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AN
E S S A Y
ON
THE SPIRIT AND INFLUENCE
OF
THE REFORMATION OF LUTHER:

THE WORK WHICH OBTAINED THE PRIZE ON THE QUESTION PROPOSED IN 1802, BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FRANCE ;

“What has been the Influence of the Reformation of Luther on the Political situation of the different States of Europe, and on the Progress of Knowledge?”

WITH
A SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH,
FROM ITS
FOUNDER TO THE REFORMATION;
Intended as an Appendix to the Work.

BY CHARLES VILLERS.

Translated, and Illustrated with Copious Notes,
BY JAMES MILL, ESQ.

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1805.



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PREFACE

BY THE TRANSLATOR.

WHEN the question which gave occasion to this work was first proposed by the National Institute of France, it particularly attracted the attention of the translator. In a Catholic country, the approbation of Catholicism has in general implied the belief that every thing opposed to Catholicism is full only of evil. It appeared to him, therefore, a memorable proof of the extraordinary progress of reason and liberality, when a learned assembly in a Catholic country proposed to estimate the beneficent effects which have arisen from the great revolt against the Catholic church.

The work itself gives occasion to additional sentiments of satisfaction and surprise. It is an unreserved display of all the vices of the papal system, and an impartial representation of the happy tendency and effects of the Reformation. To do justice to this most important subject the union of many talents was requisite. It was necessary to possess a very extensive and accurate

acquaintance with historical facts, both ecclesiastical and political, and as well before the Reformation as after it. And a mind was required capable of the most vigorous and profound reflection, accustomed to trace the more important and hidden relations by which the series of human events is affected, and thoroughly imbued with that philosophy which imparts the knowledge of the faculties of man, and of the circumstances which tend to their improvement. It is enough for the present purpose to add that the translator was surprised to find so many of those great qualities combined on the present occasion; and of the numerous circumstances requisite for the perfect elucidation of the subject, he was pleased to observe that far more were present than absent.

A picture, in any degree complete, of the consequences of the Reformation of Luther upon the political condition of man, and upon his intellectual improvement in Europe, he regards as an object of the utmost curiosity and importance. The knowledge of the subject communicated in the present performance appeared to him great; and he thought that a service of some magnitude might be rendered to his countrymen by offering it to them in their own language. The views too which are presented, in the course of the inquiry, respecting the religious and political rights of mankind, appeared to him so liberal and just, to

be placed at so proper a distance from those extravagant projects on the one hand, which are neither founded on a knowledge of human affairs, nor consistent with their prosperity; and from those contracted, mean, and ill-founded principles, on the other, that because human creatures often make a bad use of their liberty, the smaller part of them should always prevent the greater from having any, that he thought they could not be too generally diffused in a period when men are so frequently in extremes.

As the author immediately addresses himself to persons better acquainted with many of the circumstances connected with the Reformation, and less with others, than the people of this country, it appeared to the translator that several particulars in the work would require some illustration to his countrymen, and in other places that the inquiry might be aided by the views of some of our own authors, or even by the lights which he himself had been enabled to collect. Such is the principal intention of the notes. In some places too the ideas of the author appeared to stand in need of correction. And some notes are added chiefly for the sake of the curious particulars which they contain; or to exhibit the opinion of some eminent author. Upon the whole it is hoped that this miscellany will add something both to the elucidation and to the interest of the work.

The sketch of ecclesiastical history subjoined is so very short, that it was impossible it could be explicit in every particular of importance. To have written notes on every thing in this which might appear to stand in need of illustration or correction, would have required a space altogether disproportionate to the text. It was therefore thought proper to omit them.

It is necessary perhaps to remark, that the author considers the great inquiry concerning the effects of the Reformation of Luther as consisting of two parts; The first, relating to its effects on the political affairs of Europe, and on the progress of literature; The second, relating to its effects on morals in the nations of Europe, and on the religious ideas and character of the people. To the first part of the subject he was confined by the terms of the question proposed by the Institute. The latter part, he observes, forms an inquiry still more difficult, and not less important than that which he has attempted to execute.

Although this work is altogether directed to general purposes and conclusions, it is hardly possible, at the present moment, to avoid making a particular application in regard to one department of British affairs. It appears an object of great importance to all those who truly understand, and wish well to the interests of Great Britain, not only that the Catholics of Ireland should be eman-

icipated from all political disqualifications, but that they should be converted from a system, in its best shape, so much more unfavourable to their progress in reason and virtue, than that embraced by the rest of their fellow subjects. Were the Roman Catholics of Ireland delivered from those circumstances which lead them to regard the Protestants as their enemies, and brought to look without suspicion upon any thing presented to them by Protestants, a book, like this, in which the defects of the papal system, and its evil tendency with regard to all the best interests of men, are more fully and accurately pourtrayed than they have ever yet been, could not fail, approved too as it has been by Catholics, and in a Catholic country, to have the most powerful effects on the minds of all the best informed and superior classes, effects which would speedily descend from them to their inferiors.

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PART FIRST.

GENERAL REFLECTIONS.

SECTION I.

On the State of the Question.

IF, during one of the centuries which preceded the sixteenth, when no barrier had as yet been raised against the supremacy of the Roman Pontiffs, a learned assembly had come to the resolution of estimating the effects of a schism, of an opinion contrary to that of Rome, the question undoubtedly would have been conceived in the following terms; "What are the evils, and what the scandal to which the church has been subjected by means of the impious and pernicious doctrine which has been stated?" At the present period, when several respectable nations have separated themselves from the church of Rome, when the intimate connections which subsist between the

nations of Europe have habituated the adherents of Rome to behold among the professors of a different religion communities equally well regulated, equally virtuous, and equally enlightened with themselves, the question is naturally announced in a different manner. An assembly of philosophers in the heart of France, restored to Catholicism, propose, "To determine the influence of the Reformation of Luther upon the state of society in Europe, and upon the progress of reason and knowledge." This change in our language implies an important one in our opinions, and in this view of the subject, it may be asserted that the question answers itself.*

* If the question, thus stated, refer, as it appears evidently to do, to the beneficial influence of the Reformation, it denotes an era in the progress of liberality and knowledge. This is the first declaration in favour of the great revolt from Popish dominion, which has been made by a public and constituted body in a Popish country. An opinion must be thoroughly ripe before it can be published in this manner. It was by slow degrees that popery succeeded in burying all liberality and freedom of mind. Ten centuries it laboured either to accomplish or preserve the conquest. Three centuries only have revolved since the rebellion; and the votaries of popery itself declare to the whole world that this rebellion was beneficial to the human race.

Yet it was in this very country, that within a shorter period than three centuries all the horrors of a St. Bartholomew's day were perpetrated; when a king of France, from the windows of his palace, fired with his own hand at his alarmed and distracted subjects, as they were swimming across the river to

As the Institute has not accompanied this question with any preliminary explanation, the following observations, of which the object is to ascertain the sense and limits of the reply, cannot appear out of place.

escape from death, calling out incessantly, *Kill, kill!* and when the fanatical murderers pursued into the chamber of the king's sister, Marguerite de Valois, and even to the bed in which she was lying, some officers belonging to the court, whom they suspected of Protestantism.

“ On the evening of St. Bartholomew,” says Hume, “ the signal was given for a general massacre. The hatred, long entertained by the Parisians against the Protestants, made them second, without any preparation, the fury of the court; and persons of every condition, age, and sex, suspected of any propensity to that religion, were involved in an undistinguished ruin. The streets of Paris flowed with blood; and the people, more enraged than satiated with their cruelty, as if repining that death had saved the victims from farther insult, exercised on their dead bodies all the rage of the most licentious brutality. Orders were instantly dispatched to all the provinces for a like general execution of the Protestants; and in Rouen, Lyons, and many other cities, the people emulated the fury of the capital.”

Even so late as the time of our own happy revolution, the revocation of the edict of Nantz produced the most deplorable scenes in France; and upwards of half a million of her most useful citizens were happy to fly from their native land, and abandon their means of subsistence, to escape the horrors of the persecution to which they were subject.

We shall be told that France stripped herself of religion, and that she is now restored to Catholicism in name rather than in reality. This is no objection to the exhilarating conclusion

A reformation in religion appears at first sight calculated to produce effects only on that which concerns religion, on the doctrine and discipline of the church. But, long before the Reformation of Luther, the church and the state had become so blended together in all the political systems in Europe, that it was impossible to shake the one without communicating the shock to the other. The church, which every where formed a state within the state, had so far pushed its encroachments upon the latter, that it threatened to swallow it up. All Europe had long been in danger of passing under the yoke of an absolute theocracy. The sovereigns of the new Empire of the West, who saved it from that destiny, alarmed it in their turn with the project of an universal monarchy. The kings of France, of England, of Sweden, and of Denmark, the princes and free cities of Germany and Italy opposed only partially and successively the pretensions of either

respecting the progress of reason. It is no small matter that France is stripped of bigotry and superstition. This is the first step. The transition from no religion to a pure religion is, in a whole people, much easier than from a corrupt and pernicious, to a pure religion. The propensity in man to religious sentiments will ever prevent a nation from being long without a religion; and the intermediate state, which produces writings like that we are now perusing, so powerfully calculated to introduce a good religion, cannot be considered as useless.

competitor. A new impulse, a new and powerful tie which bound together the oppressed, against the two oppressors at once, an event which wakened the passions of men, the love of liberty, and religious and political enthusiasm which doubled the power of princes by inflaming the minds of their subjects, which, together with independence, offered to rulers the rich prey of the spoils of the clergy: an event, I say, like this, must needs, in such a juncture, produce an universal agitation in Europe. The fabric of modern states was shaken by it to the very foundation. During the long and painful struggle which ensued, every thing obtained a new form and position. A new political order arose out of the general fermentation and confusion; the different elements of which it is composed, long and variously agitated, obeyed at last the gravitating law of the moral world, and assumed the place assigned by their respective weight, which was not, however, in general, the place which they formerly occupied. A new order of ideas also sprung up from the agitation of opinions. Men dared to think, to reason, and to examine what before only challenged a blind submission. Thus a simple stroke aimed at the discipline of the church was the cause of a considerable change in the political situation of the states of Europe, and in the moral culture of its inhabitants. The Insti-

tute, therefore, was animated with the true spirit of history when it prompted the solution of the problem which it has stated so well. It is glorious for a writer to treat, before such an assembly, of religion and politics, those two cardinal points of the life of man. One of the first prerogatives of true liberty, is the power of full and unconstrained expression on those important subjects; and in whatever country that power is exercised, infallibly that country is free.*

* It is impossible to deny that this compliment to the Institute is, in this instance at least, well deserved. We are enabled to say so with still greater evidence, now that it has given its suffrage to a work in which so many free and noble sentiments are contained. To enhance the merit of that assembly, it is to be remembered that it is placed under a government by no means very favourable to freedom of opinion; and that general tone of mind which this book has a tendency to inspire, is one which Bonaparte would be very sorry to see gaining ground among his people. The circumstances attending this publication, however, are a sufficient proof that such a tone of mind is gaining ground among them, and that it is too strong for all the powers of Bonaparte to resist. It is produced by the circumstances of the race, the situation into which the species at large is now brought; and no attempts of any body of men in any quarter will avail against it.

The author conveys a lesson, which will not be misunderstood, when he states the freedom of expression, with regard to religion and politics, as the grand criterion of the liberty of every country. With regard to religion, Bonaparte indeed is not disposed to be without indulgence. But Frenchmen cannot consider their liberty of expression very complete in regard to

The Institute, by inquiring what *has been* the influence of the Reformation of Luther, indicates clearly enough its opinion, that this influence has now ceased, or at least has no longer an active existence. In fact, nearly three centuries have now elapsed since the first explosion. The agitation which it produced has subsided by degrees; the force which originally communicated the impulse, and by which so many new phænomena were produced, has ceased to act as a living power, as a productive principle. The institutions which it created, and those which it modified, have, for the most part, continued; some have disappeared; but those which have remained follow at the present period the general course of events, and that course is no longer directed by the Reformation as an immediate cause. It has performed in a great measure what it was destined to perform. Its present influence is of a derived and secondary nature; gentle, and visible only in the effects of the institutions which derive from it their birth.

politics. They know and feel that no restraint can be more complete. The conclusion to which they are here called to attend is, that they are not free. It is a hint, a suggestion which it was worthy of a philosopher and a man of spirit to give. It will not be without its effect. This book has run with great rapidity through France, and over all Europe; and in most places it will diffuse clearer ideas of the civil and religious rights of mankind.

The time then has arrived, when a judgment of it may be formed, when we can enumerate and discuss the benefits and the evils which it has produced to the human race. It is undoubtedly conformable to the views of the Institute that I should confine myself to specify exactly the more immediate effects of the Reformation, and content myself with a slight notice of its remoter consequences. Were it proposed to enter into the detail of these last, it would be necessary to draw the immense picture of the history of the states of Europe from that epoch, since there is scarcely any great event, or any result of the Reformation, such, for example, as the actual constitution of the Germanic Body, or the Republic of the United Provinces, the influence of which in its turn has not been greater or less. It would be impossible ever to find a way out of this labyrinth of *secondary consequences*. For, to regard the matter thus, the influence of every political or religious commotion is propagated to infinitude. We still at this moment feel more or less what happened in India, Arabia, Greece, and Italy, in very distant times. We yet live under the very perceptible influence of the invasion of the people of the north, of the crusades, and other political movements, which have become principles of action among the nations. The line of the culture of nations, a line deviating, often winding, sometimes

retrograde, is formed by the complicated action of so many different forces; to mark its turnings, and deflections, in estimating the forces which concurred in its production, is the business of the philosophy of history. The author of the present inquiry will regard it as sufficient happiness, if his judges are of opinion that he has completed a similar task, in regard to that period of modern history when the Reformation was the predominant force.

Meanwhile it is impossible for a man to engage in the inquiry into the effects of the Reformation without finding himself constrained to make this reflection; "Is not that great event which I consider as a cause itself the simple result of other events which have preceded it? and must I not, on this account, refer to them, and not to it, which has been only an intermediate agent; the real origin of all that has followed?" Assuredly; such is the lot of mind in its researches. While it looks forward, the point of its departure appears to be a fixed station from which the succeeding steps have proceeded. On looking backwards, the first point appears to it but a necessary connection of those beyond it, and the step, as it were, by which one passes to those on the other side. To the eye of the mind, every event as it traces it upwards becomes a simple effect; every effect as it traces it downwards be-

comes in its turn a cause. The principle which leads us to attribute to an event every thing which follows that event, as if it were its effect, is the conducting thread by which we are enabled to arrange historical facts. It is the law of cohesion, by which the present is united to the past. To mount up in this manner from the effect to the cause, even to a First Cause subsisting by itself, and which is the effect of no other cause, is a want, a demand of our intellectual nature, which searches for an absolute principle in which its speculations terminate. On this deceitful path it is that Metaphysics loses her way.—A man entirely unacquainted with the nature of a river, arriving on the banks of one, and observing it here to flow in an extensive plain, there confined in a narrow channel, in another place foaming by the agitation of a cataract; such a man would regard the first turning of the stream where it might lie concealed from his eye as the origin of the river; should he ascend, the cataract would produce a similar illusion; having reached the source at last, he would consider the mountain from which it issues as the primary cause of the river; he would soon however reflect, that the bowels of the mountain must shortly be exhausted by so constant a stream; he will observe the accumulation of clouds, the rains, without which the drained mountain would yield no water.

Thus do the clouds become the primary cause; but those are brought by the winds which sweep the great seas: and by the sun it is that they are raised from the sea. Whence then comes this power in the sun? Thus is he quickly conducted to the inquiries of speculative physics, by the search of a cause, of an absolute principle from which he may deduce in the last resort the explanation of so many phænomena.

In this manner the historian who inquires into the cause of the decline of the papal authority, of the terrible war of thirty years, of the reduction of the House of Austria, the establishment of a powerful opposition in the heart of the empire, the erection of Holland into a free state, and so of the rest, must at first behold the immediate origin of all those events in the Reformation, and attribute them unconditionally to its influence. But pushing his researches higher, he perceives that the Reformation itself is evidently but a necessary result of other circumstances which preceded it; an event of the sixteenth century, with which, to use an expression of Leibnitz, the fifteenth was pregnant; at most only the cataract of the river. How many people still obstinately persist in referring the French revolution to the *deficit*, as its primary cause, to the convocation of the states

general, to the *tiers etat*, to the parish clergy.* Others, who look somewhat farther, think they

* The difficulties in which the French crown was involved, immediately previous to the revolution, are well known. The public income fell short of the expenditure of the court; and the term by which this disproportion is expressed, is the *deficit*. Those difficulties, and the impossibility which was felt of increasing the taxes without new and important changes in the government, produced the convocation of the states general. And in that national assembly, as is well known, the revolution began.

In the feudal kingdoms of Europe the people were regarded as consisting of three orders, or *estates*, as they were called; that of the nobility, that of the clergy, and that of the commonalty. When the affairs of a nation required a consultation of the whole people, the assembly distinguished into these orders, was called the *states general*, that is the general assembly of the three states. The order of commonalty was in France denominated the *tiers etat*, or third state. The constitution of this order was never so exactly ascertained as in England. It is well known that the representatives of cities were in it; but no order of persons, corresponding to our knights of shires; and the great body of peasantry was not represented in the national council. These assemblies are plainly of the same nature with our parliaments in the more early periods. But the power of the aristocracy in this country obliged the king to strengthen himself by the alliance of parliaments for an extensive period; and afterwards the spirit and power of parliaments made it impracticable for him to lay them aside, when the power of the aristocracy declined; and thus parliaments have been continued in this country; whereas the *states general* were early set aside by the kings of France,

find that cause in a particular parliament, in the

When the financial difficulties in France rendered the wheels of government incapable of moving any longer, every expedient was had recourse to, rather than convoke this almost forgotten assembly. The assembly of the notables was first tried, consisting of the nobility and higher clergy, with such persons of the third estate as the king chose to call. To them was proposed the abolition of the exemption of the nobility, and clergy from taxes, and of other abuses. But it was not obtained. The states general, which were called for on all sides, were resorted to as no longer avoidable. Those who discover the origin of the French revolution in this assembly, must needs search a little for the cause of that assembly itself; and still more for the cause why that assembly was more dangerous in the present age, to kingly powers, than in former ones, when it had been its protection. This danger arose from the change in the circumstances of the king and of the people, and from the change in opinion. And to trace and appreciate those changes, has been very little either in the talents or intentions of the persons who have hitherto declaimed upon the French revolution.

Among those who find the cause of the French revolution entirely or principally in the *tiers état* is Mr. Burke. "After" says he, "I had read over the list of the persons and descriptions elected into the *tiers état*, nothing which they afterwards did could appear astonishing." Yet the *tiers état* unquestionably afforded a pretty fair representation of the opinions, projects, and principles predominant in the nation. If that be the case, what was the cause of this general tone, and habit of thought, which as soon as it found an occasion of acting must necessarily produce such scenes as the French revolution? This formed no part of Mr. Burke's inquiry. The composition of the *tiers état*, unfit as it was for the transcendently difficult work of reforming a disordered state, arose out of the general circumstances of France, and was as little the effect of parti-

extinction of the Jesuits, &c.* They are all right under a certain limited point of view which

cular, and momentary causes, as the composition and tone of the *Diet of Augsburg*.

* The word parliament in the English language is near in signification to the term *states general* in French. In this last tongue the word parliament was used in a very different sense. It was applied to certain courts of justice, composed of a considerable number of judges. It had been usual for the kings of France to have their edicts registered by those parliaments, particularly by that of Paris. These edicts, there being no constituted legislature in France, were the laws; but by long practice, it came to be generally conceived that they were not of the force of laws,—till they were registered by the parliaments. On this ground the parliaments had often remonstrated against unpatriotic edicts, and had prevented their execution. For a series of years the disputes, of this nature, had continued to grow more violent, and the opposition which the parliaments had made to the edicts for imposing new taxes had contributed greatly to bring the difficulties of government to a crisis. Those who see not the operation of general causes in this gradual opposition are certainly not very profound contemplators of history.

The extinction of the Jesuits, which however had become absolutely necessary, certainly gave a blow to the ancient systems both religious and political, in all the Catholic countries of Europe; and contributed to shake the decayed edifice. In all those countries where the Catholic system remains incorporated with the political, the gradual and inevitable decay of the one must affect the other; and every mouldering piece which tumbles from the one carries with it a portion of the other. But is the decay of the Catholic system also to be ascribed to the authors of jacobinism in France?

belongs to them. Those however, whose eye contemplates the progress of the human race through a series of ages, behold the movements of that enormous mass of individuals, each of whom, instigated by his interest, his passions, and his peculiar character, seems desirous to oppose the progress of all the rest; but, in spite of their infinite diversity, all those minds have common characteristics, are directed toward certain ends, which are finally the same; those characteristics, those tendencies, common to all, form an union of forces, or rather a single force, which is that of the human race; that of an universal spirit, which concealed in the lapse of ages, governs and directs them. Under the dominion of Providence (that sun of the moral world, to use again the language of a philoso-

It is wonderful that the author has not here mentioned a cause of the revolution in France on which such mighty stress has been laid in this country; I mean the writings of the philosophers. It does not appear that the people on the continent judge more soundly of that event than we do. The analogy is strong between the complaints against these authors, and those of the partisans of the church of Rome in the sixteenth century, against Erasmus, who, they said, laid the egg which Luther only hatched. The question has been asked, with great propriety, what were the circumstances by which Erasmus and others were prepared and formed to write as they did; and the people to listen to them? And the question holds in equal strength with regard to Voltaire and Rousseau.

pher) that spirit of the human race, in its continual operation, prepares and regulates events. Any great revolution which surprises us is only a product of it, a result, a striking manifestation. Is it then to this revolution; is it not rather to the influence of the causes which have preceded and produced the revolution, that we ought to attribute the events which have followed it?

It belongs then to the historian, in the case supposed, to direct his attention to what preceded the great event which he examines; to determine by the influence of what causes that event was itself brought about, and what has been the extent of the influence of those same causes on the series of subsequent events. It belongs to him also to consider what would have happened according to the slow and progressive movement of the human race, which is sometimes entitled the natural course of things, if the great event, if the ebullition, under consideration, had not taken place. Finally, he ought to determine what modifications the peculiar and distinctive character of that event, the character of the age and nation in which it was produced, and that of the men who had the principal share in it, have communicated to its effects.

SECTION II.

On the Essence of Reformations in general.

