights as not to hurt another; the importance of which issue will, at all future periods, be appreciated and all the more prized by every one who follows the teachings of Sir William Blackstone, such liberty being, according to him, the special outcome of the British Constitution. If in after ages it receives an ever-increasing sanction from new legislation developed in accordance with new needs, it will not by reason of its origin be any the less valued.

THE END.

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