

THE

NEMESIS OF POWER:

CAUSES AND FORMS OF REVOLUTION.

BY

JAMES AUGUSTUS ST. JOHN.

'Nemesis, the divinity who punishes evil deeds and rewards the good.'

AMMŒA 'US MARCELLINUS.

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TO

PERCY, BAYLE, AND HORACE ST. JOHN,

THREE OF MY SONS,

I DEDICATE

THIS BOOK.

P R E F A C E.

NEMESIS is the personification of Justice, and is, therefore, engaged equally in rewarding and in punishing. Her movements are slow, but irresistible; and She is ever at work in human society, ensuring ultimate triumph to the Good, and perdition to the Wicked. She may be regarded, therefore, as the inseparable attendant on Power, to uphold and encourage it when exercised for the benefit of mankind, to repress and chastise it when perverted to their injury or destruction.

A practical illustration of the results of unjust power has been given by my son Bayle, in his "PURPLE TINTS OF PARIS." Nemesis has often been at work in France; but her task is obviously not yet accomplished. When or how her next blow is to be struck is uncertain, but whenever it falls it will probably be decisive.

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THE

NEMESIS OF POWER:

FORMS AND CAUSES OF REVOLUTIONS.

PART THE FIRST.

THE state of society in nearly every part of the world, whether Christian or otherwise, convinces me that man has not yet reached that happy condition of life for which nature has fitted him. Towards this, nevertheless, he incessantly tends. The obstacles and impediments which stand in his way he seeks to put aside; and the efforts he makes for this purpose, when they fall short of their aim, are seditions, insurrections, rebellions; but when successful, are denominated revolutions, and regarded as national blessings. The authors of the former are stigmatised as criminals, and put to death; while history celebrates the latter as patriots, and covers their names with glory.

II.

It is and should be the aim of statesmen to preserve established institutions, partly by ameliorating them, partly by reconciling the people to their defects and imperfections. By acting thus, they at once consult their own ease and promote the interest of those classes on whose support they chiefly depend.

But there is an order of men, call them by what name we please,—philosophers or reformers,—who, standing beyond the vortices of public affairs, are able to contemplate tranquilly the progress of society, and to decide when certain institutions have become useless, and require in the interest of humanity to be subverted. Such have been the legislators of great epochs, the truest friends of the human race, who, delivering it from errors and prejudices, have brought into the great current of political affairs new elements of happiness. By acting upon their principles, and keeping in the path they have traced out, we may ensure to ourselves a greater amount of freedom, a nearer approach to social equality, better laws and institutions, a wiser distribution of property, and a greater development of the intellect; through which all beneficial changes are to be effected.

III.

Much is often said about the civilization of the age in which we live; and, certainly, we are not in many respects, behind our forefathers, or neglectful

of the advantages springing out of our position. But if we look over the whole continent of Europe, and the greater part of America—the only divisions of the world in which legislation and government can, in a scientific sense, be said to exist—we shall perceive nothing but depressed nationalities, populations reduced to degrading servitude, the many held in subjection by the few, absolute kings ruling by the bayonet, secret leagues of despots formed for mutual support; insignificant communities calling themselves free, but, instead of perfecting their own internal organization, engaged perpetually in sanguinary struggles; monarchies without power, republics without freedom; ignorance, anarchy, superstition, occasionally glossed over, and cemented by respectable names.

IV.

There is still, therefore, very much for revolution to accomplish; and the future history of the world during many centuries will be little but a record of civil contests. In England, because old abuses have in many cases been swept away, there are those who maintain that nothing remains to be done; but, in the words of Burke, it is not to be argued that we endure no grievance, because our grievances are not of the same sort with those under which we laboured formerly; not precisely those which we bore from the Tudors, or vindicated upon the Stuarts.

Hitherto the people have been restrained from the attempt to emancipate themselves by ignorance,

which has concealed from them their own strength, as well as the way of developing it usefully, and has held them in the chains of terror, by propagating false notions of duty, of birth, place, power, authority; of the relations of society, internal and external; and of whatever else can influence the happiness of nations.

But philosophy has at length introduced a little of that leaven which in time will leaven the whole mass. It is felt that the people all over Christendom have grown weary of oppression, and that their rulers are everywhere upheld by bayonets, which make but an uneasy throne. To conduct mankind to the turning point at which they may emerge from the domain of authority, and enter upon that of self-government, it is now only necessary to impregnate their minds with true ideas of justice and injustice, and to destroy those opinions which, operating like idolatry, withhold them from asserting their rights.

v.

To accomplish this is not the task of cold speculation, looking forth from perfumed and gilded chambers upon the great prospect of humanity. It must be the work of strong conviction, rooted in the belief that God cares equally for all, and that they best perform His will who break the chains of their brethren, and enable them to look up, and worship fearlessly in the face of the sun.

No doubt, the apostle of popular rights must reckon upon fierce opposition. The more he is in

earnest, the more will he be persecuted. Grandeur will behold in him an enemy; society at large will regard him as a disturber of public tranquillity; literature will repudiate his efforts as things scarcely reconcilable to her effeminate rules; and even the people themselves, deluded and misled by custom, will perhaps for awhile stand aloof from him, and refuse the expression of that sympathy which constitutes his best reward.

But liberty has always had its martyrs, and there is no reason why the race should ever cease. Religion herself recognises them, classes them secretly with her own, upholds and comforts them during their struggles, and breathes into their souls the unconquerable belief that what they accomplish for mankind is viewed with Divine approbation, and that the brightest of all Lights, though invisible to the world, will assuredly guide them through the multiplied difficulties and dangers of their career.

What can be effected by individual exertion is comparatively little. The word written, by whatever power it may be accompanied, moves in a limited circle, obstructed by the differences of language, by national prejudice, by the direct interference of Governments, by variations of creed, and by the natural indolence which restrains men from embracing novelties.

Still, what is put forth here in England may find its way by degrees to the Spaniard, to the Italian, to the German, to the Pole, to the Russian, and to the Greek. I mean, the ideas may penetrate,

divorced from the name of the author. But this should perhaps be regarded as an advantage. The true friend of the people does not even labour for Fame, but is content if perchance it falls to his lot to break or loosen the chains of any portion of his race. Liberty is too sacred a thing to be served for gain. Our offerings to her must be offerings of the heart, and we should covet no reward save the consciousness of having contributed to enlarge her empire.

VI.

One of the most effectual means of promoting political progress is to extirpate from the breasts of the people their traditional reverence for usurpers and despots. What is just and good they will continue to respect, as it is right they should; but the basis of government nearly throughout Christendom being neither goodness nor justice, the great lesson which mankind have to learn is, how they may most speedily deliver themselves from the moral and political theories which enslave them.

To aid them in the performance of this duty is my object in the present work. The greatest abilities have been engaged from time immemorial in riveting or polishing their chains; though truth and freedom have not always wanted worthy advocates. I rely greatly on the sacredness of the cause, and trust my earnestness and sincerity may be accepted in lieu of any other qualities which Providence may have denied me. If the popular mind be disenthralled, the road to liberty will be short and easy.

The People's Mission at the outset is to destroy what is bad. It must be for their leaders, while engaged in this process, to consider what is to be substituted for the vast apparatus of evil which they remove.

VII.

Revolutions are brought about in various ways: in the course of time, by gradual changes, when they bear the name of reformations; or suddenly, by conspiracy, insurrection, and armed conflict,—when they are given their natural designation.

Philosophers, commonly inclining to the form of dominion established in their country, have too frequently counselled innovations imperceptible from their minuteness, in imitation, as they say, of time, which, though the greatest of all innovators, brings about its changes by slow degrees. But this is timidity, sheltering itself under the disguise of prudence. The political life of a nation has necessarily its paroxysms, when the principle of Conservatism, after a protracted struggle, is overcome by the principle of change. The work of years is then crowded into a day; enthusiasm and passion are enlisted in the service of wisdom; sufferings are endured, life is sacrificed, but society emerges from the turmoil advanced whole centuries beyond the point at which it stood at the bursting forth of the tempest.

If these periodical visitations are distasteful to statesmen, the certain means of avoiding them are supplied by Reform. One of the chief elements of

political discord is the increase of the population—which is only another word for the growth of poverty, discontent, misery and crime. When there exist numerous classes unpossessed of property, the principle on which government usually proceeds is to exclude them from all participation in political rights. They are supposed to have no interest in the preservation of the state; for which reason, though allowed to exist on its territory, they are treated rather as slaves than citizens, and watched and guarded against with the most jealous apprehension. This policy may for a while succeed; but there comes at length a time when prudence counsels you to throw open the doors of the constitution, recognise the rights of the majority, and thus devolve upon the people themselves the task of combating their own misery. If they fail to find a remedy for it, they cannot reproach you. At present they say, it is not we who cover the land with distress, but the upper and middle classes, who alone co-operate in the making of the laws. Associate them with you in all political rights and privileges, and they themselves become responsible for whatever may happen.

VIII.

We may, as long as possible, postpone what we call the Evil Day; but come it will, however pertinaciously we may withstand its advent. At present we maintain the doctrine, that property is superior to humanity—the work of man, to the work of God;

because it is property that rules empires, property that has rights, property that possesses a monopoly of knowledge and honour, with whatever else is valued by man. Reverse this practice, let rights be invested in the citizens, and not in the wealth of the community; and we shall escape those evils which have overwhelmed so many other nations.

IX.

The ruling classes, who, in the season of calm make no account of the coming tempest; would think the honours of office and power not worth possessing, if compelled to govern solely for the good of the people. The patricians of Rome, inflated by rank and distinction, and elevated by education above all around them, treated with scorn the claims of the plebeians to exercise some influence over the management of their own affairs; and the nobles of modern Europe, their equals in pride, however inferior in merit, aim in every state at the same exclusive domination. To this may be traced all the complicated social difficulties which now embarrass the proceedings of Government in Christendom. Vainly are princes counselled to consult the interest of the poor; they will follow no counsel but the instincts of their nature, and make use of the power they possess for their own benefit. In tranquil times they oppose reforms, because, according to them, they are needless; in troubled times, because they are dangerous. "The gods," says the pagan proverb, "help those who help themselves." Suffer

the humble classes to put in practice the philosophy contained in this maxim. At present they are utterly helpless, oppressed, despised, treated contumeliously, and deprived of every prerogative of a citizen. They are aliens and strangers in the land. They form no component part of the state. They obey perforce the laws which others make for them. But their obedience is sullen and reluctant, because accompanied by the consciousness that it implies the sacrifice of their best interests.

X.

The opponents of reform, when most friendly to the people, ask of what benefit political privileges would be to a destitute man. The question carries its own answer along with it; for it is true that the man could not immediately convert these things into the means of life, and that consequently he might perish with the insignia of citizenship in his hand. But not to be deluded by a fallacy, we must carry our consideration further back, and suppose all the members of the state in habitual possession of the privileges of freemen. They would then take care, by exerting a proper influence on the legislature, that such laws only were made as might tend to the good of the whole community.

The existence of immense classes in a state of utter destitution would then be impossible. The property of the state would find itself subdivided, first between all the children of its owners, and then, by legal transfer, among all capable of purchasing it.

It is a fundamental law of society, that when some have too much, others must have too little; and, though there may be a system of political economy which denies this truth, mankind will not always adopt that system, or suffer themselves to be deluded by it. Their enemies, although they ridicule all large measures of reform, cannot disprove the existence of a portentous amount of misery, ignorance, and crime, simultaneously with the operation of the established order of things. Whence comes that misery? It has not been created by Annual Parliaments, or the Ballot, or Universal Suffrage; and yet the misery is among us, eating into our very vitals, and making us tremble for our lives. We, who advocate reform, attribute the destitution of the humbler classes to the operation of unjust laws. This may be denied, but cannot be disproved. Every step in the direction of reform has widened the circle of those who are interested in preserving the institutions of the country. Why not advance, therefore, and impart the same interest to all? You fear for your property,—but the people are not robbers; and, were power placed in their hands to-morrow, would insist on nothing but Justice.

XI.

Sometimes, however, Reform comes too late, and only accelerates the progress of Revolution, especially when it constitutes no part of a system, but is made capriciously by fits. In the address of the Regent to the French Parliament, the day after

Louis XIV.'s death, he recognised the power of the popular element by saying, "In whatever I undertake for the public good, I shall be aided by your counsels and prudent remonstrances." This was a formal abdication of arbitrary power on behalf of the crown; but, instead of retarding the revolution, may be regarded as its initiatory process. Upon the King's death, the Duke of Orleans attempted to introduce an innovation, that of councils or committees. There were seven of these: 1, of War; 2, of Finance; 3, Foreign affairs; 4, Conscience, or Religion; 5, of Manners; 6, Interior; 7, though highest in rank, the Council of the Regency. In 1716 an eighth was added, of Commerce. After creating inexhaustible confusion, the system was abandoned in 1718, and the old plan of Secretaries of State resumed. In this instance, an ill-conceived and arbitrary change, instead of becoming an element of stability, only augmented the dangers of the throne.

XII.

Charity, in the region of theory, is a barren principle. You may deck it out, and exalt it, and worship it, if you please; but unless you take it into your heart, and act upon it, to you it is nothing but an unmeaning word.*

Hitherto, the governments of the world have scarcely, if at all, recognised this principle, for it is not to recognise it, in the Christian sense, to create millions of pariahs, and then heap the principal burdens of the state on their shoulders.*

Practically, the lower classes are almost everywhere oppressed. Denied by the operation of social laws the instruction that might elevate them, they grovel on everlastingly in degrading drudgery, without hope of emancipation, except from time to time through political catastrophes. Not that there is anything degrading in labour itself; on the contrary, there is no bread so sweet as that which is earned by honest toil, no hearth so brightly lighted up as that of the industrious citizen, who beholds in everything around him a proof of his intelligent and well-directed energy. It is the consciousness that it excludes from the communion of intelligence, that it is ranked in the same category with vice and crime, that it is hunted about, trampled upon, and in many instances denied the protection of the laws: these are the circumstances which shed bitterness in the poor man's cup, and make him feel like a slave, in spite of the noble yearnings of his nature.

• Thus situated, he seldom looks up but with envy, and learns to consider society as an abstract monster which crushes him. Even his religion is sullied by his poverty. Scarcely can he raise his eyes to God as the Father of all living, because his perverted understanding, confounding the laws of the world with the regulations of eternal justice, secretly suspects of partiality the Author and Fountain of all good. In this way his nature becomes almost totally corrupt; for when the relations between man and his Maker are obscured, his whole nature must necessarily be degraded. To nations placed in such

a category, Revolution speaks as with a voice from heaven, proffering them deliverance from thralldom, intellectual and bodily; and they easily sophisticate themselves into the belief, that for the regeneration of the human race, all things become lawful.

XIII.

The existence of large masses of people inimical to the state, whose numbers are perpetually augmenting, whose misery is incessantly on the increase, whose morals are deteriorating, whose minds are cankered, whose hearts are gradually estranged from all virtue, contentment, or hope of happiness,—the existence of such masses, I say, is a fact which we must recognise, whether it terrifies us or not.

For several ages this surplus of humanity was consumed by foreign wars. Kings got rid on the field of battle of their domestic foes; and history bestows on the sacrifice the name of glory. All kinds of dazzling fictions have been invented to reconcile mankind to this horrid game, at variance with the fundamental principles of Christianity, hateful to God, and destructive to man. Chroniclers, poets, and servile flatterers of power, seek to disguise the wickedness of the process by which instinctively, or through system, the governors of the earth endeavour to confine population within their artificial limits of subsistence.

But civilization in its progress gives birth to arts, which by their development completely counteract the designs of ambition. Addicting themselves to

the operations of peace and industry, the people increase and multiply faster than war can destroy them; and, accumulating property, and transmitting it to their children, elevate the middle classes, the terror of crude despotism. In the lottery of life, however, all cannot draw prizes. Population multiplies faster than property; or, which produces the same results, while by the tendency of established institutions, property runs into heaps, population diffuses itself far and wide as the sustaining powers of the earth.

XIV.

Hence the cardinal difficulties of governments. There are found in the bosom of every modern state multitudes of men and women, who throw their lives upon the providence of the hour. They have no assured future. The labour of the day provides the subsistence of the day; and the slightest interruption in their toil places them, consequently, within the limits of starvation. Here in our own capital, three rainy days would bring nine thousand persons, the nomadic outcasts of the nation, to the brink of famine. This is the case in every great city, where there always exists a wandering population, living, as we say, from hand to mouth, performing the rudest operations of society,—a hybrid race between beggars and thieves, who labour when they can find employment, and steal when they cannot. They are extremely numerous in Paris, where they form the sutlers and stragglers of revolutionary armies;

still more numerous in London; but perhaps most numerous in Naples. Though denominated "the dangerous classes," they are probably the least dangerous of all, but, when insurrections are actually in progress, they throw themselves into the *mêlée*, and incalculably increase the confusion.

It is a fearful sight, to which custom reconciles us, to behold millions of our fellow-creatures, possessing, like the birds and beasts of the field, no provision for the morrow. Comprehended under the common appellation of the "poor," society accustoms itself to regard them as an inferior species. Born to be mere hewers of wood and drawers of water for their neighbours, it is expected that they will never look up, or presume to hope for a better destiny. Drudges they are, and to drudgery are their children and their children's children doomed in perpetuity. But this is not all. Could they by their daily labour secure to themselves their daily bread, it might be tolerated; but it happens that the possessors of property require only limited services from those who through mockery are called their brethren; and, therefore, the supernumerary poor—they who possess hands for which society has no use—they who possess minds, which society condemns to stagnation—they who possess souls, which society abandons to despair—are denominated Paupers, and thrust pell-mell, like the mere refuse of humanity, into dismal and hopeless dwellings, where they almost necessarily sink below the level of rational creatures.

XV.

Thousands, rather than submit to this, make open war upon society, which has cast them forth from its bosom, and perish in the struggle. That the crimes of these men originate in their poverty is proved by the fact that not one-tenth of the general number of malefactors belong to the educated and easy classes. Others, differently constituted, envelope themselves in sullen pride, retreat to the noisome dens still open to them, where like wolves they expire in silence, of hunger, or by their own hands. Occasionally, certain individuals, designated by particular names, seize upon certain other men, who have acted contrary to the regulations of society, and thrust them into dungeons beneath the earth, forbid them to employ the faculty of speech, drag them from place to place, put heavy chains upon their limbs, and convey them to expire in misery in distant parts of the world, or strangle them at home in the sight of their neighbours, who look on to see their souls separated from their bodies. Burke, under the name of Bolingbroke, observes: "It is no wonder that what is set up in opposition to the state of nature, should preserve itself by trampling on the law of nature. To prove that these sorts of polished societies are a violation offered to nature, and a constraint upon the human mind, it needs only to look upon the sanguinary measures and instruments of violence which are everywhere used to support them.

Let us take a review of the dungeons, stripes, chains, racks, gibbets, with which every society is abundantly stored, by which hundreds of victims are annually offered up to support a citizen or two in pride and madness, and millions in an abject servitude and dependence."

Whoever, therefore, whether in the name of religion or not, labours to perpetuate ignorance, labours to perpetuate crime.

XVI.

But social man is an ingenious creature, and contrives, by the invention and propagation of certain opinions, to diminish to his imagination the horrors of these things. He resolves upon the establishment of artificial differences between man and man, and assigns a meaning to epithets, which, being prefixed to the name of an individual, act as a sort of passport to universal respect.

He maintains the necessity of offering a sort of civil worship to that individual, of conciliating his good will by small acts of idolatry; and while one is thus elevated in the social scale, the other is in the same proportion degraded. We live under the iron yoke of prejudice, which teaches us to put false constructions upon everything, to people our minds with fallacies, to substitute sophistry for reasoning, fiction for truth, and to acquire habits of gross mental servility, which will not suffer us to look our natural equals in the face.

XVII.

To sympathise with the poor is almost to partake of the sin of their poverty. Educated and polished persons shrink from all contact with misery. To associate with God's image in rags is next to being in rags oneself. Property is the great measure of all things. Birth itself, the other twin idol to which the weak and ignorant bow down, is nothing without it; and, therefore, to possess property stands in lieu of all great qualities.

Our own ancestors, out of an intense respect for property, enacted laws commanding parishes to keep bloodhounds for the purpose of hunting down moss troopers, and other persons who made free with their cattle. The Spaniards, it is well known, pursued the same policy towards the negroes in Cuba; and so did the English planters in Jamaica.

To be deprived of property, on the contrary, is to be despised and hated, and driven from all respectable society as an outcast,—an Ishmaelite, whose hand is against every man, and every man's hand against him. It is in vain that philosophers and good men have in various ages sought, by precept and example, to reconcile mankind with poverty. The oldest offspring of poetical inspiration has aimed at shedding the halo of religion around the houseless sufferer:

“To Jove the stranger and the poor belong,
He wanders with them, and he feels their wrong.”

And He, whom I scarcely dare mention in connexion with heathen literature, the Incarnation of

the spirit of love and charity, frequented the society of the poor, was poor Himself, and bequeathed poverty as an inheritance to millions of His sincere followers. But neither His doctrine nor His example has sufficed to reconcile the world with poverty, which in Christian countries is looked down upon with as superb a disdain as ever exerted its hateful influence in heathen times.

Every day shows fresh examples of this truth. Look at our streets! Are they not filled with swarms of our brethren and our sisters, who hold out the famished hand to us as we pass, and entreat us to spare something from our superfluity, to mitigate the pangs of hunger in them? But, case-hardened by false science, or pride, or selfishness, we turn a deaf ear to their prayers, and bid them go seek relief from overseers and workhouses.

I will not, adopting the cant of the day, say that nature itself makes a difference in men; for nature means God, and God is just and merciful to all His children. It is society that is wanting in its duty. It is society that persecutes the poor; and if I were to enumerate all the acts of cruelty, oppression, and wrong, which it has perpetrated against them, I should have to recapitulate the history of the world.

XVIII.

Despots, when seized by the ambition of becoming reformers, habitually make the most reckless experiments upon the poor under their sway Peter I. of

Russia, servilely denominated the Great, reflecting upon the fact that mariners often perish of thirst at sea, imagined he might remedy the evil by compelling the children of his sailors to drink salt water, that they might betimes become accustomed to it; but, as might have been foreseen, they all died. Mohammed Ali, of Egypt, a genuine brother of the Czar, being suddenly seized with a desire to improve the dwellings of the working classes of his country, built a model village, and transported the inhabitants of some neighbouring hamlets by force thither. As soon as they were comfortably installed, he sent his tax-gatherers with increased demands upon them; and the poor people, unable to answer what was urged against them, that they lived in finer houses than of yore, were compelled to fly, or to reduce their new dwellings to ruins, and live in sheds constructed in corners amidst the rubbish.

XIX.

The worst effect of poverty remains,—the divorce it produces between man and virtue. First, even while employed in honest toil, it cuts him off from the sources of knowledge; and, while perpetually calling for bodily exertion, condemns the mind to inactivity. Hence the paralysis of the faculties, intellectual and moral, narrow and sordid views of nature and society, false theories of virtue and vice, incapacity to resist temptation, proneness to coarse pleasures, debasing sensuality, indifference to crime, and an almost total perversion of ideas. Man in this

state is as far removed as he can be from the proper condition of his nature. His noble aspirations have died out in him one after another. All his associates are degraded as himself; and the intercourse of misery with misery, and of vice with vice, is not calculated to generate virtue. From bad to worse, therefore, do the humbler classes proceed; and, as they increase in numbers, they plunge deeper and still deeper into depravity. A public opinion exists among them, the antagonist of the public opinion prevailing among the higher classes. They feel that they live in a state of social banishment, that they are exiles in the midst of society, till at length, like the servile classes of Rome, discovering each other by their rags,—the badge of their order,—they begin to count their numbers, and organize resistance or revenge.

XX.

Even the knowledge which reaches the minds of the poor, like the rays of light passing through an impure medium, is discoloured and perverted.

No notion coming to them from without can extinguish in their bosoms the consciousness of the wrongs they endure. Passing through garrets, through cellars, through workhouses and gaols, they issue forth upon the bare strand of the world, armed with every evil passion that can afflict the human race. They are possessed by an unappeasable thirst for vengeance. Undiscriminating in their hatred, they menace alike both friends and foes, and

often in periods of anarchy make of their benefactors the first victims.

XXI.

To maintain that such a state of things is necessary is to declaim impiously against the great Author of nature. The earth was given to man, not to any particular set of men; and all, therefore, who are born into the world, are born with a right to whatever it contains. If for the sake of convenience we have invented civil and political fictions, it may be well to respect these fictions up to a certain point; but we proceed much too far when we sacrifice human life to them:—when, for example, to the fiction of primogeniture, the practice of entail, the privileges of nobility, we immolate whole classes of men, and condemn them to perpetual suffering and vice. Contrast the palaces of the great, their spacious chambers blazing with all the pompous insignia of wealth, and filled with a perfumed atmosphere, with the hovels of the labouring classes,—low, confined, filthy, filled with stenches and mephitic vapours, which exert a deleterious influence even on the mind itself. Go back to the palace, and converse with its inmates; consider their luxury, their idleness, their effeminacy, their romantic dreams of passion or intrigue, their sensitiveness, their false delicacy, their shrinking incapacity to bear the winter's blast or summer's sun; return then to the hovel, and approach, if you can, the ragged inmates, squalid, unwholesome, offensive;—with sordid ideas,

revolting habits, familiarity with meanness and vice; and then ask yourself if this be a healthy state of things,—if such contrasts should be found in a Christian country, under the benign influence of the Gospel, which teaches equality of all men before God, and denounces against the pomp and grandeur of the world the severest anathemas of Heaven.

XXII.

Among the worst effects of poverty are the corruption and degradation of women. Witnessing too often from the cradle nothing but misery and vice, growing up without instruction, religious or moral, they are thrown forth by the death or helpless indigence of their parents, upon a world ready to pervert to the vilest of purposes their beauty and their innocence.

No relation in nature is so holy as that of parent and child; yet the operation of poverty is so pernicious, that it often dissolves this most sacred tie, and renders fathers and mothers indifferent to the fate of their offspring. Girls, who might be the ornament of society, and shed gladness over a thousand hearths, are prematurely condemned to be polluted by degrading intercourse in shops, factories, or the streets. Everything with which they are familiarized tends to obliterate from their minds the distinction between right and wrong. Love, the noblest, purest, and most beautiful feeling of our nature, is converted by ignorance, coarseness, vulgarity, and moral turpi-

tude, into a brutal appetite. Their association with the opposite sex becomes gross and fortuitous. They do not look forward with hope and joy to the period when they shall themselves become mothers, and dwell with inexpressible fondness on their own images in miniature; but, on the contrary, are haunted by feelings of dread and horror, by apprehensions of the hospital, the workhouse, or the dreary and desolate streets, where every wretch who is a disgrace to his species may insult and maltreat them.

Even when the fate of women falls short of this fearful consummation, their lives among the lower classes are full of sadness and humiliation. Clothed in wretched garments, often in rags, they dwell with their male companions, wedded or unwedded,—marriage is a costly luxury,—in garrets, cellars, or in small, stifling, unwholesome rooms, filled with deleterious odours, and surrounded by similar dens, where the physical and moral atmosphere appears to be equally impregnated with disease and death.

XXIII.

Writers who have undertaken, from praiseworthy motives, to unveil these hideous mysteries to the world, present us with a picture so terrible that the heart sickens while we contemplate it. I am restrained by sheer loathing from reproducing their dreadful delineations. Civilisation should blush while it beholds these results of its influence upon

society, in which it multiplies ignorance, immorality, squalor, rags, filth, and a thousand indescribable abominations, in order to enable a few favoured classes to live in voluptuous indolence, surrounded by all kinds of animal indulgences, effeminate, selfish, uncompassionating, making a mockery of religion, and taking credit to themselves for abstaining from vices and crimes which they have no temptation to commit, or, if they had, could not perhaps command the energy or the courage necessary to their perpetration.

The civilisation which produces and tolerates such consequences, is base and spurious. The female sex especially are degraded by it, and as they are the mothers of the world, whatever corrupts and vitiates them, must necessarily pervade the whole body of society. The reform of all institutions, social and political, must begin with women, for until they shall be elevated from the condition they occupy in nearly all countries, until they shall be properly instructed and thus enabled to refine and purify themselves, we must be content to witness the same odious exhibition of debased and vindictive weakness, seeking to avenge itself through the instrumentality of sin and shame upon the furious and hateful power which holds it in unjust subjection.

· XXIV.

It would be a mockery in addressing myself to the public reason, to ask if this be a wise or just order of things, and whether it be possible it should

always continue to exist. If not remedied in time, the evil will manifestly cure itself, but in a way by no means agreeable to the great and prosperous. Every day the ranks of the poor are increasing in number throughout Europe, and otherwise becoming more formidable, and by and by, if care be not taken, they will arm themselves with despair, and wreck the system which refuses to recognise their rights. There is, however, an arithmetic in misery, as well as in everything else, and the question is, whether the empire of wretchedness will be extended or contracted by the triumphs of the humbler classes. That is the point for consideration. It is to little purpose to talk of the grandeur of an empire, of the magnificence of its power, of the splendour of its civilisation, if upon calculation it be found that more men are rendered miserable than prosperous by them. Better retrace our footsteps, and return to the barbarism from which by so many efforts we originally emerged, than pamper a system of refinement which destroys more than it preserves. Half a million of souls annually swell the population of these realms; so that in less than twenty years, by the ordinary rate of increase, ten millions more will be added to the aggregate. Will a majority of these new-comers be persons of property, or will they not go to recruit the ranks of the poor and the disaffected? How is this superfluous population to be taken off?

By emigration, by famine, by plague, by pestilence? Clearly, they must be maintained or blotted out of existence. There is no middle course. They

cannot be prevented from being born, though much pains be taken to effect that purpose. But the passions and affections of the heart have not yet been eradicated from the breasts of the poor. They will marry and be given in marriage, and in due time their offspring will make their appearance in the world, to the terror of rulers and legislators.

Early in the eighteenth century, the plague, of which De Tocqueville describes the horrors, broke out at Marseilles, and spread through a large portion of Provence to Arles, Aix, Toulon, Avignon, Orange and Montpellier. The government scarcely took any notice of the calamity, standing more in fear of the Parisians than of the Provençals. But the criminal neglect of rulers is punished sooner or later; and the Marsellais of 1792 avenged the victims of 1720.

XXV.

Revolutions exhibit in their progress no phenomena more remarkable than the ebb and flow of public opinion, in conformity with the character of passing events. Noble deeds, self-sacrifice, moderation, forbearance,—the heroism, in one word, displayed by either party, without reference to principles, is sure to enlist for a while in its favour the sympathies of mankind. Often, however, these sympathies are blind, and do credit to our generosity at the expense of our judgment. When nations, for example, rise against their oppressors, and seek to establish liberty, it is a pure and holy thing they aim at. But, considering the antecedents of the

subject, the state of mind and morals into which men are naturally thrown by servitude, it is scarcely rational to expect that the agencies and influences brought to bear upon the citadel of despotism should also be holy and pure. Emerging from a moral chaos, degraded by ignorance, stung to madness by their own poverty, the people are yet always expected to display disinterestedness and moderation.

This, doubtless, is a compliment to our nature. They have been trampled on, and they are expected not to remember it; they have been injured, and they are expected to forgive; they have been oppressed, insulted, enslaved, and they are expected to refrain from all retaliation; they have been familiarized with vice and ignorance, and poverty the parent of vice, and they are expected to display the enlightened magnanimity of philosophers.

But in politics, as in religion, "As we sow, so also shall we reap." Every man deprived of political rights has an interest in agitation, and, if he be wise, will do his best to promote it.

XXVI.

It was an observation of Socrates, that when the herd has been deteriorated and diminished, it argues neglect upon the part of the herdsman. This he applied to the Thirty Tyrants, who were cutting off and corrupting the people of Athens. His homely comparison involves this political axiom,—that the debasement of nations is traceable to their rulers, which is an undeniable truth; for, in what does

ruling consist, if not in regulating the interest of the 'body politic, in promoting its moral and physical health, and preserving everywhere that harmony without which nations degenerate into rabbles? To those who corrupt them, therefore, are to be attributed the crimes of the people. The advocates of despotism object that this doctrine has been moulded in the airy regions of theory, where, in their opinion, whatever is found is false.

But mankind are beginning to distrust this anti-theoretical jargon, and to despise those statesmen as dwarfish and short-sighted who cannot raise themselves to the level of new political processes, and provide for the changes inevitably introduced into human society by time.

XXVII.

This infinite moving mass which we call humanity, filled with passions, and impregnated more or less with intelligence, is not condemned by nature to remain for ever in the same condition. Its course towards eternity lies over a track, the incidents of which vary every moment. It never retrogrades, it never halts, but marches forward unceasingly like the waves of the ocean. It rises now, and now it falls into the depths of valleys. It is beaten by storms, it is drenched by showers, it is warmed, invigorated, and enlightened by sunshine; but, as the phenomena of physical nature are never exactly repeated—as the tempest of yesterday differs from the tempest of to-day—so the aspect of circum-

stances which envelope humanity in its progress is ever varying. Nothing, therefore, but scorn is inspired by those who babble about forms and precedents, and would swathe the limbs of the future in the swaddling bands of the past.

There is positively no retrogression. We must on—on for ever, whether for good or evil; and intelligence also and freedom make progress, in spite of all appearances to the contrary. A truth conquered from nature is never lost, but becomes part of the universal inheritance of mankind, and finds its use some day. The operation is not always speedy. The gentle rains and the refreshing dews, when they descend into the earth, appear to sink, and to be lost. But not so; they merely remain concealed, to be secretly elaborated by nature into reproductive juices, that they may rise in spring, and take the forms of leaves, and fruit, and flowers.