AS the mind ascends the chain of events, and passes on from every effect to its cause, in order to arrive at last at a first cause, at an ultimate principle, to which it attaches the first link of the chain; in like manner it proceeds downwards from causes to effects, eager to arrive at a last result, an absolute effect, which is complete in itself, and no longer becomes a cause, or plays the part only of a means to arrive at something else. This effect, which terminates every thing, the last link of the chain, and the final result of all that has preceded, is the end pursued by the mind, the place of rest where it consents at last to repose. All its speculations concerning human events are divided into those two inquiries, respecting the *beginning* and respecting the *end*; whence they come, and whither they tend. Between those two points the activity of the mind is confined. And it renders the distance between them greater or less according to its extent or its demands. But until it has arrived, in one direction, at a cause which it thinks it has reason to consider as a first cause; and in another, at an

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effect which it regards as final, the mind of man remains in suspense, vacillates in a forced equilibrium, and feels the uneasiness of an unaccomplished destination. Resignation is indeed attainable with regard to the space which it declines to traverse, and it may assign to itself a limit which restrains the full expansion of its powers; but this resignation is not competent to every one, and is not in the primitive nature perhaps of any one.

Do we then give permission to him who contemplates the history of the human race, to ask of himself whither tends that succession of tumultuous events, of commotions, and of transmutations in things and in opinions? Let him give free scope to his mind in pursuing the end of so many progressive revolutions.—He can find it only in the sublime idea of a state of things, in which, the destination of the whole human race being fully consummated, all their physical and moral powers having attained their highest degree of improvement, mankind would be as good, as wise, and as happy as the original qualities of their nature permit. Not that it can be demonstrated that this golden age of morality, this millennium of philosophy can even be realized as the dream of philanthropy exhibits it to our imagination. But in the efforts of man, in those of society, we cannot avoid perceiving a tendency to-

wards the better, towards an order of things more just, more beneficent, in which the rights of every one are better guarded, and those rights more equally divided. Let us grant that absolute perfection will never be the lot of mortals; but, at the same time, let us acknowledge that this perfection forms the ideal object of their desire, that it is a want, a demand of their intellectual nature. It is not clear that they will ever arrive at it; but it is certain that they aspire to it. Peradventure the phenomenon of the geometrical asymptote is destined to be repeated in the moral world, and that we shall for ever approximate to the ellipse without being able to touch it. Meanwhile the hope even of approximation is sufficient to inflame the more noble spirits, and is an object not unworthy of them. Ah! what would be the lot of the generations to follow, what the despair of him who reflects upon them, if in the chaos of human affairs the laws of an inexhaustible creation did not exhibit themselves, if, in the darkest storms, by which every thing appears ready to be swallowed up, the lightening of Providence did not afford through the gloom the glimpses of a better futurity! True it is, that when the tempests are let loose, and hurricanes, raised by the passions of men, rage on the ocean of time, the vessel cannot hold her course direct to the destined harbour. The spectator is some-

times deceived, and thinks the motion retrograde, when it is not. For all are not provided with a chart sufficiently correct, to know the course of the voyage. Those however who pretend that the motion is retrograde acknowledge by that act the existence of the destination to which the motion tends, since to retrograde is only to remove from it to a greater distance. But should this removal even have place for a time, can it follow from this that the approximation will not return, and with increased velocity? Is not that a limited view which extends not beyond the point of departure? To judge of the whole course, it must be contemplated entire. That which human nature shall run after us is not known to us; but we may form presumptive conclusions respecting it by that which has been run before us. Up to our time the species has made progress; it is credible that our successors will do the same.—Greece and Italy, barbarous in their early ages, were far behind Greece and Italy in the brilliant days of their improvement. But however eminent, in many respects, that improvement may have been, it was peculiar to each of those nations, and exclusive with regard to the rest. It belonged to the citizen of Athens, to the citizen of Rome. It belonged not to man. All the rest of the globe was born to an inheritance of barbarity, and slavery, of practical slavery, beneath

a few millions of men. Was improvement to be confined for ever to a few cities, to a narrow corner of the earth? Were the millions of human beings who vegetated in the store house of nations between the Oby and the Elbe to remain eternal strangers to it, and to be for ever only the swordsmen or galley slaves of the privileged orders? No; most assuredly! Among them too the dispersion of light was to take place; an intercourse was to be formed by which the spirit of Latium and of Achaia was to be carried to the Cimbrian Chersonese. To accomplish this event it was necessary either that the small number of people with whom improvement was lodged should subdue innumerable nations, and penetrate to the remotest corners of the most distant regions; or that the mass of uncultivated nations should conquer the small number, and become incorporated with them, in the native place of illumination. After the first of those means had been tried, and the Romans had penetrated as far as was consistent with a power and a virtue worthy of eternal admiration, the second, more natural, was set in action by the mysterious Arbiter of human events. The children of the north poured themselves out upon the south of Europe, and carried their own darkness along with them. Chaos appeared to come again. Scarcely here and there a feeble spark of light appeared in the midnight

gloom, which lasted the time proportioned to the foreign mass which had arrived. Ten ages of fermentation were necessary to assimilate so many heterogeneous elements to the better ingredients which were blended with them. At last the light burst forth anew on all sides. During three ages, since its appearance, it has spread, and made a progress hitherto unexampled. The illumination of Athens and of Rome is restored, not only throughout Europe, but at Philadelphia and Calcutta. Rome, and Athens, which our knowledge and our arts would astonish, would admire also the philanthropy of Europe, which glories in the feelings of humanity, and allows not slavery to exist on its soil. Such are the effects which have resulted from the dismal inundation of the barbarians in the fourth century; and in this manner does time at last vindicate the ways of Providence, whose power during the course of one or even of several generations appears sometimes entirely to have remitted its action. It behoved me to make choice of this example, because the apparent downfall of human nature, during the long interval of barbarity in the middle ages, is generally the favourite theme on which the adversaries of Perfectibility descant in recommendation of their own doctrine.

Should we examine too with minuteness the progress of civilization among those barbarians,

the progenitors of the people which have now attained the greatest height of improvement, what should we first perceive? Force, the only law: Every individual, every lord of a castle at war with all his neighbours: And those personal contests inundating the earth with blood, carrying desolation into every corner, and regulated by no law but the ferocity of the conqueror. How disastrous a picture for example do the Gauls present in that period of anarchy! By degrees the valour or the fortune of certain chiefs unitēs extensive provinces under their dominion; into which they introduce a species of order and discipline, and in which the inhabitants are saved from an universal and unintermitted warfare. At last those provinces themselves become united under a single government: Millions of men who previously were divided into a multitude of hordes, cutting one another's throats, are thenceforward fellow-citizens, brethren, subject to the same laws, restrained and regulated by the same discipline. Where murder and rapine swayed uncontrouled, security, order, and harmony are beheld; Gaul is now an homogeneous whole; and over its entire surface reigns that perpetual peace which is painted in our imagination, and in the reality of which it is so difficult to create belief. Shall our civil wars be objected? Those indeed are merely accidents; violent situations of affairs, and contrary to the order of

nature. This is no longer the permanent, the constitutional state, if we may adopt that expression, of a whole country. The medicative power of the body itself speedily provides a remedy; and experience proves that the remedies become every day more easy to obtain. Let us conclude then, notwithstanding the morose disposition which makes so many men admirers of the past, solely for the pleasure of depreciating the present, that our age is greatly before that of the Goths and the Vandals; and seeing human nature has advanced the whole space between them, this consolatory prospect cannot be taken from us, that our posterity will proceed onwards to a still better and happier situation.

I solicit the indulgence of my judges for this effusion which has issued almost involuntarily from my mind. I know that one may hazard the language of speculation before an assembly of wise men, whose object it is to carry into the study of history the consolatory views of philosophy. How indeed was it possible to refrain from turning ones eyes towards an amelioration in human affairs, while contemplating the consequences of those bloody revolutions of which the Reformation effected by Luther presents so memorable an example? At each of those great convulsions among the nations, ought we not to accuse divine Providence of a tyrannical absurdity, if the result

of all those evils were only to fall back into a worse condition than that out of which we had arisen?—But no; after those deplorable commotions, in which so many individuals are sacrificed, it is not uncommon to see a better order of things arise, to behold the race itself advance more freely toward the great end which is pointed out to it by its intellectual nature, and obtain a new expansion of its improvement by every new explosion of its powers.*

* There are few persons, it is presumable, who will object to this moderate and rational view of the tendency in the condition of the human species toward improvement. Yet this is no other than the doctrine of Perfectibility to which such horrible consequences have been ascribed. That impulse which every individual experiences to better his condition, and which is the inexhaustible source of improvement in the individual, is an equally necessary and inexhaustible source of improvement to the species. Those circumstances in the constitution of this world, which have been so largely descanted upon, which seem opposed to the establishment of perfect happiness or virtue on the earth, prove nothing. It will not be denied that a much more perfect state of happiness and virtue, than any which at present exists upon the earth, is perfectly consistent with the constitution of this world. And to advance as near as possible to what of perfection this constitution permits is all that the advocates of Perfectibility contend for. Toward this state of perfection, they think there is a natural and fixed tendency in human nature, and the constitution of things amid which human nature is placed; a tendency which can only be counteracted by temporary, and accidental causes, and which will finally triumph over them; and that the idea of this perfection

In conformity with these conclusions we will consider the gradual improvement of the human species as consisting of an uninterrupted series of

is the grand model to which the contemplator and the director of human affairs should turn their attention in delineating or executing plans for the administration of any portion of those affairs. The meaning, unquestionably, is, to turn their attention to it with wisdom and discretion; and the doctrine is not answerable for the erroneous applications which may be made of it.

It may be worth while to compare, on this important subject, the expressions of Villers, with those of a very cautious and guarded philosopher of our own country:

“ Before closing this disquisition, it may be proper for me to attempt to obviate a little more fully than I have done, an objection which has been frequently drawn from the past experience of mankind, against that supposition of their progressive improvement, on which all the foregoing reasonings proceed. How mournful are the vicissitudes which history exhibits to us, in the course of human affairs; and how little foundation do they afford to our sanguine prospects concerning futurity! If, in those parts of the earth which were formerly inhabited by barbarians, we now see the most splendid exertions of genius, and the happiest forms of civil policy, we behold others which, in ancient times, were the seats of science, of civilisation, and of liberty, at present immersed in superstition, and laid waste by despotism. After a short period of civil, of military, and of literary glory, the prospect has changed at once: the career of degeneracy has begun, and has proceeded till it could advance no farther; or some unforeseen calamity has occurred, which has obliterated, for a time, all memory of former improvements, and has condemned mankind to re-trace, step by step, the same path by which their forefathers had risen to

reforms; partly silent and gentle, the slow produce of ages, of the personal conviction of the powerful orders, and of opinion, which in

greatness. In a word; on such a retrospective view of human affairs, man appears to be the mere sport of fortune and of accident; or rather, he appears to be doomed, by the condition of his nature, to run alternately the career of improvement and of degeneracy; and to realise the beautiful but melancholy fable of Sisyphus, by an eternal renovation of hope and of disappointment.

In opposition to these discouraging views of the state and prospects of man; it may be remarked in general, that in the course of these latter ages, a variety of events have happened in the history of the world, which render the condition of the human race essentially different from what it ever was among the nations of antiquity; and which, of consequence, render all our reasonings concerning their future fortunes, in so far as they are founded merely on their past experience, unphilosophical and inconclusive. The alterations which have taken place in the art of war, in consequence of the invention of firearms, and of the modern science of fortification, have given to civilised nations a security against the irruptions of barbarians, which they never before possessed. The more extended, and the more constant intercourse, which the improvements in commerce and in the art of navigation have opened, among the distant quarters of the globe, cannot fail to operate in undermining local and national prejudices, and in imparting to the whole species the intellectual acquisitions of each particular community. The accumulated experience of ages has already taught the rules of mankind, that the most fruitful and the most permanent sources of revenue, are to be derived, not from conquered and tributary provinces, but from the internal prosperity and wealth of their own subjects:—and the same expe-

time brings errors to the ground; and partly tumultuous, and violent, the sudden effect of a beam of light which strikes all eyes, of patience

rience now begins to teach nations, that the increase of their own wealth, so far from depending on the poverty and depression of their neighbours, is intimately connected with their industry and opulence; and consequently, that those commercial jealousies, which have hitherto been so fertile a source of animosity among different states, are founded entirely on ignorance and prejudice. Among all the circumstances, however, which distinguish the present state of mankind from that of antient nations, the invention of printing is by far the most important; and, indeed, this single event, independently of every other, is sufficient to change the whole course of human affairs.

The influence which printing is likely to have on the future history of the world, has not, I think, been hitherto examined, by philosophers, with the attention which the importance of the subject deserves. One reason for this may, probably, have been, that, as the invention has never been made but once, it has been considered rather as the effect of a fortunate accident, than as the result of those general causes on which the progress of society seems to depend. But it may be reasonably questioned, how far this idea be just. For, although it should be allowed, that the invention of printing was accidental, with respect to the individual who made it, it may, with truth, be considered as the natural result of a state of the world, when a number of great and contiguous nations are all engaged in the study of literature, in the pursuit of science, and in the practice of the arts: insomuch, that I do not think it extravagant to affirm, that, if this invention had not been made by the particular person to whom it is ascribed, the same art, or some analogous art, answering a similar purpose, would have infallibly

exhausted under long oppression, of the desire inflamed to excess of restoring the balance in some part of the political or religious system.

been invented by some other person, and at no very distant period. The art of printing, therefore, is intitled to be considered as a step in the natural history of man, no less than the art of writing; and they who are sceptical about the future progress of the race, merely in consequence of its past history, reason as unphilosophically, as the member of a savage tribe, who, deriving his own acquaintance with former times from oral tradition only, should affect to call in question the efficacy of written records, in accelerating the progress of knowledge and of civilisation.

What will be the particular effects of this invention, (which has been, hitherto, much checked in its operation, by the restraints on the liberty of the press in the greater part of Europe,) it is beyond the reach of human sagacity to conjecture; but, in general, we may venture to predict with confidence, that, in every country, it will gradually operate to widen the circle of science and civilisation; to distribute more equally, among all the members of the community, the advantages of the political union; and to enlarge the basis of equitable governments, by increasing the number of those who understand their value, and are interested to defend them. The science of legislation, too, with all the other branches of knowledge which are connected with human improvement, may be expected to advance with rapidity; and, in proportion as the opinions and institutions of men approach to truth and to justice, they will be secured against those revolutions to which human affairs have always been hitherto subject. *Opinionum enim commenta delet dies, naturæ judicia confirmat.*

These views with respect to the probable improvement of the world, are so conducive to the comfort of those who entertain

Those are the epochs, the mile-stones, as it were, of the human race in its journey through time. History enumerates them with care, observes

them, that even, although they were founded in delusion, a wise man would be disposed to cherish them. What should have induced some respectable writers to controvert them, with so great an asperity of expression, it is not easy to conjecture; for whatever may be thought of their truth, their practical tendency is surely favourable to human happiness; nor can that temper of mind, which disposes a man to give them a welcome reception, be candidly suspected of designs hostile to the interests of humanity. One thing is certain, that the greatest of all obstacles to the improvement of the world, is that prevailing belief of its improbability, which damps the exertions of so many individuals; and that, in proportion as the contrary opinion becomes general, it realises the event which it leads us to anticipate. Surely, if any thing can have a tendency to call forth in the public service the exertions of individuals, it must be an idea of the magnitude of that work in which they are conspiring, and a belief of the permanence of those benefits, which they confer on mankind by every attempt to inform and to enlighten them. As in antient Rome, therefore, it was regarded as the mark of a good citizen, never to despair of the fortunes of the republic;—so the good citizen of the world, whatever may be the political aspect of his own times, will never despair of the fortunes of the human race: but will act upon the conviction, that prejudice, slavery, and corruption, must gradually give way to truth, liberty, and virtue; and that, in the moral world, as well as in the material, the farther our observations extend, and the longer they are continued, the more we shall perceive of order and of benevolent design in the universe.

Nor is this change in the condition of Man, in consequence

their effects, and forms by them the divisions of her labour.

Men of temperate natures, whom a mild phi-

of the progress of reason, by any means contrary to the general analogy of his natural history. In the infancy of the individual, his existence is preserved by instincts, which disappear afterwards, when they are no longer necessary. In the savage state of our species, there are instincts which seem to form a part of the human constitution; and of which no traces remain in those periods of society in which their use is superseded by a more enlarged experience. Why then should we deny the probability of something similar to this, in the history of mankind considered in their political capacity? I have already had occasion to observe, that the governments which the world has hitherto seen, have seldom or never taken their rise from deep-laid schemes of human policy. In every state of society which has yet existed, the multitude has, in general, acted from the immediate impulse of passion, or from the pressure of their wants and necessities; and, therefore, what we commonly call the political order, is, at least in a great measure, the result of the passions and wants of man, combined with the circumstances of his situation; or, in other words, it is chiefly the result of the wisdom of nature. So beautifully, indeed, do these passions and circumstances act in subserviency to her designs, and so invariably have they been found, in the history of past ages, to conduct him in time to certain beneficial arrangements, that we can hardly bring ourselves to believe, that the end was not foreseen by those who were engaged in the pursuit. Even in those rude periods of society, when, like the lower animals, he follows blindly his instinctive principles of action, he is led by an invisible hand, and contributes his share to the execution of a plan, of the nature and advantages of which he has no conception. The operations of the bee, when it begins,

lanthropy warms without enthusiasm, who are more shocked by the appearance of present evils, than animated by the hope of future benefits,

for the first time, to form its cell, conveys to us a striking image of the efforts of unenlightened Man, in conducting the operations of an infant government." Stuart's *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*. Ch. IV. sec. 8.

He recurs to the same doctrine in the following beautiful expressions, in closing his account of the imagination :

“ The common bias of the mind undoubtedly is, (such is the benevolent appointment of Providence,) to think favourably of the future; to overvalue the chances of possible good, and to under-rate the risks of possible evil; and in the case of some fortunate individuals, this disposition remains after a thousand disappointments. To what this bias of our nature is owing, it is not material for us to inquire: the fact is certain, and it is an important one to our happiness. It supports us under the real distresses of life, and cheers and animates all our labours: and although it is sometimes apt to produce, in a weak and indolent mind, those deceitful suggestions of ambition and vanity, which lead us to sacrifice the duties and the comforts of the present moment, to romantic hopes and expectations; yet it must be acknowledged, when connected with habits of activity, and regulated by a solid judgment, to have a favourable effect on the character, by inspiring that ardour and enthusiasm which both prompt to great enterprises, and are necessary to ensure their success. When such a temper is united (as it commonly is) with pleasing notions, concerning the order of the universe, and in particular concerning the condition and the prospects of man, it places our happiness, in a great measure, beyond the power of fortune. While it adds a double relish to every enjoyment, it blunts the edge of all our sufferings; and even when human life presents to us no object on which our hopes can rest,

those peaceful minds, whom impetuous movements and the furies of insurrection alarm; such men, I say, who are the friends of the ameliorations and reforms which time produces without a commotion, rightly desire that good would never present itself but under a beneficent appearance. Wherever they observe the conflagration of passions, arms challenged by arms, and thunder answering thunder, they sigh, they lament, they protest, equally against both parties. Frequently they decide against him who gave the first blow to the peace which they cherish, notwithstanding that it is often he who is really innocent, the victim of oppression, by which he has at last been urged to extremity.—May we not rank in this class a great number of the enemies of our last revolution, a set of virtuous and upright men who shuddered at the shock of parties? In the same manner may we explain the estrangement which some

it invites the imagination beyond the dark and troubled horizon which terminates all our earthly prospects, to wander unconfined in the regions of futurity. A man of benevolence, whose mind is enlarged by philosophy, will indulge the same agreeable anticipations with respect to society; will view all the different improvements in arts, in commerce, and in the sciences, as co-operating to promote the union, the happiness, and the virtue of mankind; and, amidst the political disorders resulting from the prejudices and follies of his own times, will look forward with transport to the blessings which are reserved for posterity in a more enlightened age." *Ib.* Ch. VII. sec. 6.

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distinguished characters of the 16th century shewed, not to the doctrine, but to the events of the Reformation. Erasmus entitled it the *Lutheran Tragedy*; and in fact it was because the piece announced itself as a tragical one, that this discerning and cautious man, whose favourite motto was, *otium cum dignitate*, refused to become an actor in it. But to expect that good should be wrought out of good only, is to make of human nature a romance, to turn history into a pastoral, and the universe into an Arcadia. This, unfortunately, is not the order of events. Nature amid the bounties which she sheds in profusion on the earth, disfigures it by hurricanes, by inundations, by subterraneous fires, the images of the terrible disasters which sometimes appear in our social confederacies, and which are owing, frequently to the faults of our predecessors, sometimes to our own. It belongs to the man, fitted to live in the age in which he is cast, to resign himself to its course, to observe in it the operation of the comprehensive laws which direct the great whole; laws which we misunderstand only when we dare to judge of their action from too partial and limited a view.*

* This distinction between the two great classes of the friends of amelioration and advancement in human affairs is important, and well explained. It is material to add that the natural temper, to which either class yields obedience, leads

The amelioration, after which man perpetually aspires, both in his political and religious institu-

to evil consequences. The one runs the risk of degenerating into timidity, and of losing important opportunities for benefiting mankind; the other is in danger of running into rashness, and of incurring great evils by the unseasonable pursuit of advantages. Reason, not natural temper, on either side, is the proper guide in this momentous concern. The business of all men who wish to benefit their species is to cultivate their reason, not to listen to their passions, or temper, but to acquire a steady and perfect habit of consulting their reason solely, in a case in which it alone can give proper advice. The behaviour of Erasmus, to which reference is here made, throws so much light on this important subject, that it will be useful to peruse some passages from a work, in which the conduct of that celebrated man is very finely illustrated, his life by Dr. Jortin.

“The celebrated diet of Worms was held this year, 1521, where Luther, who had as much courage as Alexander and Julius Cæsar put together, made his appearance, and maintained his opinions, in the presence of Charles V, and of other princes. After this, his friend the elector of Saxony carried him off secretly, and conveyed him to the fortress of Wartburg, where he remained concealed for some time, being proscribed by the emperor, and excommunicated by the pope. Hereupon Erasmus wrote a long letter to his friend Jodocus Jonas, a Lutheran, in which he deploras the fate of Luther, and of those who had declared themselves his associates; and blames them much for want of moderation, as if this had brought their distresses upon them. Moderation, doubtless, is a virtue: but so far was the opposite party from allowing Luther to be in the right, as to the main points, that it was his doctrine which gave the chief offence to the court of Rome; and he would have gained as little upon them by proposing it in the most submissive and softest

tions, consists in bringing and retaining them as near as he possibly can to the particular spirit

manner, as he gained by maintaining it in his rough way. Erasmus himself experienced the truth of this; and the monks were not induced to change any thing that was reprehensible in their notions and in their manners, by his gentler and more artful remonstrances, and abhorred his ironies no less than the bold invectives of Luther. However, Erasmus may stand excused in some measure in the sight of candid and favourable judges, because he talked thus, partly out of timidity, and partly out of love and friendship towards him to whom he addresseth himself. You will tell me, says he, my dear Jonas, to what purpose these complaints, especially when it is too late? Why, in the first place, that (although things have been carried almost to extremities) one may still try, whether some method can be found to compose these terrible dissensions. We have a pope, who in his temper is much disposed to clemency; and an emperor, who is also mild and placable. Honest Erasmus judged very wrong of both these persons. Leo was a vain, a voluptuous and debauched man, who had no religion, and no compassion for those, who would not submit entirely to his pleasure, as he shewed by the haughty manner in which he treated Luther, without admitting the least relaxation in any of the disputed points. Such is the character which history hath bestowed upon him: and as to Charles V, he was a most ambitious and restless prince, who made a conscience of nothing, to accomplish any of his projects, as it appears from the bloody wars which he waged under religious pretences, and indeed from his whole conduct. The Lutherans would have been fools and mad, to have trusted themselves and their cause to such a pontiff, and to such an emperor.

“ If this cannot be accomplished, continues Erasmus, I would not have you interfere in these affairs any longer. I always

which constitutes their essence. The exterior forms with which they are clothed, are never so

loved in you these excellent gifts, which Jesus Christ hath bestowed upon you; and I beg you would preserve yourself, that you may hereafter labour for the cause of the Gospel. The more I have loved the genius and the talents of Hatten, the more concerned I am to lose him by these troubles; and what a deplorable thing would it be, that Philip Melancthon, an amiable youth of such extraordinary abilities, should be lost to the learned world upon the same account! If the behaviour of those, who govern human affairs, shocks us and grieves us, I believe we must leave them to the Lord. If they command things reasonable, it is just to obey them; if they require things unreasonable, it is an act of piety to suffer it, lest something worse ensue. If the present age is not capable of receiving the whole gospel of Jesus Christ, yet it is something to preach it in part, and as far as we can.—Above all things we should avoid a schism, which is of pernicious consequence to all good men. There is a certain pious craft, and an innocent time-serving, which however we must so use, as not to betray the cause of religion, &c.

“Such is the gospel which Erasmus preached up to the Lutherans, imagining that they and their cause would go to ruin, and that a worse condition of things would ensue. But, if they had complied with his proposal, we should have been at this day involved in all the darkness, which had overspread the Christian world in the fifteenth century, and for many ages before it. So far would the popes and the ecclesiastics have been from abandoning their beloved interests, founded upon ignorance and superstition, that a bloody inquisition would have been established, not only in Italy and Spain, but in all Christian countries, which would have smothered and extinguished for ever those lights which then began to sparkle. Lutheranism,

exactly adapted to their spirit, as to permit its entire operation and accomplishment. It happens

gaining more strength and stability than Erasmus expected, prevented the tyranny of an inquisition in Germany, and the Reformation of Calvin secured the liberty of other countries. If all Germany had yielded and submitted to Leo and to Charles, in compliance with the timorous counsels of Erasmus, he himself would undoubtedly have been one of the first sufferers; and the court of Rome, no longer apprehensive lest he should join himself to the heretics, would have offered him up a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour to the monks, who did a thousand times more service to that court than a thousand such scholars as Erasmus."

"We have, in this year, 1521, a remarkable letter of Erasmus, addressed to his friend Pace, dean of St. Paul's. I see now, says Erasmus, that the Germans (the German Lutherans) are resolved, at all adventures, to engage me in the affair of Luther, whether I will or not. In this they have acted foolishly, and have taken the surest method to alienate me from them and their party. Wherein could I have assisted Luther, if I had declared myself for him, and shared the danger along with him? Only thus far, that, instead of one man, two would have perished. I cannot conceive what he means by writing with such a spirit: one thing I know too well, that he hath brought a great odium upon the lovers of literature. It is true, that he hath given us many a wholesome doctrine, and many a good counsel; and I wish he had not defeated the effect of them by his intolerable faults. *BUT if he had written every thing in the most unexceptionable manner, I had no inclination to die for the sake of truth. Every man hath not the courage requisite to make a martyr; and I am afraid, that if I were put to the trial, I should imitate St. Peter.*

but too frequently that an embarrassment in the wheels of the machine interrupts and disturbs the

“ It was proper to give these extraordinary words at length, because though he hath elsewhere dropped some expressions amounting nearly to the same thing, yet perhaps he hath nowhere so frankly opened his mind, and so ingenuously owned his timidity. The apprehension of losing his revenues, the reputation which he still enjoyed in the court of Rome, and was loth to give up entirely, and possibly the fear of being excommunicated and proscribed, and perhaps poisoned or assassinated, might work together upon him, and restrain him from speaking freely concerning the controversies then agitated. However, to do him justice, he still maintained the truth, though cautiously and obliquely. Although he frequently censured Luther, yet he heartily wished that he might carry his point, and extort from his enemies some Reformation both of doctrines and manners; but, as he could not imagine that Luther would succeed, he chose to adhere outwardly to the stronger party. I follow, says he, the decisions of the pope and the emperor when they are right, which is acting religiously; I submit to them when they are wrong, which is acting prudently: and I think that it is lawful for good men to behave themselves thus, when there is no hope of obtaining any more.

“ After this, when Erasmus testifies his disapprobation of the Lutheran measures, it is needless to seek other reasons for it than those which have been here mentioned.

“ Le Clerc often censures Erasmus for his luke-warmness, timidity, and unfairness, in the matter of the Reformation; and I, as a translator, have adopted these censures, only softening them a little here and there: for I am, in the main, of the same opinion with Le Clerc as to this point. As Protestants, we are certainly much obliged to Erasmus; yet we are more obliged to the authors of the Reformation, to Luther, Melancthon, Zuinglius, Oecolampadius, Cranmer, Bucer, &c.

action of the primary spring. What subjects all human institutions to this discordant duplicity is

“Erasmus shews at large, that whatsoever pains he had taken to keep upon good terms with the divines of Louvain, it had been impossible to gain their friendship; and that some of them had cruelly deceived him, particularly Joannes Atensis, who was one of the most able and considerable persons amongst them. Then he makes a transition to Luther, and censures his violent proceedings; as if Luther could have brought the Christian world to measures of Reformation, in spite of the Romish court, without plain-dealing and animated expressions! He declares his hatred of discord to be such, that he disliked even truth itself, if it was seditious. But Luther, who was of another humour, would have replied, that such was his hatred for falshood and oppression of conscience, that he thought it better to suffer persecution, if it arose, and to break loose from such a tyranny at all adventures, than to stoop down, and live and die under it, and hear a thousand lies vented and obtruded under the venerable name of Christian doctrines. They who are bold and resolute will approve these maxims of Luther, and they who are cautious and dispirited will close in with those of Erasmus. It must be acknowledged, that in this Luther acted rather more like an apostle, or a primitive Christian, than Erasmus. If the first Christians had been afraid of raising disturbances, they would have chosen to comply with the Sanhedrim, and to live at peace with their countrymen, rather than to draw upon themselves so much hatred. Some of the great, says Erasmus, meaning the king of Denmark, are of an opinion, to which I cannot assent, that the malady is too inveterate to be cured by gentle methods, and that the whole body must be violently shaken, before it can recover its health. If it be true, I had rather that others should administer this strong physic, than myself. Very well: but then, at least, we ought to respect

the nature of man itself, which is a compound of a mind and a body intimately united. Confined,

and commend, and not to censure those, who have the courage and the constancy to do what we dare not practise."

"There was at this time a certain preacher at Constance, who consulted Erasmus by Botzem, how the Reformation might best be advanced. Erasmus answered, that they who imagined themselves to have as great abilities for settling those Christian truths which concern all men and all times, as they had for a theological computation, or a little scholastic dispute, were infinitely mistaken. Truth, says he, is efficacious and invincible, but it must be dispensed with evangelical prudence. For myself, I so abhor divisions, and so love concord, that I fear, if an occasion presented itself, I should sooner give up a part of truth, than disturb the public peace.

"But the mischief is, that a man cannot thus give up truth, without running into falshood, and assenting to things which he doth not believe. For a man cannot judge that to be right, which his own reason pronounces to be false, only because overbearing persons attack the truth with more vehemence than he chooseth to employ in defence of it, and are the majority and the stronger party. Besides, when such enemies to reason and to religion perceive that a man will not have the courage to defend his opinions at all extremities, which Erasmus confessed to be his own disposition, they never fail to take advantage of him, to oppress him, and to run him down, well knowing that nothing is necessary to accomplish their purposes besides stubbornness, clamour, impudence, and violence. And so spiritual tyranny being once erected, would endure for ever, and gain strength and stability. Concord and peace are unquestionably valuable blessings; but yet not to be purchased at the expence of truth and liberty, which are infinitely more estimable than a sordid tranquillity beneath the yoke of falshood and arbitrary

and as it were entrained by the organs of the body, which are given it for its manifestation,

dominion. Beneath this yoke the Christian republic becomes a mere faction of poltroons, solicitous about enjoying the present, and neglecting every thing that is laudable, under the pretext of preserving the peace. Such would have been the present state of christianity, if the pacific scheme of Erasmus had been received and pursued. Divisions, it must be owned, do much harm; yet they have at least produced this good, that the truth of the gospel, and a Christian liberty, which acquiesceth only in the decisions of Jesus Christ, are not entirely banished from the face of the earth, as they would have been without those struggles of our ancestors. They have produced no small service to the memory of Erasmus himself, who, having his works condemned by theological cabals, and mangled by inquisitions, which struck out the most valuable part of his writings, would have been stigmatized and proscribed through all ages, if a party had not risen up in Europe, and also amongst his own countrymen, which willingly forgives him his weaknesses and his irresolution, for the sake of his useful labour's philological and theological; and hath restored to him a second life, and recommended him to the christian world, by an elegant and a faithful edition of all his works.

“ But let us hear some more of his advice. This preacher, says he, who certainly is a worthy man, will do more service to the Gospel, the honour of which we all have at heart, if he takes care to join the prudence of the evangelical serpent to the simplicity of the evangelical dove. Let him essay it; and then let him condemn my counsel, if he finds it not to be salutary.

“ Alas! experience hath taught the Christian world, that this same serpentine prudence served to make falsehood triumphant. It was even easy to-foresee it, since this wisdom consisted only

the intellect cannot freely display its power of thought, or produce effects equally ethereal with

in submitting to that faction, which was the most powerful and the most obstinate.

“ Erasmus entertained some hopes, that his old friend and school-fellow, Adrian VI. would do some good, as he testifies in this letter: but, says he, if I should be mistaken in this, I will not be factious. As to the preacher’s last question, are we to abandon and give up the whole Gospel? I reply; they may be said to abandon the Gospel, who defend it in an improper manner. Besides; with what reserve and slow caution did our Lord himself discover his doctrine?

“ All this in some sense may be right: but then our Saviour never said any thing contrary to the truth; and when the time was come for it, he laid down his life in confirmation of it; which is more than Erasmus was inclined to do, as he himself frankly confesseth. It cannot be called defending the Gospel, to refer it to the arbitration of a set of Ecclesiastics, whom all the world knew to be either ill-instructed, or ill-disposed, or both.”

We shall add a letter from Luther to Erasmus in the year 1524, which sets in a striking light the different character of those two great men.

He begins in the Apostolical manner; “ Grace and peace to you from the Lord Jesus.

“ I shall not complain of you, says he, for having behaved yourself as a man estranged from us, to keep fair with the Papists, my enemies. Nor was I much offended, that in your printed books, to gain their favour, or to soften their rage, you have censured us with too much acrimony. We saw that the Lord had not conferred upon you the discernment, the courage, and the resolution to join with us, and freely and openly to oppose those monsters; and therefore we dared not to exact from

its nature. This thought, to act, and make itself externally perceptible, must connect itself

you that which greatly surpasseth your strength and your capacity. We have even borne with your weakness, and honoured that portion of the gift of God which is in you."

Then having bestowed upon him his due praises, as he had been the reviver of good literature, by means of which the holy Scriptures had been read and examined in the originals, he proceeds thus :

" I never wished that, forsaking or neglecting your own proper talents, you should enter into our camp. You might indeed have favoured us not a little by your wit, and by your eloquence; but forasmuch as you have not that courage which is requisite, it is safer for you to serve the Lord in your own way. Only we feared lest our adversaries should entice you to write against us, and that necessity should then constrain us to oppose you to your face. We have withheld some persons amongst us, who were disposed and prepared to attack you; and I could have wished that the *Complaint of Hutten* had never been published, and still more that your *Spongia* in answer to it had never come forth; by which you may see and feel at present, if I mistake not, how easy it is to say fine things about the duties of modesty and moderation, and to accuse Luther of wanting them, and how difficult and even impossible it is to be really modest and moderate, without a particular gift of the Holy Spirit. Believe me, or believe me not, Jesus Christ is my witness, that I am concerned as well as you, that the resentment and hatred of so many eminent persons (of the Lutheran party) hath been excited against you. I must suppose that this gives you no small uneasiness; for virtue like yours, mere human virtue, cannot raise a man above being affected by such trials. To tell you freely what I think, there are persons (amongst us) who having this weakness also about them, cannot bear, as they

with a body, to which it communicates its impression, and which becomes current in its stead.

ought, your acrimony and your dissimulation, which you want to pass off for prudence and modesty. These men have cause to be offended; and yet would not be offended, if they had more greatness of spirit. Although I also am irascible, and have been often provoked so as to use sharpness of style, yet I never acted thus, except against hardened and incurable reprobates. I have restrained myself, though you have provoked me; and I promised, in letters to my friends, which you have seen, that I would continue to do so, unless you should appear openly against us. For although you are not in our sentiments, and many pious doctrines are condemned by you with irreligion or dissimulation, or treated in a sceptical manner, yet I neither can nor will ascribe a stubborn perverseness to you. What can I do now? Things are exasperated on both sides; and I could wish, if it were possible, to act the part of a mediator between you, that they might cease to attack you with such animosity, and suffer your old age to rest in peace in the Lord; and thus they would act, in my opinion, if they either considered your weakness, or the greatness of the controverted cause, which hath been long since beyond your talents. They would shew their moderation towards you so much the more, since our affairs are advanced to such a point, that our cause is in no peril, although even Erasmus should attack it with all his might; so far are we from fearing some of his strokes and strictures. On the other hand, my dear Erasmus, if you duly reflect upon your own imbecility, you will abstain from those sharp and spiteful figures of rhetoric; and if you cannot or will not defend our sentiments, you will let them alone, and treat of subjects which suit you better. Our friends, even you yourself being judge, have some reason of anxiety at being lashed by you, because human infirmity thinks of the authority and

Hence, for example, arises the vast importance of language in regard to the faculty of thinking; and hence is seen the truth, in this sense, of the opinion, that without language we should be unable to combine our ideas. Thus, every institution for the service of man, must be provided with a body, with a physical and perceptible form. The spirit of all religions, without doubt, is originally the same, as well as that of all governments. The one consists in recognising as laws ordained by God himself, the laws of morality, and rules of duty which are engraven in all human hearts; the other in securing to all the members of the community the exercise of their natural rights. But what sort of a religion; what sort of a government would that be, which should be confined to that idea, which should be nothing but a spirit? It would not be a machine, organised, capable of action in man's world; it would not be a human institution. To be this, it must have an external form, and a visible and material organ.

Still the spirit, which forms the essence of those institutions, unalterable, eternal, remains what it was, and similar to itself. It is not so with the body, the external form. This is subject

reputation of Erasmus, and fears it: and indeed there is much difference between him and the rest of the Papists, and he is a more formidable adversary than all of them joined together."

to the influence of the material world; and of human passions. Variable, perishable, it is modified at the pleasure of chance and of events. In proportion as its form changes, as its organs wear, become overloaded, or disproportioned, the spirit, oppressed and constrained, loses its primitive action and tendency. Sometimes smothered under a monstrous load, it ceases altogether to manifest itself; the phantom has no life, or pliability; it has only the heaviness and stiffness of death. Thus the spirit of Christianity, so pure, and so sublime, to which belongs a form alone as pure and simple as itself,* was successively extinguished during a long course of ages, down even to the sixteenth century, by a continual load of dissimilar elements, which perverted its action, and rendered it by little and little a deformed mass, from which issued all the evils which the errors and passions of men could engender. Thus does history, the depository of a melancholy experience, enable

* Fenelon, in his letter on the existence of God, and the worship due to him, (Vol. II. Philos. Works) repeats several times that the Christian Religion is nothing but the love of God. He quotes Tertullian, who declares, in this sense, that the soul is naturally Christian; and St. Augustin, according to whom the only worship is love, *Nec colitur nisi amando*. "This," according to Fenelon, "is the reign of God within us; it is the worship in spirit and in truth; it is the sole end for which God created us." It is manifest that the Holy See could not think this mode of Christianity very suitable. Author.

us to see that political constitutions, contrived for the preservation of natural rights among men, almost always degenerate at last, and end by becoming embarrassed with a mass ruinous to liberty and to public safety. On this account, among those who reflect upon the condition of nations, an opinion has become pretty generally established, which is almost always confirmed by the event, that sooner or later, a government, democratical in the beginning, changes successively into an oligarchy, a monarchy, and ends by degenerating into a despotism.*

And such is the source whence arises, at certain epochs, the necessity, generally felt by all upright and disinterested minds, of reformations in the great Establishments of human beings. The exterior form is in general but too opposite to the spirit. What is the situation, when all harmony between them being lost, the form only binds, oppresses, and paralyses the spirit. At last it must of necessity burst forth, of necessity escape from a body which no longer affords it the organs ne-

* This talk about the body and spirit of human institutions can only be regarded as an account of a vague and faint analogy. There is no meaning in it. It explains nothing. But the author merits our excuse for a momentary departure into the regions of the unmeaning, by his sudden return, and the steadiness with which he avoids a similar departure through all the remainder of his course.

cessary for its developement. Men, who all more or less find in themselves the distinct idea, the clear type of that spirit, are provoked at the proud and pernicious Colusus, break it to pieces in their indignation; and strive to collect the sacred flame which was concealed within it. Flitting and feeble as it is, they are unable to catch it. They are compelled to inclose it anew in a vase which their own hands have fashioned, and to conjoin it to a new perceptible form. Thus, after having destroyed the old edifice of the Romish communion, the Christians who separated from it required the confession of Augsburg, and other similar codes. After the destruction of the monarchy in France, it was necessary to fix the spirit of the government, and of the natural rights of man, in the positive forms of a new constitution.

But in judging of those Reformations how necessary is it to consider the general spirit of the times, and of the country in which they take place? They receive from those two circumstances, as well as from the personal character of their author, and that of his principal coadjutors, from the purposes and local objects of those actors, their modification and distinctive colour. Moses, going out of Egypt at the head of a band of mutinous, superstitious, and sensual slaves, of whom it behoved him to form men obedient to authority, soldiers capable of every enterprise,

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and resolved on hostilities against all nations who possessed or should attempt to possess the territory on which he wished to settle them; Moses, in those circumstances modelled the reform of his people as it was necessary to model it for the accomplishment of his purposes. Mahomet, reforming a free and haughty nation, sensual to excess, but capable of elevation and virtue, was able to stamp on it a great character, and reduced to very simple terms the external form of the pure deism which he preached to it. Both of them confounded the religious constitution, which ought to belong to all men, with the political constitution which ought to belong only to one nation; they formed an union of the church and state, and by that means rendered their religion purely local. As to Jesus, conformably to his Divine origin, he separated the concerns of the state from those of religion, whose kingdom, he proclaimed, was not of this world. Amid the Jewish nation, which had received from Moses, during the forty years in the desert, a system of government, conformable to the necessities of its first settlement in Palestine, but which had arrived at the highest pitch of need for a reform, Jesus undertook that of the whole human race, by rejecting the forms which belonged only to a local spirit, and appealing to the universal spirit of religion, which is the same among all man-

kind. The work of his Reformation accordingly, from the spirit, truly divine, that is eminently beneficent, which formed its essence, was naturally embraced by all upright men, whose hearts were yet simple, and uncorrupted by the constraint of local forms. The divine Reformation accomplished by JESUS is then essentially, and in contradistinction to the two others, cosmopolite, or *Catholic*,* according to the true etymology of that term. It is not impossible that the form which he gave it was too simple, and that when the religious society formed in his name extended over the globe, it became expedient to add to that form.† Hence also the discretionary power which the legislator, in this respect, was able to confer upon the future church. But the right of adapting the form was not a right to render it totally distorted and monstrous, and contrary to the very spirit of which it ought to form the organ. The Spirit of CHRIST was no longer discernible in the Christian church of the west in the fifteenth century. The subordination of the

* That is universal, belonging to the whole world, to the whole human race.

† This is an idea derived from the feeble analogy, noticed above; and which is equally erroneous in philosophy, and inconsistent with just ideas of the Divine origin of christianity. Its weakness and futility will be easily seen from the considerations adduced in the following note.

church to the state in regard to human and terrestrial things; their separate provinces, of the things belonging to this life, and the things belonging to heaven: this primitive distinction had been violently obliterated; the irreconcilable spirit of certain fantastic institutions had crept into the disjointed scheme of modern christianity: all was confounded and changed; a reformation, a recall of the primitive spirit, a simplification of the external form was become indispensable. This Reformation was accomplished in the sixteenth century over a part of the west; and it has been distinguished by the name of Luther, its chief, and courageous promoter.

Let us remark yet farther that the external form of religious institutions being that portion of them which corresponds immediately with the senses of man, and which thence unites itself with his passions; that the spirit, on the other hand, which animates those institutions, being that which corresponds directly with his intellectual part, it follows from this, in the first place, that the more any community is formed of ignorant and sensual men, men sunk in matter, the more occasion it will have for outward services, for regulations purely ceremonial in its worship; and secondly, that the more any society of men is enlightened, the more cultivated their intellectual powers in preference to their senses, and

the purer the spirit has remained of their other institutions, the less will they endure the form of their worship to be clogged, and the more eager will they shew themselves for a reform in this particular.*

* This is a vulgar prejudice, which is transmitted from mouth to mouth, in defiance of the most obvious considerations; and which this author fancies he has confirmed by a particular theory. We find this opinion admirably exposed by a very profound contemplator of the history of religion, Dr. Hardy, the late revered professor of ecclesiastical history in the university of Edinburgh, in a sermon entitled "The Progress of the Christian Religion," preached before the society in Scotland for propagating Christian knowledge.

"The mode of corruption which christianity experienced, during its period of decline in the fourth and fifth centuries, consisted partly in an extension of the ritual, which transformed the religion in its obvious characters from the discipline of the heart, to a pitiful exhibition of gestures, forms, and pageantry; and partly in the introduction of dark theories imported from the academies of the Egyptian sophists, and mixed with the doctrine of the gospel, as alloy and dross, debasing the gold of the sanctuary. By the extended ritual and the mysticism together, the beauty and authority of religion as a practical rule was lost, the actual redemption from vice, and the improvement of men individually in piety and holiness, for which the Lord of the Christians had laboured and bled, were in effect set aside, and supplanted by new contrivances which were adopted as substitutes for eternal virtue. From all this it followed, that to tender to a new nation the religion as now altered in substance, was to offer something else than that which the experience of three centuries had proved to be calculated for success; it was to offer something, which having no foundation in hu-

The passionate attachment to what is body and mere form in religion, an attachment which leads

man nature, no support from right reason, no accommodation to the general exigencies of the human race, could not succeed; of course it did not succeed; men would not exchange for it the opinions and rites of their fathers, and their reluctance is in no degree surprising.