So precisely is it with ideas. We scatter them over the soil of humanity, and they sink into the heart, and for a while dwell there invisible, till time has changed them into principles of action; and afterwards they burst forth into virtues, patriotism, magnanimity, courage, which, swelling in the breasts of millions, produce revolutions.

There are apostles in all ages, and prophets, and martyrs too. But when the apostle and the prophet die, the doctrines they delivered, and the prophecies they uttered, do not perish with them, any more than the rain-drops perish with the storms that scattered them over the globe.

XXVIII.

But I was speaking of the contrast presented by the people and the privileged classes in their struggles for ascendancy. Where there is education, there should be superior virtue and humanity; where there is ignorance, there ought we to look for violence, ferocity, and revonge. But interrogate experience, and you will find that the people are habitually far more merciful than their oppressors.

Louis Philippe, when in power, pursued with unrelenting vindictiveness the men who rose up against him from the ranks of the people, and was content with nothing short of their lives. Afterwards, when he—the oppressor and the tyrant—stood, helpless, with all his family, at the people's mercy, did they take revenge? Did the men who had been imprisoned, persecuted, and hunted down by him to the lowest depths of misery, lift a single hand against his person, when he appeared haggard and cringing before the wild ragged multitude of Paris, excited almost to madness by the slaughter of so many of their brethren? True to the instincts of humanity, they pitied the miserable old man, and bade him go in peace, if peace could be with such recollections as his. In Vienna again, one man, Latour, was assassinated by the people in the first frenzy of an insurrection, traceable chiefly to his evil doings. This was a crime, and humanity accordingly condemns it, for freedom can have no fraternity with crime, and indeed, is inconsistent with it. There, however, the

fiery passions of the populace ceased; their vengeance was appeased, and no more blood was shed.

But when the Imperialists triumphed, how different was the result! Noble, devoted, and patriotic men, like Blum and Messenhauser—whose names shed a glory on Germany—were assassinated in cold blood; for no forms or ceremonies can alter the nature of human actions.

Of Prince Windishgratz, it is unnecessary that I should speak. As the name of some obscure blacksmith is connected with the murder of Latour, so the name of Windischgratz is linked for ever with the murder of Messenhauser and Blum.

XXIX.

From these events, sad, yet not so sad as they seem, can we derive no instruction for our guidance hereafter? Shall we, like the patient who shrinks in the midst of an operation, and thus condemns himself to double agony;—shall we, I say, reject the advantages already gained for mankind, and through pusillanimous terror return to that Circean-sty of false opinions from which the world has so recently escaped? Revolutions, rightly understood, teach but one lesson, namely, how to avoid them; which is not to be done by effeminate shrinking from duty, but by the resolute performance of it.

No one doubts that disturbances and civil broils are evils. The question, however, is whether they be greater evils than the oppressions and persecutions of humanity from which they sometimes deliver nations.

Doubtless, very much depends on the spirit in which they are conducted. But whatever may be the cause, it must be evident that they arise out of a pre-existing state of things. The germs are deposited, like ovaria, in the womb of circumstances. Neither are they impregnated nor quickened by accident. They owe their birth to the tempestuous passions of the hour, which, like them, trace their origin to causes far remote.

This consideration should lead statesmen to unearth the seeds of sedition while it is yet time. Nothing can be more unphilosophical than to leave them with all their integuments and quickening powers in the soil, and to imagine they will remain unproductive. But what, it may be asked, are the seeds of sedition? Poverty, distress, neglect of the indigent, legal inequalities, privileges and the monopoly of places by the aristocracy.

XXX.

Mankind have in all ages suffered themselves to be enslaved by mere fictions and figures of speech. They have attached some occult and cabalistic signification to words, and allowed their imaginations to be terrified by empty sounds. Princes and courtiers, dignified in the popular apprehension by crafty disguises and political abstractions, have, for services rendered to themselves or the community, bestowed on certain individuals the titles of earls, counts, dukes; and forthwith the persons so designated are supposed by the uninitiated to acquire

a natural superiority over other men. History in vain chronicles the performances by which such honours are often acquired. The vulgar soon accustom themselves to look up with reverence to the titled descendants of intriguers and court parasites, especially when they behold them occupying the highest places in society, invested with all the power of the state, and distributing at their pleasure its revenues, preferments, and distinctions.

Were we to search the annals of every realm in Europe, we should find its principal noble families planted and matured in the hot-bed of royal profligacy. Even in our own country, examples might be pointed out. During the single reign of the first James, titles great and small were lavishly squandered, some for infamous compliances, others for gold. To enrich Somerset, the king's minion, the title of baronet was invented, and bestowed on the heads of two hundred obscure families, at the price of a thousand pounds each. All other ranks and distinctions were equally venal, till the alarms of the ancient aristocracy arrested the recklessness of the court.

XXXI.

The history of modern times affords innumerable and irrefragable proofs of the servile idolatry of titles throughout Christendom; and if the progress of civilization has effected any real good for mankind, it is the diminution of that idolatry; but we are hitherto very far from contemplating such matters

from the right point of view. Historians gifted with great narrative powers and sagacity, orators overflowing with eloquence, and philosophers who have made no mean proficiency in wisdom, still bow, more or less, before the sovereignty of political superstition. They ally themselves, as it were, with the pomp and grandeur of the world, and mistake the effects of natural giddiness for a sense of elevation. But there is nothing elevated, save truth and justice, those twin-children of God, to whom the government of this world should of right belong. Least of all is there elevation in prejudice, in servile adoration of authority, in acting the part of an accomplice in enslaving and misleading the human race.

XXXII.

For several centuries, the chill inheritance of feudalism deprived Europe of the free exercise of its vital and productive powers. Government and property were monopolised by the oligarchy, who, in their arrogant impiety, looked down upon the masses as creatures born exclusively to bear their yoke.

In England, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, the old drama of patricians and plebeians was quaintly enacted in petty mimicry of Rome. The equality taught by the Gospel was treated as a pious reverie. In some countries this audacity was carried so far as to draw a physical distinction between the blue blood which flowed in the veins of the nobles, and the black current which circulated in those of the people.

This excess of insulting pride produced its own chastisement. Reposing on their hereditary honours, these superb grantees omitted to strengthen, by exercise, their powers of body or mind, and gradually, beneath the influence of effeminacy, dwindled into a race of imbeciles, unequal to any exertion, mental or bodily. This accounts for the disappearance of historical names from the recent annals of Spain. All the men who have made a figure there during the last half century have risen from the ranks of the people. The same thing has been the case in France, where, for more than sixty years, every trace of the old families has been rapidly disappearing from public life.

In Germany again, we have witnessed a repetition of the same phenomenon; and if Italy seem to offer an exception, it is only because the popular element has there been less impregnated with knowledge, and less exposed to the influence of revolutionary enthusiasm. The appearance of new names in the history of a country indicates that revolution is in progress, and that there is some force at work in the depths of society disturbing its foundations, and throwing up the lower strata to the surface.

This process may be disagreeable to many, because it brings into play rough and uncouth characters, who shock the dilettanteism of the drawing-rooms. Cromwell appeared vulgar in the eyes of the impotent nobility whom he routed on Marston Moor. But history has now cleared away the husk which concealed his greatness from the ignorant and

feeble among his contemporaries, and rendered his name classical in the eyes of statesmen and politicians.

XXXIII.

Burke, whose opinions are still the opinions of many classes in this country, maintains, in various parts of his works, that the privileged classes in France constituted an upright and respectable body, to overthrow which was a crime in the Revolution. The whole testimony of French history is at variance with this idea.

XXXIV.

Despotism in its ordinary forms is scarcely more pernicious to society than the government of privileged orders, whether they derive their authority from the hereditary fiction of birth, or from new-fledged opulence. Precisely the same delusions which impose upon mankind in the case of absolute monarchy prevail under aristocracies and oligarchies. The artificers of national prosperity are oppressed and despised. The sense of superiority, and the habit of command, transmitted from generation to generation, implant in the breast of the nobles a scorn of all other classes, whom they designate by opprobrious epithets, and jealously exclude from the adyta and labyrinths of political authority.

This was preeminently the case at Venice, where an organized tyranny was established, which trampled audaciously upon the most sacred laws of morality.

Nowhere, however, was that terrible abstraction, called the State, invested with more grandeur. Enveloping themselves in secrecy,—deliberating, moving, and thinking in the dark,—the magistrates of the republic inspired profound apprehension, and created in all the courts of Europe an idea of their power, much greater than that power itself.

To maintain the position thus gained, they put in practice the most questionable arts, and sometimes hazarded the guilt of atrocious crimes. Their ambassadors in every part of Christendom employed themselves with the diligence of spies to collect and transmit such information as might promote, legitimately or otherwise, the interest of the oligarchy. In Dalmatia, the Morea, Crete, Cyprus, and other outlying dependencies, they pursued a nefarious policy, destroying by calumny the credit among their countrymen of all eminent and distinguished natives, imprisoning them for slight or imaginary offences, and poisoning them in their dungeons when a public trial and execution would have been attended with scandal or danger.

This profligate system of domination, organized with consummate ability, and upheld by unrivalled craft and energy, enjoyed a duration uncommon in political communities. But the villany of its maxims at length produced its natural effect. The people, degraded and vitiated, excluded from all public employments, and inspired with aversion by insulting distinctions; were always prepared for outbreak and insurrection. Conspiracies, dark and sanguinary,

frequently shook the foundations of the State. Treasonable communications were carried on with foreign governments. Turkey, Spain, and France absorbed its provinces, circumscribed its resources, or assailed the Sea Cybele in her Lagunes ; and, at length, Austria, reaping where she did not sow, imposed her brutal and infamous yoke upon the Venetian people.

XXXV.

In other countries, where the aristocracy have been associated with princes, they have imbibed corruption from the court on one hand, and corrupted the people on the other. Writers who employ the received political jargon, represent them as a barrier between the power of the crown and the nation. But all the concessions and advantages they have extorted from the sovereign, they have been careful to monopolise, leaving the people to content themselves with vain theories and chimeras. In all great social catastrophes, whether caused by the progress or the decline of monarchy, they are invariably at hand to intercept the largesses of fortune on their way to the people. At the Reformation in England and Germany, in the troubles of Spain, in the civil wars of France, the nobles divided among themselves the church lands, the plunder of the abbeys, and the benefits arising from all forfeitures. If their estates were enriched, however, their honour, when they had any, was stained in proportion. Drawn to

court in the expectation of thriving there by the arts of flattery, intrigue, and licentiousness, they frequently found themselves punished by witnessing corruption invade their own families, and reaped disgrace, if they were not disappointed of profit.

XXXVI.

Through the influence of that Nemesis which attends invariably upon crime, their excesses and their misfortunes have equally contributed to disseminate the seeds of revolution. When triumphant in their career, they have excited public indignation by their pride and extravagance, by their cruelty, and by their oppression; and in calamity and adversity they have awakened contempt and disgust, by ridiculous or revolting exhibitions of meanness, venality, ignorance, self-conceit, subservience, and depravity.

* The civil wars of 1640, and the transfer of the monarchy in 1688, were precluded by portentous debauchery among the nobles. From the court of James I. women were almost entirely banished, and their places supplied by striplings, who rose like the mistresses of other princes to the highest rank and distinction in the state. Charles I. took into his counsels, and treated as his best friend, the man who purposely or accidentally had poisoned his father. The sovereign himself was so regardless of public decency, that he could not behave with propriety even at the theatre, while his conversation and that of his

associates was so offensive and obscene, that modest women found themselves under the necessity of flying from the court.

Among the aristocratic ladies who surrounded Charles II. modesty was altogether exploded. A community of women confined in these days to the Utopia on the great Salt Lake, was then realized in the palace of Whitehall, where, from the duchess to the kitchen-wench, every female was accessible to titled and opulent libertines. The king and the Duke of York, who had gone through a long noviciate of vice on the continent, sauntered all day from one lady's boudoir to another, or paraded their titled courtezans in open carriages through Hyde Park, or the streets of London.

Henrietta Maria, the mother of these princes, set them the example of licentiousness. On one occasion when, taking advantage of the king's absence, she had received Jermyn into her private apartment, it was only the sympathetic courtesy of one of the grooms of the chamber that prevented her detection and exposure. The martyr king returning unexpectedly to the palace, desired to be conducted immediately to the chamber of his wanton queen. The obsequious nobleman who went before him, knowing that her majesty was then engaged with her gallant, adroitly, when near the door, stumbled and extinguished the light, and thus afforded the king's despicable rival an opportunity to escape. Henrietta afterwards spent her life in France with this profligate, who, different in this from the be-

sotted and uxorious Charles, beat her like the vilest of her sex.

XXXVII.

The study of these revelations of history corroborates that startling doctrine of Machiavelli, that mankind will pardon all excess of villany and wickedness in the possessors of sovereign power. The stern old Florentine confined his consideration chiefly to the crimes of ambition, such as distinguished the Grecian Agathocles, Oliverotto di Fermo, and Cæsar Borgia. Had he lived in our times, he would have included in the list Mohammed Ali, Sultan Mahmoud, Louis Napoleon, the Czar Nicholas, Francis Joseph of Austria, and Ferdinand of Naples.

The continental nobility regard with admiration and indulgence the achievements of these scourges of humanity. In the luxurious atmosphere of mirrored and perfumed drawing-rooms, nothing is more common than to hear members of their order, both male and female, ostentatiously lisp their praises. It is not difficult to divine the idiosyncracies of such adulators. The men envy the power and plunder enjoyed by their idols, while the women would gladly wear the jewels of Montespan and Parabère. The consciousness of this, did they possess one spark of shame or modesty, would restrain their enthusiasm, or at least set some limits to their eulogies. The people, elevated and disciplined by Christianity, shrink with horror from these regal and imperial

criminals, and prefer eating in humble tranquillity and innocence the fruits of their honest labour, to sharing their guilt, or profiting by their extravagance.

XXXVIII.

In Rome, the transition from the republic to the empire was characterised by startling and fearful social phenomena. From having been the most prudent, laborious, frugal, and modest people in the known world, the Romans, and more especially the aristocracy, became in all things the reverse. Falling at once into anthropolatry, which indicates the worst degeneracy of our nature, they suffered themselves to be betrayed into the perpetration of every vice and every crime, by the example of their imperial idols. Heroism in voluptuousness and sensuality now succeeded to heroism in virtue. Having exhausted the whole empire of natural pleasures, the Cæsars transgressed its eternal boundaries, and rioted in nefarious and forbidden gratifications. Nero, Commodus and Caligula set mankind the example of unlimited profligacy, which, transmitted through popes, cardinals, and monks, infected the modern world with the lust of imitation.

With the Roman laws and institutions, corrupted and travestied by ignorance and pedantry, the Roman vices also obtained currency among all those nations which affect to have derived their civilization from the Eternal City. While the people, devoted to

industry and economy, cultivated the manners and virtues of primitive times, the aristocracy exaggerated the models bequeathed them by imperial Rome, and plunged into every species of moral turpitude; of this, proofs innumerable are to be found in the history of medieval Italy. Petty tyrants, struggling with petty republics for ascendancy, perpetrated all kinds of political enormities publicly against their competitors, and in private stained their souls with all low and degrading abominations. Haunted by some dim consciousness that they were engaged in an internecine conflict with democracy, they hoped to escape their doom by overwhelming the middle and lower classes beneath an ocean of guilt and licentiousness. They had yet to make the discovery that vice is weakness, and that consequently the more they indulged their depraved inclinations, the greater would be the force at the disposal of popular principles.

XXXIX.

Italian history, replete with instruction of every kind, though wanting the charm of unity, is peculiarly rich, as the students of Guicciardini, Fra Paolo, and Machiavelli need not be told, in illustration of this truth. To introduce them here, however, is unnecessary. I shall content myself with two or three anecdotes from the Annals of Piedmont, a country familiar with political vicissitudes, and destined to witness still greater changes.

A Sardinian baron, having been taken captive, and thrown into prison, applied, like our *Cœur-de-Lion*, to his vassals for the money requisite to ransom him from his foe. He now learned that despotic power is seldom the parent of love. The serfs refused, peremptorily, compliance with his demands, until he should have bound himself by a solemn compact never, in person or by his deputy, to enter upon his estates, till he had fixed, in an equitable manner, their rents and dues. This engagement was made on the boundary mark, which was ever afterwards denominated the "Stone of the Oath."

Another feudal lord, in the wantonness of his authority, levied a heavy tax upon his vassals to reimburse himself for losses which he might possibly sustain from the entrance of vermin into his granaries. This impost was denominated in Sardinia, "The Measure of the Mice."

Nor were the peasants free from galling personal insults. A stranger walking with a Sardinian nobleman over his estates, witnessed an exhibition of petty tyranny worthy of a slave-owner. Experiencing a little fatigue, the baron beckoned to one of his vassals whom he observed at work in the fields; and when the man had approached submissively, his lord commanded him to place himself upon the earth on his hands and knees, and then coolly seated himself on his back. To his companion, who afterwards expostulated with him, he replied, "It is quite right that they should thus conduct themselves towards their owners, the wretches that they are!"

Another peasant, being ordered to perform a similar act of debasement, answered by sticking the handle of his long bayonet in the earth, and, bidding the haughty aristocrat seat himself upon that, said that rather than submit to be treated like a beast of burden, he would bury the weapon in the baron's body, or even in his own.

XI.

Differences are supposed to be discoverable in the social and political principles upon which the aristocracies of different countries have based their authority, and developed their power; but this, I apprehend, is erroneous. What has probably given rise to the opinion is the observation that in some parts of Christendom the spirit of privilege and caste has incarnated itself, so to speak, in one system of manners, and elsewhere in another. The fundamental ideas, on which the whole structure of obligarchy rests, are everywhere the same. As, however, the ethical phenomena attending the growth of its organization have varied in every community, it may perhaps be useful to contemplate them apart.

Taking our stand on the events of 1789, and looking back, we may discover, in the dark ensanguined stream of French history, a thorough explanation of what then took place. If we adopt the theory, that the social virtues flourish most in simple ages, we must admit that there was a time when the upper classes in France were comparatively uncorrupted,

though it is extremely difficult to determine when this time existed. As soon as the noblesse appear upon the stage, we find them selfish, sensual, and tyrannical towards the people. As their power augmented, their vices took a wider range; they became intoxicated with their superiority, insolent, rapacious, prodigal of what they had acquired, yet insatiable in acquisition.

XLI.

The first symptom that a bloody Nemesis lay lurking in the bosom of French society, was the bursting forth of that terrible insurrection which the nobles contemptuously denominated the *Jacquerie*, from the phrase *Jacques bon homme*, by which they distinguished all persons not of their order. At this period, France was torn to pieces by dissensions; Paris had been taken and retaken by hostile factions, murders were committed with impunity in the open streets, suppliants were torn from the altars to be put to death, the Dauphin and the King of Navarre exasperated the people against each other, and the capital presented daily one vast scene of carnage and confusion.

Under these circumstances the nobles perpetrated every species of violence against the unhappy country people, who received no protection from the royal authority they contributed to support. These miserable victims, beaten, plundered, hunted down like wild beasts, possessing no places of refuge but

caverns, forests and marshes, acted like the poor hare, which, in its desperation, springs at the throat of the greyhound; they rushed together in large bodies, took up arms, and vowed to exterminate the whole feudal order.

The movement commenced in the Beauvoisie, and the first popular chief was Caillet, who, like his successors of the eighteenth century, seems to have thought more of avenging the past than making provision against the future. Had the towns joined in this great effort, all would then have been lost to the nobility and monarchy in France; but, raising the usual stupid cry of "Property in danger," they refused to open their gates to the insurgents, and were thus nearly producing the effect which their miserable policy was designed to avert.

Irritated by their hostility, the peasants attempted to storm several strong places; but being wanting both in military knowledge and proper leaders, they everywhere failed. They carried on, as might have been anticipated, the fiercest war against the chateaux, which they plundered and destroyed. Considering the state of manners at that period, the persecutions and oppressions they had endured, their poverty, their ignorance, their desperation, it can excite no surprise that they were guilty of much cruelty. The whole aristocratic class, English, French, and Navarrese, united against the revolted populace, and extinguished the insurrection in blood. The army under Caillet was defeated, and its leader put to death; by the king of

Navarre: the main body was encountered by the Dauphin, who cut to pieces 20,000 of the peasants in one day.

XLII.

Delivered from this danger, the *grandeess* seemed to have increased in insolence and rapacity. Flocking, wherever he went, about the king, they passed their whole lives in soliciting places, in reciprocating injuries and vengeance on each other, in ostentatious exhibitions of vice. The greatest ladies tarnished their lives by repeated acts of swindling; and to give a climax to their infamy, the Duc d'Angoulême kept a house in Paris exclusively for the purpose of manufacturing false coin, with which he inundated the country. This was during the reign of the epic Henry, whom French literature has sought to elevate into a model for princes. Finding it easy to forgive offences which only injured others, the good king blandly laughed at the knavery of his cousin, whom he used familiarly to joke about his bad money.

Burke, with whose glowing eulogies on the French noblesse everybody is familiar, drew a very different picture of them in his earlier and better days. Referring to the very age of Henry IV. he says, "Were ever the honours and emoluments of the state more lavishly squandered upon persons scandalous in their lives than during that period? The kingdom was full of the most atrocious political, operating upon the most furious fanatical factions. As to the finances,

they had scarce an existence, except as a matter of plunder to the managers, and of grants to insatiable and ungrateful courtiers. No place was safe from treason; no, not the bosoms on which the most amiable prince that ever lived reposed his head; not his mistresses, not even his queen."

XLIII.

As that social process which we denominate civilization advanced, the corruption of the French nobles advanced also. Delivered from the pressure of intestine wars, and detesting the quiet of a country life, they huddled together in Paris, men and women, each demoralizing and vitiating the other. This was especially the case under Louis XIII. and Anne of Austria, whose paramour, Cardinal Mazarin, set the example of profligacy. No crime, no baseness, disturbed the consciences of these enervated parasites of a shameless court. Setting no bounds to their licentiousness, they revelled in every indulgence within the boundaries prescribed by nature, and these at length seeming too confined, they audaciously transgressed them. Boundless profligacy necessitating boundless profusion, the leading members of the nobility by degrees found their means exhausted, and to replenish their coffers, had recourse to poisoning, and other forms of assassination.

Every man who had property to bequeath, and had made a will, ate his meals with fear and trembling, lest his cook should have been corrupted, and

have administered him Italian physic in his soup. Universal distrust pervaded society. The coadjutor of Paris repaired to the Parliament with a dagger in his pocket, to defend himself from the attempts of the nobility. High and low, rich and poor, studied the art of poisoning; wretches who would have disgraced the gallows became the familiar companions of the great, who, associated with them in crime, could scarcely refuse to make them the companions of their pleasures. Some of the noblest names in France were tainted with this moral leprosy, as Justice afterwards discovered through the revelations of the *Chambre Ardente*.

All hell seemed to be let loose in Paris. The most sacred ties of nature were broken. Daughters poisoned their fathers, and had the courage to see them gasp out in happy ignorance their last breath upon their bosoms, unconsciously blessing the hands that caused their torments. At court no limits were set to the infamous obsequiousness of the *grandées*. Men rose to rank and opulence, to distinction in the palace or the state, or to command in the army, through the prostitution of their wives and daughters. Shame became extinct throughout the whole feudal order. Queens, princesses, and ladies of the highest rank rivalled in excesses and abominations the Roman Messalina; and the superior clergy in too many instances encouraged and augmented the moral turpitude which it was their duty to denounce and repress.

XLIV.

Louis XIV., occupying the summit of French society, and possessing a resolute will, naturally impressed his own character on the manners of those about him. The Cardinal de Mazarin, whose son he probably was, had purposely inspired both him and his brother with a distaste for study, in order that he himself might be the longer able to hold them in tutelage, and govern the kingdom. The consequences necessarily followed. Having remained in ignorance up to the age of the passions, the rage for pleasure absorbed the whole man, and incapacitated him for making any useful acquisitions. What he did not possess himself, he despised or dreaded in others, and it therefore became the fashion at court to laugh at those who addicted themselves to learning, or displayed any aptitude for intellectual pursuits; of course the number soon became very small. The hatred, however, of the regal dunce, disguised under the form of contempt, did not proscribe knowledge in the clergy or in plebeians. It was enough if his grandees resembled himself in mental imbecility. The others might, he thought, prove useful in investing him and his actions with a false glory, and dazzling and bewildering mankind, who are generally much too ready to attribute all sorts of good qualities to princes.

Yet, in spite of all his ignorance, his follies, and his vices, Louis XIV. was in some sense a reformer, because he restrained the external manifestations of

profligacy, In the courts of all former French princes, licentiousness had appeared without a mask. It now became the fashion, whatever might be the dissoluteness of the morals, or the corruption of the heart, to affect a stately and dignified exterior. Further than this, however, the reformation did not extend. Nurtured in the principles of his predecessors, he would have regarded himself as a dupe, and his whole life to have been thrown away, had he confined his affections to his queen, or contented himself with a legitimate offspring. To be a king, was, in his opinion, to outdo other men in the extent and variety of his intrigues ; and he had accordingly mistresses of all classes, married and unmarried, princesses, duchesses, countesses, the wives of soldiers and citizens, farmers' daughters, peasant girls, milliners, ladies' maids, and washerwomen.

XLV.

To appease the cravings of his sensuality, the minister readily consented to pervert the institution of the post office. All letters were opened, sorted, and read by clerks bound to secrecy, who allowed only such as were insignificant, or concerned mere matters of business, to be forwarded to their destination. Such as contained political allusions, scandalous anecdotes, or assignations or revelations of intrigue, were brought to the king in his cabinet, where hours which should have been devoted to public affairs, were spent in prying into the wantonness and debauchery of his

subjects. • When he found any which could forward his designs against particular women, he retained and made use of them in the ways best calculated to forward his ends, though it must be owned, there was in general little necessity for having recourse to arts so base and mean, since most ladies of rank, in those days, considered it an enviable distinction to be pointed at as the king's mistresses.

In the midst of that brilliant court, towards which the ignorant and the frivolous still look back with envy or regret, an association was formed for carrying vice to the utmost limits of depravity. Among the members of this nefarious club, Louis XIV. had the mortification to find the names of two of his own sons enrolled. Ordinary excitement had ceased to have any charm for these connoisseurs in libertinism, who sought therefore to gratify their corrupt inclinations, by imitating the atrocities of the Celts and Medes. In the recesses of French literature, we find the history of this portentous society, together with its fundamental principles and laws; but abhorrence and loathing restrain me from entering into further details. It may be sufficient to say, that religion, morality, and whatever is refined or elevated in human nature were outraged by the practices of these aristocratic sinners, who contributed more, perhaps, than any other class of men to prepare the way for the fiery retribution of 1789.

XLVI.

History, among its other lessons, teaches us, that wickedness is in general closely allied with superstition. One of the principal delinquents to whom I have made allusion, Monsieur, the king's brother, was always careful, according to the theory of his church, to neutralize the guilt of his criminal indulgences by the performance of abundant rites and ceremonies, and the lavish employment of relics. His wife, with an effrontery of which there are few examples, has revealed the secrets of his bedchamber, and inspired all posterity with scorn and pity for the miserable libertine with whom she was linked in matrimony.

The king exhibited exactly the same weaknesses. Immersed in ignorance, and debased by bigotry, he endeavoured at the instigation of Madame de Maintenon, and his confessors, to expiate the comparatively trivial guilt of his amours by the sanguinary persecution of the protestants, and the expulsion of energy, industry, and commerce from his dominions. Sin alternated regularly with devotion. The Duchesse de la Vallière, when she had exhausted the resources of wantonness, retired to play the penitent in a convent. From a remark she made to the regent's mother, it is clear she hoped that the rigours she practised against herself would bring her royal seducer to her dejection. She would conceal herself so completely, she said, that Louis, should he make the attempt, would never be able to find her.

The sincerity of her penitence was not put to the proof. Sunk in the embraces of Mde. de Montespan, the king allowed the fair recluse to proceed unmolested in the path of desperate devotion, to which she only betook herself when she had exhausted all her arts to regain the post of shame from which she had fallen.

XLVII.

Towards the close of his reign, Louis XIV. sought, by superstitious practices and grovelling fanaticism, to make amends to heaven for the infamies and atrocities of his past life. There was accordingly a brief period of masked sensuality and external devotion, which terminated with the government of the regent, when the flood-gates of iniquity were once more thrown open, to deluge and pollute the land.

The Duke of Orleans is said to have corrupted his own family, in order to afford encouragement to others. Several noblemen followed his example. All ties of relationship were broken, and one universal rage for the perpetration of enormities prevailed throughout the kingdom. In such a state of things, public affairs were necessarily neglected. Mandeville might have beheld on a grand scale a practical refutation of his paradox, that private vices are public benefits. Every man limited his cares to providing for his own ignoble enjoyments. Immense fortunes melted away like snow beneath

the touch of voluptuousness, and numbers of the families once reputed illustrious, degenerated into gamblers, profligate speculators, and reckless adventurers. Through the effects of their extravagance, they beheld the much-coveted places about the court filled by persons from among the middle classes, who, as every office was sold, were enabled, by their industry, to purchase, while the nobles, overwhelmed by debts and embarrassments, were driven to subsist by the gaming-table or the prostitution of their persons for hire.

XLVIII.

With the accession of Louis Quinze the corruption of the public morals was accelerated. Several members of the aristocracy lived in precarious opulence, by ministering to the sovereign's vices; and their example and influence operating on all around them, diffused a taste, or rather excited a passion for every species of debauchery. In this way nearly the whole body of the nobility and superior clergy, who belonged chiefly to aristocratic families, became depraved.

All students of French history must be familiar with the abominations of the Parc aux Cerfs, of the Petit Trianon, and of every palace in which the regent, or the monarch, indulged his criminal passions. From these Spintrian caverns of modern times, pollution was disseminated like a flood, until the health of the whole system of society be-

came deranged; until morality became a fiction; until faith in God was obliterated; until kindness, generosity, and humanity, which depend upon that faith for existence, appeared to have been extirpated altogether from the French mind. Thus vitiated, thus degraded, the privileged orders were overtaken by the tempest of the revolution, which infused a new spirit into society, not in France only, but more or less throughout the whole of Christendom.

XLIX.

Similar causes were producing, during the eighteenth century, similar effects in England. From the moral elevation of the Commonwealth, society had descended, through the influence of a profligate court, to a state of extreme debasement. William III. is supposed to have cherished some Oriental tastes; and if the grandees of the kingdom abstained generally from following his example, they would appear to have made ample amends for their forbearance on this point by unlimited indulgence in every other.

The arrangement of the succession, the rebellions of the Stuarts, the introduction of the German dynasty, tended to unsettle the principles of public men. The old superstition of divine right had made way for the doctrine of mere expediency. The Tories, corrupted by pensions, places, titles, the smiles of the monarch, and the plunder of the provinces

transferred their mercenary loyalty from the Stuarts to the Guelfs. Among the Whigs a larger theory of public liberty gradually developed itself, though for the purpose of wielding the authority of the state they did not scruple to employ the instrument of boundless corruption.

Other causes contributed to lower the ethical tone of English society. The growth of our empire in the East attracted immense flights of adventurers to Asia, where they at once gave free scope to their licentiousness and to their cupidity. And when they had shaken off thoroughly the yoke of moral restraint, acquired almost fabulous vices, and accustomed their minds to the exercise of oppression and tyranny, they returned home to augment the influence of the court, and deteriorate the institutions of their country. The despotic temper and mean understanding of George III., seconded by a series of corrupt and subservient ministers, kindled the flames of insurrection in America, and led to the founding of that great republic, which now stands foremost among the governments of the world.

L.

Meanwhile, the infidelity and wickedness prevailing on the continent had traversed the channel and domiciliated themselves among us. A rage for imitating foreigners pervaded the whole privileged orders. A new ethical nomenclature disguised the profligacy of the age,—seduction, desertion, adultery, escaped

public censure under the name of *gallantry*. The absence of honour and integrity, was denominated a *knowledge of the world*. Submission to the will of the prince or his favourites was *prudence*, and to grow rich by court bribes, was to be a good husband and father. Statesmen counselled their sons to become masters of the secrets of foreign ministers, by debauching their wives or mistresses. Ladies in shoals thronged the saloons of rich and titled libertines, tottering with age or premature decrepitude on the brink of the grave. Everything went for money; no matter how offensive the manners, or how depraved the character, women, young and old, married and single, were always full of complaisance towards the possessors of inordinate opulence. The old Duke of Queensberry, says Horace Walpole, the English representative of the De Lauzuns and Grammonts of France, had his death-bed covered with letters from females of quality, ready to hazard whatever reputation remained to them for the gratification of their venal rapacity.

Our aristocracy had sunk to this corrupt and degraded state, when the French revolution came to awaken them from their lethargy. Overawed by the terrible chastisement inflicted by Nemesis on reckless and incorrigible grandeur among our neighbours, they were scared suddenly into reformation. Some examples of high honour and unimpeachable integrity had always remained, and these were now set up as models for the rising age. Religion, after having been long estranged and repulsed, was once more

wooded back to the heart as its only true consolation. Instead of being proud, as previously, of resembling the French, it became at once the fashion to repudiate all traces of likeness, and to cultivate once more those virtues of home growth which had elevated our great ancestors to a level with the stoics of the old world. Every statesman of masculine principles and enlarged capacity, recognised the necessity of ameliorating our ancestral institutions, and reform and popular education became the cry; weak at first, but growing rapidly stronger, until the entire nation became excited, and hurried into that mighty current which is bearing the whole modern world towards democracy.