“The present argument places us on strong ground to meet a prejudice by which many speculative and sagacious men have been misled. It is, That superstition is necessary in human life: That simple and rational religion cannot attract and fix the *bulk of mankind*: That either pageantry or mysticism, or both, must be employed to keep religion afloat: and, That the *people* must in some degree be deceived for their good.

“If these maxims were well founded, they would present a more humiliating view of the nature of man than any other principles in the philosophy of our species, for they imply that prejudice and folly are actually to be depended on as the guides of human life, and not truth and reason.

“Now, it is to be observed, that the plan of JESUS CHRIST for gaining and keeping the people, proceeded on principles directly opposite to these. His doctrine in the simple majesty of truth, was without any addition or fictitious embellishment revealed unto babes; it was unfolded by degrees indeed, as they were able to bear it; but in no case was it contaminated by the smallest particle of superstition, folly, or deception. The entire fairness of the gospel dispensation, as one doctrine given alike to the wise and the simple, was its character, announced in prophecy, in opposition to the double doctrine of the philosophic schools; and to this character JESUS appealed: Go and shew John, said he, the things which ye see and hear;—the blind receive their sight, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and to the poor the gospel is preached.

to an ignorance of its spirit, and transfers to the accessories, to the externals of devotion that ve-

“ We have now seen, that the additions of superstition and mystery which were made to the Christian doctrine in the fourth and fifth centuries, instead of rendering it more fit to attract the affections of mankind, as the priests vainly and ignorantly imagined, arrested its progress, affected the body of the church as with a mortal palsy, and left mankind to wonder as much at its imbecility after that period, as they had admired its strength before it was thus diseased.

“ The removal of the prejudice now under discussion is a matter of consequence to mankind. I mean therefore farther to expose it by stating, that in various ages and countries the men who have endeavoured to simplify religion, and to throw off superstition, have been supported by the *multitude*, while there is no instance in which the *people* have freely consented to exchange a simple faith for a complicated and superstitious ritual. It is only by gradual steps that superstition has ever gained ground; it is an unnatural state of the human mind: men have been cheated into superstition. So far from being cherished by the people for its own sake, they have on every opportunity manifested the eagerness of impatience to throw it off; and unless when held back by the force of the civil arm, they have flocked around every reformer who would venture to pronounce that their superstition was all folly, and who would treat them as reasonable creatures, by uttering a few plain truths, of which their own understandings and consciences could form a judgment.

“ When Zoroaster undertook to reform the religion of Persia, and, in opposition to the leaders of the Magi, restored to the popular faith the doctrine of the Eternal One, the source of existence and of glory, the superior of the angel of good and the angel of evil, the joint ministers of Providence: when he

neration which belongs only to the Divinity, this perversion so common among rude and sensual

restricted the worship of his followers to the good beings only, and taught that the dead should be judged in equity, instead of being staked in the lottery of fate according to the predominance of the good or the evil being; he had nothing to support him but the superiority of his system in its plainer accommodation to the unsophisticated dictates of the mind; yet he was successful, and the effects of his reformation are not to this day wholly lost in Persia.

“When Confucius, in whose family the patriarchal traditions had fortunately been preserved in considerable purity, perceived with sorrow the degeneracy of China, he spoke to his countrymen as a philosopher and a reformer; he claimed no divine commission; he declared that his doctrine was not his own, but that of the ancients, handed down by tradition: he was listened to with avidity wherever he went; whole provinces declared their conversion; and his system, which consisted in the simple worship of the God of heaven, and the practice of moral virtue, became predominant for ages in the empire.

“Let us attend to the facts in the Christian history which naturally bear respect to the same argument. During the long period in which superstition had fixed its throne on the ruins of christianity before the Reformation, the people felt the weight of their oppression; they groaned under it, though they durst not complain; they turned a wishful eye on every side, looking for deliverance. Eagerly did they listen to every voice which ventured to speak of reason and spiritual liberty, and were ready to throw down their burdens and to obey the call which accorded with the genuine tones of nature. The Waldenses in Italy and Spain, the Albigenses in France, the followers of Huss in Germany, and of Wickliffe in England, all of whom aimed at the rejection of superstition, and the restoration of the

men, is the origin of *superstition*: A pernicious, and fatal principle, which placing the torch of

truth in simplicity, were on popular ground; they possessed the respect and received the blessings of the people in the ages and countries in which they appeared; they failed merely because they were borne down by force, and massacred by the troops which the interested patrons of superstition armed against them. The truth had foul play, otherwise it would have prevailed. The Christian people had been at first cheated into superstition, and they were held in it only by fraud and by force.

“ The Reformation, for which the people had groaned for ages, was at last brought forward with success in Germany and in Switzerland. The cause was popular beyond precedent; from province to province, and from kingdom to kingdom, it spread its influence like the sun beams of morning after a long night of gloom. From the dreams of delusion and terror, the Christian man awoke, he gave thanks unto God who had said, *Let there be light.*

“ The Reformation, which, spurning superstition, reverted to the simplicity of the gospel in faith and worship, was for that very reason gladly embraced by the people; mankind naturally love the plain truth, and in their hearts despise the mystical chicane, or the ceremonial evolutions by which they are enslaved. The Reformers were revered as the friends of the human race. Their success was great; and if the cause had been left to the fair decision of mankind individually, and to the effect of free discussion, all Europe would have regenerated its creed and its worship in the course of a few years; but there were various interests necessarily confederated and arrayed against it. The Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Herodians of the age, with the chief priests and scribes, these trusty battalions which compose the standing army of spiritual usurpation, resisted its progress from obvious motives. It was force alone

enthusiasm in the midst of the senses and passions, may give occasion to the greatest enormities, and the most hideous cruelty.

exerted or menaced against the people which checked their growing inclination, prevented the general success, and restricted the Reformation to a few countries of Europe.

“ From the whole deduction which has now been made, it appears, that superstition is useless; that truth and reason are alone to be depended on in giving a regular and safe determination to human actions; and that the idea of managing mankind by means of prejudices and by arts of deception is false philosophy, as unwise as it is immoral.

“ That superstition when admitted in any extent within the Christian church, must necessarily produce the consequence of arresting the progress of the gospel, admits of being proved *a priori*, from the genius of the doctrine of the New Testament, without the induction which ecclesiastical history affords.

“ The plain and open spirit of the Christian system, the application to the natural impressions and to the good sense of mankind, which was invariably made by our Lord and his apostles, were essential circumstances (as has been already shewn) of the universal character attributed to the religion in its original fabric. Besides the considerations which shew the impossibility of rendering any mode of superstition universal, it is remarkable that precautions were taken in the very first arrangements of the Christian system, to impede its progress under the contingent circumstance of its corruption, and to prevent the visible church from going beyond the bounds of the real church, which is according to simplicity and truth. The cares of our Lord to secure this object, account for a striking circumstance in his history, a shyness to admit among his followers many who offered to share his fortunes. It was because they only wished to share his fortunes in the expected dominion, and not

The opposite tendency, that by which a man, obeying the impulse of his spiritual principle,

to follow him in his humility and contempt of the world, that he declined their attendance until they should come to him upon his own terms. The conduct of Providence towards the Jewish nation, in various parts of the New Testament history, manifests an unremitted attention to the same principle; that the cause should be preserved pure, at least in its progress; and that it should not be tendered to the Gentiles mixed with any portion of Jewish prejudice or of useless ceremonies.

“The care of Providence has been exerted over the Christian church in all ages to the same purpose. Men may by degrees corrupt christianity where it is, but they shall not propagate it in this state: they shall not spread error over the earth in the name of Christ: they shall not give to the Gentiles an institute of pageantry and mysticism, calling it christianity; they may offer it if they will, but Providence in its general conduct shews that the Gentiles will not accept it.”

It is remarkable that a person so well acquainted with the history of christianity as M. Villers, should not have reflected that it was among the rude and unpolished, not the refined and learned part of the Roman people, that the Christian religion, when preached by the apostles, in its native, and perfect simplicity, made its principal progress. And the fact is remarkable that while it was preserved in this simplicity it met with the most wonderful reception wherever it was presented; but that as soon as it came to be loaded with forms, and to receive that body, of which Villers speaks, it came to a stand, and has been absolutely so from that period to this. Were the Greeks and Romans, whose religion had so complex and splendid a *body*, more gross and immersed in matter than our barbarous, druidical ancestors, whose religion was so nearly pure *spirit*? Were the Scots at the Reformation more refined than the English be-

strives to throw off every thing that is body and form in religion, that he may devote himself entirely to its spirit, this rejection of a visible and external worship is the high road to *mysticism*. It is frequently the propensity of contemplative and solitary men, who perceiving not the occasion to operate on others, conceive they may dispense with the senses, and restrict themselves to the pure spirit of religion. This attachment to the spirit, divested of every thing which is local or accidental, must awaken, in all men, who cherish it, nearly the same sentiments. Hence the singular conformity remarked between the opinions of our Christian mystics, Quesnel, Fenelon, and some Germans and Spaniards, with the opinions of the Bramins in India. Mysticism, the offspring in

cause they adopted a form of christianity with much less *body*, much less of the *material organ* than the English? Were the Saxons more refined and less material than the French, though the one embraced the Reformation, and the other adhered to the *overgrown body* of the Catholic church?

The author's definition, or description of superstition and mysticism, being founded upon this erroneous doctrine, is very faulty. Superstition does not consist entirely in the attachment to outward forms; though that is a part of it. The attachment to the doctrine of transubstantiation, and the infallibility of the pope is as true superstition, as that to the worship of images; and the divine right of episcopal ordination, as the doctrine of purgatory. And unquestionably attachment to the pure spirit of religion is not mysticism, otherwise was JESUS CHRIST the most perfect of mystics.

general, of mild and contemplative natures, may produce an intellectual fanaticism; which is not however of the smallest danger to society, so long as the principle is sincere, and is not made the tool of hypocrisy. Our revolution, within the short space of its duration had its superstitious votaries, its mystics, and its hypocrites. This dry digression which it is now high time to conclude, can only be excused by the necessity under which the author lay, to place in the clearest light the aspect under which, in his opinion, ought to be viewed the influence of a revolution which began in the province of religion; and thus to draw as it were a previous outline of his task.

SECTION III.

On that of Luther in Particular.

TWO objects are peculiarly dear to the heart of man, and it is not unusual to see him sacrifice for them all his other interests, and even his life itself. The one is the preservation of his social rights, and the other, the independance of his religious opinions; liberty in his civil transactions, and liberty in the acts of his conscience. To both he ascribes a value equal to that of his existence. The idea of recovering them when they have been lost carries him to the height of enthusiasm; that of losing them when they are in his enjoyment throws him into a state of desperation which fits him for every attempt. Both of those sentiments lurked secretly in Europe at the beginning of the sixteenth century. One nation, which had lost its civil and religious liberty, began to feel the weight and ignominy of its chains; another which yet enjoyed some degree of independence shuddered at the prospect of being speedily deprived of it. All the states, in that part of the world, and more particularly the confederacy of states which formed the empire of Germany, had been long harassed and torn to

pieces by the obstinate struggle maintained between the Emperors, successors of the Cæsars, and the Popes, successors of St. Peter; a contest, the prize of which was the unlimited sovereignty over the ancient territory of the Roman empire. Both competitors advanced or affected equal claims upon Rome, and it was clear in their eyes, as well as in those of all Europe, that the master of Rome must also be that of the empire; so difficult are vulgar prejudices to be eradicated! The magical name of Rome imposed upon mankind ages after its real glory had vanished; it even imposes upon them at the present moment. One of the most pernicious habits of man is that of persuading himself mechanically, that what has lasted long ought to last for ever; that existence for a day establishes a right for the day after; that history should be only a periodical repetition of the same events, and that every century ought to resemble the preceding.* Rome had long been the capital of the world; it followed that she must be so for ever. It entered into no body's thoughts at first to deny this conclusion, and to leave the master of Rome for what he was. Men fought with one another long to

* "Were the examples of the past even true, they prove nothing with regard to the future. This proposition is more sure: whatever is possible may happen." Fred. H. *Cœuvres Posthumes* II. p. 7. *Author.*

determine who should remain in possession of the sovereign city, and to which of the two rivals they should submit their necks; they contended literally for the choice of tyrants.

The genealogy of the pretended claim which the successors of *Charlemagne* advanced upon Rome and the empire, is sufficiently known. "They were called *Cæsars*: Now the ancient emperors of Rome had been called *Cæsars*, and Rome was the mistress of the greater part of Europe: therefore the prince called *Cæsar* ought incontestibly to reign as emperor over Rome and over Europe." This argument was long regarded as irrefragable.

The claim of the popes was not so very clear, but it was only the more respected. As Rome was the natural mistress of the whole world, and as the prince who had so long resided at Rome was the head of the empire, it was evident that the bishop of Rome ought also to be the head of the church. By machinations, and plans skillfully formed, and steadily pursued, this primacy of the Roman pontiff was by degrees, but not without difficulties and trouble, established. Afterwards when Rome came to be without an emperor the dignity of the pontiff only increased. He was now the principal figure in Rome, where he had formerly been only the second. And when the princes at the head of the Franks and Ro-

mans became inspired with the singular ambition of being crowned emperors in the city of the *Cæsars*, it was the popes who performed the honours of the empire, and who appeared to confer it by crowning its new rulers. As soon as the pope was invested with the office of crowning the emperors, Europe, besotted, no longer regarded as such any but those who received the crown from the papal hands. Hence the flatteries, the submissions, the concessions of the princes who aspired to the imperial dignity, to obtain the favour of the pontiff. Disposing of the first of crowns, this important personage thence concluded that the rest were in the same manner at his disposal. The sovereign of a numerous clergy, rich, active, and spread over all the nations; reigning by this means over all men's consciences, it was easy to establish himself in the general opinion, as the depository of the power of God upon earth, the vicar of JESUS CHRIST, the ruler of kings.* If any prince dared attempt to escape

* This is the language, not only of the bulls, issued by Rome at this and succeeding periods, but of the most popular and extensively circulated writings of the times; which shews that the prejudice was very generally established. We read in the preface of the *Mirror of Swabia*, a work belonging to the end of the thirteenth century: "At the time when God made himself prince of peace, he sent upon the earth the two swords which he had in heaven for the protection of christianity, and

from this authority, proceeding from heaven, the pontiff anathematized him, threw him out of the communion of the faithful; and his miserable subjects abandoned him as one infected with the pestilence. He generally went to beg pardon of the angry Vice-god, to appease him by the meanest submissions, and by the acknowledgment of all the rights which the haughty pontiff assumed; after which the contrite prince was re-established in his authority and honours; and by every similar experiment, the power of the popes, sanctioned and enhanced, was established more firmly than ever.

Heaven forbid I should be justly chargeable with the vile intention of insulting in this discourse the clergy, or the head of the Romish church. At the present period, after ages of humiliation, of pillage, and even of persecution, have expiated ages of pride, avidity, and intolerance, it would be cruel to impute to the posterity the crimes of their predecessors. The clergy of these times are not the clergy of former times. How desirable to be even able to think that the former spirit, which after the days of vain glory produced so many days of reproach to the church, is altogether extinguished among her ministers.

gave them both to St. Peter, the one for temporal justice and the other for spiritual. The one for temporal justice the pope entrusts to the emperor." Author.

At any rate we ought to believe that the greater part of them participate in the illumination of their cotemporaries, that the strictness of modern orthodoxy has given place to a spirit, milder and more conformable to the ancient spirit of the gospel. It is not on the latter pontiffs therefore who have displayed virtues truly apostolical in the holy chair; it is not on a multitude of learned and modest priests, that judgment is pronounced in the merited exposure of the vices and conduct of the pontiffs and priests of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Who will impute to Marcus Aurelius the crimes of Nero, or to Pius the VII. the enormities of Alexander the VI?*

But, this observation being once made, the historian whose office it is to paint events as they really are, to explain the causes of the provocation and resistance of the people in an age remote from our own, must be allowed to proceed without dissimulation, to think and speak with the cotemporaries of the actions which he relates, to unveil

* This is very finely said, and deserves the particular attention of Lord Redesdale, who wrote the celebrated letters to Earl Fingal last year, on the inconsistency between the Catholic religion and loyalty to a Protestant prince: How strange it is that a principle, apparently so congenial to the human heart, when uncorrupted, as liberality, should, even at this late period, be so rarely found!

the shame of those who have merited shame, and vindicate the indignation of the oppressed by the accurate description of the oppression.

The reflections on the essence of the Reformation, operated in Europe by Luther, ought to be confined to three principal points, which determine sufficiently its nature and subsequent influence. Without considering all the three together one would be in danger of misapprehending the real essence of that great event, of taking a partial and incomplete view of the general action and spirit of the human mind in the sixteenth century, a spirit all the powers of which were at once unfolded on that occasion.

The *first* of those three points is the political state of the European nations, their internal condition, their situation with regard to one another, with regard to the Head of the empire, and to the Head of the church.

The *second* is the religious condition of those nations, their subjection more or less to the decrees of the pontifical throne, and the disposition in that respect of the sovereigns.

The *third*, which is intimately connected with both the first two, but still more immediately with the second, is the state of improvement, of reason, and knowledge in Europe, which, reduced to barbarism in the fifth century, immersed in chaos

and darkness during ages that followed, had however for about three centuries begun gradually, though feebly, to restore itself to light.

It is only by exhausting those three topics that we can arrive at a competent knowledge of the general spirit, and of the position of the European states in the sixteenth century, and thence to a knowledge of the consequences of the Reformation. But how can we here engage in the immense detail, in the researches, and discussions, which this threefold investigation would require? The author must confine himself to a vague notification of the principal objects, and leave it to be only conceived what the historian could do.

A Sketch of the Political, Religious, and Literary State of Europe at the beginning of the Sixteenth Century.

PART I.—POLITICS.

From the wreck of the Roman empire in the west was formed, on the soil of Europe, a number of states, at the head of which in general were the leaders of those tribes of the north which had overthrown the empire. Weak and powerful by turns, and long without cohesion, they changed their masters and their form at the will of events; they were seen to rise, increase,

decline, and fall; and amid all these vicissitudes, few ideas appeared of an union, of a confederacy among the weak to oppose the strong, and not a shadow as yet of that great and prolific conception, an equilibrium among the powers. Meanwhile the feudal aristocracy lost by degrees its cohesion. The crusades and other wars which had impoverished the nobility; commerce and industry which had enriched the class of citizens; the diffusion among them of knowledge which awakened the sense of the natural privileges and rights of man, procured at last in spite of all resistance the establishment of a political existence for the third estate, the order of the people, and of their influence in the government of the nation. The members of some cities, which constituted themselves free, dared even to distribute the sovereignty among themselves, which was not without some effect upon general opinion, at that time so involved in darkness, and fed with prejudices.

Italy, divided into a great number of feeble states, some monarchical, others republican, torn to pieces by the jealousy and hatred of those little communities toward one another, by the mutinous barons and great lords who aspired to independence, was still the unhappy scene of the invasions of its powerful neighbours, the French, Germans, and Spaniards, who all strove to obtain in it a firm footing, one at Naples, another at

Milan, Mantua, and so on. That fine country was given up to ravages, which succeeded one another without end. Its feeble sovereigns, at one time ranging themselves on the side of a powerful conqueror, at another jealous of his progress, and plotting his expulsion from their country, saved themselves in general only by perfidy, and by an artful and knavish policy, which from that period has been one of the leading features in the Italian character. This country which had long been the richest in Europe, and the centre of all commerce, was on the eve of beholding this source of its wealth dried up by means of the new paths of commerce which had just been opened upon the ocean by the Portuguese.

The *Turks* had lately taken possession of the capital of the eastern empire, and had carried west their victorious arms into Calabria, Hungary, and to the very gates of Vienna.

Poland, abandoned during the course of the sixteenth century to the convulsions of an anarchical aristocracy, and consuming its whole strength within itself, was insignificant abroad. In the northern part of it, the knights of the Teutonic order, had, under the pretext of converting the infidels, established a dominion, the origin of the kingdom of Prussia.

Russia did not as yet exist with regard to the

west of Europe, where she has since acquired so great an ascendancy.

Sweden and Denmark were nearly as insignificant with regard to the southern countries. The kings of Denmark, after many wars, and vicissitudes, had reduced Sweden, which bore with impatience that foreign yoke, and eagerly desired to throw it off. A hero, to whom it gave birth, accomplished that enterprise. Gustavus Vasa became the legitimate sovereign of his country which he had delivered.

The *North of Germany*, which may be denominated Saxon Germany, because it is the ancient Saxon race which there predominates, was divided into states for the most part neither extensive nor rich. They were connected with the southern part of the empire only by the tie, at that time so lax, and so ill defined, of the Germanic confederacy. The emperor, at the same time, harassed without ceasing by the Turks had the most urgent motives for conciliating the Saxon princes, from whom he might obtain some assistance. That part of the empire had seen formed within its bosom a formidable league of commercial cities, bound together by a common interest. The Teutonic *hanse* was erected to resist the pillage of the feudal robbers, who from their castles, or more properly speaking, their dens, infested the high-

Reformation of Luther.

ways in their neighbourhood, and plundered the merchants as they travelled from one fair to another.* The cities of Lombardy, and those on the

* "But the age of chivalry is gone.—That of sophists; economists, and calculators, has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever. Never, never more, shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience; that subordination of the heart, which kept alive even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom. The unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and of heroic enterprise is gone!"

Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France.

To this rhapsody we will oppose the description of a judicious and accurate historian. Robertson's Charles V. Vol. I.

"The provisions of the feudal policy for the interior order and tranquillity of society were extremely defective. The principles of disorder and corruption are discernible in that constitution under its best and most perfect form. They soon unfolded themselves, and, spreading with rapidity through every part of the system, produced the most fatal effects. The bond of political union was extremely feeble; the sources of anarchy were innumerable. The monarchical and aristocratical parts of the constitution, having no intermediate power to balance them, were perpetually at variance, and justling with each other. The powerful vassals of the crown soon extorted a confirmation for life of those grants of land, which being at first purely gratuitous, had been bestowed only during pleasure. Not satisfied with this, they prevailed to have them converted into hereditary possessions. One step more completed their usurpations, and rendered them unalienable. With an ambition no less enterprising, and more preposterous, they appropriated to themselves titles of honour, as well as offices of power or trust,

Rhine had formed similar confederacies: And those associations of free men, so beneficently

These personal marks of distinction, which the public admiration bestows on illustrious merit, or which the public confidence confers on extraordinary abilities, were annexed to certain families, and transmitted like fiefs, from father to son, by hereditary right. The crown vassals having thus secured the possession of their lands and dignities, the nature of the feudal institutions, which though founded on subordination verged to independence, led them to new, and still more dangerous encroachments on the prerogatives of the sovereign. They obtained the power of supreme jurisdiction, both civil and criminal, within their own territories; the right of coining money; together with the privilege of carrying on war against their private enemies, in their own name, and by their own authority. The ideas of political subjection were almost entirely lost, and frequently scarce any appearance of feudal subordination remained. Nobles, who had acquired such enormous power, scorned to consider themselves as subjects. They aspired openly at being independent: the bonds which connected the principal members of the constitution with the crown, were dissolved. A kingdom, considerable in name and in extent, was broken into as many separate principalities as it contained powerful barons. A thousand causes of jealousy and discord subsisted among them, and gave rise to as many wars. Every country in Europe, wasted or kept in continual alarm during these endless contests, was filled with castles and places of strength erected for the security of the inhabitants; not against foreign force, but against internal hostilities. An universal anarchy, destructive, in a great measure, of all the advantages which men expect to derive from society, prevailed. The people, the most numerous as well as the most useful part of the community, were either reduced to a state of actual servitude, or

active were among the small number of establishments truly favourable to the human race of which

treated with the same insolence and rigour as if they had been degraded into that wretched condition. The king, stripped of almost every prerogative, and without authority to enact or to execute salutary laws, could neither protect the innocent, nor punish the guilty. The nobles, superior to all restraint, harassed each other with perpetual wars, oppressed their fellow-subjects, and humbled or insulted their sovereign. To crown all, time gradually fixed, and rendered venerable, this pernicious system, which violence had established.

“To these pernicious effects of the feudal anarchy may be added its fatal influence on the character and improvement of the human mind. If men do not enjoy the protection of regular government, together with the expectation of personal security, which naturally flows from it, they never attempt to make progress in science, nor aim at attaining refinement in taste, or in manners. That period of turbulence, oppression, and rapine, which I have described, was ill-suited to favour improvement in any of these. In less than a century after the barbarous nations settled in their new conquests, almost all the effects of the knowledge and civility, which the Romans had spread through Europe, disappeared. Not only the arts of elegance, which minister to luxury, and are supported by it, but many of the useful arts, without which life can scarcely be considered as comfortable, were neglected or lost. Literature, science, taste, were words little in use during the ages which we are contemplating; or, if they occur at any time, eminence in them is ascribed to persons and productions so contemptible, that it appears their true import was little understood. Persons of the highest rank, and in the most eminent stations, could not read or write. Many of the clergy did not understand the breviary which they were obliged daily to recite; some of them

the modern nations have to boast at that early period.

could scarcely read it. The memory of past transactions was, in a great degree, lost, or preserved in annals filled with trifling events, or legendary tales. Even the codes of laws, published by the several nations which established themselves in the different countries of Europe, fell into disuse, while, in their place, customs, vague and capricious, were substituted. The human mind, neglected, uncultivated, and depressed, continued in the most profound ignorance. Europe, during four centuries, produced few authors who merit to be read, either on account of the elegance of their composition, or the justness and novelty of their sentiments. There are few inventions, useful or ornamental to society, of which that long period can boast.

“ As the inhabitants of Europe, during these centuries, were strangers to the arts which embellish a polished age, they were destitute of the virtues which abound among people who continue in a simple state. Force of mind, a sense of personal dignity, gallantry in enterprise, invincible perseverance in execution, contempt of danger and of death, are the characteristic virtues of uncivilized nations. But these are all the offspring of equality and independence, both which the feudal institutions had destroyed. The spirit of domination corrupted the nobles; the yoke of servitude depressed the people; the generous sentiments inspired by a sense of equality were extinguished, and hardly any thing remained to be a check on ferocity and violence. Human society is in its most corrupted state, at that period when men have lost their original independence and simplicity of manners, but have not attained that degree of refinement which introduces a sense of decorum and of propriety in conduct, as a restraint on those passions which lead to heinous crimes. Accordingly, a greater number of those

Bohemia had in a particular manner exhibited to Europe the example of a republican spirit, but only in its application to the liberty of conscience. The partisans of the martyr of *Bohemia*, *John Huss*, had maintained by prodigies of bravery and firmness their religious faith. The Austrian princes had been unable to wrest it from them. A capitulation had taken place between the prince and the subjects on the article of religion. This example appeared to invite the rest of the christian world to emancipate themselves in the same manner. It is not because the brave Bohemians made use of the cup in the sacrament that they were praise-worthy and the proper objects of emulation; but it is because they did in this respect what their conscience prescribed, and because they had the courage to vindicate to themselves the right of doing so.

The southern part of Germany was divided in a manner nearly similar to that of the north; but its better half formed part of the states of the colossal house of Austria, which invested, almost

atrocious actions, which fill the mind of man with astonishment and horror, occur in the history of the centuries under review, than in that of any period of the same extent in the annals of Europe. If we open the history of Gregory of Tours, or of any contemporary author, we meet with a series of deeds of cruelty, perfidy, and revenge, so wild and enormous, as almost to exceed belief."

by hereditary title, with the imperial dignity, enriched with all the states of Burgundy under Maximilian, with the crowns of Spain under Charles the V, as well as with a portion of Italy, no longer even disguised its design of an universal monarchy. That power possessed the preponderance at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and threatened to swallow up all the rest.

Mean while, *France*, its noble rival, destined to contribute so powerfully to save Europe from that ignominy, had expelled from its soil the English, who so long contended for a part of it. The standing mercenary army which the kings were obliged to keep up on that occasion was of prodigious service in enabling them to unite the provinces of the independent lords to the crown, to strip the vassals, great and small, and to strengthen the monarchy at their expence. Louis the XI had in a great measure accomplished this aggrandizement of the regal power. Charles VIII and Louis XII had made trial in Italy of their arms against the imperial. In spite of their disasters they had at least shewn that they might become formidable. After them Francis I found himself at the head of a commanding power, and undoubtedly the first in Europe after that of Austria.

Between those two powers, and at the expence of the former had been formed a republic of mount-

taineers, simple, and energetic, who had first given credibility in modern Europe to what is related of the courage of the Spartans at Thermopylæ, and of their virtues in Laconia. The Swiss had recovered the right which all men recover when they can, of living independent, and of being their own masters. They protected themselves against Austria, of whose jealousy they were aware, by fortifying themselves with the friendship of the kings of France.

England, who had so long neglected the part which nature called her to act, that of a maritime power; who had so long wasted her strength in the conquest or preservation of some provinces in the west of France, had, at last, obtained, we may say, the good fortune to behold her armies expelled from the continent, and obliged to retire to their own island. This apparent loss became a real advantage to the nation which turned, in the sequel, its activity toward the establishment of its liberty and its navy. It was not in the sixteenth century what it has since become; but it was even then in the rank of the first powers of Europe; and Henry VIII, an inconsistent and violent prince, who began by writing in the stile of a theologian against Luther, and concluded by following his example, would have played in Europe a much more important part than he did, if,

less occupied with his passions, his amours, and his cruelties, he had made a wiser employment of his power.

Spain had long wasted her strength, contending on her own soil with the Moors, who during some centuries possessed the finest part of it. At last those conquerors were expelled. Ferdinand of Arragon, who had the honour of atchieving this deliverance to Spain, married Isabella, and thus joined the crown of Castile to that of Arragon. Those united states fell to Charles V, and Spain formed under him only a province of the vast Austrian monarchy.

Mean while the political system, and the new species of warfare introduced, became daily more favourable to the greater powers. The invention of artillery, which rendered castles and mere walls altogether useless, produced the necessity of erecting fortresses, too expensive for the little princes and states. Standing armies too secured to powerful princes a decided advantage over those who could not support the expence. The Princes of the Empire had more occasion than ever to be afraid lest Charles V should treat them as Louis XI had treated the barons in France. Notwithstanding this danger they continued to enfeeble themselves by dividing their territories among their heirs, and giving portions of them to all

their sons, as if the people and the provinces had been their personal property. No person at this time called that right in question.

The Europeans, hitherto confined to the old world, had lately penetrated beyond these bounds. The roads to India and to America were now opened. At the same time that bold navigators explored in this manner an ocean whose limits seemed to preclude that event, the minds of men appeared every where endeavouring to escape from that narrow sphere of ideas, in which they had languished for ages. The human race were visibly advancing toward the maturity of a new era. A change in the order of things, an approaching commotion became no longer doubtful. The bowels of the volcano were heard to resound; heated vapours were perceived escaping; and burning sparks were seen flying through the gloom. Such was the portentous fermentation which appeared in the political state of the nations at the opening of the sixteenth century.

PART II.—RELIGION.

Religious superstition, which had more or less tormented all those nations, began to abate in some places; and enlightened men every where appeared who successfully attacked it. The doctrine of the Waldenses and Albigenes was not forgotten in France. Wickliff had lifted up his

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voice in England, and had been heard. The Hussites, and their success in Bohemia, have already been mentioned.

The princes and kings all bore with more or less impatience the pride and pretensions of the Roman pontiff. Some of them ventured to oppose him openly; and the university of Paris more than once served as the instrument of the royal power in answering the menaces of Rome. The courage was even acquired of appealing to a future council, which thus was plainly set above the Pope. Other princes, whether from conviction or policy, still bent the knee before Rome, and appeared to make common cause with the head of the church. Charles the V, for example, could not avoid remaining connected with the Holy See. It was his interest to conciliate its support in Italy, where he wished to rule. His subjects in Spain, where the inquisition had been lately introduced, and where the terror of the Moors which they had so long endured, had confirmed the people in the most superstitious Catholicism, would have instantly revolted against him if he had appeared a less zealous Catholic than they.

The countries which enjoyed a republican constitution, and which maintained among them a bolder sentiment of liberty, were those too which shewed themselves least timid with regard to

Rome. It is well known with what noble firmness the senate of Venice opposed a constant barrier to her usurpations. Some cantons, essentially republican, as Holland, Holstein, and Lower Germany, were never entirely Popish, and the Reformation found them already reformed.

The eyes of men, moreover, began to open. The impolitic violence of some Popes, the scandalous lives of others; the shameless profligacy of their court and capital, the bad morals of the clergy, the ignorance and impudence of several of the mendicant orders, those faithful satellites of the Papal throne; the seventy years of captivity at Avignon; the schism of 40 years which succeeded, when two Popes, and even three were seen, all having their partisans, all reviling and excommunicating one another, loading each other with disgusting reproaches and imputations of the basest crimes, lively exposures, which covered with ignominy both rivals at once; the multiplied exactions of the church, particularly indulgences, the monstrous abuse of the most monstrous of powers; the intolerance and cruelties of the inquisition; these are causes abundantly sufficient to explain that hatred and contempt of the Romish hierarchy which secretly lurked in every corner. But what was to become of a power founded entirely upon opinion, the moment opinion was withdrawn from it? To doubt of its rights was

to annihilate them; to inspect its foundations, was to undermine them; to examine was to destroy.

The Popes, in the mean time, who knew better perhaps than any one else the deep wounds by which their authority suffered, allowed no appearance of this consciousness to escape, and affected that security which imposes upon opinion. They knew how to yield at times, and to bend when necessity constrained them to it; but they changed their tone as little as possible, always hoping that a better time would return, a time of bigotry and of darkness, in which they might display, in all its magnificence, their obstinate system of *Lamaism*.* The irascible *Paul the III*, as audacious as *Hildebrand*, summoned the king of England to appear before him; and on the refusal of the no less irascible *Henry VIII*, declared him to have forfeited his crown for himself and his descendants for ever.† Pius IV treated the king of Naples in

* *Lamaism* is the religion of the Tartars of Thibet; the most absolute, tyrannical, and degrading superstition that has appeared among men. To denominate the Roman Catholic religion *Lamaism*, is one of the severest sentences that could have been pronounced.

† Nos—Henricum privationis regni incurrisse poenam declaramus—Ejus & complicum, &c. Filii poenarum participes sint. Omnes & singulos Henrici regis, & aliorum prædictorum filios, adque descendentes (nemine excepto, nullaque minoris ætatis, aut sexus, vel ignorantie, vel alterius cujusvis causæ

the same manner: Pius V pronounced a similar sentence against the high-minded Elizabeth of England; and on each of these occasions the Vicar of JESUS CHRIST held forth with assurance his incontestible rights over all thrones and all the earth. He allotted America as fast as it was discovered, and even before it was discovered;*

habita ratione) dignitatibus, dominiis, civitatibus, castris, privatos & ad illa ac alia in posterum obtinenda inhabiles esse decernimus et inhabilitamus. Decernimus quod Henricus rex et complicēs et sequaces, nec non præfati descendentes, ex tunc infames existant, ad testimonia non admittantur, testamenta facere non possint, &c. (Bullar. Magn.)

This is what we may call an anger truly pontifical! It is not contented with condemning and declaring *infamous*, even to the fourth generation; it reaches to eternity, and denounces the latest descendants of the latest posterity. Author.

* Nos motu proprio—de nostra liberalitate—omnes insulas & terras firmas inventas et inveniendas, detectas et detegendas versus occidentem et meridiem, fabricando et construendo unam lineam a polo arctico, scilicet septentrione, ad polum antarcticum, scilicet meridiem, sive sint versus Indiam, aut versus aliam quamcunque partem, quæ linea distet a qualibet insularum quæ vulgariter nuncupantur *De los Azores y Cabo Verde*, centum leucis versus occidentem et meridiem, quæ per alium regem aut principem *Christianum* non fuerint actualiter possessæ, auctoritate omnipotentis Dei et vicariatus J. C. qua fungimur in terris, cum omnibus illarum dominiis, civitatibus, castris, locis, et villis, jurisque et jurisdictionibus, ac pertinentiis universis, vobis hæredibusque vestris, in perpetuum, tenore præsentium donamus, vòsque et hæredes illarum dominos facimus et deputamus. (Bullar. Magn. V. I. p. 454.)

and he had his legion of authors, of theologians, and of lawyers, who demonstrated with intrepidity all the sanotity and evidence of his rights. The grateful church has placed the names of several of them in the calendar.*

This disastrous system, which subjected civil society to the iron sceptre of an exclusive church; a church, out of which there was no salvation,†

A strange thing at this time was the public law of Europe, founded on such pieces as this. It appears that the apostolic council, which in general does not pique itself upon great geographical exactness, acknowledges no sovereigns on the earth as legitimate but the Christian. All the others may be dispossessed without ceremony. Author.

* *Saint Thomas, Saint Anthony, Saint Bonaventure, Saint Raymond, &c.* For the same cause she invested with the Cardinal purple Turcremata, Reginald Pole, Albert Peghius, Silvester Prietas, Navarrus, Bellarmio, &c. Author.

† The quality of Roman Catholic had entirely supplanted that of man, and even that of Christian. Whosoever was not Roman Catholic was not a man, was less than a man, and were he a king, it was a good action to take away his life. Of the following stile, in this respect, was the ordinary language of the casuists of Rome. I quote at a venture the words of one of them. *Ostendimus jam satis aperte justum esse, ut hæreticus occidatur: quo autem genere mortis sit occidendus, parum ad rem facit. Nam quocunque modo occidatur, semper consulitur ecclesie.* Alphonsus a Castro. (*De justa Hæreticorum poena, L. II. cap. 12.*)

This Castro wrote at a time when the Reformation, being already begun, should have taught people of his cloth to be more circumspect. One might fill volumes with similar pas-

could not fail to alienate from her by degrees the superior order of minds. Remonstrances, complaints, arose on all sides. A thousand voices joined together to demand a Reformation of the church *in the head and in the members, in faith and in morals*; these are the consecrated terms. Three councils in rapid succession, at Pisa, Constance, and Basle, had disclosed the wounds of that aged body, and probed them to the bottom. The general constraint and dissatisfaction had become more visible than ever at the beginning of the 16th century; and in this state of affairs it was that the young and voluptuous *Medicis* ascended the pontifical throne. A friend to the fine arts, from which he expected only celebrity and enjoyment, an artful, but presumptuous politician, prepossessed with contempt for the unpolished coarseness of Germany, under which he was unable to discern a penetration and manliness of character, the energy of which he was soon to experience, Leo the X was not possessed of powers to contend with Luther; and the haughty weakness of the one prepared abundant success to the intrepid firmness of the other.

sages, and in reading them we are reminded of the horrible joy which Gregory XIII displayed on the news of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Author.

PART III.—*LITERATURE.*

The ignorance which the barbarians of the north brought with them into Europe, seconded by the continual wars and devastations which from the time of their appearance desolated that part of the globe, had extinguished in it almost every ray of learning. That low degree of instruction which was silently transmitted through the first years of the middle ages was confined to the ecclesiastics, and in a great measure to the cloisters. In those retreats, often respected by the superstition of ferocious warriors, who respected nothing else, some books were preserved and copied, the annals of the times were composed, and a certain mixture was taught, in general extremely absurd, but sometimes not a little astonishing both for its subtilty and brilliancy, of a theology, a logic, and metaphysics, in the highest degree deformed, and by which hardly any clear and just ideas were conveyed to the student. It will be easily understood that I speak of the scholastic philosophy which had so many periods of varying and opposite fortune; a desert uninhabitable by common sense; but here and there interspersed with spots where we discover the hand of a beneficent nature, and on which the mind dwells with extacy.

If the churchmen preserved in this manner the

faint tradition of knowledge, it must, at the same time, be acknowledged, that in their hands it more than once became dangerous; and was converted by its guardians to pernicious purposes. The domination of Rome, built upon a scaffolding of false historical proofs, had need of the assistance of those faithful auxiliaries, to employ on the one side their half knowledge to fascinate men's eyes, and on the other to prevent those eyes from perceiving the truth, and from becoming enlightened by the torch of criticism. The local usurpations of the clergy in several places were founded on similar claims, and had need of similar means for their preservation. It followed therefore both that the little knowledge permitted should be mixed with error, and that the nations should be carefully maintained in profound ignorance, favourable to superstition. Learning, as far as possible, was rendered inaccessible to the laity. The study of the ancient languages was represented as idolatrous and abominable. Above all, the reading of the holy scriptures, that sacred inheritance of all Christians, was severely interdicted. To read the bible, without the permission of ones superiors, was a crime: to translate it into the vulgar tongue would have been a temerity worthy of the severest punishment. The Popes had indeed their reasons for preventing the words of JESUS CHRIST from reaching the people,

and a direct communication from being established between the Gospel and the Christian. When it becomes necessary to keep in the shade objects as conspicuous as faith and public worship, it behoved the darkness to be universal and impene- trable. When the numerous legions of mendicant monks were found insufficient for this purpose, the horrible inquisition was invented, to exting- uish by blood and tears every spark of light which the night should exhibit.*

* It is not in support of the tyranny of the church of Rome only that opposition to the progress of knowledge has been made. The extinction of knowledge is naturally and necessarily the aim of all tyrannical power, as knowledge is that enemy, whose elevation is its downfall. It may be laid down as a sure principle, that the degree of eagerness which every power shews for the extinction or confinement of knowledge is the exact measure of its tyrannical nature or tendency. How many efforts are made in various parts of Europe at this moment to restrain the free course of knowledge. In Austria a new degree of rigour has been adopted to prevent the circulation of all books which teach any thing contrary to the views of the court. No book is to be sold without a licence from commis- sioners appointed by the court. A new set has been appointed to examine all the books which have been sent into circulation since 1791. These make extraordinary prohibitions. Almost all French books written, lately before, or since the revolu- tion, are proscribed; and the greater part of the new German works are included in the same condemnation. The court of St. Petersburg has lately published an edict similar in object and severity; and which must prevent the people from knowing by the press a single thing which the government does not wish

But the efforts of men cannot for ever counteract the course of nature. It was necessary that the morning should re-appear; that day should follow; and throw its rays upon the phantom of the night; the object at once of the scorn and admiration of men. The university of Paris already had daughters worthy of her in Germany and in England. That of Wittenberg, where Luther and Melancthon began their career as professors, had been lately founded. Sovereigns inspired by the genius of the times, by the love of glory, and the captivating splendour of learning, a thing

them to know. Among other articles, all works relating to religion, must, previous to publication, be examined and approved of by a censorship composed of members of the established church. All journals, and even the hand-bills of the theatres, must undergo a similar scrutiny. Bonaparte, who reigns by terror over the French press, and would send to Cayenne whoever should utter a syllable displeasing to him, has established the strongest regulations to prevent the introduction into France of the Journals printed on the German side of the Rhine; and of every work which may be suspected of passing any censure upon the nature or measures of his government. In this country, this is undoubtedly not the system which our free constitution permits to be adopted; and the diffusion of knowledge here is generally in a high degree free and unrestrained. Every one, however, has fresh in his memory certain remarkable exceptions, which it is not necessary to specify; any thing similar to which it is probable will never be seen again, and which happened at no very distant period; a period that may be termed the reign of terror in this island.

as yet so new, encouraged its revival by similar establishments. It became impracticable to impose silence upon so many schools, which laboured to render themselves more illustrious, the one than the other. The ancient languages, history, and criticism, were taught in them publicly in spite of the clamours of the partisans of ignorance. Science at last escaped from her state of tutelage, and broke by degrees her ancient covenant with error. The commerce with distant countries, the discovery of a new world, had disposed men for the reception of new ideas. The art of printing, that inestimable blessing to the human race, and the greatest gift which mind ever received from the hands, had been lately invented in Germany on the banks of the Rhine, diffused light with extraordinary efficacy, and prevented the possibility of its being ever again shut up under a bushel. At the other extremity of Germany, on the banks of the Vistula, Copernicus had reformed the doctrine of the celestial motions, and explained their real order, which the bulls of Popes have not since been able to alter. When we consider the first years of this sixteenth century, it is impossible not to regard it as one of the most decisive in respect to the progress and amelioration of our species.

During this first conflict between light and darkness, each party confirmed and strengthened

itself in its own opinion, and made preparation for a decisive action. At the head of the party of literature, the public voice had placed the modest and ingenious Erasmus of Rotterdam. His pointed satires against the excesses of the clergy, and the stupidity of the monks, had made a deep impression. He contributed powerfully to revive the taste for ancient literature and criticism. Reuchlin, who had attained great eminence in philology, and had taught in almost every part of Europe, was at this time settled in Germany, his native country, and excited there a great enthusiasm for the study of the languages, especially the Greek and Hebrew, for the perusal of the sacred books in the original tongues, and for the critical exposition of the bible. The theological inquisitors of Cologne, among others, the boisterous Hochstraten, who had solicited and obtained an imperial edict to burn and exterminate all Hebrew books, sought a quarrel with Reuchlin, and wanted to prove that the study of Greek, as well as of Hebrew, was of pernicious influence on faith.* Perhaps they had reason, in their own

* Even the faculty of theology at Paris declared at this time before the parliament assembled, *That religion was undone, if the study of Greek and Hebrew was permitted.* The mendicant monks held another language. Observe the expressions of one of those common soldiers of Hochstraten's army. Conrad of Heresbach, a very grave and respectable author of that period,

sense; and every kind of study was in truth dangerous to the inquisition, and to the power which hired such auxiliaries. At any rate the dispute excited prodigious attention; and ended by covering with shame the patrons of ignorance. The Hebraists triumphed. Ulrich de Hutten, a young gentleman of Franconia, ardent, and full of genius, a soldier, a poet, a learned man, and even a theologian, wrote on this occasion the celebrated "Letters of Obscure Men," *Epistolæ obscurorum virorum*, a keen and well-directed satyr, which poured on the opposite party irresistible ridicule.