PART THE SECOND.

I.

ALL improvement in society commences with the reformation of opinion. Out of their own false ideas the scourges of mankind are fabricated, and hence the extreme difficulty of overthrowing a long-established idol; though the most encouraging sign of the present times is the tendency of all original thinkers, and philosophical investigators, to historical scepticism. We are beginning to escape the impositions practised upon past ages. The annals of ancient empires are scrutinised and re-constructed; the heroes of the past are interrogated before a tribunal more terrible than that of Rhadamanthus; and therefore we are not without hope that the minds of our children may be delivered from those traditional frauds and errors which have hitherto exercised the most relentless tyranny over the human race.

There are still some names in which the fate of a political system, or creed, appears to be involved; others are spared through habit or timidity; but a careful examination of contemporary literature will disclose to us many indications that a bolder and a wiser spirit is about to dawn upon society. Constantine, the idol of ecclesiastical historians, because he created a State church, and enriched it with extravagant donations, has been gradually brought down from the lofty pedestal on which he once stood. It is remembered that he murdered his father-in-law, his nephew, and his son, and that in all likelihood he also imbrued his hands in the blood of his wife. These domestic crimes were accompanied by others of almost equal atrocity, both against individuals and the State; and therefore as philosophy obtains influence over the judgment of mankind, the memory of this suspicious convert to Christianity, which he disgraced by his conduct, is blasted and withered.

II.

Another tyrant, of similar energy and equal guilt, is likewise descending gradually from the bad eminence to which servility and adulation in his lifetime elevated him; I mean the Czar Peter, upon whom the vulgar, both among sophists and the populace, have bestowed the name of Great. This despot, who likewise assassinated his son, succeeded, no doubt, in accelerating the progress of civilization in Russia; but while pursuing this policy, set at nought all the laws of morality, public and private,

was a contemner of oaths, a violator of treaties, a conspirator against neighbouring states, a gross and licentious adulterer, inhuman towards his family, and ferocious towards the rest of his subjects.

III.

History in despotisms is only a piece of grave imposture, which endeavours by honied lies to "blazon evil deeds." Peter, as delineated by this delusive pencil, was a hero, intent on promoting the good of mankind. Draw aside the tinselled veil of disguise, and he stands forth a crafty, unprincipled, lustful tyrant, debauched in mind, and gross in manners; falling occasionally into convulsions from the effects of regal poison administered to him in his youth, but much more frequently convulsed by those disorderly passions which the indulgent ethics of modern times deem pardonable in a prince.

They who are satisfied with a theatrical exhibition, may study Peter in Voltaire's pages. But divest him of the trappings of sophistry, and you behold a man, endowed, no doubt, with great energy, but coarse, offensive, and immersed in unbounded libertinism. One scene from his life, sketched by a princess, may serve to convey an idea of the remainder. During his travels, he passed from Holland into Prussia, pausing on the way at Cleves to afford the Czarina an opportunity of miscarrying, and on his arrival at Berlin, took up his residence in a small palace belonging to the queen, which was almost rendered uninhabitable by the disgusting practices

of this prince and his associates. Besides his wife, he had along with him about four hundred women, who called themselves ladies, but in reality were for the most part German servants, ladies' maids, cooks, and washerwomen. Nearly every one of these creatures (I use the expression of the king of Prussia's daughter) carried a baby richly dressed in her arms, and if asked whose it was, replied, "It is one I have had the honour to bear to the Czar." It was evident that the empress lived on the best of terms with the members of this seraglio; for observing that Frederick William's queen treated them disdainfully, she returned the compliment by behaving towards her daughters in like manner. Catherine spoke but little German, and understood less. Dressed like an actress, sparkling all over with jewels and orders, which clinked against each other as she walked, "Her Majesty" reminded the Princess Wilhelmina of a mule in motion.

IV.

At a banquet given by Frederick William to these barbarous guests, a very striking example of the instability of fortune was exhibited. Getting tired of mangling German with the queen, Catherine called her fool, with whom she conversed in Russian, and indulged every now and then in loud bursts of laughter. The person who acted this part was a Princess Galitzin, who having been engaged in a conspiracy, was compelled to play the part of the Czarina's fool to save her life, after having been

twice subjected to the knout. If the mind of this unfortunate lady had not been shaken by her sufferings, it is difficult to imagine a more distressing scene than this, which, besides exciting our pity and sympathy, exhibits Peter and his wife, in the most odious light.

V.

Moralists often seek to console themselves for their social inferiority, by dwelling on the fancied miseries of crowned heads. But despots manage to support very well the amount of misfortune which falls to their share, so that history, though conversant with the crimes and dissensions of palaces, affords, I believe, few examples of regal suicide. Their heavily laden consciences may, perhaps, restrain them from entering unbidden that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns.

Prussia, however, in the eighteenth century, was on the point of affording an instance of this moral phenomenon; for Frederick William, after having dismissed his wife and children with abundant curses, twisted a rope about his neck, and was hastening to strangle himself, when those cherished members of his family rushed back and prevented him. This formed the first scene in a royal drama of curious interest. His Prussian Majesty was not mad, but melancholy. The consciousness of his sins,—and they were not a few,—oppressed him like a nightmare. It was apprehended therefore by his best friends that he would become religious, which

they dreaded more than suicide. Had they thoroughly understood his character, they would have experienced no such fears.

VI.

The mingling of sorrow with licentiousness is common among all classes, and not the least common among kings. Surrounded by an ocean of enjoyment, they have little time for grief; so that if they cry with one eye, they laugh with the other.

When George I. died of apoplexy, his son-in-law of Prussia experienced some pangs of regret, especially as by this catastrophe his daughter appeared to have lost a husband. His sorrow was of short duration. Tempted by those around him, he plunged into all sorts of excesses, which ruined his health, and rendered him hypochondriacal. Of course, there was an ecclesiastic at hand to take advantage of this humour. I mean Mr. Franke, the pietist, who is supposed to have augmented the gloom then thickening about the king's intellect. According to this casuist, music and hunting rank among the seven deadly sins. All pleasures are prohibited, and the only duty of man upon earth is to dissertate without ceasing upon theology. Mr. Franke, who obviously belonged to the sect of the Princess Galitzin, declaimed incessantly at table, and edified his royal convert and family with a long homily every afternoon. This may in some measure account for the impiety of Frederick II., whom this dog Franke, as Wilhelmina calls him, almost sermon-

ized to death, during her father's paroxysms of melancholy.

VII.

Frederick did not, however, desire to appear impious in the eyes of the Prussians. "I may write," he says, "a few psalms, to raise a good opinion of my orthodoxy; we must give way to the fancies of a foolish people, in order to avoid persecution. But, for my part, whoever may enlist under the banner of fanaticism, I never will."

Under the influence of his gloomy visions, Frederick William conceived the idea of imitating Charles V., in abandoning the throne to his son, which so alarmed his friends, Grunkow and Sekendorf, that they immediately devised a new plan for his majesty's cure. His usual circle of amusements, consisting of intrigues with low mistresses, drunkenness, reviewing his colossal soldiers, and beating his children, would no longer suffice. They bethought themselves therefore of enlarging it, and prevailed on him to accept the invitation of Augustus, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, to spend the Carnival at Dresden, ostensibly for the purpose of negotiating a marriage between his eldest daughter, Wilhelmina, and Augustus; but in reality to detach him from Franko and pietism, through the seductions of elegant vice. The king fell easily into the trap, though set for him with true German awkwardness.

The court of Dresden was at that period the most profligate in Germany,—a bold thing to say,—and

Augustus, was probably the most profligate person in it. He possessed a harem worthy of Solomon,—his own daughter, the Countess Ozciska, among the rest; and 'tis reckoned he had by them 354 children. This virtuous prince, with good dinners and Hungarian wines, soon put Frederick William's melancholy to flight; after which, Grunkow, who, in the midst of pleasure, never lost sight of politics, plotted with Augustus how once more to betray his master into a taste for women.

VIII.

One evening, when they had drunk deep, the King of Poland led his guest into an apartment, furnished sumptuously, and with the most exquisite taste. Frederick William, whose senses had been thrown by the wine into a state of delirious excitement, stood still, and gazed around him with rapture. At this moment, a piece of tapestry was raised suddenly, and, reposing upon a costly couch, he beheld a lady with face and form of extraordinary beauty. His daughter, Wilhelmina, to whom we are indebted for this scene, describes it *con amore*, but her picture is too much in the same spirit with the exhibition itself, to be admitted into these pages.

The Prussian king would probably have yielded to the seduction, but that, turning round, he beheld his son Frederick at his elbow, at which he was so disgusted, that, pushing him furiously out of the room, he retreated with affected indignation. The sequel is instructive; Frederick had fallen in love

with the Countess Ozelska, which inspired the Saxon monarch with so fierce a fit of jealousy, that in order to induce him to abandon all designs against her, he consented to relinquish Formera, the beautiful lady of the cabinet; who thus became the first mistress of the philosopher of Sans Souci.

IX.

I have alluded above to the first connexion of ecclesiastical establishments with the State—I mean in the Christian world. Among the pagans, priests were often employed in subduing the minds of the people to answer the designs of their rulers. This was the case throughout Asia, in Egypt, and more or less in Greece and Rome. But when truth, divine and pure, came to be preached to mankind, it might not unreasonably have been expected that its ministers would hold themselves aloof from secular influence, and preserve that independence without which no man, or body of men, can ever obtain or deserve the entire confidence of their fellow-creatures.

A State Church therefore is a church perverted from its original intention. Everything becomes corrupt in the hands of corrupt men. Thus the acts of teaching truth and administering justice, are frequently converted into the means of giving currency to error, and force and efficacy to iniquity. Even churches too often forget the end for which they were established; and because they derive their support through the hands of authority, though drawn altogether from the people, enlist themselves under the

banner of the powerful against the weak, losing sight of the original principle of Christianity, which was to break the chains of the slave, to deliver the bondman from his lord, to elevate the condition of the poor, and advocate in the teeth of power the cause of the widow and the fatherless.

This duty no church, as a church, accomplishes in Christendom. In every one we detect more or less the benign influence of Christianity, but debased by the alloy of human institutions, and drifted far away from the primitive design of the Gospel by imperious self-seeking.

X.

There are those nevertheless who, in their lavish ingenuity, have imagined a philosophy, from which may be extracted a defence of even the worst churches. But does their subtle logic satisfy the human understanding? If so, how has it come to pass, that among nations which embrace with all the earnestness of conviction the sacred truths of the Gospel, the members of the Sacerdotal caste are nearly always viewed with suspicion and distrust? Observing them to be the antagonists of intellect, the people acquire with the first rudiments of knowledge, something like hostility to ecclesiastical bodies.

No character is more venerable than that of a minister of Christianity, yet in many parts of the world, though completely under its dominion, the very name of a priest inspires aversion. The

reason is, that laying aside the real characteristics of their high calling, the clergy have degenerated into a profession, intent like other men on the accumulation of capital, or the acquisition of honours and distinctions, with whatever else awakens the ambition, or constitutes the reward of mere worldlings. I am sensible that we must not task too severely the virtues of human nature. It is part of our lot here, though certainly the part of which we should be least proud, that the energy necessary to the pursuit of all active employments, requires the stimulus of gain. Yet certainly it seems not unreasonable to expect that the noblest and loftiest feelings of our nature, the love of God and of mankind, should inspire some degree of contempt for secular possessions. If, in all the earnestness and sincerity of our souls, we lay up our treasure, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal, we may very well be content to behold other men pass us by, in the race after titles and riches.

Christ had neither titles, nor possessions, nor home, nor family, nor friends. The world gave him nothing,—scarcely the bread required to support his sacred life. Yet went he about indefatigably, night and day, in heat and cold, in hunger and weariness, in contempt often, in danger always, revealing to those with whom he was allied by his humanity, the way to be reconciled with God.

XI.

His Apostles and immediate disciples followed humbly and patiently in the same track. Despised by grandeur, persecuted by governments, neglected by most men, they were so far from organizing a State Church, or desiring to organize one, that they purposely avoided all connexion with the people in authority. Taking example by their Divine Master, it was to the poor they preached. But the power of God went along with them, and softened the flinty rock under their feet, and spread them a pillow in the wilderness, and gave them bread to eat which the world knew not of, and enveloped them with a light from heaven, and blessed them even here with the sweetest of all inheritances, a holy and sacred place in the memory of all succeeding generations.

XII.

What those men did, might be done still, could we separate the Church from the State; there would yet, however, remain very much to be accomplished. To give vitality to the Christian system, to convert it everywhere into an accepted rule of conduct,—its teachers must practise the disinterestedness they inculcate. Little benefit can flow from preaching in silken robes and fine linen to the ill-fed and tattered Christian. The messenger of peace on earth and good-will towards men, must in some measure resemble his hearers; or if he differ from them, it

should be by his less costly raiment, by the superior simplicity of his manners, by his greater abnegation of self, by his gentleness, his humanity, his resignation. The ambassador of Heaven needs not the insignia of worldly authority. Our hearts are not warmed the more towards him, or more inclined to receive the truth he undertakes to deliver to us, by beholding him issue from a gorgeous palace, and proceed to the house of prayer and humiliation in a magnificent equipage lined with the richest stuffs, and adorned on the outside with glittering ornaments and heraldic paintings. The Franciscan monk, in his haircloth sack, barefooted, with a rope about his loins, bears a closer resemblance to the Apostles.

XIII.

No apprehension need be entertained that religion would want ministers. There is sufficient generosity, and nobleness, and faith, in human nature, to impel men to labour for the good of their kind, for the sake of that good, and nothing else.

We know that in pagan times, statesmen, magistrates, and private gentlemen, retiring in the decline of life from the world, often became the ministers of some temple, where they laboured to promote the instruction, secular and spiritual, of their countrymen; and who can doubt that it would be the same with us? Men would look forward to this as to a haven of peace, after a stormy life, where in the

hush of the passions, and entirely exempt from all mean and sordid considerations, they might devote themselves to the noblest service of their country, and breathe forth their souls in the act of doing good.

But wherever there exists a State Church the reverse of this must always be found. Whether they desire it or not, the clergy inevitably become under such circumstances the instrument of government, which they must support, with or against their consciences. They often find themselves under the necessity of repeating, weekly or daily, barren formulæ, or incredible propositions, attributing to certain individuals virtues or great qualities altogether incompatible with their conduct and character. Where the mind has been contaminated by such culpable compliance, it feels less reluctance to repress the promptings of conscience, loses its self-respect, and ceases to look up with due reverence to the fountain of all truth. Reflection upon these circumstances led Milton to maintain that to become a priest is to write oneself a slave; though examples may now and then be found of men endowed with sufficient strength to resist the force of habit, to set authority at defiance, and to preserve the even tenor of their way in the faithful performance of their duty towards mankind. The majority cannot be expected to display this rare greatness of soul. On the contrary, the ecclesiastical order throughout Christendom has degenerated into a sort of spiritual body-guard of despotism, invariably siding with the distributors of wealth and preferment.

XIV.

It would be highly unphilosophical, however, to suppose that they do all this consciously and with design. No large body of men could endure life in a position so humiliating. It would be complimenting their understanding at the expense of their honesty to imagine that they comprehend the theory of their own craft. A few Machiavellian ecclesiastics may by force of investigation penetrate beyond the veil, and discover the real object aimed at by the establishment of State Churches, but the great majority of the sacerdotal order in all countries are the unconscious instruments of a State policy, which governs them as imperiously as the other classes of the community. I am very far, therefore, from being inimical to the clergy, though I object to their office as ministers of a State Church. As ministers of the Gospel, in whatever other way supported, they would be entitled to respect in proportion to their earnestness and sincerity; and I believe there are many,—I can personally answer there are some,—who, if Church and State were separated to-morrow, would persevere in the performance of what they conceive to be their duty, with unswerving and unfaltering fidelity.

XV.

No revolution can be greater than that which is taking place in the public opinion of Europe on this subject. In contemplating the entire fabric of the

political edifice, with all its vast outworks and bastions, it is found that no portion is more assailable than that in which the Church stands united to the State. Against this point, accordingly, the attacks of reformers have long been directed. They feel that religion derives nothing but detriment from its connexion with the State. Even morality cannot be made to flourish by act of parliament. The more profoundly a nation becomes impregnated with the love of truth, with piety, with sincerity, with devotion, the greater its enmity to ecclesiastical establishments organized exclusively for political purposes. There is almost a necessary contradiction between the duty which the clergy owe to God and the compliances systematically required of them by their rulers. This, in many periods of modern history, has occasioned a species of sacerdotal revolt, when the priests have taken part with the people, or in the interest of their own order carried on the most determined hostilities against royal and imperial aggressors.

XVI.

But as a rule, priests and tyrants have lived in close alliance. The despotism of Muscovy, at this moment the most closely knit and terrible in the world, exerts its fatal and degrading influence through the Greek Church. That immense organization, operating upon society from the frozen banks of the Oby to those of the Danube, over sixty millions of human beings, subdues their spirit, and moulds their

passions, and directs their energies in obedience to the will of one remorseless and unprincipled individual. It is chiefly through the superstition of his serfs that the Czar is great. His bearded satellites in black or furred capote, with a turret of cap on their head, with congealed visage, and nasal drawl, inculcate upon high and low throughout the empire a false adoration of the despot, elevating him almost to an equality with God. In return, the autocrat himself inflames the ambition and favours the subtle designs of the priesthood. Whenever he engages in war, it is sure, according to his professions, to be for the promotion of the orthodox faith. With the plan of some sanguinary campaign in his pocket, with the maps of devastating conquests already drawn out, he makes declarations of reliance upon the justice of his cause, and snuffles in his barbarous dialect an impious allocution, which he denominates a prayer to the Almighty. The traveller through Russia who should speak the language would witness, if he frequented the churches, exhibitions of strange character. Religion, the soul's atmosphere, encircles the globe, keeping alive everywhere our holiest thoughts and associations. But in places like Russia it is adulterated with deleterious mixtures. The priest ascends the pulpit, not to preach Christ, but Nicholas; not to inculcate peace and good-will towards men, but furious and destructive fanaticism, lust of conquest, hatred of neighbours, and the necessity of a blind submission to the audacious behests of authority.

Far in the heart of Asia, or amid the snowy solitudes of the north, the unhappy peasants are excited almost to madness by sacerdotal agitators, inspired with zeal and ferocity by wild visions of patriarchal splendour. Thus wrought upon, immense multitudes are ever ready to march under the imperial standard to what they regard as a holy war, though its only object is to assuage the senseless thirst of dominion in the Romanzoff family.

XVII.

At the head, however, of all churches, considered simply as instruments of mental subjugation, stands that of Rome. Uniting in itself the focus of secular despotism and ecclesiastical imposture, it extends its empire over much the greater part of Christendom. Wherever intellect has exhibited a disposition to be refractory, whether against kings or priests, the Papal system, sympathising profoundly with tyranny, has invariably placed its racks and gibbets, its wheels and pulleys, its chains and dungeons, its thumbscrews and martyr-flames, at the service of oppression. By a steady adherence to this policy, framed with consummate craft and developed with intrepid villany, it has succeeded in de-rauding a majority of Christian nations of their inalienable birthright—liberty.

Spain, once filled with a chivalrous and gallant population, has sunk gradually through the chilling influence of priests and monks, almost to a level with the grovelling tyrannies of Africa. In Austria

and throughout Germany, except where Protestantism is established, a formidable ecclesiastical militia suppresses all tendencies towards liberalism.

Modern society looks with wonder and terror at the secret combinations of former ages as delineated by history, and is unconscious that similar combinations exist in its own bosom, organized by monarchs and priests for the subversion of freedom. The same Jesuits who cooperated with the Ferdinands, the Philips, and the Rodolphs, in extirpating religious and liberal ideas from the popular mind, are still labouring under the descendants of those despots at exactly the same task. Scarcely any fireside is free from the intrusion of this black fraternity, which has become indispensable to absolute princes. Hence, though the order has at various times been hunted down and suppressed, it is sure to revive again to meet the exigencies of arbitrary power. The numerous revolutions in France have been rendered completely nugatory by the disciples of Loyola. Openly, or in disguise, they are ever at hand to bar the emerging of the people into light. Their mission is to inculcate immorality, servility, meanness, ignorance—everything that can lead mankind to bow their neck patiently to the yoke.

Like the Greek priests, or the pagan prototypes of Rome, they distinguish themselves by their solicitude to accomplish the apotheosis of imperial guilt. The blood of the people, sends up a sweet savour to their nostrils, they bless the hand that perpetrates a street massacre, they diffuse themselves through

villages and hamlets, they creep stealthily into the dwellings of the peasants, they ingratiate themselves with helpless mothers and children; whom they pollute by their superstitions, till they are ready to lisp or mumble with adoration the name of the destroyer of their kindred.

This demoralizing process we have witnessed with deep affliction in France, where the struggle henceforward must be between the Republic and the Jesuits. One of these powers must be exterminated before the other can triumph. Liberty, however, is now depressed, its advocates are in prison or in exile, and not a few of the most distinguished have expiated their attachment to it with their lives. When the day of retribution comes, the people in all likelihood will put in practice the lesson which the past has taught them. They have tried moderation, and it has not answered their hopes. Next time they will probably make an experiment in the opposite direction.

XVIII.

The demonstration that a State Church is no way conducive to the diffusion or purification of religion is supplied by the United States. There the republic allies itself with all forms of Christianity, but places exclusive dependence upon none. Convinced that free institutions must derive their vitality from faith, the statesmen of the Union are careful to train up the youthful citizens of both sexes in morality and piety. Theology enters into every man's studies. The wild settler, who retreats from society and

itches his tent in the far back woods, does not imagine himself to escape thus from the grasp of those ideas which originated on Calvary and the Mount of Olives. On the contrary, he feels them to be interwoven with his whole intellectual and moral system. Every fibre of his heart vibrates nightly to the touch of religion; and it is this that renders him fearless, that enables him to subdue fatigue, to endure privations, to make great personal sacrifices, and to form stupendous projects of civilization which time will unquestionably bring to maturity. Upon all the processes of thought in America we find indelibly impressed the image and superscription of Christianity. Every man is a priest upon his own hearth; and exactly in proportion as he is undaunted towards man, is he humble and submissive towards God. This constitutes the palladium of liberty in America. God is King where there is no other, and they only are fit to be His subjects who have shaken off every inferior yoke.

XIX.

Bacon has remarked, that lawyers are bad legislators. With a slight change the observation will apply to churchmen, who are almost invariably bad politicians. Accustomed to one set of maxims, which in their form were applicable to a particular state of society, they are apt to carry into the concerns of the world a spirit of pedantry, than which nothing can be more inimical to the proper management of business. They separate human actions into two

spheres, of which the one is under the sway of one set of principles, while the other is subjected to another totally different. Yet they confound sin with crime, and presume that their acquaintance with the theory of the former entitles them to be judges of the latter. Timid where they are sincere, they subject their minds to the influence of political superstition, and fear to encounter innovation, as if it were in itself an evil. They lose sight of the limits which divide the spiritual from the temporal, and because submission to the laws of Providence is a virtue, persuade themselves that submission to all other laws is so also. The goal of such doctrines is passive OBEDIENCE, to which ecclesiastics are generally inclined. They cannot persuade themselves that rebellion against bad government is as much a duty as obedience to good ones. Burke observes rightly enough that government is of divine institution, but that all forms of it are human. No other view of the matter is consistent with common sense, but sacerdotal politicians taking a professional view of secular affairs, imagine that all forms of civil polity are ordained by God—or, in other words, are teachers, without perceiving it, of a blind fatality to which it would be immoral, if it were possible, to offer resistance. By giving currency to tenets like these, they corrupt the minds of youth and disable them from comprehending their true interests. It requires some intrepidity of intellect in a pupil of the Church to believe that Heaven takes no concern in any form of government, excepting so far as it may be conform-

able to the principles of justice and promote the happiness of mankind. True religion inculcates rebellion against all other authority, since whatever circumscribes the field of human enjoyment, is in direct opposition to the Divine will. The Church ought long ago to have made the discovery that Theology is a part of politics, since it constitutes one of those sciences through which the human race is governed. Ecclesiastics, therefore, should be possessed by the humility to feel and admit their dependence on statesmen, who comprehend them and their science as the greater comprehends the less. If they would display this deference for their natural superiors they would cease to perplex their own minds, and those of their neighbours, with what does not lie within the range of their studies. Content with directing the consciences of the people, they should cease to meddle with their civil and political action. It is no part of their duty to inculcate obedience generally, but merely obedience to what is just, leaving it to mankind to determine what is or is not so. A State Church, however, cannot act on this principle, because the very object of its institution is to inculcate servile submission to the existing order of things. Yet there was a time when it constituted what may be called a middle term between governments and people, tempering the severity of the one, and elevating the hopes and aspirations of the other. This was in the infancy of modern civilization, which having in its progress elevated some sections of society far above the Church, and inspired them with

designs and wishes beyond the contemplation of its philosophy, it has in self-defence fallen back upon governments, and taken part with them against the people.

XX.

In the French Revolution the clergy and nobility were at first more the object of popular dislike than the monarchy, especially when it was found by experience that instead of contributing cheerfully their proper proportion towards the support of the State, they intrenched themselves behind the rampart of their privileges from the assaults of the tax-gatherer, which they sought to direct exclusively against the people. To men nurtured in the servile principles of Catholicism, it required no common effort to retreat from the sanctuary; but when they beheld it desecrated by selfishness and avarice, they listened to the invitations of that seductive philosophy which, confounding religion with its ministers, sought to overwhelm both beneath the ruins of the Church.

Truth, however, is indestructible, and therefore, while the whole fabric of rites, ceremonies, and superstitions, priests, nuns, cardinals, friars—white, black and grey, with all their trumpery,—were buried beneath the formless ruins of oblivion, Religion emerged from the fiery trial with all the lineaments of her divine beauty more resplendent than ever. This will console true piety for the threatening aspect of affairs all over Europe. Forms may perish, but the eternal essence of truth lies beyond the reach of human

power, and our minds and understandings, whether willingly or reluctantly, must be obedient to its empire.

XXI.

One of the most inherent vices of governments is extravagance, which leads as a necessary result to poverty. Courts and ministers, admirals and generals, ambassadors and agents, with all the subordinate classes of officials, deal lavishly with the public money, because being ignorant of the sweat, and toil, and tears by which it is produced and accumulated in the state treasury, they imagine it to flow spontaneously from some inexhaustible source. The absence of economy and frugality leads to embarrassment, and this again to debt—which, whether to nations or individuals, is one of the worst forms of slavery.

Accordingly no sight is more common than that of governments, having exhausted their legitimate resources, applying to capitalists and speculators for the means of carrying on some foreign war, or oppressing their own subjects. Nearly all the sovereigns of the continent have made over their thrones and sceptres in pawn to Jews and money-lenders. Nations not yet in the womb will thus be made the inheritors of ancestral debts, and will either have to clear themselves a way to freedom though the bankruptcy of empires, or with the ban of poverty and infamy upon them, settle down into hopeless servitude.

There are those, however, who view this state of

things with complacency, either because as capitalists they profit by the necessities of despots, or because they dread the occurrence of those troubles through which alone oppressed nations can hope to effect their political and social deliverance. In the event of any great catastrophe, such persons deserve to be involved in the ruins of the systems they uphold. Humanity should reserve its compassion for the industrious, the humble and the poor, upon whom the weight of despotic institutions most remorselessly presses; and in their behalf accordingly it is, that Nemesis strikes at regal and imperial profusion, and brings down their towering pride to the dust.

The causes which circumscribe the resources of power paralyse at the same time the energies of the people. This latter consequence does not in all cases make its appearance at once. Governments often seem to be imparting a fresh impulse to industry by those public works which, being unproductive, absorb uselessly the national wealth. Roads, bridges, canals, railway's, by facilitating the operations of trade and commerce, enrich the community whose resources they appear to exhaust; but the building of useless palaces and fortifications, or the erection of any other structures for mere show, though it may for a while repress disaffection by affording employment to the needy, can only complicate the difficulties of arbitrary rulers, and render their fall when it comes more disastrous and complete. The same observation applies with still greater force to mere wars of ambition. Under some governments con-

quests are undertaken, not simply in order to enlarge the territories of the State, but to provide a means of absorbing its superfluous valour and activity. The public are dazzled into acquiescence by the phantom splendours of glory, which have charms and allurements for a people exactly in proportion to its vanity and weakness.

XXII.

In some States, no pains are taken to disguise the operations of despotism. The sovereign regards nothing but the suggestions of his own will, to which the nation, however vast and numerous, must yield a blind obedience. Of this we have an example in Russia. The Czar standing at the head of the social system, and inspiring all ranks with reverence or terror, wields the entire resources of the empire as if it were his private estate. But the creation and diffusion of great wealth require the stimulus of freedom. Men must feel that the property they accumulate is their own, or they will not be able to command the energy necessary to its accumulation. This explains the mighty development of society in the United States, and in Great Britain, where exactly in proportion to the amount of self-government, we observe the growth of riches, the boldness of speculation,—the universal prevalence of activity,—the independence, the intelligence, the integrity,—which produce and ensure the prosperity of nations.

I would not, however, be understood to maintain,

that despotism is altogether incompatible with the existence of wealth in a community. The tendency of mankind is everywhere and under all circumstances to multiply their own comforts and conveniences, and to aim at that social distinction which the possession of great superfluity confers. There exists an opulent aristocracy in Russia, together with merchants and traders who have amassed considerable property. But there is no easy middle class,—no large body of small proprietors or citizens, hoping by industry and economy to mingle as equals with the orders above them. The working of an iron system keeps every man in his place, and forbids even the birth of those hopes, which in free states urge men forward in the track of acquisition. Hence the revenues of the Czar bear no proportion to the extent of his dominions, or the number of his people. Were it otherwise, the subjugation of Europe by the Cossacks would be no chimerical enterprise; for no doubt can be entertained that the military population of Russia is sufficiently numerous, did it possess the means of putting and keeping itself in movement, to overwhelm the distracted, effeminate, or degraded inhabitants of the continent.

XXIII.

Fortunately there exists no means of engrafting the advantages of liberty on servitude. The policy of the Russian government, which seeks above all things to perpetuate tyranny, prevents at the same time the growth of intelligence, because knowledge is

not only power, but a power irreconcilable with arbitrary sway. To educate the people there, would no doubt be to multiply wealth, but it would at the same time be equally certain to scatter far and wide the seeds of revolution; for wealth also is power, and its possessors are in general little disposed to abandon what they have earned by toil and industry to the capricious ambition of despotism. By the operation of causes not within the control of the government, a great change has taken place even in the national character of the Muscovites. The men of property, who have traded and travelled and thought, look with secret disapprobation upon the conquering schemes of the Czar, which must be matured more or less at their expense, and already revolve in their minds the means of checking his reckless ambition. This will lead to the combination of the mercantile classes and the nobles, and create by degrees a check to the authority of the crown, in all likelihood through insurrection and violence. Meanwhile the poverty of the State obstructs the organization and marching of great armies. The soldiers, ill-clothed and ill-fed, engage with little ardour in carrying out the designs of their master. The mortality in all distant campaigns is enormous. In whatever direction they move, the hospitals are crowded with the living, the ditches and bogs with the dead; and fearing from the beginning what is likely to be their fate, they desert in multitudes whenever circumstances enable them to escape from their regiments.

XXIV.

Austria affords another instance of the poverty engendered by despotism. The Athenian orator, in his harangues, used to ridicule those paper battalions, as he denominated them, with which the contemporary Grecian states habitually menaced each other. The sovereigns of the house of Hapsburgh have been great proficient in the same system of strategy, by which, however, they have frequently succeeded in exciting throughout Christendom an extraordinary apprehension of their power; but the most sordid indigence lurks in the imperial treasury. Every act, therefore, of unjust aggression, is preceded by negotiations with the children of Israel for the means of perpetrating the crime. If these wily coadjutors of tyranny, dissatisfied with the offered percentage, persist in holding back their gold, the complicated apparatus of oppression, the heavy dragoons, the light and gay hussars, the stalwart infantry; the formidable parks of artillery, must remain immovable. Sometimes it happens, through the operation of this cause, that whole regiments are reduced to skeletons, that there are muskets and haversacks without men to bear them, cavalry corps without horses, and whole armies half-famished and depressed, crawling about in tatters, with the bitterest rage in their hearts against those who have reduced them to so despicable a state. In the old wars of the Low Countries, the Spanish soldiers were frequently compelled to subsist by begging; and

when this proved unproductive, by robbing in the streets, or on the highway. Occasionally their destitution urged them to still more desperate attempts; they took towns by storm, lived there at free quarters, defended them against the royal troops, and persevered in their hopeless independence till they were overcome and cut to pieces.

If things have not proceeded thus far in the Austrian armies, they are fast verging towards the same point; while the political organization of the empire is, if possible, in a still more disordered condition. In Bohemia, Croatia, Hungary, and above all in Italy, people of all ranks are animated with profound disaffection; the Italians, more especially, are universally impregnated with republican principles, and looking forward to the Nemesis of revolution to avenge them on their oppressors. All that can be expected of an indignant population they accomplish for the ruin of the imperial financiers; and it seems not improbable that the deficit caused in the public revenue, by this and other means, will commence the disruption of that organized mass which we denominate Austria.

XXV.