Such is the great outline of the picture of Europe at the era of the Reformation, as well in what relates to politics, as in what relates to religion, and the culture of the mind.

REFORMATION.

Catholicism was not a religion given, after its complete formation, to nations previously un-

thus relates the monk's own words. "They have invented a new language, which they call Greek: you must be carefully on your guard against it: it is the mother of all heresy. I observe in the hands of many persons a book written in that language, and which they call the *New Testament*. It is a book full of daggers and poison. As to the Hebrew, my dear brethren, it is certain that all those who learn it become instantaneously Jews." This is a sample of the Papal spirit during that age. Was it good and expedient to allow it peaceably to proceed in this manner? Author.

acquainted with it, among which it might assume an uniform appearance. Christianity, introduced at different times, into very different countries, had received in each a local modification, arising from the character and circumstances of the people. Thus, the language of the Romans, introduced into several parts of the empire, in one place met with the language of the Goths and Lombards, in another with that of the Celts and Teutones, in others with the Gallic, the Saxon, and even the Arabic at last, and hence by degrees was changed into the Italian, French, English, and Spanish. Christianity itself, after its gradual transmutation into Romish Catholicism, essentially altered by the innovations of the court of Rome, of monks, and theologians, did not every where experience the same variations. Retaining the fundamental similitude of the principal dogmas, it obtained in different places a different physiognomy. Thus, even in our own days, the Catholicism of Madrid does not in all respects resemble that of Paris, any more than that of Rome does that of Vienna. In one place it had acquired a more superstitious complexion, a form more gross, more material, more calculated to stifle the spirit; in another, it was less confined with material bonds, and had preserved a stronger tendency towards mysticism: the spirit remained more free, and more distinguishable. These va-

ficties in the character of this religion proceeded from varieties in the character of the nations; here more sensual, more dissipated, more external; there, on the contrary, more contemplative, more grave, and more collected. Italy on the one side, and Saxony on the other, will afford us an example of that diversity; and it is natural to make choice of those two countries, since the one was the seat of Catholicism, and the other became that of the Reformation.

Italy had long been the residence of the masters of the Roman empire. The luxury and corruption of Asia had passed into the city of the *Cæsars*, and overrun the rest of the country. The riches of the whole world there circulated and overflowed. The effeminacy of the latter years of the empire stamped the Italian character. Subdued afterwards by a multitude of conquerors, who succeeded one another incessantly, that fine country was, during ten centuries, the field of continual wars, waged there by strangers, who contended for its possession. The Italian, never his own master, always oppressed, subdued, became naturally artful, selfish, and deceitful. Commerce still continued to enrich him; but he hasted to consume in pleasure what he foresaw that violence might speedily wrest from him. A taste for luxury, pomp, sensuality, and the fine arts, was the source of his consolation. The magnificence of the

vernments, as that of Austria, &c. the greater part of Switzerland, a prodigious number of persons in France, Poland, Hungary, Denmark, Sweden, England, separated in a few years from the Romish church, and refused all obedience as well as all tribute to its head.

Yet, notwithstanding the general sentiments above described, notwithstanding the cause universally felt for a reform in the church, notwithstanding the eloquence and energy of Luther; that memorable revolution would certainly not have been confirmed, it would not have required a political consolidation, if another consideration than that of religion and truth had not lent its assistance, and made of it an interest of state. The princes of the north of Europe, to whom, with their ordinary means, resistance against the ambition of Austria became almost impossible, beheld in the new enthusiasm of their people a source opened whence they could draw extraordinary assistance. By means of this they were enabled to oppose the whole mass of their subjects against the imperial arms. An intimate union

rage of the Roman pontiff, to the persecutions of an exasperated clergy, to the severity of such a potent and despotic prince as CHARLES V, to death itself, and that from a principle of avarice and ambition. But I have said enough to satisfy every candid mind." Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, Cent. 16, Sec. 1, . 2.

between every prince and his people, between the whole of those provinces and those people, which before would have been a chimerical enterprise, became a necessary effect of that common interest which spoke to all hearts. Beside the temptation offered by the riches of the clergy, which every prince conveyed into his exchequer, that of independence, and the gratification of an inveterate resentment against the court of Rome, all contributed to enforce the concurrence of rulers, and to carry them along in the same stream with the people. Whatever may have been their motives in the end, it cannot be disputed that the league of Smalcald exhibits, in modern Europe, the first efficacious union of free states against their oppressors; that the foundation was there laid of a better policy, and the rights of conscience were ascertained. Several of the reasons have already been enumerated which might induce Charles the V to oppose the Reformation. Indeed it was enough for him to see it embraced by the princes of whom he was the natural enemy. Francis the first might have declared in its favour, and have introduced it into France. His conduct was influenced partly by his own religious conviction, and partly by his politics and his views on Italy. But seeing a formidable party formed in the empire against the Austrian, his rival, he seconded them efficaciously, and with all his power.

This is not the place for entering into the detail of the events which accompanied, succeeded, and consolidated that memorable revolution. The Institute, besides, has not required an account of the progress, but of the consequences of the Reformation. Let it suffice then to say that this great affair occupied almost entirely all the powers of Europe from the year 1520 to the middle of the next century. Through various turns of fortune, triumphs, defeats, alliances, defections, the Protestant states were at last enabled to give a constitutional existence to their faith, and to divide the Empire with Catholicism. While Luther lived he supported the character of a minister of peace, and employed all his authority in preserving it. The civil war of the peasants of Swabia and Franconia disturbed the first years of the Reformation. Sects of fanatics arose in several places, but chiefly in the circle of Burgundy and Westphalia. The short reign of the anabaptists of Munster, and of their leader, John of Leyden, presented a scene of horrid disorders. The Protestants beheld with grief the enormities of these false brethren. Luther and Melancthon wrote against them; and demonstrated that those excesses were as opposite to Christianity as to the true spirit of the Reformation. After a peace, almost uninterrupted, under four emperors who succeeded Charlemagne, down through the whole

of the fifteenth century, and some of the first years of the sixteenth, the war which was kindled under Ferdinand the second, on the subject of the religious capitulations of Bohemia, was soon converted into a furious contest between the two parties, for nothing less than the entire extirpation of Protestantism, the annihilation of the German constitution and liberties, and the absolute dominion of Austria over the empire, which would have furnished it with the means of extending that dominion further. This terrible conflagration, which ravaged Europe for thirty years together, from the confines of Poland to the mouth of the Scheld, and from the banks of the Po to the Baltic sea, depopulated whole provinces, annihilated in them agriculture, commerce, industry, cost several millions of men their lives, and retarded in Germany for more than a century the study of the sciences, which at first had there made so much progress.* Twelve years of this

* We regard the sciences, and even polite literature, as having only very lately begun to be cultivated in Germany; and Germany is supposed to be considerably behind at least England and France in the pursuits of literature. We accuse the Germans of having spent all their time in heavy commentaries on the classics; instead of exhibiting the efforts of genius, or entering into the experimental examination of the material or intellectual worlds. Yet the Germans entered with uncommon ardour into the efforts employed for the restoration of letters; and their progress, at that early period, suffered not in compa-

destructive war had passed; and the confederated princes, notwithstanding the prodigies of constancy and valour which they displayed, were on the point of sinking under their potent adversary, when a hero, the successor of Vasa, the immortal Gustavus Adolphus, quitted his kingdom at the head of an invincible army, and marched to save, at the expence of his own life, which he lost in the midst of victory at Lutzen, the liberty of Germany, perhaps of all Europe, and the faith which he held in common with the other princes of the *evangelical* league; such was the name assumed by those who had separated from the Romish communion. Denmark, which had be-

risen with that even of the most forward nations. The causes here mentioned by Villers truly account for that long stagnation which Germany has experienced. They afford the solution of a question which every one must have put to himself with regard to the seeming contradiction between the early aptitude which the Germans exhibited for the finest efforts of literature, and their slow progress afterwards. The cause was not in the Germans, but in the circumstances of Germany; and those circumstances were in a principal manner produced by the noble resolution which Germany first adopted of procuring to herself liberty of conscience, and by the terrible conflicts and disturbances in which that glorious determination involved her. It is singular that to Germany we owe almost all the more remarkable inventions and transactions by which modern times are distinguished, the art of printing, gunpowder, the mariner's compass, and the Reformation of Luther.

fore interfered in the quarrel, was soon obliged to slacken her pace. The aid of Sweden was more efficacious. It is doubtful if the military annals of any nation present a period more worthy of admiration than the eighteen campaigns of the Swedish army in Germany. France also joined her victorious arms to those of the Swedes in support of the Protestant party. It was during the course of this war that the names of Guebriant, Puysegur, Turenne and Conde, were rendered illustrious; and it was by this war that the monarchs of France began to acquire a visible preponderance in the affairs of the empire.

Meanwhile France herself was not exempt from the troubles and internal commotions which flow from revolutions of such magnitude. After an obstinate civil war between the reformed and Catholic parties, the monarchy was vested in the person of a reformed prince, who, however, became Catholic when he ascended the throne. Spain, since the time of Charles the V, had been governed by her own kings, who still enjoyed the sovereignty of the Low Countries. But the spirit of the Reformation had there introduced its ally, the spirit of liberty. The United Provinces courageously threw off the yoke of Philip the Second, and founded in their marshes a confederacy nearly resembling that which had been

formed on the mountains of Helvetia.* The Dutch became, what a free people in the neigh-

* The effects of the Reformation, in creating bolder and more generous sentiments of liberty, are very remarkable. It is not very generally reflected upon how much that system of free government, happily established in this country, is immediately owing to the Reformation. Had the Papal servitude continued as severe as it existed in the beginning of the reign of Henry the VIII; and had the minds of men not received that impulse and agitation which so important a change is calculated to produce, there is no probability that the great power by that time vested in the hands of the king would have met with any adequate resistance. It is well known how great a share religious sentiments had in raising and upholding the opposition which was made to the tyranny of the Stuarts; and in finally expelling them from the throne. Neither is there any probability that without this powerful auxiliary, those happy effects would have been produced. Even Mr. Hume himself bears ample testimony to the influence of this principle, who declares, in his history of Elizabeth, that "religion was the capital point, on which depended all the political transactions of that age; and who says, that if a spark of liberty was preserved alive in England at that period, it was owing to the puritans. It is to be observed, however, that Hume exaggerates with the utmost industry the arbitrary power of Elizabeth, which met with no resistance, that he may extenuate that of the Stuarts which was resisted. In several places the spirit of the Reformation carried the people even to republican government, as at Geneva and in Holland; and gave birth to the most settled and well defined ideas of republicanism. One instance of this may be adduced from a very curious work, chiefly written by the celebrated pensioner de Witt, and published by authority of the United Provinces, entitled, "The

bourhood of the sea were fitted to become; but which nature denied to the Swiss: they became

true Interest and political maxims of the Republic of Holland and West Friesland."

After some reasonings to prove that monarchs, or individual rulers, never consider it their interest to behold their subjects become rich and independent, it is added; "To bring all this home, and make it suit with our state, we ought to consider that Holland may easily be defended against her neighbours; and that the flourishing of manufactures, fishing, navigation, and traffic, whereby that province subsists, and (its natural necessities or wants being well considered) depends perpetually on them, else would be uninhabited: I say, the flourishing of those things will infallibly produce great, strong, populous and wealthy cities, which by reason of their convenient situation, may be impreguably fortified: all which to a monarch, or one supreme head, is altogether intolerable. And therefore I conclude, that the inhabitants of Holland, whether rulers or subjects, can receive no greater mischief in their polity, than to be governed by a monarch, or supreme lord: and that on the other side, God can give no greater temporal blessing to a country in our condition, than to introduce and preserve a free commonwealth government.

"But seeing this conclusion opposeth the general and long-continued prejudices of all ignorant persons, and consequently of most of the inhabitants of these United Provinces, and that some of my readers might distaste this treatise upon what I have already said, unless somewhat were spoken to obviate their mistakes, I shall therefore offer them these reasons.

"Although by what hath been already said, it appears, that the inhabitants of a republic are infinitely more happy than the subjects of a land governed by one supreme head; yet the contrary is always thought in a country where a prince is al-

rich and powerful, and raised themselves to the rank of the first states in Europe. England, in

ready reigning, or in republics, where one supreme head is ready to be accepted.

“ For not only officers, courtiers, idle gentry, and soldiery, but also all those that would be such, knowing, that under the worst government they use to fare best, because they hope that with impunity they may plunder and rifle the citizens and country people, and so by the corruption of the government enrich themselves, or attain to grandeur, they cry up monarchical government for their private interest to the very heavens: although God did at first mercifully institute no other but a commonwealth government, and afterwards in his wrath appointed one sovereign over them. Yet for all this, those blood-suckers of the state, and indeed of mankind, dare to speak of republics with the utmost contempt, make a mountain of every molehill, discourse of the defects of them at large, and conceal all that is good in them, because they know none will punish them for what they say: wherefore all the rabble (according to the old latin verse*) being void of knowledge and judgment, and therefore inclining to the weather or safer side, and mightily valuing the vain and empty pomp of kings and princes, say *Amen* to it; especially when kept in ignorance, and irritated against the lawful government by preachers, who aim at dominion, or would introduce an independent and arbitrary power of church-government; and such (God amend it) are found in Holland, and the other United Provinces, insomuch, that all virtuous and intelligent people have been necessitated to keep silence, and to beware of disclosing the vices of their princes,

* — *Sed quid?*

*Turba Remi sequitur Fortunam, ut semper, & odit
Damnatos.* JUVEN.

the midst of troubles occasioned also by religious innovations, had assumed her true station, that of a maritime power.

or of such as would willingly be their governors, or of courtiers and rude military men, and such ambitious and ungovernable preachers as despise God, and their native country.

“ Nay there are few inhabitants of a perfect free state to be found, that are inclinable to instruct and teach others, how much better a republic is than a monarchy, or one supreme head, because they know no body will reward them for it; and that on the other side, kings,* princes, and great men, are so dangerous to be conversed with, that even their friends can scarcely talk with them of the wind and weather, but at the hazard of their lives; and kings with their long arms can give heavy blows. And although all intelligent and ingenuous subjects of monarchs, who have not, with lying sycophantical courtiers, cast off all shame, are generally by these reasons, and daily experience, fully convinced of the excellency of a republic above a monarchical government; yet nevertheless, many virtuous persons, lovers of monarchy, do plausibly maintain, that several nations are of that temper and disposition, that they cannot be happily governed but by a single person, and quote for this the examples of all the people in Asia and Africa, as well as Europe, that lie southerly. They do also allege, that all the people who lie more northerly, are more fit to be governed by a single person, and with more freedom; as from France to the northward, all absolute monarchical government ceaseth: and therefore maintain or assert, with such ignorant persons as I mentioned before, that the Hollanders in

* — *Sed quid violentius aure Tyranni,
Cum quo de pluvius aut æstibus aut nimbo
Vere locuturi Fatum pendebat amici?* . Juven.

Finally the Reformation produced the two most celebrated assemblies which the history of modern times has to record: The one for the concerns of religion, the council of Trent, in which so much intrigue, eloquence and knowledge, were displayed, and of which the decrees, more or less modified, have become the principal foundation of canon law in all the Catholic states of Europe: The other, of a political nature, the congress of Munster and Osnaburg, which put an end to the terrible war of thirty years, by the treaty of Westphalia, that master-piece of human wisdom and sagacity, which for the first time constituted the nations of Europe into a connected system of bodies politic. It was during this protracted congress that the art of negotiating was brought to perfection, that the utility was discovered of a ba-

particular are so turbulent, factious, and disingenuous, that they cannot be kept in awe, and happily governed, but by a single person; and that the histories of the former reigns or governments by earls, will sufficiently confirm it.

“ But on the other side, the patriots, and lovers of a free state will say, that the foregoing government by earls is well known to have been very wretched and horrid, their reigns filling history with continual wars, tumults, and detestable actions, occasioned by that single person. And that on the contrary, the Hollanders, subsisting by manufacture, fishing, navigation, and commerce, are naturally very peaceable, if by such a supreme head they were not excited to tumults: Whether this be so or not, may be learned and confirmed too in part from those histories.”

lance of power, of a counterpoise, by which the powerful might be restrained, and the weak protected and supported.

After this survey, too rapidly taken, of the principal events which immediately followed the Reformation, let us hazard a few conjectures on what would most probably have happened in Europe, on the supposition that it had not taken place. Had there been indeed a little more prudence and reserve on the part of Rome, or a degree less of inflexibility in our Reformer, or more indifference on the part of princes, perhaps this great explosion would have been extinguished in the spark. A Luther was requisite to accomplish it. But a multitude of favourable circumstances were requisite to make his efforts of any avail. How many voices were already raised, without being heard, without having reached the ears of those whom it was necessary to rouse!

SECTION IV.

Conjectures.

IF the tide of events had followed in the sixteenth century, and in those which succeeded, the course in which it had hitherto flowed, nothing could have saved Europe from approaching servitude, and the yoke of an universal monarchy. That danger, though imminent, was, however, not sufficiently evident to the multitude. The people would not have made a common cause with princes to oppose it; the princes would not have made a common cause among themselves; intrigue and interest would have too easily divided them. Besides, where were the means of rousing, and directing towards a common object, the men of that time, who had almost forgotten that they were men? The clergy were rich, and earnest to preserve their riches; the third order, as yet almost slaves on the soil, had their townsmen and merchants labouring to acquire riches. Between those two classes was another, jealous of both, plundering them sword in hand wherever it could, and against which it behoved those classes to seek protection. As to other respects, the gentleman boasted of not

being able to read, and the clergyman was not a great deal more learned. How distant were they from any notion of regular policy and social order, of common rights and equality among men! How foreign, in particular, were those ideas to the minds of the peasants! These were so ignorant, and so engrossed with popes and the clergy, with emperors and nobles, with saints and miracles, and feudal obligations, that they were inaccessible to all sound reason and all consideration of their own rights. Excess of oppression hurried them here and there into revolts which, for want of union, produced no advantage. Some thousands of them were massacred on each occasion; and heavier chains were imposed on those who escaped the slaughter. In general they knew not that there was any other possible kind of life than that of going to work on the highways for their lord, and of being pillaged by the military. Nothing remained but religion, which was an interest common and important to all classes.

The popes and emperors, in the long and obstinate conflict of their pretensions, had in preceding times fortunately counterbalanced one another, and the efforts of one party had often neutralized those of its antagonist. Had the Pope not been so powerful, the House of Austria would have found less difficulty in bringing Europe under its sway; as the Pope too, without the resistance

of the emperor, would much more easily have erected himself, beyond recovery, into the great Lama of the West. Thus one evil served long as a remedy to another. But this contest could not last for ever, and one of them must at last have obtained the ascendancy. One Pope had already conceived the idea of placing the imperial crown on his own head, and one emperor that of placing the tiara on his. On the accession of Charles the V, the power placed in the hands of that prince was so préponderant that he would easily have triumphed over all his adversaries; and would have executed the favourite project of his predecessors, of reducing the whole Roman empire in the west under his authority. If we have seen feeble states resist powerful coalitions by their union, and by that alone, what could not so formidable a power, entrusted to a single hand, with such a director as Charles the V, have executed against Europe, broken and disunited? The policy of that emperor is sufficiently known to enable us to conclude that, in pursuance of this great scheme, he would have courted the head of the church, and in order, by his means, the more easily to subdue the nations, he would have granted him the second rank in the empire, and an unlimited power over conscience. The holy inquisition would have become the instrument of both despots, and would, for some cen-

turies more, have maintained superstition, and both political and mental slavery on the soil of Europe. The Reformation alone could oppose a mound to this torrent. It struck by one blow both the rivals, who were aspiring to impose chains upon Europe. Haughty Austria was humbled, and brought under restriction for ever. The Roman Pontiff lost a part of his dominions, and retained only a precarious power in those which he preserved. Powerful governments too have arisen, which, rivalling one another in whatever contributes to the glory and happiness of nations, commonly second the operation of that new spirit which animates the people, and hasten to remove every trace of the barbarism of the middle ages.

“ The gradual progress of knowledge,” we may be told, “ would insensibly have produced the same consequences, and have saved all the evils which sprung from such terrible commotions, and lengthened wars.” But those who object so do not reflect that in the system of an infallible church, all the decisions of which are dictated by the Holy Spirit, such a Reformation as is requisite becomes impossible, and that it is contrary to the very spirit of Roman Catholicism. It is at least reasonable to doubt whether the desired change would have happened so soon, and have been so complete. It is certain that at the period

of the Reformation the heads of the Catholic religion, who at first had discovered nothing in the revival of letters, but glory and pleasure, or some tendency toward the refinement of manners, and who encouraged them under that idea, began to perceive their own danger in too much knowledge, and manifested a very distinct resistance. That opposition has not speedily ceased in Austria, in Spain, in Italy, in the Netherlands, where all the means of inquisition and censure were employed to restrain the operations of mind, and turn improvement backwards. Let any one compare the political, religious, and literary condition of the greater part of those countries during the succeeding ages, with the condition of Saxon Germany, of Holland and England, in the same respects; and let him judge, without prejudice, what could have been expected from the same policy extended in all its rigour over Europe.*

* Let any one make the same comparison even at this moment. In all those countries which have long been under the Austrian rod, he will find bigotry and superstition in the place of religion and morality; ignorance and prejudices in room of sound and valuable information; the most brutal sensuality instead of all the noble propensities which distinguish man when he has received a more elevated and liberal education. Whoever has been a near observer of Austria, Spain, or the Netherlands, will feel the truth of this remark. Unquestionably the spirit of our times has here and there penetrated into those countries, and given rise to some exceptions. Lombardy, in

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As to what might have been expected, in course of time, from popes and the clergy, if they had been allowed to proceed as they chose, in the full career of their power and credit, we may form a judgment by the physical and moral condition of the kingdoms immediately subject to ecclesiastical princes.* The spirit of Popery, it is impossible to deny, is exclusive and intolerant: Now the spirit of an institution cannot cease, without putting an end to the institution itself. A testimony sufficiently decisive is, that the humane and virtuous Innocent XI was scarcely able to

particular, situated between France, Germany, Venice and Genoa, and which bore with impatience the Austrian yoke, could not be entirely brutalized. A striking monument of the barbarity which remained in Catholic Germany at the end of the eighteenth century exists in the narration of the adventures of M. Schad, which has been published by that gentleman, professor of philosophy in the university of Jena, who had formerly been a benedictine monk in the convent of Banz, whence he made his escape, fortunately for himself and for philosophy, which he cultivates with success. Yet those monks of Banz were regarded as the lights of Catholic Germany. It would be difficult to believe the excess of their superstition, if it were not described by an eye-witness, and one who had himself been concerned in it. Author.

* I am happy to be able to quote a striking exception. All Europe will proclaim with me the illustrious Elector Arch-Chancellor of Dalberg, whom history will record among the best of princes, whom the sciences are proud to claim, and who holds in the literary world a rank correspondent to that which his high dignity secures to him in the political. Author.

execute any of his laudable designs during a pontificate of twelve years. The popes since the Reformation, more cautious, reduced, indeed, to the last stage of debility, have yielded by necessity in several rencounters; but what they wanted was strength, not inclination. Many attempts have been made to re-unite the Reformed and Catholic churches. The latter has rendered all those efforts vain, by refusing to relax her pretensions. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, the emperor Leopold the first entered warmly into this design; and plenipotentiaries were named on the different sides. The negotiations were even carried into France, and conducted by Leibnitz on the part of the Protestants, and Pelisson and Bossuet on that of the Catholics. This last personage displayed on the occasion all his eloquence, but at the same time all the inflexibility of his genius, and all that of his church. There could not be, according to him, any mention in any respect of accommodation, but only of submission. If any one consider the haughty and violent language used at that time by a man so enlightened as Bossuet, it will be difficult for him not to suppose that were the riches and power of the Romish clergy restored, we should behold them as fanatical and persecuting as before.*

* Every year, on a particular day, the Pope still excommunicates and curses all heretics, and particularly the Lutherans,

The intrigues of the Catholic party to restore Protestant princes to the Romish communion,

in these words: " We then, following this ancient and solemn practice, excommunicate and anathematize, on the part of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and on our own part, all heretics, as also those who follow the damnable, impious, and abominable heresy of Martin Luther, and all who encourage and receive it, and all who read the books of the said Martin, or of any other, and in general all their defenders." (a) (Bullar. Magn. Luxemb. 1804, Vol. I. p.718,) Who would have thought that after the most zealous Catholics have condemned the impolitic revocation of the edict of Nantz by Louis XIV, there could have been found in Europe a prince sufficiently barbarous to have recourse to a measure so ruinous to his dominions? The archbishop of Salzburg, Baron of *Firmian*, inflicted on his country a similar calamity in the year 1782. After persecuting with the utmost atrocity those of his subjects who were not Catholics, he commanded them at last to quit their country, to the number of 30,000, without daring to carry with them any of their property, or even their families. This emigration has exhausted that little country. The unhappy fugitives were received by the Protestant states of Europe, and provided with the means of subsistence. A great part of them went to clear and people North America, where the descendants of those Salzburgers are still to be found.

Author.

(a) It is but candid, however, to own that the retaining of an exceptionable ceremony in the annual service of the church is not a very sure foundation of any conclusion against the spirit of the church; since according to this rule we should be obliged to think very unfavourably of churches which we know to be the most liberal. The church of England, for

are worthy of being made known, such, for example, as those employed in the case of the elector of Saxony, and of Christina, queen of Sweden. The aversion to all the sovereigns who remain separated from Rome is abundantly visible; and the Holy See has not to this hour formally recognised the king of Prussia.* Long after the

example, retains in her liturgy and repeats the creed of St. Athanasius, which declares all persons damned who do not believe the Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity.

* The Pope at present on the throne has lately declared in a brief addressed to Prince Ruspoli, that he ought to be regarded as supreme head of all the orders of chivalry. In this he has followed the example of his predecessors. When the Teutonic knights, in the thirteenth century, conquered ducal Prussia, and set themselves up as its sovereigns, Innocent the IV declared by a bull dated An. 1243, that this conquest of right belonged to him. The following are his words; "The territory of Prussia we take into the possession, and under the jurisdiction of St. Peter; and we decree it to remain for ever under the special defence and protection of the apostolic see." (*Acta Borruisæ*, V. I. p. 423.) A sovereignty so well established is not willingly resigned. When the Electors of Brandenburg assumed the title of kings of Prussia, and when all the courts of Europe, except that of Spain, recognised them in this character, the Pope Clement XI set up the loudest complaints, and wrote to the different sovereigns to rouse them against the unparalleled impudence of the *Marquis* of Brandenburg. In the brief addressed to the king of France on the 16th of April, 1701, we read as follows; "Although we are persuaded that your majesty by no means approves of the attempt, which forms a precedent most pernicious to the christian commonwealth,

Reformation, Clement the VIII drew up a form of an oath to be taken by bishops and archbishops,

raised by Frederick, Marquis of Brandenburg, in presuming publicly to usurp the name of king; an action of a sort contrary to the terms of the apostolic sanctions;—by which action truly the sacred dignity of king is assumed by a man not a Catholic, even in contempt of the church: And indeed the Marquis does not scruple to call himself king of that part of Prussia which by ancient right belongs to the order of Teutonic knights: We cannot pass over the affair in silence, that we may not appear wanting in our duty. We require that you will not pay him regal honours, who has too rashly joined himself in the number of those whom the following passage of sacred writ condemns and reprobates; “ They have reigned, but not by me; princes they were, but I have not known them.” And in the *Orationes Consistor.* of Clement XI we see that this Pope in presenting the account of this event, and of his bull to the college of cardinals, states, “ that the Margrave Frederic had arrogated to himself the title of king in an impious manner, and hitherto unexampled among christians; it being well understood, that according to the pontifical laws, an heretical prince ought much rather to lose his ancient dignities than obtain new.”—Is not this the language and principles of Hildebrand, the same pretensions, and the same abuse of the bible, by strangely perverting passages to modern events? It is imagined, perhaps, that the Holy See departed from this protestation afterwards, and recognised a sovereign who treats his Catholic subjects with an exemplary equality. Nothing less than this. In 1782, when Pius VI travelled in Germany, a Prussian minister made several overtures to obtain from him a formal acknowledgment of the crown of Prussia. Pius VI, who at that time did not wish to quarrel with a German prince, answered politely, and promised that as soon as he should return

in which all the principles of the despotism and

to Rome, he would summon a congregation of cardinals, without whom he could decide nothing, to deliberate on the affair. That congregation has never been summoned, and the Pope has forgotten his promise. The pontifical calendar printed at Rome, with the approbation and sanction of the Holy Father, has continued since as before, to make no mention either of the kingdom or dutchy of Prussia; or even of the electorate of Brandenburg. In the genealogical article, where mention is made of that house (1783) we find the Great Frederick, designated in this manner, *Charles Frederick, Marquis* (Marchese) a title so insignificant at Rome, that it is a subject of ridicule. The prince *Henry* of Prussia is denominated the *brother of the Marquis*. In that calendar there is no room for an Electorate of Hanover. In general, every thing which bore a part in the *odious* treaty of Westphalia is vilified at Rome. The thundering bull of Innocent X against that instrument of peace between Christian nations, is well known: and his successors from time to time have renewed these anathemas. In this respect the pontifical court stands without the public law of Europe, and has separated from the political communion. In 1782, on the occasion of some disputes concerning the Prussian part of the diocese of Cologne, the king of Prussia defended himself by an article of that celebrated treaty. The Pope replied in express terms that the treaty of Westphalia was of no validity with regard to him; since it was never recognised by his See; "The separation which is supposed to have been made by the fifth article of the treaty of Westphalia can avail nothing in regard to the present question, since it is known that the Holy See has never recognised that treaty, against which Innocent X protested not only in words, but by two formal deeds. It is therefore not to be expected, that the Holy Father will make any concession which would be at va-

intolerance of Rome are established.* What, to speak sincerely, can be expected from such temper

riance with that procedure." His letter is very well known at Berlin. The same state calendar, quoted above, in the article, "Population of Rome," enumerates strangers also, and among other particulars has the following, "Heretics, Turks, and other Infidels, above 100!"—Those are recent facts, and a thousand others might be mentioned. I ask of any impartial judge, if they are of a kind to inspire any great confidence in the voluntary improvement of the system of the pontifical court, and of the spirit of popery? Author.

* "I will be faithful and obedient to our lord the Pope, and to his successors. The counsel which they may impart to me I will disclose to no one. In preserving and defending the Romish papacy and the regalla of St. Peter, I will be their assistant against all men. I will labour to preserve, to defend, to increase, and to promote the rights, honours, privileges and authority of the holy Romish church, of our lord the Pope, and of his successors, with which if I shall discover any other persons whatsoever to meddle, as soon as possible I will give information. Heretics, schismatics, and rebels to our same lord, I will pursue to the utmost of my power." (Pontificale Romanum Clem. VIII Pontif. Max. jussu editum. Antwerp. 1627, p. 59.) Let us add a word more on the famous bull *In Cena Domini*, which contains the essence of transalpine orthodoxy, and the principles which are and ever will be the secret foundation of the conduct of the Holy See. This bull, drawn up in 1610, by Paul V, and published in 1627, by Urban VIII is merely a complete collection of the anathemas discharged during ages against the persons found refractory to the orders of the Vicar of JESUS CHRIST. It excommunicates heretics, schismatics, pirates, all those who dare appeal from the bulls and briefs of the Pope to a future council, the princes

and principles? What might not have been done by absolute Popes, supported by bigotted and superstitious emperors, united by temper and interest with Rome?

When we consider in this manner what might have happened, but what did not happen; is not this in some measure to describe the influence which the Reformation had on the state of affairs in Europe? But let us observe more in detail what have been its positive effects.*

who raise new taxes without the permission of the Popes, those who make treaties of alliance with Turks and heretics, those who appeal to secular judges against the injuries and oppressions of the court of Rome, &c. These odious terms long formed the law of Romish obedience, and that even in some provinces of France, such as Roussillon and Cerdagne, until at last the courageous de Cappot, advocate general to the supreme council of Roussillon, in the month of March 1763, took measures against that abuse of ecclesiastical power, and opposed the annual publication of the bull. See a work entitled "*Jurisprudence du grand-conseil examinée dans les maximes du royaume,*" Avignon, 1775. Author.

* Enough has undoubtedly been said to satisfy any reasonable man that the spirit of the Romish church was altogether opposite to the admission of improvement, that improvement never could have originated in her, and that could her power have been preserved commensurate to her designs, improvement would have been for ever prevented. It will too, we should imagine, be pretty generally allowed, that the circumstances here pointed out by Villers render it extremely probable that such a degree of power would, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, have been retained or acquired by that church, as

would have enabled her effectually to resist improvement for centuries longer, if the grand rebellion had not broken that power, and opened a source of improvement independent of the Romish church, and in defiance of her opposition. It is by no means improbable that were the same irresistible power bestowed upon any church, she would make a similar bad use of it. It is the nature of irresistible power in the hands of frail and corrupted man, to be abused. The reduction of the power of the Romish church was therefore of the utmost importance to all the best interests of humanity; and of equal importance it is to prevent that power from ever again becoming enormous. But this affords no reason whatever for depriving the members of that church of their equal share of the rights and privileges of citizenship, in any country in the world, when the power of the church is not by such means rendered in the smallest degree more dangerous. The object of no rational mind can be to punish or depress the individuals who profess that or any other religion; it is to keep the power of the church within bounds. But how can the power of the church of Rome, for example, be extended beyond bounds by the emancipation of the Catholics in Ireland? This much we thought necessary to remark, because the strong and just picture here drawn of the tendency of the enormous power once possessed by the Romish church, might be converted into a prejudice against the rights which the Roman Catholics of Ireland claim, not as Catholics, but as citizens, and from which no advantage could accrue to the church of Rome, as a system, nor any prejudice to the church of England as another.

PART SECOND.

Influence of the Reformation.

CHAPTER I.

On the political Situation of the States of Europe.

Mens agitat molem,

*The living Power of Mind triumphs over the dead
Power of Matter.*

EUROPE, before the Reformation, was in general subject to two powers, the spiritual and the temporal. The head of the church, on one side, extended his authority and pretensions over the nations indiscriminately; a great number of bishops and prelates on the other had acquired the temporal sovereignty of the flocks which had at first been entrusted to their spiritual guidance; and there was no country in which the clergy, high and low, secular and regular, did not possess considerable wealth and privileges, and did not enjoy great authority. The church was an immense body, which violently constrained, and in a greater or less degree modified all the political

bodies. Every remarkable change accordingly in the church produced one in the political world. A revolution, however, which began in the province of religion necessarily produced its first effects on the church. It is natural then to treat of this, in the first instance; as well in regard to itself, and its head, as in regard to its relations, and those of its members with the different governments. We shall next examine the influence which the Reformation, considered in a political point of view, has had on the states of Europe, both Protestant and Catholic; and afterwards exhibit a view of the system of the balance of power introduced into Europe at that epoch, of the changes which it underwent, and of the powers which one after another possessed the principal weight in it, till the period when it ceased to be acted upon by the Reformation.

SECTION I.

On the Church, and its Connection with the States.

THE Popes lose one half of the Empire, and more than one half of Switzerland, all Denmark, Sweden, Holland and England. The rich tribute which flowed from those countries towards Rome instantaneously ceases. The authority of the sovereign pontiff over all those Christian powers is annihilated. Had it only been a new inundation of barbarians, an earthquake, a deluge, any physical cause, in short, which had torn those fair possessions from the Holy See, it would have been nothing. It was an active force, an epidemic and dangerous malady, to which those losses were to be ascribed. Nations and princes, of their own accord, and from conviction, had, in this manner, renounced the authority of the Roman pontiff. The example was to be dreaded, both for the present moment, and for all time to come. It was easy to foresee that sooner or later this precedent would be universally followed.* The church,

* It is natural to be struck with wonder when one reflects to what an extent the example of Luther has been already followed, and how very near the authority of the Pope is to a complete

separated from Rome, maintained itself with decency and honour; in it religion, the gospel, and morality, were respected; the claims which Rome had set up were estimated at their just value; books of merit written on the subject were diffused in all quarters, and read even in Catholic countries; they were not read without

extinction. It is scarcely three centuries since the first blow was struck at that colossal and pernicious power which held the human race in bondage and terror, and against which it seemed that the powers of human nature would be exerted in vain. Such have been the effects of the progress of reason and knowledge in the three centuries which have preceded; such the enemy whom they have brought down, while yet only in their infancy. What may they not be expected to do in much less than three centuries to come, now that they have advanced to such a degree of maturity? It is remarkable that one of the latest acts of degradation to which the Pope has been subjected, strikes a fatal blow at the root of another of the prejudices by which chiefly mankind have been held in bondage, the opinion that a family which has long ruled over a nation with absolute sway has a divine right to rule over them with absolute sway, and that it is criminal in the people to wrest this power out of their hands. The Pope has given the whole sanction of his office and character to an individual set up by the people, after they had dethroned, and banished, and killed the individuals, who by the ancient title should have been their unlimited sovereigns. As far then as the authority of the Pope is concerned, the right of the people to make and unmake governments for themselves is beyond dispute. In other Catholic countries this principle may be expected to produce its effects at no distant period; nor have its effects yet ceased in France itself.

producing some impression; and even on the steps of the pontifical throne, more than an ironical smile had been made at the expence of the tiara. It was this which rendered the wound deep and incurable, and which the Popes did not at first allow themselves to believe was of such magnitude. They were yet seen, after this terrible blow, to present for a moment to the Christian world an image of the pride of *Hildebrand*, and of the vices of *Borgia*. But time, at last, and severe experience, have taught them to know their true situation. They have resigned themselves, at least in practice, to that character of humility and complaisance which henceforth has become their portion among the potentates of the earth.* The Catholic princes, on their part, have

* The French revolution has been peculiarly instrumental in bringing the Pope to the last stage of degradation; his territories overrun and pillaged again and again; he compelled to every species of submission; and the holy chair itself kept empty till it suited the convenience of the republican and atheistical chiefs to place in it a Vicar of JESUS CHRIST. The temporal power of the Pope is completely destroyed by the republic, and he is one of the meanest of the vassals of Bonaparte. This is not only seen, and felt by the princes of Europe; there is hardly a monk or a peasant, in the darkest Catholic corner of Europe, who is not sensible of it. It is now visible to every votary of the Holy See, that the Pope has nothing to give. His vast patronage stimulated the zeal of those votaries in former times; and we may now expect to see speedy changes in the state of Catholicism wherever it yet exists. — (1805) —

from that time regarded the Pope as a political engine, which they might work for the accomplishment of their purposes; as a means of turning to advantage the credulity of their people. Hence the arts employed to court him. But from that time the appearance of respect has only been vain ceremony. It was too well known that the Vatican now was only a volcano exhausted. What issued spontaneously from Rome was impotent and unavailing, whilst a single courier, dispatched from Paris, from Vienna or Lisbon, towards that ancient capital of the world, extorted from it sometimes a bull for the extinction of a religious order, sometimes a reform, sometimes a regulation; so many proofs of submission given by the feeble successor of so many haughty pontiffs, who only purchased his precarious existence at the price of all the compliances exacted of him.

So considerable a portion of the riches and authority of Rome having disappeared, her excessive luxury, her flatterers and parasites disappeared also by degrees. This paved the way for a reformation of morals, for a change of life, become altogether indispensable among the Romish clergy. The clergy of the Protestant church were in general poor, learned, and exemplary. So many eyes directed to the contrast between the two parties created an imperious obligation to diminish, and even to extinguish it. The Popes, besides,

and all the other Romish clergy, living in the age to which they belonged, and partaking of its knowledge, would themselves have blushed at a conduct resembling that of so many of their predecessors. Those in particular who have held the office of pastors in the times nearest our own have commonly lived in the exercise of the most eminent virtues. The clergy of the Romish church, both head and members, have become anew what they ought always to have been. This church has, it is exceedingly true, executed on itself a reform, but it is equally true that this reform is nothing but an immediate, and perhaps a forced consequence of that accomplished by Luther; who, in this light, ought to be regarded as the reformer of the Catholic clergy themselves.

What has been said concerning the reduction and abasement of the Romish clergy ought not to be understood, as has already been hinted, of the times immediately following the Reformation. As the political troubles which arose in Europe on that occasion had all a religious character, and flowed from religious quarrels as their source, it was natural that ecclesiastics should act in them an important part; that they should be considered by princes as agents necessary to the cause, and be chosen for their counsellors and ministers. We see accordingly a great number of churchmen during that period raised to eminent places in the

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state, and vested with the greatest power, as Richlieu and Mazarin in France. The famous council of Trent too, which engaged and kept in action the cabinets of Europe from the year 1695 to the year 1663, rendered ecclesiastics indispensable in the councils of princes. The high opinion likewise entertained of the refined policy of the court of Rome was a prejudice favourable to every thing in the form of priest. This political importance conferred upon certain individuals among the clergy could not fail to have an effect with regard to the whole body; and no doubt the church owes to it the re-establishment and preservation of many privileges which she would then have lost. Some violent measures too adopted by courts, of which the history of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries affords abundance of examples, were fairly owing to the inquisitorial zeal of such counsellors. Some, however, of these political priests conducted themselves with more regard to the state than the altar; and the minister sometimes in them gained the ascendancy of the priest. Finally this last period of sacerdotal importance has itself passed away. It vanished instantaneously after the treaty of Westphalia, when religion ceased to be the prime mover in political affairs, and when the wheels of governments were set in motion by different springs; by the spirit, for example, of finance and commerce, the in-

fluence of which still remains, and may for a long time to come.

To the same causes we ought to attribute the rapid elevation and immense credit of the new order of Jesuits, which, produced as it was along with Protestantism, was destined from its birth to oppose and counterbalance it.* These new troops

* The account of this society given by Dr. Robertson, in his *History of Charles the Fifth*, is so interesting, and the subject itself is of so much importance, and so intimately connected with the Reformation, that the passage, though long, is highly worthy of insertion:

“ The constitution and laws of the society were perfected by Laynez and Aquaviva, the two generals who succeeded Loyola, men far superior to their master in abilities, and in the science of government. They framed that system of profound and artful policy which distinguishes the order. The large infusion of fanaticism, mingled with its regulations, should be imputed to Loyola its founder. Many circumstances concurred in giving a peculiarity of character to the order of Jesuits, and in forming the members of it not only to take a greater part in the affairs of the world than any other body of monks, but to acquire superior influence in the conduct of them.

“ The primary object of almost all the monastic orders is to separate men from the world, and from any concern in its affairs. In the solitude and silence of the cloister, the monk is called to work out his own salvation by extraordinary acts of mortification and piety. He is dead to the world, and ought not to mingle in its transactions. He can be of no benefit to mankind, but by his example and by his prayers. On the contrary, the Jesuits are taught to consider themselves as formed for action. They are chosen soldiers, bound to exert themselves

of the church, formed into a body in a manner much more formidable than the army of Men-

continually in the service of God, and of the Pope, his vicar on earth. Whatever tends to instruct the ignorant; whatever can be of use to reclaim or to oppose the enemies of the Holy See, is their proper object. That they may have full leisure for this active service, they are totally exempted from those functions, the performance of which is the chief business of other monks. They appear in no processions; they practise no rigorous austerities; they do not consume one half of their time in the repetition of tedious offices. But they are required to attend to all the transactions of the world, on account of the influence which these may have upon religion; they are directed to study the dispositions of persons in high rank, and to cultivate their friendship; and by the very constitution, as well as genius of the order, a spirit of action and intrigue is infused into all its members.

“ As the object of the society of Jesuits differed from that of the other monastic orders, the diversity was no less in the form of its government. The other orders are to be considered as voluntary associations, in which whatever affects the whole body, is regulated by the common suffrage of all its members. The executive power is vested in the persons placed at the head of each convent, or of the whole society; the legislative authority resides in the community. Affairs of moment, relating to particular convents, are determined in conventual chapters; such as respect the whole order are considered in general congregations. But Loyola, full of the ideas of implicit obedience, which he had derived from his military profession, appointed that the government of his order should be purely monarchical. A General, chosen for life by deputies from the several provinces, possessed power that was supreme and independent, extending to every person, and to every case. He, by his sole

dicants, raised in the barbarous ages, having invented a system of tactics much more adapted to

authority, nominated provincials, rectors, and every other officer employed in the government of the society, and could remove them at pleasure. In him was vested the sovereign administration of the revenues and funds of the order. Every member belonging to it was at his disposal; and by his uncontrollable mandate, he could impose on them any task, or employ them in what service soever he pleased. To his commands they were required not only to yield outward obedience, but to resign up to him the inclinations of their own wills, and the sentiments of their own understandings. They were to listen to his injunctions, as if they had been uttered by CHRIST himself. Under his direction, they were to be mere passive instruments, like clay in the hands of the potter, or like dead carcasses incapable of resistance. Such a singular form of policy could not fail to impress its character on all the members of the order, and to give a peculiar force to all its operations. There is not in the annals of mankind any example of such a perfect despotism, exercised not over monks shut up in the cells of a convent, but over men dispersed among all the nations of the earth.