The circumstances which lead to the disorganization of the public finances, might be illustrated from the history, whether remote or recent, of every country in Europe. I confine myself to the most obvious. France, always exhausted by the profligacy of her monarchs, beheld herself, during the whole of

the eighteenth century, conducted gradually towards the brink of ruin, by the profusion and recklessness of the court. The employment of the upper classes had come to consist exclusively in administering to the sovereign's vices. Voluptuousness is essentially inconstant. The prince therefore required a rapid succession of mistresses, who were taken into favour, and cast off with less reluctance than children throw away toys. To prevent murmuring and discontent, however, each aristocratic courtesan obtained regularly, on her dismissal, the wages of infamy—and together, frequently, with all her relations, subsisted during the remainder of her life in disreputable splendour. But this, in speaking of the revenues of States, may appear at first but a small consideration. When we reflect, however, on the lavish manner in which princes squander the money of their subjects; when we find a whole order of nobility created and enriched through royal favour; when we observe the number and opulence of their chateaux, their vast bands of followers, the magnificence and costliness of their style of living, the millions they hazarded at play, we may form some faint conception of the inroads made upon the public treasury, by placing them in a situation to act thus. Colbert, no very niggardly economist, found himself under the necessity of checking the king's extravagant expenditure, even, in his own household, where the rage for gaming and the taste for costly suppers absorbed so much of the public revenues as to inspire the minister with alarm. Things proceeded

from bad to worse, as the monarchy approached its decrepitude. Under Louis XVI. poverty and fiscal disorganization reached their acmé. Yet no reformation was observable in the court, where the queen united Austrian pomp and insolence with the unreflecting profusion of her adopted country; the king, amused by playing the part of a locksmith, encouraged with inexplicable apathy the approaches of that political chaos which was so soon to engulf him and his whole race.

XXVI.

Very much the same lesson is taught by our own domestic experience. Thus many aristocratic families formerly rose to distinction and wealth, through the favour of the sovereign, and at the expense of the country. The Stuarts were the most active agents in this process of demoralization, which, having been once begun, went on without check or restraint, till Parliament and public opinion at length put a stop to it.

In Russia the Empress Catherine's paramours augmented largely the number of the nobles, and in Spain and Austria, from time immemorial, profligates of both sexes have taken and maintained their station near the throne, and oppressed and treated with scorn the virtue of the middle classes. In many cases, both abroad and at home, a disproportionate amount of wealth is lavished on successful admirals or generals, who in these days are far from being contented with laurel crowns. The military profession

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has, in fact, degenerated into a trade, and its members accordingly keep a strict debtor and creditor account with the country they serve.

XXVII.

I am not one of those who believe that free nations stand in no need of the ordinary implements of power, that they should concentrate all their activity in industrious channels, and leave to others the policy, the efforts, and the sacrifices of war. I believe, on the contrary, that all great states must occasionally go clad in iron, like the smallest; that they must be able to punish injustice, to defend their citizens, to overcome ambition, in short, to make themselves feared and respected throughout the whole civilized world. For this reason, fleets and armies are among the most indispensable possessions of popular communities. They are the means of developing externally the energies of the State, whose influence, so long as it is vigorous and healthy, will overflow like a spring tide upon its neighbours, and inspire them with reverence for its genius and ability.

But useless conquests and false ambition ruin the State. Among the titles of Louis Quatorze to be accounted great, historians omit to mention the situation in which he left the kingdom at his death. He had wasted all the resources of the country, and bequeathed to his successors a degree of poverty and exhaustion almost unexampled. Historians, though they persist in believing him to have been a great prince, unconsciously thus sum up his claims to be

so regarded. At his death, the National Debt amounted to a hundred million sterling. The revenues of the next two years had been forestalled. There remained but seven or eight hundred francs in the Treasury; forty-five millions were owing by the people; but they were unable to pay. The scarcity of the circulating medium was extreme and nearly general. Ruined by the wars, the nobility found themselves overwhelmed with debt. The great proprietors had sunk to a state bordering on indigence, numerous farms were abandoned, large estates left uncultivated. Along the frontier, the peasants, in want of everything—even of straw on which to sleep—left the country and settled in Germany. In the cities, the magistrates, deprived of their incomes, lived by loans from usurers. There was no trade, the produce of the royal lands was sold at eighty per cent. below its value, and all credit and confidence were destroyed among individuals. The wonder consequently is, not that the revolution came at last, but that it was so long in coming.

The principle of taxation in France was, as is well known, partial and unjust. The body of the people were exposed to land and capitation taxes, from which the nobility and clergy were free; the former under pretence of military service, which had become a fiction; the latter in consideration of voluntary gifts which they were seldom called upon to make. It has been asserted by some writers, that had the noble and ecclesiastical orders consented to relinquish this privilege, the revolution would

never have taken place. When Chalons and Rheims were nearly burnt down, a subscription was made throughout the kingdom for their inhabitants, upon which the Bishop of Chartres said, "I have been able to collect only a hundred pistoles in cash, and a hundred thousand francs in bank notes. The reason is, that the inundation of this paper money, (the true progenitor of the assignats,) has been as fatal to my diocese as the conflagration to Chalons and Rheims."

XXVIII.

The greatest revolution yet in store for the world, is a revolution in the theory of property. Ingenious writers, like Proudhon, have brought to bear on this subject a lavish profusion of sarcasm and eloquence; but without producing much effect on the general convictions of mankind, who feel that you attack their lives, when you attack the means by which they live. All that appears to render existence desirable, is bound up in the idea of property, which is, in fact, for the individual the most fascinating, as it is generally the most attainable form of power. To possess property is to possess dominion over your fellow-creatures—over beauty, over genius, over honour, over everything men most covet in the world. Observe how the opulent man is greeted everywhere with the golden smile of woman, with the servile flattery of men, with the hypocritical hospitality of courts, and the adulatory applause of senates. Property is invested with a sort of secular omnipotence, and enjoys that share of idolatry which

the feeble are always ready to offer up to power. But all who possess any skill in what may be termed political diagnosis, must have discovered from unmistakable symptoms, that humanity has at length given birth to an idea the antagonist to that of property, which in ways, and by means yet to be made clear, will destroy or greatly circumscribe its empire. It is felt that there is a state of happiness, attainable, which is not to be purchased by wealth; that mere voluptuousness, mere crude power, cannot constitute the ultimate end of our existence; but that we are capable of something holier, purer, and more enduring, which must be secured to the mind by forms of mental activity; that, in short, happiness is only possible in the region of ideas, and that to realize it even there, we must consent to substitute the general idea of humanity for that of self.

Happiness, according to the popular saying, was born a twin. You impart first to one individual the stores of your physical and intellectual life; but the process not being completed there, and the hunger for larger communion being ever more experienced, your love rises by degrees to the level of your family, of your friends, of your country, of your whole race. You learn to regard your individual satisfaction as depending on the prosperity of others. You cannot consent to enjoy while you behold them suffer. Your harmony is disturbed by their discord; you soar above the instincts and happiness of the individual; you merge your separate being in the great

flood of humanity, and seek to draw delight from sources common to your whole species.

Only the very lowest class of minds can be content in their maturity to derive pleasure from exclusiveness, from comparison with others less fortunate. It is a drawback to the gratification of the noble mind that there should be any want or suffering in the universe; that there should exist one soul forcibly condemned to be tortured with envy by having its proper food withheld from it, that it may be bestowed in excess on others.

XXIX.

Out of the adoption and diffusion of ideas like these, a new theory of property will necessarily spring. It must always have been obvious that the national wealth belongs to the nation, and that the creation of private property was only an imperfect contrivance to elude the difficulty of distributing that wealth in conformity with general and just laws. Could the State have depended on itself, it would have been its own steward; but succumbing to difficulties insurmountable, perhaps during certain stages of society, those duties were delegated to individuals which, in the original theory of society, belong inalienably to the State. As the science of politics perfects itself, therefore, it will become more and more possible to return to the primary principles of human association, which some endeavour to express by the term Socialism, others by that of Communism, —neither, as yet, accepted fully by the world.

Hitherto, in fact, we may be said not to know the goal towards which we are tending, and therefore it is obviously impossible for us to describe the road by which we are to reach it. Communism, however, which is universal association, includes Socialism, which is only partial association. The former, therefore, must touch more nearly on the proper solution of our social difficulties, though in all probability it has entered into the heart of no man to conceive how the effect is to be produced.

Meanwhile, it may be laid down as certain, that the things we designate by the word property, must be rendered more accessible to the many; that there must be a better distribution of them, less superfluity, in order that there may be less suffering; that Alpine fortunes must be reduced in altitude, that there may be found wherewith to cover those vast naked tracts of humanity which now lie arid and exposed to all the bitter blasts of misery. Experience has shown that there is in social life something like a golden mean, equally distant from poverty and riches, with which all the virtues of humanity kindly unite. The question is, how far can this golden mean be realized? Is poverty the necessary accompaniment of all forms of civil polity; and if so, is crime, which for the most part only indicates the absence of property, a thing justly punishable by human laws? According to the deduction of a severe political logic, what we call crime is the sum of those irregularities of humanity produced by the unskilful way in which governments play on that

mighty instrument. Properly attuned and skilfully touched, it produces only harmony; but when the chords are rudely struck by ignorance, discord is the consequence, the blame of creating which rests originally with society itself.

XXX.

Were the affairs of nations wisely administered, wealth would be so distributed that there should be no want, and knowledge so diffused that there should exist no ignorance—no ignorance, I mean, of those duties which all men owe to the State and to themselves. In most countries men are now taught to seek their happiness as individuals by erecting lofty platforms of property, on which they may climb up and sit secluded from their brethren. But as the happiness of man lies in communion, these solitary watchers of Mammon, whom the revolving seasons find ever at their posts, enjoy nothing of that serenity of soul, which is created by the interchange of kind offices among brethren, by comforting the afflicted, by feeding the hungry, by clothing the naked, by carrying earnestly and fervently into execution the divine precept of doing unto others as we would they should do unto us.

If there be one common parent of humanity—*πατήρ θεῶν τε καὶ ἀνθρώπων*—a curse must cling to those who treat their brethren as aliens, who defraud them of their portion of our common inheritance, who labour to blot out the image of God from their souls, who drive them beyond the pale of

civil society, convert them forcibly into Ishmaelites, and then make war upon them for offences not their own. Christianity is either true or false. If it be false, men have no right, for aught we know, to call God their father, or at least to regard each other as brethren. But if we are all the offspring of one principle; if one divine breath, transmitted through thousands of years, quickens us all into existence; if we were all moulded in one bosom; if we have all been cradled in one lap, and suckled at the same breast of woman, sophisticate how we may, we cannot obliterate from our souls the conviction that we are brothers, born with the same rights, and heirs to the same universal property, bequeathed by God our father to the human race.

XXXI.

Politicians have sometimes treated this subject rather as humourists than as philosophers, speaking of the action of civil society as a contest between those who have something, and those who have nothing, and apparently approving of the state of things which perpetuates this classification. The contest they speak of is undoubtedly going on, and will be brought to a conclusion as soon as the disinherited part of mankind acquire a certain amount of knowledge. If they meditate, they cannot fail to discover the truth, that society has treated them like a stepmother, and taken away their portions, to give to her favourite children. The *beau-ideal* of individual existence is harmonious action alternating

with repose, and the same thing is true of political existence; but there are few States in which we discover anything of this harmony. Instead, nothing presents itself but fierce discord, hatred of one class for another, envy, strifes, exclusion, excess, want, revenge.

Life, intended as a boon to all, is rendered almost a curse to many by want of the means of developing its capabilities. Property in profusion bestows on men the delights and the revels of gods; the extreme want of it reduces them to the rank of beasts, and causes them to be hunted down with unintermitting rancour by their fellows. Nor is this the worst. If they could carry into the conduct of this war the natural pride of man; if they could preserve their original inheritance of noble sentiments; if they could think grandly and act magnanimously, they would not be so much to be pitied: but it is the worst effect of poverty, that it blasts the ideas and dwarfs the mind, that it engenders mean and ignoble thoughts, that it inspires political superstition, and makes men bow the crooked hinges of the knee before their natural equals.

The virtue of a nation, therefore, is extended or circumscribed according as the inequality of material possessions is greater or less. Hopeless indigence is little removed from crime; inordinate wealth is habitually prolific of vice; but where a majority of the citizens enjoy a moderate competence, where intelligent industry may easily acquire land, where knowledge leads naturally to public employment,

without any reference to birth or opulence, the moral and social virtues flourish naturally, and are accompanied by a strong attachment to the State.

XXXII.

Here, in England, we are farthest perhaps removed of all men from the natural condition of mankind; feudalism, disguised by the modern forms of law, regulates the transmission of real property, and our whole system of manners has been impregnated by the spirit of our legislation. The estates of certain great families are equal to principalities in extent. The revenues of individuals are enormous, and there are those who possess, for the various seasons of the year, for the convenience of hunting, or the indulgence of caprice, a greater number of palaces, in various parts of the country, than the ancient Persian kings. Their plantations, their parks, their grounds, devoted exclusively to pleasure; their artificial lakes, and canals, and ponds, and streams, administer to every whim of luxury, or dream of idleness.

In the close vicinity of their paradises, exists perhaps a large population not possessing a single rood of land, crowded into small, filthy, unwholesome hovels, where fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, sleep together in demoralizing confusion. The one state of things in this case is the cause of the other. Through the law of primogeniture property descends in masses, which for the most part are constantly enlarged. The cottager's garden and field are

gradually absorbed in the lands of the squire, which again, through intermarriage or otherwise, are often lost in the domains of the grandee. These facts suggest the course which reform ought henceforward to take with respect to property, otherwise we shall teach, whether profitably or not, to the rest of the world, the lessons which the history of other countries has long been vainly endeavouring to inculcate upon us. Even the people, unmindful of their best interests, often seek to promote the popular cause by creating new great proprietors, who in the second generation, if not in the first, will keep themselves as sedulously removed from democratic contact as the ancient members of the oligarchy, ennobled and enriched by regal partiality and profusion.

PART THE THIRD.

I.

IN the present condition of society what is the paramount duty of a good citizen? Is it to ally himself with the partizans of reaction, to exhaust his intellectual faculties in the support of authority, to perplex the minds of men by a defence, eloquent or otherwise, according to his power, of the prejudices of past generations; or to fall in with the march of humanity where it now stands, and to advance with it towards the new destiny which God has in store for us?

In the past, nothing is respectable but justice, truth, liberty; and that not because they are ancient, but because they are excellent in themselves. To reverence what is old, because it is old, to kneel before the majesty of buried generations, and take laws from them, is indeed to walk in a vain shadow, and disquiet ourselves in vain. It is well to tread

over the past as we tread over the ruins of extinct races, and fallen cities, and shattered empires; not to consult dumb oracles, not to worship at desecrated shrines, but to collect and preserve the fragments of art, the records of the little that was good among the people whom time has swept away: and what a melancholy spectacle is the past! a few names, a few nations encircled by glory stand elevated and visible through the gloom; but the infinite majority of our fellow-creatures are buried from sight in unfathomable obscurity and oblivion, as they were buried during their lives in an overwhelming flood of misery.

From all that has happened to our race, from all that history and politics and poetry have bequeathed to us, we learn but this truth, that God helps those who help themselves. In this homely maxim centres all the wisdom of the world. The slothful, the vain, the credulous, the ignorant, and the superstitious have a knee for every idol, and are always ready to implore succour of everything external to themselves. Hence the existence of those great political parties, which have made so much noise in the world. Great, I mean, in the sense in which we speak of a great flock of sheep, or great herds of cattle. Their respectability resides in their numbers; and out of their own humility and degradation they fabricate the power and glory of their oppressors.

II.

We now stand upon the threshold of a new era, in which mankind, it is to be hoped, will divest them-

selves as far as possible of all reverence for mere authority, of all worship of names, of all deference for anything but truth and just principles, and the men by whom they have been revealed. The whole domain of the past will have to be reviewed in a new spirit; politics, poetry, philosophy must be recast, in order that the germs of social and civil idolatry may, if possible, be extirpated from the human mind. This idea presented itself to many of the leaders of the first French revolution, and though the design was but imperfectly executed, it has never been relinquished, but is still in the course of fulfilment. From the whole aspect of contemporary society, we discern clearly that the leaven of revolution is there, pervading, fermenting, and heaving through the entire mass. The advocates of the old order of things, whether honest or dishonest, reluctantly admit the truth of this, and launch their antiquated thunders at those who superintend the process, but without doing for the present much execution.

All great political catastrophes have been preceded by a questioning of the moral and religious principles on which society rests. Our own civil wars were ushered in by tempestuous discussions on things ethical and spiritual. First, the authority of the Church was disputed, then its liturgies and dogmas, then the civil institutions connected with it, marriage, social subordination, and property. When the entire national mind is in a state of ferment, individuals more exalted than the rest project their thoughts

into the supernatural world, confound the motions and influences of heaven and earth, and seek to establish all sorts of perverse opinions, chiefly with reference to their susceptibility of being rendered serviceable to the new order of things.

III.

Men in society understand little of the reasons of their own actions and opinions. Their religion and morals, as well as their politics, are traditional, and, therefore, when a bold thinker arises to contest all their positions, and, divested of all reverence for their creeds and systems, the whole fabric of public belief, whether in things natural or spiritual, is easily shaken. No one has yet explored the entire domains of the possible; and, therefore, when it is affirmed that certain men and women are favoured with preternatural revelations; that through an unintelligible process, and in defiance of what we have been accustomed to call the laws of nature, they can be in two places at one time, or through some palpable medium carry the power of vision where the individual who sees is not,—unbounded credulity is introduced on the one hand, and scepticism on the other.

They whose minds abound in the principles of faith, scarcely find enough to believe in the wildest inventions of enthusiasm; while persons of the contrary habit of mind, seeing how little credit is to be given to many things believed by their neighbours, oppose an invincible scepticism to everything they hear.

Thus, in France, during the eighteenth century, credulity and incredulity marched side by side. Nothing was too sacred for some to doubt, nothing too absurd for others to believe. Even in matters of finance, miracles were wrought out of the excess of popular ignorance. No one knew what was practicable or impracticable, and therefore Law's Mississippi scheme displaced and distributed, as with the power of enchantment, the entire wealth of the kingdom, and, it was supposed, of the whole world. By writing certain documents, and signing certain papers, gold it was believed would flow into the streets of Paris like melted snow into Alpine torrents.

Opinion, flexible and vague, embraced the wildest calculations; everybody was to be enriched, without impoverishing any one; and though wide-spread devastation and ruin followed close at the heels of this mania, the taste for speculation having been communicated to the French mind, was not to be extirpated by experience or reason.

IV.

Law was the greatest of modern revolutionists, and though he failed, the example of his failure may be traced in the vagaries of a thousand obscure projectors, who moved through the mighty labyrinth of French society, reproducing his principles on a small scale, though diverging into paths which the Scotch financier never dreamt of.

To produce a revolution, it is as important to create belief in new opinions as to discredit old ones.

The great point is to remove the ancient landmarks of faith and practice. You must innovate, whether through belief or unbelief; and as the concomitant of bad government there is generally enough of misery in society to obtain credence for whatever runs counter to the established system. Its advocates may declaim with great force and ingenuity on the dangerous nature of the new principles—may warn the community against adopting them—may take refuge alternately in scorn and terror, and labour in the cause of authority with untiring earnestness. They will labour in vain, without, perhaps, being conscious of it; their very mental activity is a symptom of the disease against which they combat. Its approach has disturbed their nervous sensibility, and the efforts they make to disentangle themselves from the great intellectual current in which they are plunged, are like those which the scared and desperate swimmer makes, who finds himself in the first absorbing eddies of the Niagara Falls. The water may still be comparatively smooth, but he has entered on the imperceptible slope which must inevitably hurry him to destruction.

The laws of optics hold good in ethics and politics. We can seldom see that which is extremely near the eye. Thus it is, that, without much pains, men are unable to discover the import of that ocean of moral and social phenomena, through which the chart of daily life conducts them. They can perhaps read history with precision, because there the issues of things are visible, and actions have ripened into their

consequences ; but contemporary circumstances roll, as it were, in high waves over our heads, and permit only the strongest and most practised among us to rise and catch glimpses from time to time of what is going on. Otherwise, it would be clear that the fortunes of the nineteenth century resemble, in many respects, those of the preceding one. It is true that history never repeats itself,—that no scene in the great drama of the world can be presented twice to the eye of experience ; but, allowing for the variations of time and place, events strikingly similar may often be found in the annals of different countries, or even of the same country at different times. The revolutionary symptoms, visible here in England before the great contest of 1640, again presented themselves to the eye in France before the catastrophe of 1789, and are now once more, with the unavoidable modifications occasioned by the progress of civilization, reproducing themselves all over Europe.

Nothing is admitted to possess the character of stability. Whatever exists is regarded as provisional, and people apologise for institutions by dwelling on the difficulty of reforming or overthrowing them.

v.

All the records which preserve the forms of thought of the age are deeply imbued with irritation and discontent. A few superior minds, moving along the giddy heights of speculation, foresee the necessary abandonment of old principles, and the adoption of

new ones ; and what with them is an intelligible necessity, descends like a revelation to inferior minds, and is propagated with implicit faith.

Even the stately, severe, but cold forms of expression, sanctified by classical usage, are proscribed in favour of neologisms which appear to possess some analogy with the spirit of the age. Society, in all likelihood, unconsciously pleases itself with worshipping at new altars, not foreseeing the throes and pangs with which a fresh faith in politics or religion is invariably ushered into the world. But the operating powers in all great changes are blind. It is not the refined thinker, the eloquent master of language, the subtle investigator of passions and ideas, that changes the whole tissue of a nation's intellect. The artful, the coarse, the reckless, the hungerer after excitement, the dupe of vulgar ambition, each toiling to effect some purpose of his own, conspire against the old forms of faith and principles of action, and destroy them while labouring, perhaps, to effect some individual design.

Whatever we believe, without being able to assign to ourselves the reasons of that belief, is superstition ; and, therefore, I must plead guilty of this feeling, when I maintain that great moral and political catastrophes cause their advent by some subtle influences to be felt before it is visible. In France, long previous to the breaking forth of the revolutionary tempest, innumerable individuals appeared to be conscious of its approach. Among these would seem to have been the rulers of the country,

though their providence was not accompanied by prudence. In not a few this conviction begot gloomy fears and fanaticism, and led to the utterance in private society of predictions, some of which afterwards were in a wonderful manner fulfilled.

VI.

All sorts of horrid practices and opinions were prevalent and believed. Physicians converted into a profession the art of destroying the children of criminal parents; alchymists undertook to teach the secret of converting all metals into gold; enthusiasts revived the ancient mysteries of numbers, and the belief in intelligences, or gods, accessible to the power of spells and enchantments. The mysteries of the Rosicrucians were eclipsed by those of reformed freemasonry; believers sprang up in the art of invoking spirits, in enchantments and magic spells; and at length Immanuel Swedenborg, the incarnation of whatever is singular and wild and fantastic in the human mind, arose to add his mystical reveries to the causes of error and delirium prevailing throughout the civilized world.

Estimable men have frequently, since that period, sought to revive the dreamy system of this singular man, whom it might perhaps be uncharitable to class among mere impostors, though he had a strong natural leaning towards imposture. His power of clairvoyance greatly exceeded that of our contemporaries; for he could clearly see throughout the whole extent of heaven, the world of spirits, and

hell, where he recognised many of his contemporaries, as might have been very reasonably expected. Dante and Michael Angelo sent all their enemies to the same place; and over a credulous and superstitious people, an enthusiast of this bold stamp might at any time exercise a powerful influence, by beatifying or damning their friends and relations.

Swedenborg's picture of heaven was borrowed from the Muslims. His angels were male and female, greatly addicted to making love; and the philosopher was present at a marriage, and in the schools of infant spirits. The angels of England and Holland were of course much given to commerce, and in all likelihood originated the theory of free trade.

VII.

The existence of such an impostor was naturally turned to account by the political world. Superstition rages with the greatest fury among those who are situated at the extremities of society: kings and princes on the one hand, and fakirs, dervishes, and beggars on the other.

Queen Ulrica of Sweden, whose brother died without answering a certain letter she had written to him, applied to Swedenborg; when she learned he had obtained admission into both stories of the universe, to ascertain what was the prince's reason for maintaining silence.

The impostor replied as best suited the views of those who instigated him, and furnished him with a knowledge of facts, which the foolish queen imagined

to be known only to herself and the deceased prince. These, however, perhaps for the sake of public morals, were kept in the dark. Various versions have been given of this affair, to which I make allusion merely to show what affinity imposture has to the ordinary state-craft of the world. But to do Swedenborg justice, it must be allowed that his system, however wild and extravagant, was strongly antagonistic to despotism and oppression. His New Jerusalem was a political Utopia, intended to reform the earth by delineating what he imagined to exist in heaven. Reviving in some sort the opinions of the Fifth Monarchy men, he foretold the speedy approach of the revolution, which he believed and hoped would sweep all kings and princes from the earth, that God and justice might reign in their stead.

VIII.

In the French revolution his disciples discovered a purifying fire, which, by consuming the regal iniquities of the world, was to prepare the way for their New Jerusalem. Of course the philosophical revolutionists approved of these doctrines, however disguised, and built great hopes on those strange sects which they saw springing up around them on all sides, particularly in the north of Europe and America. In these levelling systems, the great were denounced as oppressors and enemies, and to aspire to nobility was equivalent to becoming proud and wicked. Again, distinction of ranks produced inhumanity, and even ferocity. One of the maxims

of the illuminati—that law is the expression of the general will, which at the time was thought to be extremely dangerous—has now become part of the public opinion of Europe, where all who are enlightened despise such laws as have proceeded from kings and parliaments, unless conformable to the general will.

IX.

In most countries of Europe, the advocates of established institutions greatly outnumber the men of the morrow, who, however, make up by superior energy and vitality for the fewness of their numbers. They feel themselves to be engaged in a sacred mission. They know that the truths they reveal will be carried by the poor to the sanctuary of their hearths and homes, and there and in their hearts set up as their Penates or household gods.

From the beginning of the world, they who address themselves to the poor, and become their friends, are for a while at least persecuted by the rest of mankind. Yet there is a generosity in the heart of man, so that the rich and powerful ultimately learn to sympathise with those who contend for the deliverance of the wretched. Look at the greatest names treasured up in history,—those, I mean, which are still pronounced with love and veneration; are they the names of kings and emperors? No—but the hallowed syllables which represent symbolically to posterity the benefactors of our race—those wise and good men who either struggled against tyranny in their day, or devoted their lives to the discovery

of those truths which humanity will always cherish as its noblest inheritance. The consciousness of having done this is something to face death with.

In the method they adopt, men may be mistaken, and mischief may be the fruit of what they intended to produce good. But the pillow on which the soul reposes is conscience; and he whose motives, on the horizon of his own mind, are bright and pure, never hesitates to appear before the Father of all living to claim from Him the reward of his labours.

If we ask ourselves toward what the present current of things is bearing us, I answer—towards democratic institutions. These in some countries will banish royalty, and in others will ally themselves with it, according to the measure of enlightenment which may happen to preside over the conflict. It is no longer pretended that communities have not in these matters a right to judge for themselves. When the day of deliverance comes, therefore, some will probably imitate England, while others will set up the United States as their model. The prevalence, however, in that country of high moral rectitude and extreme political forbearance, renders it safe to protract the rule of the elected first magistrate through a period of four years. In an old and corrupt country, it would be extremely dangerous to follow the same course. If a precedent must be sought at all, better go back two thousand years, and with the prudent and vigorous Romans establish annual magistrates; for the longer the period of the presidentship, the nearer the approach to monarchy—

that is, to the very evil against which the establishment of the republic was meant to guard. The president who is elected for several years, will become accustomed to power, and contract a fondness for the exercise of it; and exactly in proportion as he increases in experience, other men, his equals, must be deprived of it. Could we suppose the case of there being but one individual in a republic competent to govern, the fact would be equivalent to the establishment of despotism, since he would, both by nature and position, be the master of his countrymen. To guard against this, the great citizens of the state who have qualified themselves by study and experience, should be in succession invested with power, which, in the course of a few years, would create a school of statesmen all possessing the knowledge and the abilities necessary for the occupant of the first place in society. In preparing men for this high office, the Romans appear to have pursued the wisest course. They created a gradation of places and honours,—those of Quæstor, Ædile, and Prætor, which prepared men for the consulship.

X.

Should Europe become democratic, the cardinal difficulty will be the creating of men, at the outset, adapted to perform the several functions of the state, and perhaps the lower offices will not be the most easy to fill.

In disturbed periods of society, ambition is so violently awakened that every man believes himself

capable of taking the lead, and few will be content with the performance of those modest duties, the proper fulfilment of which qualifies men for ascending higher. We beheld lately in France a striking exemplification of this truth; all aimed at being first, all pressed forward, all looked at their competitors merely as enemies—the relationship in which they stood to each other dissolved every social and friendly tie—and each became segregated by ambition from the general mass of his fellows. This must bring into notice one of the most remarkable phenomena of modern times; I mean the absence of the spirit of friendship. A thousand causes may probably concur to produce this lamentable effect; but whatever they are, nothing can be more certain than that the fact is so. Wherever there exists a court, there can be little friendship; for court principles stifle enthusiasm, without which men cannot be fast friends. The spirit of courts is the spirit of mockery, of ridicule, of satire. Our friends must have faults like other men; but in courtly circles all faults are turned into ridicule, and no fault is greater than that of sympathy for the people, or disinterested attachment to an individual. Men, therefore, are soon made ashamed of their friends, and through the affectation of impartiality concur in pointing at their blemishes, which soon stifles all attachment. This state of things, created by the monarchy, will long prevent in France the full development of the republican principle. Every man is there for himself; and this is what is meant by people, when they

not the teaching of truth, or even of knowledge; but the development of the physical structure and intellect, so as to qualify both properly to perform the duties of life allotted to us. As in the food of youth, there should be no poisonous ingredients to weaken the powers of the body, so in its mental aliment there should be no admixture of error to debilitate the constitution of the mind.

In acting as far as possible up to this theory, we display that true reverence for youth spoken of by the Romans. In the whole universe there are but two objects of veneration—God, and Truth, which is the daughter of God. With everything else we ought to feel ourselves on terms of perfect equality. Old and young, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, we are equals, because, in the language of St. Paul, we are all His offspring who recognises no distinction of persons.

Children, therefore, should be accustomed from the cradle to that decent freedom, which, growing with their growth and strengthening with their strength, may enable them to look principalities and powers in the face without dread or shrinking. Ill-educated man is always the slave of vain shadows; gold and ermine, gauze and feathers, terrify him, and excite his idolatry. Youth should be early warned against these superstitious weaknesses, and taught to distinguish the worth of humanity through the social phenomena of silk and rags. There is nothing respectable but truth, genius, and virtue—nothing really disreputable but crime:

XIII.

The systems of education now in vogue are, in nearly all respects, the reverse of what they should be. The vain and frivolous distinctions of the world are introduced into our schools and universities; and the teachers of youth, instead of inspiring them with an honest respect for merit, and a generous forgetfulness of artificial distinctions, corrupt them by encouraging their vanity, and set them the shameful example of servility, by cringing basely to the heirs of marquises and dukedoms.

Hobbes, the modern legislator of despotism, advised for the perpetuity of this system, that many of the Greek and Roman authors should be banished our public schools; yet he translated Thucydides, one of the most democratic of them, in the hope of throwing discredit on the system by the supposed testimony of one of its noblest supporters. But the books studied by youth signify little, when at variance with the spirit of their living teachers, and the public opinion of the age.

XIV.

During seasons of prosperity, moreover, men are apt to reflect but little on political principles. It is only when calamity knocks at their doors, when the air is heavy with the storms of revolution, when disaffection and the love of change impregnate the whole atmosphere, that they apply themselves to

the investigation of the disasters and catastrophes they witness. Then the studies of their youth are perhaps remembered, and history presents herself, pointing with gloomy finger to the causes which everywhere bring about the ruin of empires. And then, perhaps, they make the discovery that their instructors were no better than empty pedants, who taught them to respect words for things, prejudices for principles, errors for truths, birth, titles, fortune, and all the wretched masquerade of corrupt society, for the genuine power of humanity. But when the floodgates of revolution are broken open—when the tempest of popular passion rages through a whole realm—when all the ancient institutions of an empire are tottering—when the whole soil of the political world is reeling as with an earthquake beneath their feet—do the pupils of the doctors of law and theology, the pampered minions of fortune, habitually show themselves equal to the crisis? Look at the three great revolutions of the world—that of the seventeenth century in England, of the eighteenth in France, and of the nineteenth throughout Europe. Who were the men of the times—nobles, or the sons of nobles? For the most part, plain gentlemen, impregnated with the love of liberty, dashed aside the inheritors of parchments and pedigrees, and threw themselves fearlessly into the revolutionary torrent, to be hurried to freedom or perdition, according to the chances of the hour.

XV.

The cry at present throughout Europe is for education; that is, for the diffusion of knowledge and truth, and the consequences of both. Now, did this cry originate from below or from above? did it spring forth from the great heart of humanity, under the impulse of instinct, or was it the produce of anything hatched by governments or statesmen? Clearly it owes its birth to the people; and now all classes, princes, and subjects, the governors and the governed, the wise and the ignorant, are employed in the process which must inevitably establish liberty. Every day the work is urged forward with increased speed; and whoever has come in contact with the young intelligence of the age—with the future statesmen and philosophers on whose decisions society must depend for its direction—must know that in those Delphian caverns the pervading spirit is democratic. With every man who now dies a portion of feudalism goes out, and his place in the world is taken up by a man impregnated by a new spirit. We have fallen upon times of invincible inquiry, which will leave no nook of the world, intellectual, moral, or political, unexamined or unilluminated. Where, then, is our hope? In this, that the ark of our covenant is placed on young shoulders; that our symbols are accepted by the rulers of the world that are to be; that the rising generation are rapidly burying the fanaticism, the ignorance, and the bigotry of the past, and making way for whole-

some doctrines and virtues, and sound principles, and that noblest and holiest of all sentiments, good-will towards men, which can spontaneously assume no other form than democracy.

That these ideas will be rejected or covered with obloquy by many it is reasonable to expect, because men naturally denounce all opinions but their own. The ideas of the minority must never look for any other reception. Coming into collision with established notions, there must be a shock, and shocks are unpleasant, and they who occasion them are unpleasant also. To thousands there is nothing more disagreeable than to learn new things, especially when they have to learn them from their children. But this is one of the greatest laws of our nature, that if the old begin by teaching the young, they must end by being taught by them. Our children are the lawgivers to us in opinions, and we must doff our prejudices out of deference to their better understandings, as was jocularly observed by Socrates, who said he knew not what we had children for, if it were not that they should teach us how to act. On the great arena of the world this is true, for up to a certain point, at least, each generation improves on that which preceded it; which, properly interpreted, means only that the young become instructors of the old.

XVI.

But when a state has long neglected the education of the people, it finds itself in a dilemma, from which

nothing but the most consummate prudence can extricate it. The cry for knowledge is not to be silenced, and yet it is difficult to communicate it with safety. Taught, however, the people will be, either by its rulers, or by the enemies of those rulers; and it may be questioned, whether, after a certain period in the history of a nation, any means can be discovered of preventing knowledge from assuming a revolutionary tendency.

XVII.

In countries where the new political dogmas have made but an inconsiderable progress, the apostles of change are naturally regarded with hostile alarm. No epithets are too harsh to be heaped on them; prejudice, timidity, selfishness, reverence for the past, the superstitions of rank and power, unite together to defame them, but to no purpose. The worshippers of false principles, however they may fret and threaten, behold the light of truth ascend gradually from the horizon, diffuse itself over the atmosphere, and grow every moment warmer and brighter, until the whole face of society is at length illuminated by perfect day.

It matters little, therefore, that the advocates of oppression, whether ignorance or interest makes them such, are loud in their denunciation of the new principles. The march of ideas is steady. Truth knocks at the doors of all men, and if they come not forth at the first summons, knocks again, and is never weary, however angrily they may chide her

away. Her patience is inexhaustible; she pities the erring and benighted, and displays the greatest amount of compassion towards those who are least conscious they are going astray.

The chief instrument of political reformation, which traces its origin to the reformation of religion, is the press, whose services to civilization it is impossible to exaggerate. For what is the press? Is it not the living expression of the nation's intellect? Is it not the voice of humanity itself revealing the discoveries it has effected, and describing the efforts it is making in order to arrive at other and still greater discoveries?

Political journalism constitutes only one form of the press, though now, and for the future, the most important. It may be regarded as an indication of the quickened pulses and greater vitality of the political system. Individually, perhaps, its conductors are not always superior to their neighbours; but, inasmuch as politics is their profession, they find themselves under the necessity of applying a profounder and more continuous study to the fleeting phenomena of society. To indicate the press, therefore, is to indicate the civilization of which it is the exponent. It is to us in these days what the Nilometer was to the Egyptians, marking the slow rise of that flood on which our life, intellectual and political, depends. No man who would comprehend the system in which he lives can bestow too much attention on the press, by far the most wonderful feature in the civilization of modern times.

I say this, not through any idolatry of intellect, but because intellect is the instrument which our all-wise Creator has bestowed on us for working out our happiness in this world, and because the press is the expression of that intellect. By its assistance alone can we be present at the deliberations of parliaments and senates all over the world, and observe the heaving and palpitating of the immense breast of humanity under the influence of the revolutionary spirit.

That individuals connected with the press sometimes misemploy their powers, and pursue a mischievous course, is a truth which cannot interfere with our high estimation of the press itself. It could not, in fact, be otherwise, unless some method were invented to render men infallible. But the press corrects its own errors, by drawing, as it were, a fresh inspiration from the people. And if it were to commit more errors than can be laid to its charge, who would not be ready to forgive them, that considers the vastness of its mission, the multitude of its difficulties, the necessity it is under of keeping pace with the giant strides of time, and of explaining the character of events almost before they issue from the womb? It is engaged in an incessant contest with the present and with futurity; it undertakes to run in the van of the human race, to discuss and appreciate on the instant all the mighty plans man forms for promoting his own happiness, and, looking forward into the ocean of unrealized consequences, to map out a safe course for the world to move in over the untrodden wastes of the future.

XVIII.

Considered in this light, nothing of mere human invention can be more sublime or more glorious than the press, which is not the creation of man, or of any set of men, but the united current of all men's ideas rushing before society, and scooping out a safe channel for it to move in.

This press, so vast and so powerful, is now everywhere the instrument of revolutions, not systematically or designedly, but inevitably, and often altogether against its own will: for to ensure sooner or later the destruction of what is bad, it is only necessary to be convinced of the practicability of establishing something better; the common sense of the public will do the rest. Nothing, however, is more certain than that the progress of opinion is slow, though it may sometimes appear to operate with startling rapidity. Thus, it seems by many to be believed that the recent revolutions on the Continent were brought about suddenly, by a sort of political tornado, raised by accident, and sweeping resistlessly over Europe. No idea could be more incorrect. The institutions, whose fall we witnessed, had been for ages exposed to the undermining influence of opinion, to the incessant agitations of the press, excited and set in motion by the growing intelligence of mankind. Our forefathers saw the first blow given, and we only witness the tardy results. In fact, the institutions themselves, when originally founded, were impregnated with the seeds

of ultimate dissolution. Nothing human is made to last for ever, and it is a mere fretful irritation against the laws of Providence peevishly to quarrel with the operation of natural causes. * The old monarchies of the Continent, built up in ages of ignorance, and founded on false principles, cannot by any wise statesmen be expected to survive the mental effervescence of the present age. Our constitution is durable only because, properly speaking, it has no definite form, but by its very nature is sufficiently expansive to embrace and contain the fortunes of the nation, however vast they may become.

XIX.

For this reason a revolution in the ordinary sense—that is, a street-rising, barricades, contests between the people and the army, followed by a change of government—is never to be expected here. We may, and must, like all other nations, modify our laws and adapt our institutions to the wants of the epoch; and the changes thus effected may be equivalent to a revolution.

Thus Lord John Russell denominated the passing of the Reform Bill a revolution, which in some sense it was. In fact, the introduction of a new principle into the government is a revolution, which is, therefore, the name some would bestow on the adoption of vote by ballot, triennial or annual parliaments, and household or universal suffrage. But, in the ordinary acceptance of the term, these changes, whether introduced gradually or at once, would be no revolution.

at all, because unaccompanied by violence and armed conflicts between different sections of the people. According to this common view, which is exceedingly puerile, the change of government in France, brought about by the Insurrection of July 1830, was a much greater revolution than "the passing of the Reform Bill in England, though the former introduced no new principle into the government, while the latter did. Great efforts, indeed, were made to impose upon France the persuasion that the monarchy of July was essentially different from the monarchy of the Restoration. But facts interrupted the progress of the idea. Under the mask of constitutional forms, France was ruled despotically. Her resources, in themselves immense, were almost exhausted for dynastic purposes; corruption pervaded all ranks of society; and but for the prevalence of the democratic principle, all the germs of morality and virtue must have been extirpated from the public mind.

XX.

Literature in most countries is fastidious, especially when it is employed in fabricating amusement for an aristocracy. The shrewd and clever among its contributors, though inwardly conscious they are but the despised playthings of the rich and powerful, yet affect aristocratic principles, that they may be patronised by those on whose approval and bounty they live. Of course, the patrician airs they give themselves are like the mimicking of noblemen by their lacqueys, and only excite the pity of those they

ape, and the contempt of the rest of the world. Still their servile labours are not without their effect. Masters of the forms of art, they prostitute the powers of their genius to entertain the fancies of the idle, and exhaust, in ingenious trivialities, intellectual resources, which, if honestly employed, might have enlarged the sphere of human happiness.

Nothing, therefore, is more ominous of change, than the development of a democratic tendency in literature, which does not lead or create public opinion, but is floated forward upon its broad bosom, like light and fragile skiffs upon that of the ocean. Mankind are greater than their teachers, and still more superior to those who amuse and too often corrupt them. To be convinced that literature receives its inspiration from society, we need only observe its character in different ages. When mankind stand on the summit of great principles, literature is elevated and noble; but when nations descend into the depths of ignorance and corruption, the literary genius still accompanies them, puts on motley, and plays the humble fool, or even the libertine and corrupter, for their diversion.

This was never more strikingly exemplified than in the history of mental energy in France. When Louis Quatorze was upon the throne, the inflated pomp and false piety of the court were reproduced in the literature of the period, which, without being wanting in strength, was deformed by the affectation of classicality, and essentially deficient in that vital warmth which excites the enthusiastic

admiration of after ages. Under his successors those chilly models were reproduced in the same spirit, of vapid loyalty; but the excess of political servility excited a reaction. Voltaire, from the natural antipathy which intellectual power feels for the power inspired by custom and prejudice, or mere birth and station, applied himself to sap and undermine the throne and its accompaniments. Diderot, D'Alembert, and others followed his example, and Jean Jacques Rousseau, with a genius wild and vast as the mountains from which he sprang, came with his fiery, half-foreign inspiration, to precipitate the French forwards towards liberty.

It would be highly unphilosophical to pretend that Voltaire put on the forms of grossness and immorality, in order to give currency to his political opinions among a gross and immoral people. He was a personification of the vices as well as the virtues of his age, and revelled in licentiousness because it afforded him as much pleasure as his readers. His genius was essentially destructive, and acted upon society like a corrosive agent, which, insinuating itself through the chinks and apertures of the political fabric, effected a complete separation of parts, and prepared it to topple down and crumble away at the first blast of the tempest.

Rousseau's philosophy was altogether different. It inculcated a firm belief in the reality of wisdom and virtue. It sought to impart elevation to human nature, and inspired the wish to combine, and reconstruct, and found institutions capable of affording

a permanent shelter to liberty. Accordingly the greatest men of the Revolution took their inspiration from Rousseau; but when the storm began—when the dregs of society were to be stirred up—when poverty, ignorance, prejudice, were to be drawn out in battle array, and precipitated against the monarchy which had produced them—literature, with a flexibility greater than that of Proteus, condescended to assume all horrid and degrading forms, and to crawl through the courts, alleys, and sinks of Paris with serpentine facility. Still there were some features in the literature of the period calculated to excite admiration. Authors seemed to have lost the desire of personal distinction, and published anonymously, or under obscure names, works which would have brought them credit as well as profit. There was in many cases a total abnegation of self. Right or wrong, they were disinterested, or looked for their reward in the progress of society in general. Forgetting the pride of literature, they suffered their productions to be recast, extended, or abridged by others, often their inferiors as writers, but their superiors in the art of addressing the populace, and the means of producing political excitement.

XXI.

In judging of the productions of that age, we should make many allowances. Public opinion is like an atmosphere, which, to those who live in and breathe it, imparts a peculiar colour to every object. The atmosphere of the revolutionary epoch in France

would appear to have reflected, refracted, and distorted things, so as to give them an aspect peculiar to the times. All the ideas in men's minds were in a state of violent fermentation. The passions were kindled and kept in a perpetual flame by events. Innumerable individuals and parties were engaged in forging, on the anvil of change, new constitutions, creeds, and forms of society.

There was an excitement, an agitation—a hubbub like that of Babel; and it would be quite as easy for a recluse and speculative man quietly to meditate and arrive at just conclusions in the midst of an insurrection,—with horses trampling, artillery roaring, and shells exploding round him on all sides,—as for the men of the Revolution to preserve, in the midst of it, the moral power to contemplate the exact nature of principles and actions.

There was, a mental intoxication, universally prevalent, which prevented men's distinguishing right from wrong. Impulse took the reins out of the hands of reason; and in the universal pell-mell of a nation hurrying towards one dim goal, it is no wonder that multitudes were overthrown and trampled to death by the way. I know of no other explanation that can be given of the horrors which took place.

XXII.

Among ourselves, literature has almost always been perverted from its proper purpose, and exhibited a servile character, because by the institutions of the country, they who cultivate and make a profession

of it, possessing a sort of Pariah intelligence, are thrust rudely away from place and power by the privileged. The fact of being a nation's teacher in wisdom, is regarded as nothing in comparison with a fiction of birth. To be descended from a marquis or a duke is esteemed a greater honour than to be a leader in the brightest phalanxes of intellect. In this degrading theory of human affairs, the weak and effeminate naturally acquiesce, while they whom nature has endowed with energy declare war secretly or openly against the established order of things, and often waste their whole lives in the struggle. Our literature, however, displays but few examples of such writers. The majority have, in many periods of our history, prostituted their genius to the service of oppression and injustice, whose excesses and crimes they have endeavoured to conceal beneath a gorgeous tissue of eloquence. Nothing more humiliating is, perhaps, to be found in the annals of humanity than the base style of adulation adopted by English writers in their dedications to persons in office,—from that of Lord Bacon to James I., down to that of the paltry novelist who adulates some titled patron in front of his three volumes.

XXIII.

No doubt an impartial inquiry into this painful subject will, in most cases, excite our pity. Poverty is too often the portion of those who devote themselves to the instruction of their fellow-creatures; for wealth is too indolent and effeminate to toil up,

the rugged steep of knowledge, and acquire the qualifications of a public instructor. During those periods, therefore, in which nations are withheld by ignorance from properly rewarding their benefactors, these are often under the sad necessity of betraying, at least in part, their trust, in order to subsist during the term of life allotted them by nature. But in fervid moments of inspiration, the shackles of prudence are often laid aside by genius, and truths formidable to power delivered to the world. In this way we must account for those testimonies in favour of democracy which escape even the most corrupt and servile writers. Not that they have always understood the full import of their own language: sentiment has taken the place of conviction. They have beheld oppression, and denounced it; they have witnessed appalling misery, and sought to soothe it. Still it is only in our times that any systematic attempt has been made to create a democratic literature, and awaken the intellectual energies of the people. That this, in too many cases, is undertaken by incompetent, or even by profligate persons, it is impossible to deny. But the blame cannot rest with the people whom the privileged classes envy the possession of knowledge. For this reason heavy taxes are levied on paper, and all possible obstructions thrown in the way of the creation of a truly popular press,—an instrument the existence of which all statesmen know to be incompatible with bad government. Hence it may be inferred that, in most parts of the world, a nation is revolutionary, in proportion

as it is instructed. The question is, whether any government is worth preserving, which cannot bear to be contemplated in the light, which shrinks from examination, and desires to owe the continuance of its power to the degradation and ignorance of the people.

XXIV.

It may be affirmed, in general terms, that with the exception of some few great writers—as Milton, Locke, Algernon Sydney, Harrington, and Penn, who discovered the identity of democracy with Christianity, and applied his discovery to regenerate society in the New World,—whatever is democratic in our literature is the work of young authors, who have not yet had time to grow corrupt. Youth naturally sympathises with justice, is full of generosity and self-devotion, and thinks itself repaid for all sacrifices by a few bursts of popular applause. Unhappily most men, as they advance in life, and experience defeat after defeat in their conflict with the world, learn to prefer solid pudding before empty praise.

They think of themselves, of their families, of approaching old age, of neglect, destitution, or perhaps a premature grave, and the courage which sustained them at first is corrupted by a worldly prudence, which even philosophers will regard with indulgence. It is for the people themselves to adjust the balance in this matter.

They must learn to distinguish their friends from their persecutors, and uphold those who faithfully

adhere to their cause. Every child remembers the saying of the old philosopher, when a great statesman came to him on the bed of sickness, and, apologising for his neglect, said, "You ought to have let me know you were in want." "Nay, friend," replied the philosopher, "the man who requires the light of a lamp should himself be careful to replenish it with oil." Not that the teachers and benefactors of the human race can look upon any reward they may receive as a motive to exertion. Their true reward lies in the good they accomplish, in the increase of happiness around them, in the subversion of tyranny, in the exercise of vengeance on oppressors, in the distribution of justice, in the elevation of the poor.

Literature is ignorant of its true glory, when it prefers the applause of the few to the blessings of the many. But moral considerations, however noble in themselves, will not stand in the place of all others. To teach, men must live, and therefore all who thirst for knowledge, and desire the secret, of their birthright to be revealed to them, should be careful to supply their teachers with the means of living in whatever way they may consider least burdensome to themselves, and most honourable to others.

XXV.

One failing of our literature is extremely remarkable, I mean the mimicry of moderation which pervades it. Great credit has been given for this quality to the authors of the Revolution of 1688,

who strove to conceal, beneath a tissue of fine phrases, the introduction of a new principle of rule. But what is imputed to them as wisdom, was in truth only the lack of intrepidity. Perverted by the study and practice of the law, they shrunk even from necessary innovation, and suffered the opinions of former ages to obscure and corrupt their own.

The same remark may be applied to a large portion of our literature which has been the production of lawyers,—men less prone, unless in extreme youth, than almost any others, to adopt new principles and opinions. Living like owls in perpetual twilight, among the ivy-mantled turrets and dim recesses of the feudal system, they experience extreme reluctance to come forth into the daylight, and examine what the world is doing or should do. Besides, subsisting chiefly by managing the concerns or settling the disputes and differences of the privileged classes, they naturally acquire a preference for their manners and modes of thinking, which they reflect with as much fidelity as they are able. Burke, who was himself a lawyer, exalts the science at the expense of its professors,—“The law, which is in my opinion one of the first and noblest of human sciences; a science which does more to quicken and invigorate the understanding than all other kinds of learning put together; but it is not apt, except in persons very happily born, to open and to liberalise the mind exactly in the same proportion.” Their familiarity with parchments, with the musty records of nobility, with pedigrees, with

the monstrous fictions of the Herald's College, with the profligate history of property, inspires them with a timid caution. Exceptions, no doubt, are found, but the majority of lawyers who have contributed to the growth of our literature, justify the picture I have drawn of them.

XXVI.

The remark applies with still greater force to our clerical writers, among whom very few examples are to be found of true pleaders for the popular cause. They imagine it is not for them to uphold the pretensions of the poor, however just; all their sympathy is for the powers that be. All rights and duties are included in the word patronage; and therefore, instead of ranging themselves on the side of the widow and the fatherless, and those who have none to help them, they take service under parties, and uphold principalities and powers, against the advocates of the human race.

It would be a phenomenon to observe the ecclesiastical body advocating the interests of the working classes against the great; because, while the latter have the distribution of preferments and church honours, the former count for nothing in our social system. At the same time it should not be concealed, that the working classes themselves contribute largely to produce these results, by listening to the harangues, and echoing the sentiments of those who side with the aristocracy.

XXVII.

This they do partly through ignorance, and partly through natural servility. But the number is daily increasing of those who have emancipated themselves from all sinister influences, religious and political, and resolved to work out their own salvation. For these there is no literature; almost everything they touch has the taint of feudalism. Turn which way they will, they find their minds entangled in the meshes of a false rhetoric, glittering with fallacies and sophistry, veiling an abyss of error and degradation, into which they are invited to plunge and be lost. But we begin, as I have said, to discover symptoms that the people are resolved henceforth to exercise their own judgment,—to read and study with caution,—to suspect a snare in every proposition, a bait in every doctrine, a fatal poison in every specious theory. Their apprehensions are well-grounded. Nearly all the works placed before them are fabricated by their enemies, and designed to lull them into the dream of servitude. There is none in whom they can put their trust, save those who consent to take up their position with them, to share their poverty and persecution, to toil as they toil, in order at length to be able to kindle a light on every humble hearth, which shall show the poor man his way to wholesome knowledge and liberty. The word democracy includes the poor man's entire creed; it is his alpha and omega. Beyond the limits of it there is no comfort for him, no self-respect,

no independence—in one word, no happiness. All who would instil other opinions into his mind he should regard as his enemies.

XXVIII.

These circumstances will suffice to account for the readiness with which the people receive the teaching of the worst species of literature. They do not perceive upon it the imprimatur of authority. It is not doled forth to them by their professional deluders, lay or ecclesiastical. It invites them, on the contrary, to assert their freedom; and though it does this in a manner unworthy of the sacred cause, the people listen, nevertheless, in the hope of discovering some clue to guide them out of the labyrinth of servitude. This may excite our sorrow, but can occasion us no surprise. The people have always been made the prey of one class of impostors or another, each labouring in its turn to emblazon the merits of the craft by which it lived. The fabricators of cheap literature have often been as little democratic as their predecessors, because, incapable of thinking for themselves, they have only transfused into fresh shapes what they found ready made to their hands. They have not called into existence a literature on new principles; they have not consulted the experience of the age; they have not entered upon a course of independent thinking; but taking indiscriminately the materials at hand, have modified and re-arranged them in the hope of attaining momentary credit for originality.

In spite of all this, the whole literature of Europe is undergoing a change, in many cases reluctantly. Some writers, making a small number of concessions to democracy, affect to regard these as all that can be conceded, and treat with an air of contemptuous pity those whom they denominate enthusiasts in the cause of freedom. But mankind despise halting caution, and bestow their confidence on those who boldly offer to lead them forward indefinitely in the career of improvement. They put full faith in their own powers; they believe all the intelligence of the world to be on their side; they look with ineffable scorn on the crumbling wreck of feudalism; and press on towards the mark they have set up for themselves, which is nothing less than the renovation of society. As might be expected, however, the democratic principle develops itself differently in different countries,—in some allying itself with religion, in others with gross infidelity,—not being as yet well instructed in the theory of its own wants. Its characteristic everywhere is boldness, so that we may apply to the writers of our own day what an ancient historian did to the generals and statesmen of his:—Their audacity confounds the wisdom of the wise; they try everything. Ignorant of their own forces, as well as of those opposed to them, they believe nothing too great to be accomplished, and often therefore achieve what they undertake.

But there is no concert or even consistency among those who thus conspire through the press. They obey an impulse, arising from no one knows where.

There is a law which regulates the tides of human society, compelling them at times to sink, or rise, or overflow their banks. And the flood is now swelling visibly, as far as the influence of civilized life extends. There is something in the principle of emulation. One man steps forward, and immediately some one is seized with the desire to do likewise, and get before him if possible. The passion spreads, — passes from class to class, from nation to nation, — until the whole race is engaged in the pell-mell struggle to get onwards. Few listen to the voice of that superannuated philosophy which teaches the respectability of old things, which discovers wisdom in abuses, and grandeur in protracted continuance. The reply to them is, there is a time for all things, and that, if the institutions they defend have existed very long, they may be said to have had their time, and should consent to pass quietly away to make room for others. They may indeed exclaim with Lear,

“The heavens themselves are old.”

But nature is wiser than man, and unites newness of appearance with antiquity of existence. The heavens and the earth exhibit perpetual vicissitudes; the stars and constellations are ever moving, day and night succeed each other, with clouds and sunshine, calms and storms, cold and heat. But man's laws and institutions, unwise and imperfect as they are, yet desire for themselves perpetuity of duration; though prolific to the last degree of evil to millions,

they refuse to be altered, and in most cases submit to nothing but force.

XXIX.

All Europe is now in a revolutionary ferment, and the only difference between us and the nations of the Continent is, that our revolution extends through a longer period of time, and is achieved with different weapons. Even in France, however, we must not confound sudden changes and mere strokes of policy with revolution. The Insurrection of February overthrew the dynasty of Louis Philippe, and was accomplished in a few days; but the usurpation of Louis Napoleon, after much plotting and conspiring, was achieved, with atrocious slaughter, in a single night. The revolution is still going on, and will only come to a close when the Republic settles into form, and is peacefully administered. The revolution of Great Britain is like that of a planet of the first magnitude, which, though it moves rapidly through its orbit, is long in performing its course because of its vastness. The revolutions of the Continent sometimes resemble melodramas in their rapidity and scenic effect; but properly to revolutionize a country is to change its habits and opinions, to eradicate old sentiments and implant new ones, to shatter and clear out ancient images from the political temple, and to set up fresh objects of worship.

Under despotisms opinion explodes like gunpowder, and produces a disruption of society, because

it explodes in a confined space; but in a free state the agitation and excitement of opinion resemble the combustion of gunpowder in the open air, where its expansive force, meeting with no stubborn resistance, expends itself harmlessly. To destroy a government, the most effectual method is, by reasoning or by ridicule, to sap and undermine all the opinions on which it rests.

In this way revolutions are produced slowly but surely; for you corrode the foundations of the edifice and disintegrate it, as storms, and tempests, and rain, disintegrate a mountain. The thing crumbles away insensibly, but it does crumble, and the world ultimately beholds, without surprise, a dead level where there had once been a towering edifice. The cycles of opinion now revolve far more rapidly than formerly. Ideas are quickly circulated, because the interval between man and man has been almost indefinitely lessened by the press, which would operate with irresistible force, did there exist harmony of thought among its conductors. But the current of reasoning is often turned into mischievous channels by the influence of interest. There is nothing so revolutionary as truth, because nearly all the institutions of the world rest more or less upon error, upon prejudice, upon ignorance, which, taken together, make up a sort of political idolatry.

The fundamental principle of Christianity—the twin principle of truth—lies therefore at the root of all political changes; I mean charity, or the love of mankind. If you love men, you desire to

impart truth to them, in order that truth may make them free.

XXX.

In countries governed by just principles, revolutions take place as elsewhere, but are brought about invisibly by the operation of opinion. We are ourselves in a state of revolution, but are scarcely conscious of it, because with us the tide of change rises gradually, overflowing first one obstacle, then another, gently, noiselessly, as the summer tide floods the shore. After a while we look around us for the abuses which formerly offended our eyes, and they are submerged.

In nearly all other countries, rulers render this beneficial process impossible by a bigoted assertion of what they call their rights. Reading the past without understanding it, they persuade themselves that events, like time, do but eternally reproduce themselves, and that what has been must necessarily always be.

XXXI.

They therefore set at nought public opinion, which they denominate popular clamour, and refuse the concessions it demands, though they know them to be just, lest they should seem to yield to classes and individuals whom they despise. They forget that political reforms are not coveted for their own sake, but for some benefit which they are expected to produce. The people regard them simply as

instruments of national prosperity, and not as so many barren triumphs over power; on the contrary, they are for the most part convinced that what they seek is calculated to prove equally beneficial to the governors as to the governed, and it is this consideration chiefly that incenses them to anger, and justifies in their eyes the taking up of arms.

But when political power is suffered long to remain in the hands of individuals, they by degrees learn to imagine, that what was a trust originally is converted into a right; and the next step is to acquire the belief that the interest of governments is different from that of the community, and paramount to it. The moment this opinion takes root in the rulers of a state, the seeds of revolution are sown, since it converts the magistrates and the people into antagonists, encamped as it were on the same soil, but naturally inimical to each other.

Rightly understood, a government can have no interest which is not included in that of the people, it being but a committee of management, acting for a large body, of which its several members form a part.

Taken separately, and in opposition to the nation, a government has no right or privilege whatsoever. It is simply an instrument contrived and wielded for the public service; and when it ceases to serve, it ceases theoretically and its right to exist. To prolong its physical being is, therefore, an usurpation, because the national will is the supreme law, which whosoever resists is a rebel. To seek for any

principle of right beyond this is to wander in a metaphysical labyrinth, in the obscurity of which it is easy to mistake spectral errors for truth.

XXXII.

But as there is nothing perfect in humanity, so even public opinion itself, to which nevertheless we are constrained to pay deference, may be perverted into an instrument for the upholding of error and injustice. Where such is the case, political reforms are impossible. To effect these you must alter the condition of the national mind, substitute principle for prejudice, truth for error, and above and beyond all this, must contrive to beget a warmth and enthusiasm which may enable men to justify to themselves the act of making great sacrifices.

Ignorance is a seed of sedition, and still more knowledge which finds itself debarred from action. It is an unquestionable law of human nature, that to know what is right actuates men in most instances to do it, especially if they believe it to be for their advantage. When they make the discovery, therefore, that they have been long deprived of their due, and that it is right to recover it, they are apt to do so at all hazards.

In this way knowledge becomes the parent of sedition. But the fault lies with those who bring the spark in contact with the powder. Wherever there is oppression, wherever there is legal inequality, wherever there is the spirit of caste, to educate the people is to be guilty of the gravest error.

Ignorance only is compatible with such a state of things.

To know is to be free : in this truth lies the sole hope of modern society. If we survey all the empires of the world, from the great despotisms of Asia to the little despotisms of Germany, we shall find that oppression is invariably grievous in proportion to the ignorance of the people. Not that they are always conscious who suffer most from its operations. Such communities are often like a man who struggles with the nightmare in his sleep, who fences with shadows, who shudders at imaginary precipices, who shrieks as the visionary rock comes crushing down upon him, and knows not that the real enemy is in his own breast.

No people is so pitiable as that which is conscious of its own degradation, as is the case with many nations of the East, and with not a few perhaps of the West. The poor in such nations believe that they are doomed by nature to servitude—that stripes and ignominy are their portion—that it is just they should be smitten and famished, that certain other individuals may live in splendour, and in the indulgence of the most unnatural caprices.

When, through the operation of any causes whatsoever, a thinking class has been created in a country, one of two things must be done,—it must be attached to the ruling body, and thus for a time rendered hostile to the people, or left independent.

In this case it will bring about the greatest changes. Under every circumstance, the man of

intellect and knowledge who finds himself condemned to an inferior position, is necessarily inimical to the system which degrades him. He may disguise his hatred when it appears to be for his interest, but it will only be the more intense because it is smothered, unless, as often happens, he be so thoroughly corrupted by vice as to be satisfied to wear the livery of the dull minions of fortune. Generally, knowledge is revolutionary wherever it finds itself out of its place. By knowledge I do not now mean proficiency in the sciences, or in the arts and processes which minister to the pleasures of the great, but political knowledge, —knowledge of man, and religion, and God.

XXXIII.

Such knowledge as this is not yet widely diffused in Europe. In some countries the thoughts of men appear to be all wrought after one pattern, as in Spain and Portugal, where everybody is supposed to be a Catholic. To study religion is there useless, for you inherit your opinions as you inherit your estate or your poverty, and are wedded equally to both for ever. It is a fallacy to maintain that despotism cannot rule the thoughts of men, for it can and does daily. Wherever there is no liberty of speech, there soon ceases to be liberty of thought, since few will be at the pains to think what they can never utter. Superstition, in such cases, becomes a sort of intellectual atmosphere, colouring or discolouring all the souls which are steeped in it. No boast is more common than that of independence of mind; yet,

no quality is more rare than mental independence; indeed, few created intelligences possess it completely. The loftiest minds, which tower like intellectual Alps above the common level of their species, seldom rise beyond that height which is visited by the clouds of prejudice; consequently, in nations enslaved by false opinions, the number of those is very small who become the champions of truth, either religious or political. This accounts for the slow progress of Spain, which has been for whole generations shedding its blood for dynasties, not for liberty, with which Catholicism can scarcely be persuaded to ally itself.

In Italy the same. Arbitrary power emanated naturally from an infallible pontiff; and now that education has in some degree dissipated the prejudice which maintained the civil worship of the pope, his religious infallibility will vanish along with it.

XXXIV.

Political revolutions are generally preceded by strange fluctuations in the feelings and opinions of the people, by theological disputations, by schisms, by the introduction of new forms of superstition, and by the ceasing of all reliance on traditional dogmas and ideas. This, in the eighteenth century, was particularly observable in France, where the most fantastic notions obtained circulation.

They who brought about the revolution of opinion could scarcely be expected to act conformably to any settled plan. Their indignation was roused, and

they gave vent to it in the fiercest language. Nowhere in the civilized world were opinions so bold ever put in circulation. Yet, even by the admission of their enemies, they considered the truth of their principles to have been demonstrated, and that the war they waged against kings was a war of justice and wisdom.

Voltaire, writing from Holland, said: "I am better pleased even with the abuses of the liberty of the press here, than with that sort of slavery under which the human mind is kept in France. I like to see the rulers of the state no more than plain citizens. They who put themselves in the way of a sabre or musket for kings, must be abominable fools. Do you wish to be happy?—never own a master.

"Everything is preparing the way to a great revolution, which will most undoubtedly take place; but I shall not be fortunate enough to see it. The French arrive at everything slowly, but still they do arrive. Light has so gradually diffused itself, that on the first opportunity the nation will break out, and the uproar will be glorious. Happy those who are now young, for they will behold most extraordinary things."

Others exclaimed, "The reflections of the sage prepare political revolutions, but it is the arm of the people which executes them." Montesquieu writes, "It is not my business to examine whether the English actually enjoy liberty or not. It is sufficient for my purpose to observe that it is established.

by their laws, and I inquire no further.” In the language of Jean Jacques,—“ Man is born free, and yet we see him everywhere in chains.” D’Alembert adds,—“ The subjection in which every man is born, with respect to his father or to his prince, has never been looked upon as a tie binding, unless by his own consent.” According to Dupont,—“ It must be owned that the generality of nations still remain victims of an infinitude of crimes and calamities, which would not have befallen them if a well-conducted study on the law of nature, on moral justice, and on real and true politics, had enlightened the majority of intellect. Here prohibitions are extended even to thought; those nations, animated by the ferocious love of conquest, sacrifice the capital of which they stand in most need for the cultivation of their lands to mere plans of usurpation.

XXXV.

“ Men are torn from their half-inhabited deserts, and their riches are seized for the purpose of shedding the blood of neighbouring states, and of multiplying elsewhere other deserts. Such is still the state of the world; such has always been the state of our Europe, and nearly of the whole globe.”

Helvetius says,—“ True monarchy is no more than a constitution invented to corrupt the morals of nations, and to enslave them. Kings are the chief executioners of their subjects, and force and stupidity were the founders of their thrones.”

Reynal exclaims, “ Cowardly, stupid populace, since

this perpetual oppression gives you no energy—since you are millions, and nevertheless suffer a dozen of children called kings, armed with little sticks called sceptres, to lead you as they please,—obey ; submit, without importuning us with your complaints, and learn to be unhappy, since you don't know how to be free.”

Again : “ Liberty is the gift of God, but autkorkity the invention of man. Bare to the light those mysteries which encompass the universe with chains and darkness ; and may the people, learning how much their credulity has been imposed upon, avenge the glory of the human species.”

Diderot pushes the matter still further : “ Chiefs of nations, often superstitious themselves, little acquainted with their own interest, or versed in sound morality, and blind to the real agents, believe they secure their own authority, as well as the happiness and peace of society at large, by immersing their subjects in superstitions, by threatening them with invisible phantoms (of their divinity), and by treating them like children who are guided by means of fables and chimeras. Under the shadow of such surprising inventions, of which the chiefs themselves are often dupes, transmitting them from generation to generation, sovereiens believe themselves excused from seeking any further instruction. They neglect the laws, they enervate themselves in luxury, and are slaves to their caprices. They confide to the gods the government of their people. They deliver over the instruction of their subjects

to priests, who are to render them very devout and submissive, and lead them, from their earliest youth, to tremble both before the visible and invisible powers.

“It is thus that nations are kept in perpetual awe by their governors, and are only restrained by vain chimeras. When the happiness of man shall become the object of real investigation, it will be with the gods of heaven that the reform must begin. No good system of government can be founded on a despotic god: he will always make tyrants of his representatives. If we are not strong enough to shake off the yoke, we will only bear it with horror. You shall find an enemy in each of your slaves, and every instant you shall tremble on the thrones which you have unlawfully usurped.”

Again, addressing kings: “Ye tigers, deified by other tigers, you expect to pass to immortality. Yes, answer they—but as objects of execration. Thousands of executioners, crowned with laurel and wreaths of flowers, returning from their expeditions, carry about in triumph an idol, which they call king, emperor, or sovereign. They crown this idol, and prostrate themselves before it; and then, to the sound of instruments and repeated barbarous acclamations, they declare it in future to be the sovereign director of all the bloody scenes which are to take place in the realm, and to be the executioner of the nation.”

Also: “Descend from your thrones, and laying aside both sceptre and crown, go and question the

lowest of your subjects. Ask him what he really loves, and what he hates the most? He will undoubtedly answer that he really loves but his equals, and that he hates his masters."

These opinions, slightly modified, passed the Channel, and reappeared in several English writers. Even the courtly Horace Walpole gave utterance in his youth to anathemas on royalty little less extreme than those of Diderot; and Chesterfield, the legislator of the fashionable world, entertained a profound contempt for the wielders of "the little sticks called sceptres."

• "As kings are begotten and born like other men, it is to be presumed that they are of the human species; and perhaps, had they the same education, they might prove like other men. But, flattered from their cradles, their hearts are corrupted and their heads are turned, so that they seem to be a species by themselves. No king ever said to himself, 'Homo sum, nihil humani a me alienum puto.'

"Flattery cannot be too strong for them; drunk with it from their infancy, like old drinkers, they require drams. They prefer a personal attachment to a public service, and reward it better. They are vain and weak enough to look upon it as a free-will offering to their merit, and net as a burnt sacrifice to their power."

XXXVI.

The means by which the revolutionary opinions obtained currency in France were extraordinary.

Louis XV. was partly won over by his physician Duquesnai, whom he used to call his thinker, and who reconciled him to the sect of Economists, then beginning to obtain influence in the world. It was to this sect that was owing the establishment of free schools in France, chiefly with a view of emancipating the peasantry from their profound ignorance, and diffusing a knowledge of the principles of agriculture and other forms of industry.

XXXVII.

The leaders of the movement soon perceived what use might be made of these free schools, and addressed numerous memoirs on the subject to Louis XV., whose little mind and egregious vanity led him to hope he might derive some glory from the project. He was of course, like other kings, under the sway of conflicting influences,—the philosophers endeavouring to urge him into the career of innovation, the clergy and their emissaries seeking to arrest the progress of knowledge. These latter contended that there were already in France but too many schools, which although not free were very nearly so. They advised him to distribute more catechisms, and get the peasantry taught to repeat them by rote, which they affirmed would be much better than teaching them industry, as this might render them systematic and vain. Louis XV., however, trusted more to the Duke de Choiseul, Malesherbes and Duquesnai, than to the priests; and, through his cooperation, the design of the philosophers was, in part at least,

accomplished.—“*Quem Jupiter vult perdere, prius dementat.*”

Bertin, one of the ministers, a man completely swayed by the priests, laboured earnestly to counteract the revolutionary writers. • He does not inform the public how the first disclosures respecting their proceedings came to him, though I suspect he received information from the country clergy. But this matters little. There existed in Paris what may be termed a publication committee, supplied with funds in ways now no longer discoverable, though it cannot be doubted that Helvetius, who was wealthy, the Duke de Choiseul, Malesherbes, the Baron D’Holbach, Voltaire, and others, contributed their share. This society seems to have had several private presses at work, printing little volumes of what was then called philosophy for the people. Frederic II., at the earnest entreaty of Voltaire, allowed the printers of Berlin to reproduce the works of the philosophers, and observed that, as they were connected with those of Holland, France, and Germany, he had no doubt that they had means of conveying books whithersoever they might think proper. But the great workshop was in Holland, where revolutionary publications would seem to have been produced by millions, for cheap or even gratuitous distribution. Having been smuggled by night across the frontier, they were sent by secret agents to the pedlars, then extremely numerous in France. Some of these were the hawkers of ordinary light goods, but very willingly added to their

business a new branch, which they soon found to be extremely lucrative, since they obtained little bales of philosophy at a very low price, and occasionally for nothing.

XXCVIII.

These works were usually published at half-a-franc a volume, which placed them within the reach of the majority. Up to that period few books reached the hands of the peasantry, save popish prayers and catechisms, intended to stupify the mind and stifle all inquiry. Of these, as was quite natural, the people were speedily weary, and therefore received with delight the volumes full of piquant novelties which the pedlars brought them, wandering from village to village, and from chateau to chateau, till the entire surface of France was inundated.

Bertin describes somewhat dramatically his discovery of this philosophical stratagem, which, with modifications, deserves to be imitated in all those parts of Christendom which are still cursed with pernicious institutions. "When the pedlars," he says, "asked me to buy, I questioned them what might be the books they had: 'Probably catechisms or prayers? few others are read in the villages.' At these words I have seen many smile. 'No,' they answered; 'those are not our works: we make much more money of Voltaire, and Diderot, and other philosophic writings.' 'What!' said I, 'the country people buy Voltaire and Diderot! where do they find the money for such dear works?' Their con-

stant answer was: 'We have them at a much cheaper rate than prayer-books; we can sell them at ten sous a volume, and have a pretty profit into the bargain.' Questioning some of them still further, many owned that these books cost them nothing—that they received whole bales without knowing whence they came, but being simply desired to sell them in their journeys at the lowest price."

XXXIX.

Another means of revolutionizing the people with the new opinions was discovered by the ingenuity of the philosophers: They established in Paris an office where schoolmasters and tutors out of employment registered their names; so that the existence of the office having been made generally known, when the municipality of a town, or the head of any private family, applied for a schoolmaster or a tutor, the clients of the office might be sent to discharge the duties. These persons were, for the most part, disciples of the new philosophy, who of their own accord delighted to make proselytes, to which they were further urged by the hope of being patronised through the powerful body whose designs they aided in accomplishing. As was natural, their libraries consisted of the works of their patrons, which the clergy regarded with horror, and fiercely denounced to their superiors.

This, however, was often done in vain; since the lords of the villages had, in a great majority of cases, themselves adopted the new opinions, for which

reason they supported the schoolmaster against the Church.

XL.

Much the same system is at this moment pursued in France, where Communist or Socialist doctrines are diffused among the youth of the country through their agency. In some places the schoolmasters proceeded a step further. On certain days of the week—probably when holidays were given to the children—they invited members of the poorer classes to assemble in their schoolrooms, and then read aloud to them some work which inculcated the new doctrine in an amusing or laughable way. No doubt, the books were well enough adapted to the period, being filled with allusions to prevalent abuses, and satires on the vices of the nobility and clergy.

D'Alembert is accused, by the enemies of the revolution, of having invented this system; and there seems no good reason for refusing the honour to him. In our own great factories and workshops a similar practice has sometimes been adopted, except that in this case it is one of the operatives who performs the part of reader, and communicates instruction to his comrades. No doubt, the works read are very different from those that were formerly popular in France; but the plan deserves attention, as by this means useful knowledge may be rapidly diffused among the people.

PART THE FOURTH.

I.

THE observation constantly in the mouths of the advocates of power is, that the authors of revolution are men of violence; but the person who has been robbed of his purse by a highwayman, and strives to recover it, is also a man of violence. The violence, however, did not commence with him: So also is it with nations which, having been robbed of their liberty, seek to recover it. The real originators of violence were those who enslaved them; and if they find themselves under the necessity of employing force to regain that of which by force they have been deprived, the justice of their act must be its apology. We must, in such cases, choose between two principles, and either maintain that might is right, which would sanctify every political crime that could be committed; or confess that there is

such a thing as justice, independent of power, possession, or prescription. If there be justice, then no authority is legitimate but that which is based upon it, and nations have an unquestionable right to rise against all rulers whose actions are not conformable to the principles of justice. Now, what is the original idea of this justice? Is it not that of equitable distribution? of a proper division of powers, according to the inalienable rights of men? Some shrink from basing politics upon metaphysics, lest the obscure nature of the foundation should involve the ruin of the edifice. But it can have no other. Its roots must strike through the deep stratum of human nature till they fasten on the eternal laws of God which extend beneath the whole universe. Out of those laws the principles of politics must draw their vitality; and though it may be convenient for certain writers to dissemble this truth, it is the duty of all friends of liberty to proclaim it, and to beware that they advance nothing which is not altogether reconcilable with the unchangeable nature of things.

II.

Financial calculations, though they should not be overlooked in considering political changes, will not suffice to explain the subversion of governments. But when a state is otherwise disturbed, when the seeds of decay are widely scattered, when the hostility of classes has been rendered bitter, and inveterate by circumstance, financial embarrassments may hasten the crisis. There is in all governments

a tendency towards extravagance, especially when Courts interfere with the distribution of the public money, or when there exist privileged classes who are interested in multiplying useless places. The recklessness of the Court and the grasping spirit of the nobility can never be satisfied with moderate revenues. There is accordingly a constant increase of taxation. This increase, however, as long as it does not outrun the growing means of the country, may be regarded as safe. But when the expenditure of government exceeds the proportion which it ought to bear to the augmentation of the property of the community, it occasions a retrograde movement, impoverishes one class after another, arrests the march of industry, and multiplies the number of the poor. It is the business of a wise minister to preserve the equilibrium between the wealth and the outlay of the state, and never to suffer the revenue to be so increased as to trench upon the productive power of the community. Of this plain truth all statesmen are of course assured in common with the rest of the world; but the wonder is, that scarcely one minister makes his appearance in the course of a nation's whole career, who has the courage to act upon this obvious maxim. Common sense urges him to confine the expenditure of the country within its natural means, but the influence of court and caste, co-operating for the most part with his own predilections, tempts him to persevere in extravagance in spite of his better judgment.

III.

Like other men, he reckons upon chances and accidents, and carves hopes and expectations out of that vast domain of the unknown which surrounds us all. Conscious that he is ignorant of much in the complicated mechanism of society, he calculates upon the production of results beyond the reach of human prudence, and hopes they may be favourable to the duration of established authority. Most statesmen thus situated are haunted by uneasy forebodings, knowing that the track of safety lies through retrenchment and economy; but anxiety to preserve the favour of the prince and to satisfy the privileged classes, the arts of favourites and flatterers, the allurements of women, and the natural intoxication which accompanies the exercise of power, usually suffice to overwhelm the suggestions of prudence. Consequently, in the history of all nations we observe nearly the same phenomena,—unwise increase of taxation produces poverty, poverty discontent, discontent fear in the governing classes. This fear, in its turn, leads to the establishment or increase of standing armies to keep down the people. The maintenance of those armies increases the sum of poverty, and though the symptoms of disaffection may through their instrumentality be repressed, the evil goes on increasing in secret, until a favourable opportunity lets loose the popular element and consummates the destruction of the State.

IV.

Two causes concur to retard the growth of free institutions in Europe—interest and ignorance. It may possibly be said that if interest be opposed to free principles of government, they neither can nor ought to prevail, since that which promotes the good of mankind is obviously for their interest, which must be the case with democracy, or it stands condemned at once.

But it often happens that in this world men are blind to their best interests. They look solely to present advantages, the smallest of which they will not sacrifice for the sake even of great good contingent upon future events. To the majority of mankind nothing is possible but what they see practically before them. In time to come they must believe, because one hour necessarily follows another; but in events to come, though they must as inevitably follow from causes at work before their eyes, they have no faith.

You may plant the acorn in the ground, but they will not believe in the possibility of an oak till it shoots up, puts forth branches, and casts in summer a palpable shadow upon them. Few, indeed, are capable of carrying forward their minds to the probable issue of things, be they ever so natural. To them the present is all in all, though they gather not from it the fruits it would yield could they persuade themselves to discover its connexion with the future.

V.

The republic, in the opinion of the majority, stands in the same predicament with virtue. People would be ashamed to deny the possibility of its existence, because that would be to repudiate all connexion with it. But they defer the resolution to be virtuous till some future day, when they presume they shall be more fit for the practice of it. So it is with the republic. Most persons who reason at all in politics confess that it occupies the apogæum of political institutions, that it constitutes the very culminating point towards which society tends when carried upward by the greatest force of civilization. They feel it is the noon of public life and glory, and as the ancients selected that portion of the day wherein to place the repose of the gods, so whatever is greatest and most godlike upon this earth tends towards the grand repose of democracy—repose, I mean, from all that is anarchical, vicious, odious, or unnatural.

To this state of things, however, it is objected, that it cannot last for ever—nor can it. But neither is any other form of government endowed with permanency. In all things the fashion of this world passeth away, and swiftest perhaps and most surely in that which is most excellent. Revert again to the comparison of the State with the life of man. Take away the long period of his infancy, in which he is not yet a reasonable creature—of his boyhood, in which we see the dawn of reason—of his youth,

in which it shows itself still more brightly,—and then accompany him over the lofty table-land of manhood, where intellect and passion bear equal sway to enlighten and urge him forwards. But to what? To the feebleness and inaction of old age—to decay—to decrepitude—to death.

Yet would any man, did the choice rest with him, persist in being a child—a boy—a youth—under the orders of others? Would he not say, Give me my manhood, with all its dangers and responsibilities, rendered sweet by independence, though I know it cannot endure; though I see the terminus before me; though the grave yawns there to swallow me up as soon as I shall have performed the whole circle of my duties towards God and man? I say, there is no enlightened person who would not hold this language for himself individually, or for the State of which he may be a member. That people do think differently is owing to the education they have received, whether in the school or in the world, which keeps dense clouds of prejudice perpetually floating over their minds, concealing from them the bright and grand prospect which lies beyond the petty circle of their mental horizon.

But, as the human animal grows to be a man, whether he will or not, so every community grows to be a republic, under whatever name it may choose to adopt—Commonwealth, Constitution, or Democracy. Its development is determined by a law which operates like destiny.

VI.

It may be assumed as a fundamental maxim in politics, that all revolutions, however threatening or imminent, may be averted by statesmen. Change, no doubt, is incident to every government; but change is not revolution, unless where one set of principles, long established and held in reverence, is violently set aside to make way for another, supposed to be more in harmony with the spirit of the age.

There are three kinds of revolutions, characterised rather by the condition of society in which they occur than by any essential differences in their own nature. First, those of young and growing States, which may be regarded as so many efforts of the political principle to hasten the period of maturity. The second class consists of those struggles and collisions incident to mature governments which seem stationary—but only seem; because in politics, as in nature, the moment you have reached the summit you begin to descend. Under the third head we may class those revolutions which happen in the decadence of States, and are either so many efforts of patriotism to restore the country to its pristine splendour and prosperity, or the crimes of selfish men, who, by perverting the powers of society to gratify their own vices or passions, expose it to destruction.

Of this last kind we have an example in Austria, where Metternich, in order to preserve his own personal influence, pursued a course of policy which

terminated in the disorganization of the empire. He persuaded himself that, having to deal with different nationalities, with Germans, Italians, Hungarians, and Slavonians, it would always be easy, by balancing one population against another, to keep the whole in subjection. He, moreover, adopted means for corrupting and enfeebling the mind of the people, keeping the masses in profound ignorance, and poisoning the sources of knowledge for those to whom instruction could not be denied. In a former period of the world's history this policy might have succeeded. It had no other fault than that it was ill-timed. Events and circumstances beyond the control of Prince Metternich had inoculated neighbouring populations with notions of liberty, and as it is impossible to prevent altogether the circulation of ideas, contraband opinions found their way into Austria and overthrew the monarchy of ignorance. It matters nothing for my argument that the Austrian empire may be reconstructed; for whatever forms the government of that country assumes, the disasters of 1848 will not the less have been suffered, and for these Prince Metternich and his emperor were distinctly answerable.

VII.

There is, nevertheless, a class of persons who once looked up to Metternich as to a superior intelligence. They conceived, because he played a prominent part in the turbulent drama of these times, he must necessarily have been wise and great. But to be

wise in politics, is to be able to estimate correctly your own forces and those opposed to you; and to be great, is to possess the magnanimity to employ those forces for the benefit of mankind. Of this wisdom and this greatness Metternich gave no proof. He was, properly speaking, a man of one idea, who believed that to pervert and to oppress is to govern. There is no truly great statesman who will not acknowledge that wherever the rulers of a country are thoroughly hated by the people, the duties of government have not been faithfully performed.

The attempt has often been made to trace the French revolution to the labours of the philosophers, who only organised and gave a voice to the existing discontent. They witnessed the oppression of the people, and perceiving them to be unable to emerge from the labyrinth of despotism, offered to serve as their guides. This was patriotism, not unmixed perhaps with vanity and the love of fame; though, in numerous instances, even this failing could not be objected to them, since they diligently concealed their names, and attributed the efforts they made to imaginary individuals, or men long ago dead. It would be absurd, therefore, to deny them the praise of a grand abnegation of self. They laboured in the dark; they contributed their property, they risked their position in society, their reputation and their lives, to revolutionise their country. Often, when they were too old to cherish the hope that they should live to behold the mature fruits of their exertion, they must have felt they were

toiling for unborn generations, and that when they themselves should be no more, their very names would have to endure the blight of calumny and obloquy, and public detestation; though, putting their confidence in the gratitude of the human race, they no doubt looked forward to a revival of the sense of justice in the public, and a restoration and rejuvenescence of their fame.

It has already been proved by irrefragable arguments that a nation flourishing and prosperous, enlightened and happy, cannot suffer its sentiments to be perverted by an artful appeal to its evil passions. Disaffection is a thing not to be generated without sufficient materials, nor can you direct against a good government that torrent of fury and indignation which may be made to sweep away and obliterate a bad one. It is impossible, therefore, to adopt the opinions of Burke and others, that the French revolution was produced by artificial means, was generated in fraud, and regulated in its movements by other laws than those which always govern the vital action of society. It was, on the contrary, a normal process, originating in adequate causes, and brought about by means defensible on the principles of transcendental justice. One of the greatest evils introduced by bad government was the ignorance and debasement of the public mind, and it was therefore felt by the friends of freedom, that the first step towards a great reformation was the general diffusion of knowledge.

Interested persons or classes may declaim against

the means they adopted; but the masters of opinion are the real masters of the world, and when they have accomplished their mission, you may persecute them, you may shut them up in dungeons, you may take away their lives, you may exterminate them, but the seed destructive of your authority has been sown, and your overthrow must follow as surely as in physics the effect succeeds to the cause. Where governments are good, truth is conservative; but where they are the contrary, nothing is more revolutionary. This it was that gave effect to the blows of the philosophers in France. They had to sap and undermine a huge structure of oppression and error, civil and religious, and they covered themselves with glory, by boldly bringing it to the ground. Wherever the same work is to be accomplished, means similar, if not the same, must be employed. The press all over the Continent is enslaved, and therefore must have recourse to stratagem and artifice, in order to effect its purpose.

There is always an abundance of Swiss eloquence at the service of authority, but the people's cause rarely tempts men of distinguished learning and ability to expose themselves to martyrdom. It is, nevertheless, still possible for nations to remedy this evil, by exhibiting gratitude towards their real benefactors, living or dead.

We who live in the midst of political convulsions may be less able than our successors to comprehend the philosophy of them. Our imaginations are dazzled and excited by a chaos of imperfect efforts and unconcluded struggles. The distant crash of

thrones, and the downfall of crumbling dynasties, agitate us. We seem to witness the annihilation of a vast political system constructed during the dark ages, invested by history and tradition with glory, and apparently containing within itself the destinies of our race. But all political systems, however vast or imposing, are in their nature transitory, while the existence of mankind is permanent. Institutions decay, but man continues. There is consequently no apprehension that the seeming dissolution of society now in progress throughout Europe will, in the end, prove detrimental to humanity. The only inference to be drawn from the phenomena we witness is, that mankind, elevated and ennobled by civilization, have acquired dimensions too great and energies too active to be confined and sheltered beneath the mouldering roof of feudalism. The nations of Europe will bid adieu to postern and tower, and moat and drawbridge, and keep, constructed by their ancestors to meet the events of the day, and will immerge into the open light of heaven, there to flourish and expand to their legitimate dimensions beneath the influence of freedom. In thus yielding to this instinct of their nature, and shaking off the yoke of obsolete opinions, they have been, and yet probably will be, guilty of some excesses. But in these cases we must weigh the good against the evil, and congratulate ourselves, if the former predominate, that a victory has been gained over barbarism.

It may savour of temerity to maintain that all

revolutions which take place in states are justifiable, but such, nevertheless, is the principle I have been constrained to adopt by history and experience; I mean here such revolutions as are effected by the united intelligence and virtue of the community, and are not the result of mere plots and conspiracies. In politics, as in all other sciences, it must be admitted that no effect can be produced without an adequate cause. The cause of revolutions is dissatisfaction with the existing government; and if this be more widely spread than the contrary feeling, it may be regarded as a proof that the government has been systematically wanting in its duty, and ought to be overthrown. This will become self-evident if it be considered that it is one of the chief duties of government to produce satisfaction in the public mind, which it can only do by promoting the general welfare. When it fails in this respect it abdicates, because it proclaims its inability to fulfil the functions of a government. Persons ignorant of political science often delude themselves into the belief that revolutions are traceable to the unruly passions of the multitudes, roused into impetuous activity by demagogues. But no fallacy can be more pitiable. To persuade a wisely governed nation that its affairs are ill-managed, that its rights are trampled upon, that it is insulted and miserable, would be the most Quixotic of all enterprises. The prosperous and contented man never listens to the voice of sedition. You may pipe, but he will not dance the revolutionary measure, and it is even long

before an oppressed people becomes conscious of the unpleasant truth, that its rulers are despots, upon whom it is necessary to make war. Whoever considers the serious nature of a political revolution, whoever calculates the mighty risks, whoever reflects that life and death are in the balance, and that all kinds of dangers must be faced by the insurgents, will be persuaded that nothing but stern necessity can ever drive a whole people or a great majority of it to take up arms against its own government. We are, consequently, forced inevitably to the conclusion that all revolutions are justifiable.

VIII.

Though not formularised hitherto, so far as I am aware, mankind have always tacitly assented to the truth of this doctrine, since free states recognise the right of resistance at some undefined and undefinable point in the career of misgovernment. It is left for the common sense of the country to set limits to obedience and submission, which evidently presupposes in men a natural reluctance to enter upon a conflict with authority; consequently, wherever and whenever they do it in sufficient numbers to ensure success to their cause, they must be supported by the unalterable conviction that right and justice are on their side, that God and nature approve of their undertaking, and that so far from overwhelming them with the obloquy due to the wanton disturbers of the public peace, posterity will invest them with glory as benefactors of their country and their race.

how could it be sweet or honourable to die for a thing thus stripped of all the religion of politics? By country we mean brotherhood; that is, identifying ourselves with the whole nation as one united family, we fill and penetrate our whole being with the thought, that it is glorious to die to promote their lasting welfare. What greater proof of love can a man give than to lay down his life for his friend? and what is friendship, compared with the love of country, with that holy and pure principle of action which God has planted deepest in the human heart, and which always flourishes there till vice and sordid selfishness have dried up the last particle of warmth and nourishment? Woe to that nation in which the love of country ceases to be a general sentiment—in which patriotism is sneered at—in which it is regarded as a mark of simplicity to labour disinterestedly for the good of others!

X.

We may talk of God, but we do not believe in him when we think thus; for our countrymen are our brethren, produced by the throes of one common mother, and if we fail to observe the relationship, it is because interest has put scales upon our eyes. In spite of ridicule, in spite of worldly wisdom, there is a sentiment in us all which leads directly to the recognition of this truth. The sophistry of pride and vanity may induce us, perhaps, to dissemble our relationship to our brothers, whom a mountain of rags disfigures and travesties.

But strip off the ermine, tear away the insignia of poverty, and we recognise our own likeness, and see at once a creature that issued metaphysically from the same womb with us, and sucked at the same breasts, and called the same woman mother.

It is but to forget the lapse of a few years, to turn rapidly over the leaves of a few generations, to behold the whole human race cradled at the feet of Eve, with the first father bending over them, and God looking on. In this way we may approximate the beggar to the queen, and establish the principle of universal suffrage. Where the original institution of brotherhood is not recognised, the elements of revolution are ripe. Of course, when we come to translate principles into practice, and bring down our theories to the level of action, we are exposed to a thousand sinister influences which thwart our designs.

In the revolutions of the present day we perceive an impassioned effort to shun the faults of the past. The idea has been incessantly repeated, that violence begets violence; that governments resemble the principle in which they take their rise; and that, consequently, if men would be free, they must respect the freedom of others both in thought and action. To what result this course will lead must be left for time to reveal; but this may be fearlessly stated now, that there is a pedantry in moderation, an excess in forbearance, a weakness in deference and respect for the opinions of others. When the matter in hand is to organize a new government, the dominant party should not hesitate, but seizing the

opportunity that presents itself, should realize at once its own conceptions, and leave to time and experience the task of modifying and improving its labours.

Of this truth the French have lost sight. In the fervent generosity which immediately succeeded the revolution of February, they boldly recognised the right of labour, which, properly understood, only signifies the right to live; but afterwards, yielding to the timid suggestions of second thoughts, they retraced their steps, out of deference to the principle of property, and thus cast into the political atmosphere the seeds of numerous tempests to come.

XI.

Restorations may, perhaps, be said to afford the best illustration of how far political leaders, and even the great majority of a people, can sometimes plunge in immorality. To redintegrate a fallen government, or bring back an exiled dynasty, is to despise the lessons of time and experience. History, however, shows that nations are not prevented by any law of necessity from perpetrating this crime. Indeed, the examples of a retrograde movement in politics are so numerous, that it would appear to be one of the conditions of society that men should, at certain seasons, grow weary of pursuing the career of virtue and freedom, and return "like a sow that is washed to her wallowing in the mire."

In pagan antiquity, the chapels of sweat and toil formed the vestibule to the temple of fame. But

the patriotism of most men cools by degrees, and disinclines them to great sacrifices and exertions; they cannot look sufficiently far ahead to discover the haven of contentment and happiness, to which a little more of effort, a little more of self-denial, a little more of martyr-like attachment to truth and liberty would conduct them. They grow weary of well-doing, sigh for ease, pant for sordid pleasures and unmanly enjoyments, and abandon the hope of accomplishing and consecrating the freedom of nations, rather than advance a little further up the steep and arduous path of public virtue.

In many cases, and on the eve of our own Restoration in particular, the populace clamoured for a return to monarchy, and urged the wavering and profligate among their leaders to conduct them in that direction. Too frequently, however, the populace are like wards under age, whose will should not be attended to when it obviously tends to their hurt. But statesmen and politicians are apt at such conjunctures to share the levity of the people, and to long for the repose of slavery, that they may escape from responsibility, and the performance of irksome and severe duties. It is always comparatively easy to be a slave, because despotism strikes only at those who stand up in opposition to it, while it is gentle and forbearing towards the tame and submissive.

Besides, ignorance is ever ready to escape from present difficulties by effecting a retreat. The sea seems always calm at a distance; and, viewed from

far out in the regions of space, those vast mountains and ridges, so sublime to us who dwell at their feet, would appear to be scarcely a wrinkle on the earth's surface. It is the same in things moral and political. Men cannot discern the tribulations of the past; and when called upon, in their attempt to achieve their freedom, to lay down their property, exchange indolent inactivity for exertion, and brave the hatred and vengeance of insulted power, they easily, after a brief trial, prevail with themselves to postpone the lofty satisfaction of the mind, inspired by the performance of duty, to that epicureanism and frivolity which may be enjoyed in servitude.

When the current has once set in towards a restoration, no one can put off fast enough every vestige of the old principles and opinions. The timid desert their political creed through fear, the base and sordid through avarice, the weak through the force of example. It has been an immemorial conviction among mankind, that kings treasure up in their minds an inexhaustible hoard of vengeance, to launch at their enemies on the first fitting opportunity.

*Κρείσσω γὰρ βασιλεὺς ὅτε χῶσεται ἀνδρὶ χέρη·
Εἶπερ γὰρ τε χόλον γε καὶ αὐτῆμαρ καταπέψῃ,
Ἄλλὰ γε καὶ μετόπισθεν ἔχει κότον ὄφρα τελέσῃ
Ἐν στήθεσσι τοῖσι.*

XII.

It is known beforehand, therefore, that the restored prince will return escorted by whole cohorts

of evil passions,—revenge, malignity, ingratitude,—some to be directed against his enemies, others against his friends. He easily adopts the persuasion that he owes no man anything, that he has only obtained possession of his right, that Heaven has effected his triumph; and they, consequently, who have been the principal actors in the drama, and really brought about the catastrophe, ought immediately on the conclusion to be worse treated than any other persons. It was a part of the faith of antiquity, that none are more to be pitied than they who put their trust in princes, especially in restored princes. Instead of acquiring wisdom during their exile, they become proficient in every folly and every vice, and as they roam from land to land, sink deeper and deeper in iniquity. Having no national resources to appropriate to their pleasures, they degenerate into gamblers, and prey on the fortunes of those whose calamity it is to put faith in the rightfulness of their titles.

As an illustration of this truth, I may refer to the example of the Stuarts in England, and of the Bourbons in France. During the existence of the Commonwealth, our ancestors, into whatever errors they may have fallen, practised the maxims of a lofty morality, were severe and exalted in their devotion, and learned insensibly to believe that the chief duty of a citizen is to serve his country. With the Restoration different maxims came into vogue. It was then believed that it was a man's first duty to serve himself—to devote his whole existence to intrigue—to cringe, and fawn, and adulate—to abuse

the principles of his religion—to cease to put faith in anything human or divine—to devote his days to, sueing for court favour, his nights to gambling and debauchery. The king himself became the first profligate in the land, converted his palace into a sink of pollution, surrounded himself with nobles, male and female, so utterly without principle, and devoid of decency, that they would scarcely have been tolerated in the *fornices* of ancient Rome. To give countenance to those who bartered their consciences for gold, the prince degraded himself into a pensioner, and accepted from Louis XIV. money for betraying the interests of his country. Courtiers exhibited themselves naked on balconies, drunkenness and the most portentous libertinism pervaded the palace and the capital, and a taint was communicated to our national morals which will, perhaps, adhere to us so long as we are a people.

XIII.

The institution of marriage became a mockery; no man could tell whether his wife's children were his own; vice spread itself like a torrent over the land; and the nation expiated in sin, degradation, and sorrow, the crime of having rejected the Commonwealth, and plunged into the guilt and infamy of a Restoration.

Many ministers of religion who aided in bringing back the Stuarts, afterwards bitterly bewailed their own conduct, and denounced Monk to his face when they had witnessed the vice and impiety of the king,

and felt practically what a curse they had brought upon the country. This was particularly the case with Fairfax's chaplain, Bowles, a Nonconformist, who found good reason to repent the step he had taken.

If the return of the Bourbons to France was not accompanied by the same social and political phenomena, the fact is easy to be accounted for. The French did not pass over from a rigid Christian stoicism to the sty of Epicurus. Under the tyranny of Napoleon, and for many generations previous, they had been sufficiently depressed; and though, while the bloody phantom of the republic remained above the horizon, there was an attempt—full, I admit, of pedantry and affectation—to revive the practice of ancient virtue, the wars, conscriptions, and reckless extravagance of the empire almost completely counteracted the effect of those ethical principles which had been introduced, though imperfectly, by the Revolution.

All who prefer indolence to industry desire a restoration, in the hope that they may obtain, through a few acts of baseness and subserviency, what, under the republic, they can only expect through a continuous succession of personal efforts. Reckless extravagance is the principle of restorations. Still it generally happens that many of the men most active in bringing them about, perish afterwards in obscurity and neglect. Clarendon, the dishonest historiographer and instrument of the Stuarts, died in exile; Fairfax, who might have bequeathed to all

future times a name dear to liberty, expiated in seclusion and contempt his desertion of the Commonwealth; and though the blackness of Monk's infamy was sought to be obliterated by titles and court favour, the scorn of all honest men pursued him to the grave, and will to all eternity cling to his memory.

High principles, honour, the love of truth, belong to a republic. In other forms of government, everything is resolvable into interest and selfishness. We cannot, therefore, be surprised that they who labour for the recal of exiled princes, have seldom anything in view beyond their own advantage. Bryan Fairfax, who conducted the shameful negotiations between his uncle and Monk, confesses that he expected to profit largely by the recal of the Stuarts:—"I hoped," says he, "that by this happy Restoration my fortune, as they call it, would have been made;" and there was probably not one engaged in the affair actuated by motives a whit better than his. It is, consequently, absurd to charge Charles II. with ingratitude. He and his partisans were aiming at one thing—the deluding of the nation for their own benefit: and if afterwards, when success had crowned their efforts, they laughed at each other, like the Roman augurs, it was only what should have been looked for. Prince and partisans despised each other, knowing that they had flattery on their lips, and falsehood in their hearts. If they professed any religion, it was a lie. Practically they were atheists and scoffers, steeped in scoundrelism to the very lips; without mutual

sympathy, because without mutual respect; unjust and oppressive towards the people, whom they regarded with contempt, and tricky and dishonest towards each other, because every man conceived it to be his duty to promote his own gratifications at the expense of all around him.

XIV.

Then come the revenges on the living and on the dead. Men, the noblest in the land for virtue and patriotism, are persecuted and cut off. To have adhered honestly to principle is esteemed a crime; to have served the country is a disgrace. Vengeance, passing the limits prescribed by nature, strikes at the weak and defenceless relatives of patriots, who are reduced to indigence; exhumes the remains of distinguished men, and reeks its impotent malignity on the illustrious dead. Barbarians the most ferocious have often suffered their vindictiveness to expire at the foot of the tomb. There, it is said, "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest;" but the ashes which had once tabernacled a great soul, and appear, therefore, to be entitled to descend peacefully into the bosom of our great mother, are not suffered to escape the base revenge of a restoration. Wretches who hide themselves during the reign of liberty from the faces of her great heroes and apostles, come forth from their holes and corners when reverses have smitten them down, and death has consigned them to fame, to insult their inanimate remains; not remembering that he

who tramples on the dead insults the majesty of the invisible world, which has received them into its precincts, and thrown its hallowing protection over whatever belonged to them. Imagine the heads of Ireton, Bradshaw, and Cromwell taken from the dust to which they had been piously committed, to be exhibited as a spectacle to all that was vile and ignoble in the capital. If any virtue remained in England, it must have shed tears of deep contrition at the sight.

Lord Munson, Sir Henry Mildmay, and Mr. Robert Wallop, were supposed to be treated mercifully when they had their estates confiscated, and were drawn to Tyburn and back again with halters round their necks, and afterwards imprisoned for life; others were condemned to perpetual confinement in remote castles and islands. In the same spirit Louis XIV., when destroying the monastery of Port Royal, persecuted a few penitent nuns, as if the safety of the country had depended on their ruin, and profaned the ashes of the dead.

xv.

Fortunately when men act thus, they are digging unconsciously a pit for their own feet. Experience, it is said, makes fools wise, and the nation, when time has been allowed it to reflect on what it has done, perceives with sorrow and shame, that instead of securing its own happiness, it has been the victim of a delusion and a snare. Nothing that was expected is accomplished; for the court spends the

money of the people in riot and extravagance. Shame for a while restrains the public murmurs; but court rapacity knows no bounds: minions must be enriched, mistresses titled and portioned off; a spurious brood of illegitimates overwhelmed with distinctions and honours; the old friends of the monarchy are converted into malcontents by contempt and neglect, its enemies are purchased at enormous prices; the people, oppressed by all this profligacy, gradually regret what they have done, and a way is thrown open for another revolution.

Machiavelli makes, *apropos* of new governments, a profound remark. He says that they who are freshly installed in power, are under a natural necessity to surround themselves with soldiers, and to adopt other injurious methods for self-defence, which alienate the minds of those by whose assistance they rose. This; in brief, is the history of Louis Philippe, who, if he was not the student of *The Prince*, acquired the knowledge by instinct, of all that was necessary to a tyrant. Shakspeare illustrated the same doctrine in the First Part of *Henry IV.*, where the nobles of England, who had aided the king in mounting the throne, are offended and conspire against him, because he has fallen short of their expectations. He naturally preferred conferring favours on men who would receive, and be grateful for them as gifts, to bestowing honours and employments on those haughty friends who would regard whatever he could give as inadequate payment for their services.

Machiavelli's remark on the princes of restora-

tions, verified by Louis XVIII. and Charles X., is extremely sagacious. He says that princes who recover their thrones are generally more intent on punishing their enemies than on rewarding their friends, and thus estrange all parties from them. In other words, they neither seek to reconcile the former nor preserve the goodwill of the latter.

In modern times the pretensions of rival churches step in to perplex the operations of politics. Our own Restoration was, in some respects, an ecclesiastical affair. Under the Commonwealth there was, properly speaking, no State church, which rendered the sacerdotal order impatient for a change. Two bodies of clergy, however, considered themselves interested in producing it—the papists, who had the Pretender with them, and the partisans of the Church of England, who by concessions and compliances hoped to win him back. The tactics of both were interfered with by the stubborn adherence of the masses to their opinions, which embarrassed the policy of the restored dynasty, and led indirectly to the commission of innumerable cruelties. Equal, as history had shown, to the perpetration of any crimes for the augmentation of their Church's power, the papists were accused by the partisans of the Church of England of horrible designs, which, whether contemplated or not, were quite conformable to the spirit of their faith; and in this war of influences, excesses degrading to humanity were repeatedly perpetrated. The king meanwhile consented to anything which would leave him in the

quiet enjoyment of his pleasures. Like one of the gods of Epicurus, he sate in Whitehall surrounded by courtesans and parasites, and engaged with them in the most revolting orgies, while the great men of the Commonwealth expiated with their blood their attachment to religion and liberty. Lady Castlemaine, Nell Gwynne, and the Duchess of Portsmouth, entertained the king with their odious conversation, or criminal compliances, while the noble Sir Harry Vane breathed forth with tempestuous struggles his heroic soul on Tower Hill. His attempts to address the people, and bequeath to them his great sentiments, were rendered vain by the roll of drums, and the braying of trumpets. An equal measure of injustice and cruelty was dealt to the members of the king's own church. With unexampled baseness and cowardice, he secretly encouraged the papists; and when, yielding to this allurements, they adopted the usual means for advancing the cause of the inflexible Church, abandoned them to the rage of their rivals, and perfectly unmoved saw them perish in the midst of atrocious tortures.

In some countries the restored dynasty lies for a while at the mercy of those who have brought it back. If these be foreigners, they force it to impose burthens on the people which render it oppressive and detested; and if natives, they place it in the same dilemma by their insatiable selfishness and rapacity. Louis XVIII. is said to have taken refuge in atheism from the tyranny of the popish clergy, who, not content with recovering their ecclesiastical

influence, wished to precipitate things back into what they had been during the middle ages. The prince, detested, but was compelled to succumb to them, and to soil his memory with the tradition of massacres scarcely less odious than that of St. Bartholomew. Wherever the reformed doctrines had made progress in France, force and cruelty were employed to extirpate them; and in the warm regions of the South, where Protestantism gallantly combated for spiritual freedom, sixteen thousand of the intrepid advocates of republicanism and religion were massacred in one day.

Such are among the fruits of restorations, which, however, must be expected to operate more or less in conformity with the spirit of the age. In France the imperial restoration was accompanied by massacre and a tremendous system of persecution. Men were driven by thousands into exile, and thousands were transported to unhealthy colonies. The persecution is still continued. War is made upon opinion, the free expression of which is enumerated among crimes. This process is approved of by conventional statesmen of our own country, who are persuaded that if men be allowed to express freely their opinions, all government is impossible. Luckily, it is not in the nature of man peaceably to bury his thoughts at the bidding of authority. Persecution convinces him of his own importance, and while it enlists the sympathy of others, rouses all the pride and passion within him to struggle for victory. If he become a martyr, it does not greatly signify to him; for if there be

not, as a French sophist supposes, a voluptuous gratification in death, there is certainly a noble enjoyment in suffering as far as you are able for the truth, and thus presenting to heaven the sight which the pagans of antiquity considered most grateful to it.

XVI.

The partisans of democracy, when oppressed and punished by a restoration, invariably have recourse to a new propagand. They revenge themselves for their sufferings by giving a fresh utterance to truth, and endeavour to repair their errors, by enlarging the basis on which to rear the standard of the republic. Nearly all revolutions have been accomplished by minorities, who, regardless of life, unless they could enjoy it in freedom, have impatiently resolved to put everything to the hazard of the sword. The cruelties which succeed restorations render them wiser, and make them resolve to appeal next time to a people more thoroughly imbued with just and upright principles. Even the necessary pressure, caused by all forms of administering public affairs, is in such cases adduced as an argument against the government, which, turn in whatever direction it may, encounters censure and obloquy. It is, moreover, fortunate that tyrants and their partisans, hypocritical as they are, never learn thoroughly to disguise their conviction, that they enjoy some mysterious right to other men's property,—that they are born to live in vice and idleness at the expense of the community, and that industry, enterprise, courage, and even intellect, are

inferior to these wretched inheritors of obsolete traditions.

If I could be sufficiently a misanthrope to wish a country visited by the worst that could happen to it, I would desire it to go through the ordeal of a restoration. A commonwealth may be no easy thing to establish; its modesty, its integrity, its unstained faith, its toleration, its humanity, its general enlightenment, may be so many obstacles in the path of its realization. But a people endued with patience and probity will enter honestly upon the task of conquering these virtues for itself, and will not desist until it has succeeded. Corrupt principles may be hard to be worked out of a political system, but perseverance will accomplish it. Persons of Utopian ideas probably persuade themselves that the proclamation of a republic should by some mysterious process give birth to all possible advantages at once. The nation infected with this folly must be miserable, since to escape from its state of probation, it will inevitably return to the idolatry of dynasties. But whatever pains or time the organization of a democracy may cost, a people politically educated will consent to make the sacrifice, since the greatest advantages that can be secured to mankind by the institution of society can only be reached through it.

XVII.

Another mischievous consequence following necessarily in the train of a restoration, is the perpetual occurrence of plots and conspiracies. What men

have never enjoyed, they look forward to with patient hope; but, when they are deprived of a blessing once in their possession, are always ready to fight for the recovery of it. A republican under a restoration is like a widower made such by restraint: he has espoused himself to the republic, he has lived with it, he has enjoyed all it has to give, he has looked for the continuance of this happy intercourse; and when, by some act of political legerdemain, he has been separated from the institutions of his choice, he longs as fiercely for the recovery of them, as if they were as many objects of mere personal affection. Consequently, nearly all the elements of revolution that can exist are accumulated in a State which has undergone the calamity of a restoration, and if by a series of reforms and popular concessions a revolution is warded off, the greatest possible credit is due to the genius and wisdom of those statesmen who know when and how to yield to the demands of the people. Wherever despotism has been established, all forms of conspiracy are allowable; because the worst crime of which man can be guilty, having been committed, it is lawful for the oppressed to defend or avenge themselves by any means in their power. Besides, princes in all ages have set mankind the example of conspiracy. Burke, so favourable in most cases to kings, speaks of the family compact between France and Spain, as one of the most odious and most formidable of all the conspiracies against the liberties of Europe that ever had been framed.

XVIII.

Conspiracies, though one of the necessary results of bad government, are seldom attended with success: first, because they are generally organized rather by passion than by judgment; and secondly, because they are undertaken by a few brave and adventurous men, who do not always carry along with them the sympathies of the nation—are often betrayed into enterprises of this sort through a romantic temper of mind. They love to tread along the edge of political precipices—to contend with danger in the dark—to hold mysterious meetings—to do and say things forbidden by the laws, or obnoxious to authority. Such persons, however, are not genuine conspirators: they have no great object in view, and merely court the excitement of peril for the excitement's sake; but reflection on what they are engaged in at length becomes too powerful for their nervous sensibility. They are haunted by apprehensions which oppress them like the nightmare, and in the state of mind thus produced often become traitors. Of this we have an example in the conspiracy against Philip the Fifth of Spain, which, originating at Vienna, and organized at Rome, was to be consummated at Naples on the arrival of the king there for the suppression of a revolt. Feelings of apprehension and dread, disguised under the mask of loyalty, shipwrecked this enterprise; for, on beholding the king, one of the conspirators immediately conceived the design of betraying his friends. The means were of course

at hand. Soliciting and obtaining an interview, he revealed the entire nature of the plot, named all the persons engaged in it, and produced letters confirming the whole of his statement. Nobles, courtiers, ecclesiastics, monks, and persons disguised as such, arriving at Naples with letters which served as their credentials, were arrested and imprisoned. The Baron de Lisole, the emperor's agent at Rome, had his caskets broken open and searched, and in these proofs were found that the court of Vienna was privy to the plot. The prisons of Naples were thronged with the conspirators, of whom some were executed in the castles, others were exiled to the Sicilies, others famished, and the majority were pardoned.

XIX.

When the object is to overthrow a long-settled government, a small conspiracy, in which secrecy may be practicable, is unequal to the effort. A large one, with extensive ramifications, and numerous members, is almost sure, in its development, to admit fickle, timid, or faithless persons, who, through weakness, revenge, or the sordid love of lucre, will betray their associates.

Still there is an example, in the history of Venice, which shows that, when men are properly trained and disciplined in politics, a secret may long be kept, even when large numbers are in possession of it. The sentence of Carmagnola, though pronounced in the presence of three hundred judges, was never divulged during eight whole months,—a thing which,

as Fra Paolo remarks, seldom happens in monarchies, where whatever is confided to four or five ministers, is almost sure to transpire. Besides, every step taken to widen the range of the conspiracy is a fresh tempting of fortune. Where the matter in question is life or death, it is not always that a man can reckon on his friend, who may be, in the ordinary sense, *amicus usque ad aras*; but choose to place his own altars precisely on the spot from which his companion had removed his. He may shelter his cowardice beneath the sanctity of oaths, or plead the fiction of allegiance to cover his retreat from virtue. In a conspiracy, therefore, you move about, as the Arab proverb expresses it, with your head in your hands. All untried individuals may, upon experiment, prove enemies. The friends of some may be hateful to the friends of others; and when brought together, instead of consenting to cooperate, may suffer the explosion of their private resentment to ruin the prospects of their country.

XX.

But the chief argument against conspiracies is to be drawn from the fact, that where the nation is ripe for a change of government, they are seldom necessary, and where it is not ripe, are never successful. The majority of a people cannot be inspired with noble sentiments by a sudden blast of patriotism, and the triumphant conspirators, if they should prove so, would have to become tyrants themselves, instead of destroying tyranny; whereas, if they failed,

the multitude would behold them led to execution with even less emotion than it would look upon a hero beheaded on the stage. When the ideas of the people keep pace with circumstances,—that is, where the majority understand what they want, and how to obtain it,—insurrections burst forth spontaneously without the aid of plots, though refined and subtle political reasoners, after the event, trace to the machinations of a few what in reality is the result of a natural law of society.

XXI.

Thus many writers, confounding effects with causes, attribute to a conspiracy the great movement throughout Europe during the eighteenth century. It would be more philosophical to discover, in the state of the public mind, the reasons of the associations then formed, whether for good or for evil. The whole mass of society was disturbed and shaken to its foundations. Everybody looked forward to the occurrence of strange things; wild opinions were afloat; old institutions crumbling to decay; old systems and creeds collapsing; while the dawn of a new order of things was gleaming dimly on the edge of the horizon.

Doubt, fear, hope, with all the other turbulent passions of our nature, agitated the minds of nations; and in such a state of universal excitement, it was natural that various knots of friends should cooperate to hasten or retard the advent of liberty.

In this way we may account for the existence of

secret societies in France and Germany, which did not produce, but sprang out of the decay of the social system. No doubt it is possible to trace, in the works of certain writers, an organized plan for the subversion of Catholicism, or even of Christianity itself. It is equally true that much of the literature of that day was also hostile to existing governments; but to pretend that any set of men were the authors of the French Revolution, is to be profoundly ignorant of all the laws which regulate the movements of society. "

XXII.

At various epochs, we find certain classes of the people possessed by a thirst of vengeance against those under whose oppression they groan. Thus the Jacquerie, in the fourteenth century, was an attempt, on the part of the rural population, to avenge, by indiscriminate pillage and slaughter, the wrongs and injuries they had endured from the nobles. The rising, which commenced in the Beauvoisie, was commanded by Caillet, a peasant, who had soon under his orders a body of from ten to thirty thousand men.

Their object was to extirpate the privileged classes, and establish a republic, in which the ablest historians believe they would have succeeded, had they not, by their cruelties and propensities to plunder, deterred the towns from joining them. Mezerai's observation is, that it would otherwise have been all over with the nobility and monarchy in France, as it had happened in Switzerland. But the barbarities

committed by the peasants were no way gratuitous. They were perpetrated in retaliation; for, during the anarchy which had preceded the insurrection, the nobility and other military men committed every conceivable act of violence against the unhappy country people. These, beaten, plundered and hunted down, were driven to take refuge in woods, caves, and marshes, till, like the spent hare, which springs at the throat of the greyhound, they turned round on their pursuers, associated themselves in bands, and resolved to annihilate the privileged classes. This flame was quenched in the blood of the peasantry,—twenty thousand of whom were put to the sword in one day by the Dauphin, after their main army had been defeated.

Again, there would appear to have been no spontaneous organization among the Gallician peasants of our own day, who, verifying the truth of the old maxim, “*Spoliatis arma supersunt*,” burst into a spontaneous insurrection against the nobles, unless we rather choose to adopt the theory of Count Montalembert, and others, which attributes the atrocious massacre to the instigation of the Austrian government.

XXIII.

For such a proceeding we certainly did not want a precedent in history. During the reign of Joseph II., who, without the wisdom, coveted the reputation of a reformer, a sort of servile war burst forth in Hungary, where the peasants, at first in small

numbers, afterwards in multitudes, rose against the nobles, burnt their castles, violated their wives and daughters, and put as many of them to death as fell into their hands.

A Transylvanian peasant, named Horja, placed himself at their head, and carried on the war with the skill of an experienced general. To those who questioned him he produced credentials, 'real or forged, from the emperor; just as Sir Phelim O'Neal did the broad seal of Charles I., authorizing the massacre of the Protestants in Ireland. In both cases many circumstances were adverse to the supposition of forgery. In the neighbourhood of Horja's operations lay encamped an imperial army, the commander of which the Hungarian nobles besought to afford them protection. The general's reply was, that he had received no orders. He therefore remained a quiet spectator of the massacre, which his presence rather encouraged than checked. On one occasion, when the peasants had stormed a town, a state coffer, filled with treasure, fell into their hands; but they forbore to touch it, saying, it belonged to their friend the emperor, and directed the proper persons to convey it to Vienna. With a guard of twenty-four men, this tempting amount of gold passed through the heart of a disturbed province, where thousands, under the designation of rebels, were in arms, and at the same time suffering from destitution.

When a sufficient number of the nobles had been cut off, Joseph appeared suddenly to recollect that

the lesson of rebellion, if suffered to be taught with impunity, might spread further than convenient. • It signified nothing that he had authorized or betrayed the peasants into revolt. To put them down became an imperative duty, and the nobles were supplied with troops for the purpose. Then came the period of retaliation, and the wives and daughters of the rebels, as they were now denominated, had to pass through the same ordeal with the female relatives of the nobility. The peasants themselves were cut off by wholesale massacre, and the province of Hungary was restored to order and tranquillity. *Solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant.*

XXIV.

What the serfs in Hungary partially accomplished, the Bohemian peasants commenced. • A conspiracy was organized in the neighbourhood of Prague, whither, on a certain day, they were to repair by thousands to receive the arms that had been stored up for them—by whom and at whose expense does not appear. Treachery in this, as in many other cases, frustrated the designs of the conspirators, whose leaders were exposed to all the violence of imperial fury.

XXV.

History, when written on principles of truth and justice, has generally vindicated the memory of great conspirators; while it has covered with everlasting

odium those who have aimed at the subversion of liberty.

One of the most touching, and therefore one of the best known, anecdotes in history, describes the fate of a Roman conspirator and his wife. The lady, obedient at once to the principles of the Stoic and the impulses of love, used the dagger first, and drawing it from her own breast, presented it to her husband, saying—"My Pætus, it is not painful."

Against such despots as ruled during the decline of the Roman empire, plots were often organized by heroic patriotism, but with no other effect than to deprive the country of great and good men. Yet it may be doubted whether it was not nobler to fall in such enterprises against monsters like Nero and Caligula, than to live beneath their sway in a state of profound degradation, rendered doubly bitter by the recollection of the republic.

XXVI.

Among the evils of conspiracies is the danger lest pernicious counsels, rendered captivating by their boldness, should hurry the associated friends into acts of superfluous atrocity, which scare away the sympathies of mankind, and link them with the opposite party. This may be said to have been the case in the enterprise of the Pazzi at Florence. That the object in view was the restoration of freedom, is scarcely to be doubted; but the means were so sanguinary, and the actors so ill chosen, that nothing but universal horror was inspired.

What else could be expected when priests undertook to murder men at the altar, at the moment they were about to receive the most solemn sacrament of their religion! The very punishment of the guilty is permitted by posterity to heighten the horrors of the deed, and our excited fancy still beholds the body of an archbishop hanging upon a pole, thrust forth from a window, and there left dangling in the agonies of death over the heads of the populace.

It frequently happens that the narratives of historians only pervert the judgment of the reader, instead of enlightening it. Through a vulgar desire of displaying poetic power of description, they rouse the sympathies of mankind in behalf of the most odious or worthless characters. Thus, writers of French and English history labour to excite commiseration for Louis XVI. and Charles I.; and there are persons who have even attempted to inspire pity by relating the death of Paul III. of Russia, cut off by a conspiracy, in which his own son, afterwards the Emperor Alexander, was suspected to be engaged; at least, he never punished the known assassins of his father, but, on the contrary, promoted them to places of trust and honour, just as Charles I. did Buckingham, known, whether intentionally or not, to have poisoned his father James.

XXVII.

One use there may be in conspiracies. They excite the attention of the country to the reality of

misgovernment, and the punishment of the successive conspirators operates like the blood of the martyrs in making proselytes to the doctrines for which they died. The only preventative is to establish freedom, and put into the hands of mankind the instruments of reform; having which, men will neither plot nor conspire, but, trusting to their virtues and their eloquence, will openly perform their duty to liberty. In free states the only plots are those for the restoration or establishment of despotism, carried on by a few members of distinguished families, impatient of popular influence, and eager for the recovery of the privileges which they possessed under the old order of things. Such were the conspiracies in this country to restore the Stuarts, among the French in favour of the Bourbons and the Buonapartists, and in ancient Rome to re-establish the Tarquins. There are in all States persons so naturally servile that it is irksome to them to be their own masters, and they attach a sort of chivalry to the idea of being slaves. When such individuals conspire and fall, our pity is overwhelmed by scorn. We admire their enterprise and devotion, but despise the cause in which they display them; and rank them with those miserable fanatics who have perished beneath the car of Jagannát'h, or poignarded themselves in the service of the Old Man of the Mountain.

XXVIII.

Another class of conspiracies—generally the most atrocious of all—consists of those intended to pull

down one monarch and set up another. Of this class was that of Grumkow and the Prince of Anhalt, against Frederick William of Prussia. They meant to burn the old king and his son alive in a theatre, but missed their aim.

On the ethics of this subject, public opinion is often much perplexed: some contending that to conspire at all is criminal, or even sinful; while others, of more daring and independent minds, reckon it among the noblest virtues. In reality, what qualifies the act, is the object aimed at. Conspiracy, insurrection, rebellion, are in themselves things indifferent. What renders them meritorious or blameable is the nature of the government they are designed to overthrow. If it be free, liberal, and good, to aim at its subversion would be most criminal; but if it be oppressive, partial, unjust, the more a man is its enemy, the more deserving he is of his fellow-citizens' love and admiration. Besides, despots have set mankind the example of conspiring: they have met in congresses, entered into secret treaties, bound themselves together by the most solemn engagements; for example, under the name of the Holy Alliance, to uphold each other's authority—synonymous with the enslavement and degradation of the human race. Such confederacies are immoral in the highest degree, their object being to promote ignorance, the parent of vice and misery. In conformity with the laws of Providence, a nation can never desire anything but justice, since that only can promote its prosperity. Consequently, whatever conspiracies or

plots are designed to effect the deliverance of a whole people, must be founded in virtue, and honourable to those engaged in them. If servile historians, openly or tacitly, inculcate a different belief, mankind will learn by degrees, to despise their decisions, and abandon their works to obscurity; for integrity and truth, though persecuted and oppressed by authority, must inevitably survive, and in the end triumph over everything. Still, it too frequently happens, that through a vicious system of education, a whole people has its opinions, on subjects like this, totally perverted.

Thus, throughout Great Britain the universal practice for ages, was to regard Charles I. as the victim of a conspiracy. But it was only by slow degrees discovered that he himself was the greatest and most unscrupulous of plotters; that no act from which he hoped to derive profit, was thought immoral by him; that he reckoned perfidy among the virtues, and despised truth and honour as things only fit to be practised by Puritans.

XXIX.

It is only from the grand level of freedom that men learn to view each other's actions with an equal eye, and to imitate in some degree the decisions of Supreme Goodness. In the corruption of public opinion throughout Europe, it is not the action that qualifies the man, but the man that qualifies the action. What is a crime in the humble, is virtuous in the privileged.

Even persons of integrity and honour are generally ready, so perverted are our ethics, to make apologies for princes and men in high stations, for invasions of the laws of religion and morality, which would cover others with contempt or ignominy, or bring them perhaps to an untimely end. As correct knowledge prevails, a severer system of ethics will be adopted. To plot and conspire will not be deemed uplawful and infamous in the poor, but virtuous in the titled and privileged. The motive will be suffered to characterise the act, and heroic disinterestedness and charity, though they may pass to the stars by way of the scaffold or guillotine, will be embalmed in the memory of posterity, as the truest and noblest patriotism.

xxx.

At this moment society throughout Europe rests on a dark and tremulous basis, in which secret societies, conspiracies, plots and machinations of all kinds are engaged in organizing the future. In many cases the designs may be discovered, and the authors of them punished; but the production of a new order of things having now become a political necessity, partial failures, though they may retard, can by no means prevent the final catastrophe. Europe is reviewing its morality, and making a separation which it may be hoped will be final, between prejudices and principles. Justice is practicable only where there exists no respect of persons. To produce the reign of this glorious impartiality, it is lawful to

conspire and plot; and they who fall in the attempt, become martyrs to the sacred cause. In Russia, in Germany, in Spain, in Italy, and in France, it is a virtue to conspire; and the same would be true in England if we could not speak our minds openly. And here we have the criterion by which a man may be able to decide between right and wrong. Where there exists no limit to the freedom of discussion, to conspire is a crime, because society, in that case, has clearly outlived the period in which it can be of use. But where public meetings are forbidden—where there is no legislative body placed beyond the control of authority—where the liberty of the press is not secured by law,—to conspire is the duty of a good citizen.

XXXI.

History celebrates as patriots the men who banded together to expel the thirty tyrants from Athens; to overthrow the kings, and to put down the decemvirs at Rome; and afterwards, when the republic had been merged into the empire, who sought to revert to the commonwealth by the destruction of tyrants, the continuance of whose existence appeared to be an imputation on Providence. If, however, it was virtuous to be the member of a secret society intended to subvert the throne of Nero, or Caligula, or Commodus, or Vitellius, or Maximin, or any other monster, how can it be a crime to pursue the same course under the Russian despotism, or at Milan or Vienna? The great laws of morality are eternal, so

that what was good in antiquity is good still. Men must be the sole judges of their own actions here, though society may permit the infliction of punishment, even for displays of heroic patriotism, as when Lord William Russell and Algernon Sydney were devoted to death for actions which are now admitted to entitle them to our gratitude.

PART THE FIFTH.

I.

MAN lies open to the stroke of few greater misfortunes than to be able to do what he pleases. For this reason the life of arbitrary princes is often a life of misery. At the commencement of their career, flattered into forgetfulness of their own mortality, they plunge headlong into vices and crimes, until, having shattered their constitutions and exhausted their animal spirits, they awaken long before the close of life to a sense of their own wretchedness, are tortured by the stings of conscience, and cursed with a perpetual feeling of satiety, which strips life of all enjoyment.

To be in possession of supreme power, and made the object of civil idolatry, a man must forfeit all genuine happiness. Usurping the place of a god, while inheriting all the frailties of humanity, he is

conscious of playing a false part, of incurring the guilt of impiety, of exacting a degree of reverence due only to his Maker. By one of the mysterious laws which regulate the concerns of this universe, a poison is infused into arbitrary power, which eats into the very soul of those who taste it. This is the dreadful NEMESIS, that avenges the wrongs and sufferings of mankind. It ascends the throne with the despot; it sits—a terrible shadow—at his right hand; it watches his actions; it sharpens the sense of guilt; it deadens the pulses of the heart; it scares away friendship and love; it eradicates the very seeds of virtue, and leaves nothing as a compensation for all this but the universal display of formal obedience.

II.

Amid the blaze of his grandeur the tyrant feels that he is hated. He knows that in his presence every face is a mask, behind which all the passions of Pandemonium rage and threaten him. By degrees the impression comes over him that he stands in the place of Cain, who beheld in every man that approached him the avenger of murder. In the dead of night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, a form comes to him—the form of injured and oppressed liberty—and scares him from his repose, and he knows not whither to fly. Heaven frowns upon him, as the hardened oppressor of humanity, and earth abhors him for his impiety towards heaven. As a last resource, he takes refuge in his own iniquity.

and studies all the various arts of delusion and deceit, of hypocrisy and dissimulation; he banishes all pity from his breast; he despises the ethical laws by which ordinary mortals are supposed to be bound; he invades the honour of those around him; he corrupts their wives and daughters; he insults and tramples on his own; he overcomes the natural scruples of man, to break into the sanctuary of life; he puts men to death without justice; he brings the curse of innocent blood upon his soul, and hopes that the intoxicating draught of power will still be to him a compensation for all this. But wickedness forges the instruments of its own chastisement.

III.

Of this we have an example in Caligula, whose remorse often differed little from madness. Into this state he is supposed to have been brought by the jealousy of Cæsonia, who, administering to him a potion in the hope of recovering his wandering love, produced a disturbance of the brain that terminated in insanity. For the most part, he sat sleepless on his couch, being rarely able to snatch more than three hours' repose, and that disturbed by spectres and horrid dreams; while at other times he would wander through the extended porticoes, longing eagerly for the appearance of light.

IV.

The licentious king has selected, perhaps, a woman to be the partner of his greatness, and endeavours to

diffuse around her a circumvallation of awe and reverence that may preserve her virtue. His own example, however, emboldens others. Listening partly to passion, partly to revenge, she dishonours him, and in the fury of offended authority he washes out the stain with her blood. But does he thus render himself happy? Can his courtiers, or mistresses, or battalions of armed guards keep away from his bedside the spectre of his murdered queen?

The meanest peasant, who, after a long day spent in honest labour, retires to sleep with his wife and children beneath the humblest cottage roof, is infinitely more enviable than the guilt-oppressed monarch, who seeks in vain for rest beneath his gilded ceiling on beds of down. Conscience smooths the pillow of the poor good man, and makes his sleep sweet, and awakens him in the morning refreshed and cheerful. He blesses God for the light that streams in upon him through his humble casement. "The swallow, twittering from the straw-built shed," invites him forth; he inhales the incense of the morning; he goes singing and happy to his labours; and a morsel of bread, moistened in the neighbouring brook, constitutes a repast delicious to his taste.

The enthroned libertine, who has committed the worst of mortal offences, would barter all he is possessed of, to be master of such a conscience. Evil custom has not left him one natural appetite. He knows not what is meant by wholesome hunger or thirst, or pleasing weariness, or delicious sleep. His

pampered palate will scarcely enable him to relish the most costly delicacies; dainties, and wines that sparkle like melted rubies, can scarcely provoke him to drink, unless to drown in temporary oblivion the never-dying worm within. From the feverish unrest of the night, or rather of the morning, he flies to the excitement of vice, until his jaded senses can no longer be roused to pleasure. Then he sinks into languor and lassitude; then the weariness of life comes over him; then he would die, but that death is still more terrible than life; then, through mere terror, he has recourse to superstition and to sordid and degrading penances, which level him with the brute.

v.

Follow the Emperor Charles into his cell; see him cast off with loathing his royal robes; behold him, with quivering fingers, grasp the fearful scourge and lacerate his own back, till the blood streams in torrents, and sickness and faintness of heart come over him; then he casts up his agonized eyes to heaven; then, under the pressure of imperial guilt, he prays, while hundreds of thousands of ghosts—made so to satisfy his ambition—pass in dreadful files before his mind's eye, and point significantly towards the gates of that place which hope never enters. And will the pleasure of oppressing our fellow-creatures for a few brief years be thought an equivalent for this? But Charles the Fifth was doomed to drain still deeper the dregs of human

suffering. In the language of Léar, it was his fate to discover "how sharper than a serpent's tooth it is, to have a thankless child;" for his son Philip, educated in his maxims, nurtured in his policy, imbued with his principles of ethics, thought, like Lear's daughters, that he lived too long, spent too much, required too many attendants, and shortened the old man's days by his ingratitude.

This example of abdicated tyranny grovelling in the dens of superstition, was familiar to the mind of Europe, when Shakspeare wrote his great tragedy, and it was probably in the convent of Castile that his imagination took the original hint for the doting old Lear, while his successor, unsexed by genius, served as a prototype for Regan and Goneril. Similar villany and meanness characterised our own second Henry, who, after suggesting the murder of à Becket, grovelled and scourged himself like a slave at his tomb.

VI.

Germany, the least refined country in Europe, supplies an endless list of despicable princes, into whose lives royalty could infuse no balm. There are few more complete pictures of domestic misery, than that presented by the household of Frederick William of Prussia, father to Frederick II. A tyrant to his wife and children, as well as to those whom in the cant of the age we must call his people, he was hated, dreaded, and despised at home, while every where else he was regarded as a powerful monarch.

Most persons are acquainted with the nature of his amusements, among which was that of kidnapping tall men to form a regiment of giants. His chief delight, however, was that of persecuting his wife or kicking his children, by whom he was necessarily detested.

The especial object of his own detestation was his eldest son, and the gratification he most coveted in life was that he would have derived from putting him to death, which he several times attempted without success. As might be expected, his end corresponded with his career: he died like a dog, and the event was a signal for universal joy in Prussia.

VII.

Few illustrations, however, of the penalty paid by despotism are more striking than that supplied by Charles IV. of Spain. A few months before his death, the desire seized him to descend into the tombs of his ancestors, in the gloomy vaults of the Escorial. This visit was paid by night, in company with his prime minister, and favourite confessor. He felt the fascination of the King of Terrors, and was irresistibly impelled towards an act which hastened his own dissolution.

There in long files lay the tombs of the Spanish kings, marble and gold without, but within full of dead men's bones. Above them, kneeling or recumbent, were many effigies of white marble, which twenty vermilion lamps, shedding an unearthly

light, seemed almost to inspire with life. Now came irresistibly over his mind the nothingness of power, the hideous nature of crime, while a light from the throne of eternal justice flashed through the gloom, and revealed to him his own deformity. What would he not have given now for the recollection of a virtuous life—or a consciousness of duty performed—of kindness and mercy towards the humble—of general philanthropy towards the poor—of love and beneficence towards all? He passed by tomb after tomb, and came at last to that which held the remains of his wife. How death overtook her his conscience knew but too well. He wished to behold her once more, that he might extort, as it were from her very skeleton, the pardon which he feared might be refused him by the Almighty. He had not entirely lost all faith in human love. He knew it was in woman's nature to pardon,—to pardon everything, even her own murder. He therefore desired his minister and confessor to remove the marble which covered the bones of his queen. When they were bared to his view, with a shriek of horror and anguish he fell upon the skeleton, and in frantic accents implored it to pardon him. He clung to the mouldering bones, he groaned, he sobbed, he poured forth his soul in agony. The minister, with the instinct of place, desired to remove him, lest his own hold upon power might be terminated by his death. The confessor, a stern monk, took a different view of the matter. "Let him remain where he is," cried he; "there is no place where it would suit him better to die. The

skeleton he now embraces was once quick with life, and invested with surpassing beauty: he knows why it is now otherwise. Let his tears descend in floods upon those rattling bones; they cannot revivify them, though they may perhaps in some measure atone for his long catalogue of sins against that deeply-injured woman."

They ascended from the vaulted tombs, and beheld with inward satisfaction the light of day, while the people gazed with astonishment at the lugubrious procession emerging from the chambers of the dead. Within thirty days Charles was stretched lifeless in that tomb of which he may be said to have made trial during this melancholy visit.

VIII.

One of the means by which tyrants are made to expiate the guilt of their position, is the life of publicity which in most cases they lead. The sweet solitude which the humble citizen enjoys, but scarcely knows perhaps how to estimate at its full value, is altogether unknown to them. Their whole life is one prolonged turmoil, with intervening fits of gloom, protracted and painful, which more than level them with the lowest of their subjects.

Louis XI. was at frequent intervals a prey to this corroding melancholy, which was the case also with Louis XIV., notwithstanding the grossness of his vanity, and the flattery of those who surrounded him. Death, terrible to all who know how to extract enjoyment from the phenomena of this world, comes

clothed with tenfold terror to the possessors of supreme power, whose reluctance to lay down the sceptre is often in proportion to the unworthiness with which they have wielded it. A sadder spectacle can scarcely be presented to the imagination than that of Anne of Austria breathing forth in pain and anguish her soul in one room, while her sons, Louis XIV. and his brother, were quarrelling fiercely in the next room for her pearls.

If she consented to the imprisonment of the man with the Iron Mask, he was fully avenged by the agonies of that moment. Perhaps to render the picture complete, this her third son should have been present in the neighbouring chamber, reproaching Louis XIV. with having, like a second Jacob, robbed him of his birthright, and demanding his share of his mother's jewels. Humanity, in such cases, obliterates from the mind of the historian all ideas of regal power, leaving only pity for the tortures of the sufferers.

Among the Roman emperors there was a stately grandeur of sentiment, not altogether unbecoming the great republic, out of whose ruin and corruption they sprang, which enabled them to pass from the summit of human magnificence to the silence of the tomb with heroic indifference. They seemed to drain rapidly the cup of life, and then to fling it away disdainfully without regret.

They killed others without remorse, and punished themselves with apathy. A touch of the stoic philosophy, seems with the first Cæsar to have ascended

the throne of Rome, and seldom to have quitted its possessors till the seat of empire was shifted to the East, when pusillanimity the most degrading completed the catalogue of their vices. Modern history is full of examples of princes cringing with loathsome superstition to their confessors, or other representatives of the Church, who tyrannise over their souls during life, and in death dismiss them, though not altogether without suspicion, to the place of which their chief affects to keep the keys. The Abbé Edgeworth, in the Place de la Révolution, bidding the soul of Louis XVI. ascend to heaven, is at once an example of the despotism of his order, and of the grovelling ideas of God and religion that usually prevail in palaces.

IX.

Another circumstance which, disguise it how they may, must inevitably shed bitterness into the cup of despots, is the irresistible conviction, that exactly in proportion to the virtue and greatness of men, are they estranged from them, whereas their friends and admirers consist exclusively of those who bear talent into the market of the world for sale, or have nothing human about them, but the weakness which inclines the mind to the commission of idolatry. Nothing can subdue the aversion of civil virtue to potentates and powers. Julius Cæsar used to observe, that he hated men of impracticable consciences, a phrase by which he designated the upright and conscientious servants of the republic. The

minds of such persons present to authority the irritating spectacle of an imperium in imperio, not to be subdued, or added to their dominion. It lies there unassaulted by human power, acknowledging no sovereignty or superiority but God's.

Moralists, with their insipid commonplaces, often seek to console the poor for their inferiority by declaiming on the miseries of grandeur, but seldom touch on the true points, through fear of giving offence to its possessors. But history, without intending it, does this better than a thousand homilies. Look at the jealousies, the aversions, the distrust, the vices, the stranglings, poisonings, with which palaces are filled,—how the mother hates the daughter, and the daughter the mother,—how, for the most part, the father hates the son, who is to supplant him, and how the son longs to behold the King of Terrors come to his aid, that he may be master of all the resources of an empire. In Eastern despotisms, the prince, on first ascending the throne, sometimes strangles all his brethren, the children of his mother; in others, he puts out their eyes, that they may be for ever incapable of successfully plotting against him.

In Europe civilization compels the substitution of different means; but however cunningly disguised, the wolfish appetite for power preserves its force, save in cases so few and far between, if not altogether apocryphal, as scarcely to deserve notice in a philosophical inquiry. Louis XVIII., wandering through Germany as an exile, once arrived at a post on which

had been written, by the order of a king, "Let no beggar or proscribed person rest here longer than a quarter of an hour."

X.

The great problem in political science, is to discover the law or power by which all changes in society are produced. States we observe at their outset are pervaded by a spirit which imparts vigour to every citizen, and acts at the same time as a principle of union among the whole. This spirit, like a floodtide, operating through philosophy, literature, and arms, floats the state to its high-water mark of civilization. Afterwards there is an ebb, at first imperceptible, but by degrees painfully visible, till, in the course of time, the vessel of the state is left stranded through hopeless effeminacy, or wrecked by revolution."

Various reasons have been assigned for this process. Some have adduced one cause, some another. But a profound study of all the phenomena of society must force us to one conclusion. The spirit which constitutes the vitality of states is no other than religious belief or faith. It may be thought rash in an age of scepticism or indifference—for to a great extent the world is now sceptical or indifferent—to affirm this proposition. But a man must reason according to his conviction, and this is mine. When the foundations of a great state are laid, its authors adopt the belief of the people, in which also they sincerely share, as the soul of their new institutions.

This belief, pervading all the citizens, binds them together in a fraternal union, and causes them to look up to the god of the state with affection as to a father. Man is great or little in this world, according to the measure of his faith. The man who confides in nothing, will effect nothing, nothing great, I mean, or worthy to be registered among the achievements of the human race. All powerful intellects sympathise with the infinite, and receive through various channels inspiration from it.

XI.

Therefore, in the youth and freshness of society, the noblest minds are the most thoroughly impregnated with faith and belief, which enables them to sway the thoughts and affections of those around them. They have an excess of the power which is possessed more or less by all.

• In states thus impregnated with the spirit of faith, every act of policy, foreign or domestic, is an act of religion. Patriotism is included in piety, and to love the State, is to love the Deity who presides over it. It is easy to perceive, that the universal prevalence of these sentiments through the community must render it powerful and formidable, because, among men so thinking and feeling, if to live and participate in the advantages of the state be desirable—to die and share its glory is no less so.

XII.

By death, in fact, such men only cease to be the citizens of a transitory and imperfect state, in order to become the citizens of another state, perfect and imperishable. A belief like this pervading a whole community, must give it homogeneity and intense unity of action. It is not so much a multitude of individuals as one individual gifted with ubiquity. Turn where you will, the same mental idiosyncrasy meets you, and all is enthusiasm, hope, confidence, and earnest cooperation.

Why this belief should be susceptible of decay, it may not be so easy to explain. But the thing is possible, nevertheless. In pagan times much of the established religion was founded in error, and therefore, ~~as~~ philosophy proceeded in the search after truth, it destroyed those prejudices which formed in some sort the cohesive principle of society. In this way philosophy was unpatriotic. But while it brought about the destruction of imperfect communities, it was preparing the way for new political creations more durable, because more closely connected with truth. But there is an erroneous as well as a true philosophy, a philosophy which terminates in selfishness, as well as an expansive and generous philosophy, which teaches men to derive their happiness not from themselves, but from the opinion of their fellow-citizens. They should live and move in the breath of other men, and be persuaded that nothing is so terrible as the frown of the

public. They should be, as far as possible, convinced that there is no escape from it, that it survives death, and extends beyond the grave.

On the other hand, public approbation is immortality and glory, and whatever else we most covet upon earth. Men really do not all die, when their names and characters pass, as it were, into the consciousness of the community, and form a part of the national sentiment, when the love of the entire race clusters round them, and when mothers pronounce their names to their children with a reverence bordering upon worship.

XIII.

If we accept what has been said, it will follow that in order to give permanence to a state, we must found religion on truth. This is the reason of the durability of some modern communities which lie open to dissolution only in so far as they have admitted error into this system of belief. It is affirmed where Christianity is believed, that it forms part and parcel of the laws of the land. This is taking an extremely narrow and sordid view of the subject. It forms the soul of the laws, as well as of society, and while it continues to do so, those laws and that society can never die. But it must not be associated with error, for error leads to disunion, and disunion in excess is death.

In monarchies ignorance is an essential element of government, which therefore allies itself with imperfect forms of Christianity. There the State

must watch carefully over education, and enjoy, as far as possible, a paramount sway over opinion itself. Hence purely catholic governments, as those of Spain and Italy, tolerate no dissent even in politics; and however much men may condemn the predominance of the nobility or clergy, they are not permitted to give utterance to their sentiments under the severest penalties.

This was the case in Austria in the reign of Leopold and afterwards, so that the very thoughts of the people came to be moulded by despotism.

XIV.

They know that inquiry must prove as fatal to superstition as it is advantageous to truth, and therefore put chains upon the thoughts of men, and subvert their consciences, that they may the better enslave their bodies. Where Christianity exists in its purity, it exercises unbounded toleration, upheld by the profound consciousness of truth, which enables it to smile at all the assaults of error, knowing they are as powerless to cast a taint upon it, as clouds and vapours to dim the brightness of the sun.

It is some imperfect perception of this truth that has led to those endless speculations about the union of the Church and State, by which the world has been so much perplexed. But the State is the Church, and there is no other. If there be among us the professors of different creeds, we must in theory contemplate them as minors, and consider not what their faith is, but what it is sure to be, when their

intellect has acquired its full development. For this reason a free State can admit no form whatever of persecution. Truth is the most tolerant of all things, because it comprehends itself as well as the ignorance around it, and knows that in proportion as it rises above the mental horizon it must inevitably dissipate that darkness which only exists by its absence, or rather is that absence itself.

XV.

There is another cause of the decay of states which historians seem generally to regard as the only one; I mean the growth of wealth, and the consequences which result from it. In infant communities poverty is the condition of all men, not indigence or want, but that absence of the materials of luxury on which men in opulent times bestow the name of poverty. This, acting as a stimulus to industry, keeps the mind of the whole people on the stretch. Every man exercises his faculties of body or mind to uphold his place in the community, and alternately concentrates his thoughts upon his family, or expands and directs them outwards upon the State. He finds it incompatible with all his views, as well as with his feelings, to be indolent, and no false public opinion has yet been created to associate discredit with honest toil. His pride, therefore, is in industry, in the labours of agriculture, or in those operations of commerce which tend at once to sharpen and enlarge the mind. In this way riches are amassed, not by all, but only by certain members

of the community, who in consequence come gradually to be invested with an air of superiority. Others, gifted with less sagacity, or less favoured by fortune, or more indifferent respecting this world's goods, find themselves by degrees in an inferior condition, from which the descent¹ to absolute indigence is short and easy.

With the loss of property comes the loss of respect from their fellow-citizens, who openly or tacitly accuse them of idleness, imprudence, vice, or, which is worse, of being the victims of an evil destiny. manifold suffering accompanies this descent in the social scale, and embitters the mind both against individuals and the State, through the faultiness of whose institutions individuals are apt to explain the tempests of calamity they encounter; and thus a discontented and dangerous class, inimical to the laws and the government of the community, is called into existence.

XVI.

On the other hand, the favourites of fortune, increasing daily in riches, learn at length to centre in these their whole happiness, which leads them to look grudgingly on whatever they disburse for the service of the State. Wealth operates in them the change which indigence brings about in their neighbours. These hate the government, because it secures them too few advantages, and those because they are required, for its support, to contribute what they consider too large a proportion. Thus disaffec-

tion reaches all classes, and leads them to desire changes of a very different character.

The poor aim at justice, which favours an equitable distribution of the advantages of society. The rich aim at power, which may enable them not only to secure what they already possess, but greatly to augment it with the additional enjoyments of distinction—rank—titles, whose sole value lies in the imagination.

Again, opulence, by generating the habit of indulgence, softens the physical structure, and renders men prone to effeminacy, which begets an aversion for the rough realities of life, a love of retirement and seclusion; or the exclusive association of members of the effeminate classes, which cultivate in common an aversion for those whose superabundant energies lead them to indulge in displays of vigour and activity distasteful to their epicurean sensitiveness. Among such men patriotism is not to be looked for; freedom they dislike, because where it is established all men are supposed to be each other's equals, which begets a primitive simplicity of manners inconsistent with an extravagant deference for wealth or station. Out of this springs a longing for a different order of things, in which the industrious classes may be assigned an inferior position in the social scale, while the possessors of hereditary property take permanent rank above them.

Through secret contrivances and arrangements, which often deserve to be regarded as conspiracies, all political power is gradually withdrawn from the

poorer citizens, who being thus deprived of every motive to exert their intellectual faculties, by degrees degenerate into an unthinking multitude, while the opulent, now distinguished by the name of nobles, entirely monopolize the management of public concerns, or elevate one of their members to the rank of king.

As, however, the affairs of this world are in a perpetual flux, the new order of things thus established immediately begins to experience the corroding influence of change. The prince, intoxicated by his elevation, soon adopts the belief that he is not made, like other men, of common clay; and the pride inspired by this fantastic dream, leads him to insist on the degradation of others in his presence. His superiors in knowledge, in refinement, in generosity, in greatness of soul, are required to bow before him, which begets and diffuses disgust. They retire to interrogate the laws of nature; they examine the history of society; they meditate, they consult with each other; they recover a knowledge of forgotten truths; they find that all men are equal and brethren, that it is a want of reliance on their common Father, or, in other words, error or impiety, that has led to the state of things which excites their indignation. A feeling of penitence springs up in their minds, they return to the belief and practices of primitive times, and, as they recover one after another the virtues of their forefathers, they likewise regain possession of the government they enjoyed, and revert to freedom through revolution.

XVII.

These phenomena would succeed each other more commonly and with much greater rapidity, but for a distinguishing feature of modern society, which, however, was not altogether unknown in the ancient world. All governments, conscious of being usurpations, learn to look on the mass of the people as enemies, or at least as liable to become so under the pressure of iniquitous burdens. They therefore apply themselves to the organizing of a power equal to the repression of popular feeling, however numerous or flagrant may be the causes of indignation. A number of dissolute, profligate and reckless men, inimical to society, because they have forfeited its respect, are taken into pay by their rulers, taught to move in bodies and act in concert, to be swayed by a perverse modification of public opinion, generated and kept up among themselves, to seek for happiness in low and degrading pleasures, and to preserve only as much of human intelligence as will enable them to wield their brutal forces against the people with the greatest effect. These individuals are bound by oaths to each other, and soon come to have no country but the confined space in which they are kept by their masters. The few ideas they possess are all perverted; they are instructed to take a pride in little bits of dyed wool, or shining metal, which, like silly children, they put upon their shoulders, and when they appear among the citizens, being dressed in a different garb, they look and feel

like foreigners, having nothing in common with the great body of their countrymen. So far is this estrangement carried, that they live under a different code of laws, which creates imaginary crimes, and denounces the severest punishments against those who perpetrate them.

Wholesome knowledge is withheld from this servile caste, for the use of whose members a system of ethics has been invented, remarkable only for its laxity. They are permitted to travel about the country to allure men into vice and debauchery, with a view of entrapping them into their association, and little or nothing is thought of their delinquencies, if the lower grades of them introduce themselves into honest men's houses, and live at free quarters among their servants. Among the upper members of the caste, the practice of seduction and libertinism has been reduced to a science, so that, as a rule, no woman of true modesty will associate with them, neither can they safely be admitted into any honest man's house.

XVIII.

Nearly all over Europe this caste, on which society bestows the name of the army, now holds the destiny of civilization in its hands. After wielding it to crush and keep down the people, governments have found themselves compelled to succumb to it in their turn, so that when they desire to make progress, to initiate reforms, and bring themselves into harmony with the spirit of the age, they are unable to accom-

plish their own designs through fear of the army. With some few slight exceptions, all Europe, is enveloped in a net, out of which none but the wisest and boldest can ever hope to find an avenue leading to national prosperity. The ordinary laws of society have been overridden by this exceptional law; this embodiment of the brute force of the community, which being an organization without mind, a power without corresponding intelligence, a state within the state, can never exist in any country at the same time with liberty. Government is now experiencing the bitter truth. Economy is rendered impracticable, by the necessity of maintaining the army, while its maintenance, reacting upon society, exasperates those passions it was originally organized to repress. Nearly throughout the world, therefore, the people and the army stand face to face with each other, preparing for the final struggle, which must either terminate in the complete emancipation, or the complete enslavement of all the communities of Christendom. Many attempts are made to gloss over and disguise this fact; but it is impossible to look on without being convinced that governments have found, in their vast military establishments, as well their own masters as those of their people; and nothing but converting the whole surface of Christendom into one battle field, on which the democratic and the military principles may decide their internecine contests, can ever restore society to a healthful state.

The approach of this calamitous period is at

length beginning to be felt; a painful uneasiness pervades the whole civilized world. The atmosphere is filled with a portentous gloom, and not a day now dawns, which may not usher in the advent of mankind's political deliverance.

In some countries attempts are made to evade the contest by extending the advantages of civilization to the army itself,—by humanizing and enlarging the soldier's mind, by teaching him that he has duties paramount to those of the camp,—that he is a citizen by nature, a member of the military profession only by accident,—that the holiest and noblest inspirations of humanity should incline him to unite with the people, with whom, after all, his lot must be cast, at least in the decline of life, whether for good or for evil.

XIX.

It is no doubt quite possible to push too far the analogy between States and individuals, but the points of resemblance are numerous, and among these the chief is that which concerns the enlarging of the circle of vitality. While all his energies and physical powers are complete, the individual diffuses his life and lays the foundation as it were of many families. Afterwards his vitality ceases to overflow. He remains stationary with those whom he has called into existence to represent him to future times. By degrees accident and circumstance diminish the number of these; his own reproductive powers at length decay and forsake him, and though he continues for

some time to wear the appearance of strength, he no more augments the sum of power in the world, but occupies his place rather by dint of prescription than through the exercise of his own forces, and is ultimately extinguished through mere decay.

This obviously is also the history of States. But whereas in the individual nature has fixed the laws which determine his development, growth, flourishing, and decline, it seems to be beyond the competence of man to establish laws for regulating the phenomena of communities. I say *seems*, because our researches do not hitherto enable us to speak with certainty. It appears to be left to government to prolong, at least to some extent, the manhood of nations, by keeping in vogue those exercises and habits and systems of belief and thought which are most conducive to the organization of power. Education may be made to operate almost like destiny.

The youth of a State may either be disciplined and trained in manly exercises, in preparation for hardy toil, for travel, for discovery, for the bar, the camp, or the senate, or they may be nurtured in effeminate practices, and taught to regard self-indulgence as the supreme good. Where there is energy and force of will, there will be a leaning towards mastery, towards enlarging the possessions of the State, towards conquest and colonization. The tide of empire in such a State rises perpetually, and in proportion to the elevation of its level is the extent of the circle described and overflowed by its waves. So long as these continue to flow outwards the State is

flourishing and in its manhood; but when they become stationary, or begin to retreat towards the unknown bed from which they rose, the State is verging towards decrepitude, and it is seldom, perhaps never, that the wisdom of statesmen can bring about a second spring-tide, though the race may in the course of long years recover its growth under the lead of different principles and new institutions.

Many of the phenomena of modern society may appear adverse to these views, because several countries have flourished and decayed, and after a while flourished again. This is true of countries and races, but not of states. The people have continued, but the constitution of the State has been totally changed.

XX.

Connected with this subject, there is a question which may deserve to be for a moment considered. I mean the effect of the diffusion of knowledge upon communities. Some, arguing from certain data furnished by history, apprehend lest the cultivation of the mind should produce effeminacy, inactivity, and complete degeneracy at last. It is, indeed, often observed that studies too eagerly pursued shatter the nervous system, communicate a preternatural keenness to the sensibility, and make men shrink from rough contact with their fellows, as was the case with Hobbs of Malmesbury, and many others; but whole communities cannot in this way become studious. They must plough, and sow, and reap; they must

excavate quarries, build houses, manufacture steam-engines, forge arms, construct ships, and navigate the ocean; in short, conduct all the arts and processes of civilization. Whole communities, therefore, cannot grow effeminate by the cultivation of studious habits. Nevertheless, civil to some extent must always arise if knowledge be not trained to action. To educate is to train, to discipline—to accustom men to self-control, and in certain situations to command. It lies also within the circle of its duties to inculcate magnanimity and contempt of death, by revealing what this transitory life is; and that it should be considered only as the flame which illuminates the short avenue to eternity.

What the Stoics were in antiquity Christians should be in these latter days. We repeat to ourselves daily, that here we have no abiding place, that our home is elsewhere, that death is but the grim portal of life. Over Christians, therefore, a sense of duty should above all things preside, and in the faithful explanation of that duty education should chiefly consist. Now in Christian states love of country and kindred cannot be less absorbing than among mere Pagans, who looked with dubious faith towards the life that is to come. We believe that it is our duty to love equally both countries, the country towards which we are journeying, and the country through which we journey. We must, therefore, all of us be the soldiers of faith; that is, be ready to die for what we love, namely, truth and liberty; and those who unite with us in reverencing both.

Hence, under certain circumstances, the sacred duty of war, which in good men is only voluntary self-sacrifice for hearth and altar, holy centres of human love, which can exist only in free states. The slave, properly speaking, has neither hearth nor altar, since neither for him is protected from injustice and oppression. If the knowledge diffused by education can be impregnated with this, or some analogous spirit, we need be under no apprehension of its unnerving the arms of men, and disabling them for bearing the sword.

XXI.

In arguing thus, I would by no means be thought an enemy of peace. But as the repose of night is won by the toil of the day, as the repose of old age is the reward of manhood's labours, so peace in this world must flow from the achievements of war.

It might be otherwise were all nations equally civilized and enlightened. But, arguing from the experience of ages past, it would appear to be a law of nature, that as the material sun only enlightens the hemispheres alternately, so civilization in perpetual progress should encircle the globe, enlightening, however, only one of its faces at a time. The moral like the physical day, therefore, is encircled with darkness, and all the tribes and nations of men, which swarm together in the gloom, invariably carry flashing arms for the invasion of civilized society.

It may appear to be a paradox, but it is a truth nevertheless, that the period in which an empire

is most formidable to its neighbours, is not that in which civilization is at its highest; for humanity then interferes to counteract the promptings of ambition. But in that period of semi-barbarism, intervening between the first awakening of a people's mental faculties and their thorough initiation in the mysteries of knowledge. At that stage in the progress of civilization, the guiding minds of the State have already acquired knowledge as a weapon, though they have not learned to reverence it as a revelation of principle. Urged into activity by the instincts of ambition, and worshipping glory as a reality, their chief happiness consists in the subjugation of their neighbours. In their creed human life is valued according to a scale of dignities, beginning with the prince and descending to the peasant, whose extinction in small masses is scarcely regarded as a calamity.

XXII.

There is, therefore, at the disposal of the intelligence of the State, confined within a narrow circle, an enormous amount of brute force ready to be disciplined, and moulded, and precipitated upon surrounding countries at the nod of the prince. This is preeminently the case with Russia, and in a less degree with Austria, Prussia, and even with France, the circumscribed extent of whose civilization has been revealed by recent events. They whose business in life is the cultivation of their minds are too apt to deceive themselves. Being the centre of a narrow circle they with dif-

ficuity and reluctance believe the existence of the thick darkness without. But after all, we are only in the dawn of the world's enlightenment. The peaks of the mountains, the crests of the ridges, and in some places, perhaps, the upper slopes of the hills are illuminated; but it will be long, very long before the light descends to gladden the deep valleys and wide plains of humanity. Here and there we perceive a leaven in the masses, by which they appear to be upheaved to meet the descending light.

Some strange influence pervades society, and agitates and quickens it on various portions of the earth's surface. There is an incessant intercourse, a perpetual running to and fro, untiring industry, exchange of commodities, and insensibly of ideas, also inquiry and response, and a slow but ceaseless effort towards self-émancipation. But, draw a map of the world, and cover with marks or shadows all those parts on which civilization has not yet exerted any powerful influence, and you will find very little of the broad surface unstained. For ages, therefore, more numerous than can be foreseen, will the principle of revolution have to be at work in human society, since in fact it is only the effort of humanity to emancipate itself from all forms of thralldom.

XXIII.

To restore complete health to society, the energies of all its members must be brought into proper action. Nothing short of the intelligence of the whole can be equal to the enlightenment of the

whole. Equality of attainments is not to be hoped for but in a well-regulated state: a degree of knowledge may be imparted to every man, sufficient, perhaps, to qualify him for the proper performance of his political duties.

What society needs most to learn, however, is the spirit of disinterestedness,—the conviction that the greatest happiness of which we are capable arises from the consciousness of doing good. To become enlightened is to be capable of perceiving this truth, which can alone deliver men from the idea that wisdom is synonymous with the act of gratifying oneself at the expense of all other persons. In this, as in the minor consideration of property, it is better to give than to receive, to diffuse than to concentrate happiness. Whatever is great, whatever is noble, partakes of the property of light, which exists only as it is perceived. Greatness is intellectual power operating for the happiness of the species. You may therefore measure your greatness by the sum of the benefits you confer on your race,—by weaning them from selfishness, by inspiring them with generous sentiments, by pervading with your power the powers of others, and converting them into so many instruments for ameliorating human kind. To engage in so noble a course of action, you must believe that men are worthy of your devotion; for unless you accept this article of faith, you will perform nothing of moment for mankind.

XXIV.

When Christianity was first preached to the world, its apostles were persecuted, and its divine theory was denounced as an ideal dream. It persisted, nevertheless, in marching at the head of humanity, far in the van, and elevated aloft like the cloud-pillar of the Israelites in the desert. As it would not descend towards the world, the world was compelled to mount towards it, and it is this perpetual striving after ideal good that, in spite of all that may be urged to the contrary, has made us what we are. Truth is akin to all other truth, and therefore the theory of the Republic is in this respect analogous to Christianity; however lofty or perfect it may be, and supposed unrealizable by man, it is still the great beacon-light of the human race, perpetually blazing on high, inviting them to ascend,—to toil without ceasing, and not to faint,—till they have attained their unalienable birthright, the great and glorious privilege of standing in God's presence, without any superior but himself.

This is the spirit of republicanism, which, varied, alloyed, adulterated, by the mixture of selfishness unavoidable in all human things, still constitutes the golden thread in the destiny of mankind; which reconciles our race to itself, and makes us feel that we are indeed the children of God. This conviction we can never receive into our own minds while we continue to worship one another,—while we debase ourselves by civil idolatry,—while looking down, not

up, we bend the knee to figures of clay like ourselves, unmindful of the Eternal Spirit, which breathes in our spirit, and constitutes our souls' vitality.

XXV.

Translated into the ordinary political language of the world, the meaning of this is, that the institutions of society should be ample and lofty enough to contain man in his noblest development; and while they afford protection and security to the humble and the weak, furnish also incitements to ambitious and soaring minds, to which no terrestrial destiny can administer entire satisfaction. The Republic is this, or it is nothing. It is the pledge for the happiness of all, or it is a contemptible phantom, to be allowed no place in the serious calculations of statesmen.

One observation which perpetually occurs in political discussions is, that though the Republic may be the best form of government, this or that particular nation is not fitted for it. When successively applied to people in almost every various stage of civilization, it must in many cases be true; for nothing is clearer than that a people grossly ignorant, grossly immoral, or irreligious, cannot govern itself by republican institutions. Montesquieu lays it down as a political axiom, that virtue is the fundamental principle of democracy. But virtue presupposes education, which again presupposes the protracted existence of the State in some form or other. To new societies, therefore, or to societies which, how-

ever long they may have existed, are very backward in mental cultivation, no mistake could be greater than to apply the principles of republican government.

All nations have a right to freedom, and to any form of government they may think proper to adopt; but it is unfortunate when they do think proper to adopt any other than that which is adapted to their condition. By way of illustration, we may refer to the example of the United States and France. The former, sober, industrious, of masculine character, though to some extent rough and uncouth, had acquired that knowledge and experience which enabled it, under favourable circumstances, to achieve its freedom, and to continue free. The latter, full of quick impulses, but unsteady—proud and ambitious, yet deeply corrupt—impatient of the yoke, yet unequal to comprehend the theory of self-government—delivered itself from monarchy, and established a republic. It would, however, be absurd to say that it was then fitted for so noble a form of government. A thousand years of oppression had depraved and degraded it; and, therefore, after making incalculable sacrifices in the attempt to establish liberty, it has admitted its incompetence by submitting patiently to military despotism.

The natives of Europe should take warning by the one, and example by the other; or, without looking across the Atlantic, they may find that the English Constitution is the model of a free state, complicated indeed and incomplete, yet advancing

constantly towards perfection. With our municipal institutions, our laws, our parliaments, we have acquired a degree of prosperity and greatness unparalleled in modern history. We have planted in various parts of the earth a hundred flourishing colonies; have covered the ocean with our fleets; subdued for ourselves a vast empire in Asia; and undeniably taken the lead in the civilization and refinement of the world.

Had our government been despotic, we must have been content to remain a third-rate power, following submissively in the wake of the military despotisms of the Continent. Being free, we are followed by those despotisms which have always found themselves unable to achieve any considerable conquest, or annex any large territory to their dominion; without the cooperation or connivance of Great Britain. This enviable position we owe entirely to the freedom of our government, founded in revolution, and strongly pervaded by democratic principles.

Even the constitution of the United States is only that of England modified by situation and circumstances. Still, with all our freedom, civilization, and power, we have yet very much to accomplish,—not by imitating others, but by developing our own domestic theories, and calling into healthful and useful action all the native energy and activity of the population. As we are, however, the communities of the Continent may learn from us what mighty results are to be produced by freedom: whatever we think, we may speak; whatever we project, we may

undertake; whatever we acquire, we may enjoy. The imperfections in our social system, of which we complain, public opinion will remedy. We possess, in parliament, the grand instrument of reform;—and though we have no disposition to disturb the tranquillity of other states, we have always, when men have risen for freedom, extended to them our sympathy, and sometimes our assistance.

Should a general war take place, the political influence of England will be widely felt. Enslaved communities, borrowing their principles from us, will rear the standard of liberty, and it is to be hoped that the combinations of diplomacy will be such as may enable us to countenance and uphold the insurgents. It is our mission to emancipate mankind, by opposing and shattering those unwieldy Tyrannies which have so long overlain and oppressed their intellectual energies. Providence, which in so many ways has already blessed our efforts, may yet perhaps, if we remain true to ourselves, complete the fulness of our glory, by rendering us the Nemesis of Despotism.

THE END.

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“ I said, I will arise, and go to my Father.”