“ As the constitutions of the order vest, in the General, such absolute dominion over all its members, they carefully provide for his being perfectly informed with respect to the character and abilities of his subjects. Every novice who offers himself as a candidate for entering into the order, is obliged to *manifest his conscience* to the superior, or to a person appointed by him; and in doing this is required to confess not only his sins and defects; but to discover the inclinations, the passions, and the bent of his soul. This manifestation must be renewed every six months. The society, not satisfied with penetrating in this manner into the innermost recesses of the heart, directs

the spirit of the present times, performed in behalf of the enfeebled church all that could be ex-

each member to observe the words and actions of the novices; they are constituted spies upon their conduct; and are bound to disclose every thing of importance concerning them to the superior. In order that this scrutiny into their character may be as complete as possible, a long noviciate must expire, during which they pass through the several gradations of ranks in the society, and they must have attained the full age of thirty-three years before they can be admitted to take the final vows, by which they become *professed* members. By these various methods, the superiors, under whose immediate inspection the novices are placed, acquire a thorough knowledge of their dispositions and talents. In order that the General, who is the soul that animates and moves the whole society, may have under his eye every thing necessary to inform or direct him, the provincials and heads of the several houses are obliged to transmit to him regular and frequent reports concerning the members under their inspection. In these they descend into minute details with respect to the character of each person, his abilities natural or acquired, his temper, his experience in affairs, and the particular department for which he is best fitted.* These reports,

* " M. de Chalotais has made a calculation of the number of these reports, which the General of the Jesuits must annually receive according to the regulations of the Society. These amount in all to 6584. If this sum be divided by 37, the number of provinces in the order, it will appear that 177 reports concerning the state of each province are transmitted to Rome annually. *Compte*, p. 52. Besides this, there may be extraordinary letters, or such as are sent by the monitors or spies whom the General and Provincials entertain in each house. *Compte par M. de Moncl. p. 431. Hist. des Jesuites, Amst. 1761, tom. iv. p. 56.* The provincials and heads of houses not

pected from human powers directed by the most profound skill, by zeal, perseverance, genius, and

when digested and arranged, are entered into registers kept on purpose that the General may, at one comprehensive view, survey the state of the society in every corner of the earth; observe the qualifications and talents of its members; and thus choose, with perfect information, the instruments which his absolute power can employ in any service for which he thinks meet to destine them.

“ As it was the professed intention of the order of Jesuits to labour with unwearied zeal in promoting the salvation of men, this engaged them, of course, in many active functions. From their first institution, they considered the education of youth as their peculiar province; they aimed at being spiritual guides and confessors; they preached frequently in order to instruct the people; they set out as missionaries to convert unbelieving nations. The novelty of the institution, as well as the singularity of its objects, procured the order many admirers and patrons. The governors of the society had the address to avail themselves of every circumstance in its favour, and in a short time the number as well as influence of its members increased

only report concerning the members of the society, but are bound to give the General an account of the civil affairs in the country wherein they are settled, as far as their knowledge of these may be of benefit to religion. This condition may extend to every particular, so that the General is furnished with full information concerning the transactions of every Prince and State in the world. *Compte par M. de Moncl*, 443. *Hist. des Jesuit. ibid.* p. 58. When the affairs with respect to which the provincials or rectors write are of importance, they are directed to use cyphers; and each of them has a particular cypher from the General. *Compte par M. Chalotais*, p. 54.”

he union of talents, of every sort. They took possession of courts, of the people, of confes-

wood rfully. Before the expiration of the sixteenth century, the Jesuits had obtained the chief direction of the education of youth in every Catholic country in Europe. They had become the confessors of almost all its monarchs, a function of no small importance in any reign, but under a weak Prince, superior even to that of minister. They were the spiritual guides of almost every person eminent for rank or power. They possessed the highest degree of confidence and interest with the papal court, as the most zealous and able champions for its authority. The advantages which an active and enterprising body of men might derive from all these circumstances are obvious. They formed the minds of men in their youth. They retained an ascendant over them in their advanced years. They possessed, at different periods, the direction of the most considerable courts in Europe. They mingled in all affairs. They took part in every intrigue and revolution. The General, by means of the extensive intelligence which he received, could regulate the operations of the order with the most perfect discernment, and by means of his absolute power could carry them on with the utmost vigour and effect.

“ Together with the power of the order, its wealth continued to increase. Various expedients were devised for eluding the obligation of the vow of poverty. The order acquired ample possessions in every Catholic country; and by the number as well as magnificence of its public buildings, together with the value of its property, moveable or real, it vied with the most opulent of the monastic fraternities. Besides the sources of wealth common to all the regular clergy, the Jesuits possessed one which was peculiar to themselves. Under pretext of promoting the success of their missions, and of facilitating the support of their missionaries, they obtained a special licence

sionals, of pulpits, of the education of youth, of missions, and of the deserts of both worlds.

from the court of Rome, to trade with the nations which they laboured to convert. In consequence of this, they engaged in an extensive and lucrative commerce, both in the East and West Indies. They opened warehouses in different parts of Europe, in which they vended their commodities. Not satisfied with trade alone, they imitated the example of other commercial societies, and aimed at obtaining settlements. They acquired possession accordingly of a large and fertile province in the southern continent of America, and reigned as sovereigns over some hundred thousand subjects.

“ Unhappily for mankind, the vast influence which the order of Jesuits acquired by all these different means, has been often exerted with the most pernicious effect. Such was the tendency of that discipline observed by the society in forming its members, and such the fundamental maxims in its constitution, that every Jesuit was taught to regard the interest of the order as the capital object, to which every consideration was to be sacrificed. This spirit of attachment to their order, the most ardent, perhaps, that ever influenced any body of men, is the characteristic principle of the Jesuits, and serves as a key to the genius of their policy, as well as to the peculiarities in their sentiments and conduct.

“ As it was for the honour and advantage of the society, that its members should possess an ascendant over persons in high rank or of great power, the desire of acquiring and preserving such a direction of their conduct, with greater facility, has led the Jesuits to propagate a system of relaxed and pliant morality, which accommodates itself to the passions of men, which justifies their vices, which tolerates their imperfections, which authorizes almost every action that the most audacious or crafty politician would wish to perpetrate.

Nothing appeared to them impossible in order to extend the dominion of the Holy See in places

“ As the prosperity of the order was intimately connected with the preservation of the papal authority, the Jesuits, influenced by the same principle of attachment to the interests of their society, have been the most zealous patrons of those doctrines, which tend to exalt ecclesiastical power on the ruins of civil government. They have attributed to the court of Rome a jurisdiction as extensive and absolute as was claimed by the most presumptuous pontiffs in the dark ages. They have contended for the entire independence of ecclesiastics on the civil magistrate. They have published such tenets concerning the duty of opposing Princes who were enemies of the Catholic faith, as countenanced the most atrocious crimes, and tended to dissolve all the ties which connect subjects with their rulers.

“ As the order derived both reputation and authority from the zeal with which it stood forth in defence of the Romish church against the attacks of the Reformers, its members, proud of this distinction, have considered it as their peculiar function to combat the opinions, and to check the progress of the Protestants. They have made use of every art, and have employed every weapon against them. They have set themselves in opposition to every gentle or tolerating measure in their favour. They have incessantly stirred up against them all the rage of ecclesiastical and civil persecution.

“ Monks of other denominations have, indeed, ventured to teach the same pernicious doctrines, and have held opinions equally inconsistent with the order and happiness of civil society. But they, from reasons which are obvious, have either delivered such opinions with greater reserve, or have propagated them with less success. Whoever recollects the events which have happened in Europe during two centuries, will find that the Jesuits may justly be considered as responsible for most of the

where it did not yet exist, or to confirm it where it had before been maintained. For this they

pernicious effects arising from that corrupt and dangerous casuistry, from those extravagant tenets concerning ecclesiastical power, and from that intolerant spirit, which have been the disgrace of the church of Rome throughout that period, and which have brought so many calamities upon civil society.

“ But amidst many bad consequences flowing from the institution of this order, mankind, it must be acknowledged, have derived from it some considerable advantages. As the Jesuits made the education of youth one of their capital objects, and as their first attempts to establish colleges for the reception of students were violently opposed by the universities in different countries, it became necessary for them, as the most effectual method of acquiring the public favour, to surpass their rivals in science and industry. This prompted them to cultivate the study of ancient literature with extraordinary ardour. This put them upon various methods for facilitating the instruction of youth; and by the improvements which they made in it, they have contributed so much towards the progress of polite learning, that on this account they have merited well of society. Nor has the order of Jesuits been successful only in teaching the elements of literature; it has produced likewise eminent masters in many branches of science, and can alone boast of a greater number of ingenious authors, than all the other religious fraternities taken together.”* Robertson's History of the Reign of Charles the Vth, Vol. III. B. 6.

* “ M. d'Alembert has observed, that though the Jesuits have made extraordinary progress in erudition of every species; though they can reckon up many of their brethren who have been eminent mathematicians, antiquaries, and critics; though they have even formed some orators of reputation; yet the order has never produced one man, whose mind was so much

dreaded neither persecution nor calumny. Decried by their enemies as ambitious men, as promoters of disorder, as vicious in their lives, even as regicides; in opposition to these clamours they presented the stoical simplicity of their manners, their real services, and their studious austerity. This is not the place to describe particularly the political movements produced in Europe by this celebrated society, whose effects are all to be ascribed to the re-action of Catholicism upon the Reformation. It is enough to say that had it been possible for the latter to yield, and to experience a counter-revolution, the Jesuits, unquestionably, would have accomplished this great enterprise. Far otherwise has been the event.

enlightened with sound knowledge, as to merit the name of a philosopher. But it seems to be the unavoidable effect of monastic education to contract and fetter the human mind. The partial attachment of a monk to the interest of his order, which is often incompatible with that of other citizens; the habit of implicit obedience to the will of a superior, together with the frequent return of the wearisome and frivolous duties of the cloister, debase his faculties, and extinguish that generosity of sentiment and spirit, which qualifies men for thinking or feeling justly with respect to what is proper in life and conduct. Father Paul of Venice is, perhaps, the only person educated in a cloister, that ever was altogether superior to its prejudices, or who viewed the transactions of men, and reasoned concerning the interests of society, with the enlarged sentiments of a philosopher, with the discernment of a man conversant in affairs, and with the liberality of a gentleman."

The enemy, whom they fondly hoped to prostrate, struck them with a mortal blow. The genius of modern times, standing opposed to the spiritual tyranny of Rome, and converted into an operative power by the Reformation, crushed those audacious defenders of Popery. The Pope himself, to complete and establish the fall of his party, was under the necessity of authorizing the transaction. Conquered by the general spirit of the human race, which in its progressive career brings the downfall of every institution by which it is opposed, Ganganelli, signing with moistened eye the bull for the extinction of the Jesuits, was only the forerunner of the unfortunate Louis XVI, compelled, in less than twenty years after to detach from him his army, his nobles, and his guards.* It is impossible for him who meditates

* It is with very considerable limitation indeed that the fall of the Pope can be compared to the fall of the monarchy in France. The different ravages which have been made upon the power of the Pope, if we except those made by the French revolution, have been performed coolly, and by princes and leading men. In France too something equally bad has been set up with that which was pulled down, if it be not even worse. Wherever the power of the Romish church has been destroyed, men have acquired more or less of real liberty. In one respect the two events may perhaps agree. As the progress of knowledge was incompatible with the continuance of all ecclesiastical despotism, and by necessity works its overthrow; the progress of knowledge may be held equally in-

on history to refuse his admiration to a society which constantly exhibited so much courage, unity, perseverance, and address, in its proceedings. In acknowledging the mischiefs which it produced he must yield a merited tribute of praise to the great and useful things which it atchieved. Its radical defect, and the cause of its destruction, lay in the institution itself. Designed for the support of the hierarchical edifice, which was crumbling down on every side; this last prop of a mighty ruin which nothing could uphold, was necessarily thrown down by the hand of time, and by opinion which directs it.*

Very different is the aspect of the clergy in the countries which embraced the Reformation. The individuals of this body only desire to be what compatible with political despotism, and in the same manner may be expected to bring its destruction.

* Some individuals, actuated by a zeal attended with very little knowledge, are at present making weak and vain efforts to revive the order of Jesuits. They succeed not. Moral impossibility is against them. Their order was a natural product of the time in which it appeared. In the present time it is a foreign and superfluous plant, which must die for want of nourishment. Our age cannot recognize the sons of Loyola as its children. The days of the possibility of their existence are past. Let them give place to the children of a new age, who will also pass away in their turn. Jesuits still exist in some parts of Poland. That country in which the Catholics found so much difficulty in supporting themselves against the dissenters has needed them an extraordinary length of time. Author.

they may and ought to be, the ministers of the word of God, and the teachers of morality. Exempted from all obedience to any foreign leader, owing their subsistence to their country; become husbands, fathers, citizens, they have no other interest than that of the state in which they live. It is either the prince, the magistrate, or the people, who elect them. Luther restored the Saxon church to the democracy of the primitive age, and the hierarchy to a system of moderate subordination. The churches which followed Calvin were constituted in a still more democratical manner. But none of them forms a civil corporation. Some public marks of honour and respect are the sole distinction of the clergy. According to the words of the Master, that which is *Cesar's* is given unto Cesar, by giving unto God that which it befits us to offer him. The abolition of Auricular confession was a stroke which cut at once the infinite ramifications by which the hierarchical despotism had every where entwined its roots, and deprived the clergy of their enormous influence on princes, and the great, on the women, and in the bosom of every family.*

* Of all the contrivances to enthrall mankind, and to usurp the entire command of them, that of auricular confession appears the most impudent and the most effectual. That one set of men could persuade all other men that it was their duty to come and reveal to them every thing which they had done, and

The external form of the church in Denmark, in Sweden, and in a still greater degree in England, remained more conformable to that of the Romish hierarchy, by causes peculiar to those countries, and which are found in their history. One of the strongest of these was the attachment of their sovereigns to the system of episcopal subordination, which they considered as favourable to their authority. The more purely Reformed, the presbyterians and others had appeared sufficiently republican to alarm sovereigns at the consequences of this spirit intimately connected as it is with that of protestantism itself. The favourite maxim of the Stuarts, *No bishop, no king*, is

every thing which they meant to do, would not be credible, if it were not proved by the fact. This circumstance rendered the clergy masters of the secrets of every family. It rendered them too the universal advisers. When any persons intentions were laid before a clergyman, it was his business to explain what was lawful and what was not, and under this pretext to give what counsel he pleased. In this manner the clergy became masters of the whole system of human life. The two objects they chiefly pursued were to increase the riches of the order, and to gratify their senses and pride. By using all their arts to cajole the great and wealthy, and attacking them in moments of weakness, sickness, and at the hour of death, they obtained great and numerous bequests to the church; by abusing the opportunities they enjoyed with women, they indulged their lusts; and by the direction they obtained in the management of every family, and of every event, they exercised their love of power, if they could not draw an accession of wealth.

well known.* Those kingdoms have accordingly retained protestant bishops, who enjoy considerable

* This ridiculous maxim was the invention of a ridiculous king, the weak and conceited James the first. Together with his other tyrannical maxims, it was cordially adopted by his son and grandsons. And according to the meaning they assigned to the word *king* and the word *bishop*, there might be some truth in the maxim. By king they understood an arbitrary monarch, in whose prerogative all law and government were included; and by bishop they understood a person lording it over other men's consciences as they themselves wished to do over their lives, persons, and properties. Between two sets of this description there was no doubt a natural alliance. But a king, who manages the affairs of the nation, in immediate concert with his people, by powers and regulations adjusted between them; who is regarded by the people as possessing no more power than is necessary for the exercise of his functions, and for their own good, such a king requires the assistance of no bishop to support him in his situation. It is the clear utility of his office to the nation which is the ground of his security. The people as little think of removing him as of removing the judges of law, or the persons who execute their sentence on offenders; because they see that his office in the same manner, and in a still higher degree, is necessary to the good of society. A bishop, also, who neither exercises, nor dares exercise any authority over men but that of mild persuasion; and whose situation is such as almost always prevents him from using any persuasion at all, or from exhibiting those virtues and qualities which are calculated to make an impression on the minds of the people, could be of little or no assistance to a king, if his assistance were wanted. While indeed he had the great instruments of superstition and extermination at command, he was an awful personage whatever qualities he might exhibit. But whenever he

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revenues, and have certain political privileges attached to their offices, as that of being members

was left to the moral effect of his diligence and his character, he was sure to lose his hold on the minds of the people, to permit the bonds of religion among them to relax, and to be superseded by those who felt a greater interest in the exercise of assiduity, self-denial, and those qualities by which the reverence and admiration of men are gained. It is no doubt true that a system of great subordination, and inequality, with gradual and arbitrary advancement, and the principal part of the patronage lodged in the king secures the obedience and unlimited complaisance of the clergy themselves: but this advantage only extends to the gaining of so many individuals, the number of churchmen in the kingdom. It reaches not an inch farther, if the clergy retain no influence on the minds of the people. On the contrary, if they retain not an influence, it must have a tendency directly contrary to the power of the king, and a tendency of no feeble sort; as the servility of the clergy must the more expose them to the contempt and indignation of the people; must throw the people more devotedly into the arms of those who are opposed to the established clergy; that is, into the arms of persons who have a ground of bitterness against the state in observing the partiality with which the established teachers are treated. An established clergy, whenever they cease to have the principal direction of the peoples' minds, are a great source of disaffection and danger in a state. This is an universal maxim. It is clearly founded in reason. And it was most eminently exemplified by the revolution in France.

Another mode of stating the same maxim is, that a body of clergy, without subordination and inequality, that is to say, constituted in a form more or less republican, must nourish in the people a disposition averse to monarchy; and inclined to re-

of the *States*, or of the house of peers, &c. But those privileges are merely personal, and it would be a mistake to conclude from this that the clergy form a separate order in those countries.* In some parts of Germany, the chief directors of the public worship are entitled *superintendants-general*. Ecclesiastical affairs are regulated in courts denominated *consistories*. These are called by the sovereign; and a layman not unfrequently presides in them, as in the free cities, for example, where this office is performed by the syndic of the senate.

publicanism. In order to admit this proposition we must first be convinced that republicanism is the best form of government. If this be so, it is very probable that such a clergy, who have no interest in disguising the truth, will not be unwilling to let the people perceive it. But if a mixed form of government; a monarchy tempered with aristocracy and democracy be a better form of government than republicanism, such a clergy have an interest equal with that of all other good men in its preservation. The question then respecting a particular arrangement of the clergy for the support of government can only refer to a bad government. A good government supports itself; and that arrangement of the clergy which best promotes knowledge and virtue among the people, is most favourable to its interests. This is the only service which it requires of the clergy.

* It is needless to mention the only two evangelical bishoprics of Germany, those of Osnaburg and Lubec. They have just been secularised in favour of the Houses to which they have long appertained. Author.

Every where the Protestant sovereigns have become the supreme heads of the church. This circumstance contributed not a little to that increase of power acquired by most of the governments in Europe after the Reformation, an effect which may be traced pretty closely to that revolution. In Protestant countries the great vacuum created by the sudden extinction of all ecclesiastical authority and jurisdiction was immediately filled up by the civil power, which was augmented in that proportion. In Catholic countries also the church, under alarm and danger, yielded some ground to the authority of government. The wars, both civil and foreign, which in most states were the consequence of religious quarrels, afforded princes afterwards an opportunity of rendering their power unlimited; as we shall explain when we come to speak of each state by itself.

Another direct consequence of the Reformation, and of the contentions, the actions and reactions to which it gave rise was the specific establishment of certain sects of Christianity as the predominant religion in countries where they had acquired ascendancy. Before that time, when only one communion was yet known, no such idea could be formed. Popery commanded, in fact, not by law. When heretics were persecuted, it was not by any statute of the realm; it was upon a requisition of the Pope, to whom the prince

lent the strong hand. An effect of the jealousy and rivalship of different sects was to exclude from all offices in the state, and frequently even from the throne, all who professed not the same faith, and used not the same symbol with that adopted by the body of the nation, and the government. From this restricting spirit arose a new species of intolerance, hitherto preserved unknown, which took up a residence among the different Protestant communities as well as among the Catholics.* Hence the revocation of the

* That the Protestants, when they first revolted against the Romish church, reformed, but in a very imperfect degree, the spirit of intolerance which prevailed in that church is sufficiently known. Luther and Calvin were both persecutors. Before, however, the Reformation any where became settled, such an improvement was obtained, that dissenters from the predominating faith were at least allowed to live in all Protestant countries; but every where under severe restrictions and disqualifications. Even in this country they were excluded from all share in the management of the national affairs; and while the burthens of the state were laid equally upon them with others, they were not permitted to share in its honours and emoluments. The test laws yet exist; though under daily infringement; and an act of indemnity must every year be passed to save a great body of the most useful subjects from the severest penalties. The practical toleration of Great Britain, however, if not her constitutional, is in a considerable degree complete. It is very remarkable, however, that in a part of the British empire, an empire in which knowledge of government and of liberty has made such unexampled progress, and in which liberal sentiments both in politics and religion are so pre-

edict of Nantz, and that yoke of political nonentity forced upon the necks of all the citizens professing a different faith from that declared to be predominant. In some Catholic countries this nonentity extended even to political death. A Protestant could neither own property, make a will, nor marry and have legitimate children. He was even happy if dragoons were not sent in pursuit of him, and if he did not perish under their hands, or those of the executioner; for it

eminent, in a part of this empire, almost touching the very center, a greater degree of intolerance, a spirit nearer that of absolute persecution exists than is to be found in any other part of Protestant Christendom. Of Ireland this is spoken, in which the animosity of the Protestants against the Catholics yet amounts to virulence and rage; and there is nothing at which they conceive more indignation than the thought of being obliged to live on equal terms with their Catholic brethren. If this proceeded from religious prejudices, our diapprobation might be mixed with some respect. But heaven knows Ireland is not the place to look for any extraordinary displays of the religious spirit. It is a vile political animosity by which they are actuated; the offspring of the selfish and meanest passions. By these the Protestants are prompted to conceive every thing that is atrocious of the Catholics; to misrepresent them to the government here, by which they have been too often believed; and when, as is very often the case, they have goaded them into violence by oppression, they held out these acts as sufficient reason to lodge in their hands powers of abusing at will a part of their fellow subjects, against whom they bear such resentment. Are these sentiments, is this a state of things which ought to be encouraged by a wise and patriotic government?

must be owned that the Catholic states carried this intolerance infinitely further than the most intolerant of the Protestant.

In a word, among the states of Europe which remained attached to the Holy See, not one can well be named in which it retained all its prerogatives. Venice and Portugal shewed themselves always refractory. Spain did the same at times. Poland, Hungary, and Austria, saw a multitude of Protestants, Socinians, and Dissenters of all descriptions arise within them. The same was the case in the ecclesiastical principalities of Germany. In France, beside the great number of individuals who embraced the Reformation, the kings and parliaments, on many occasions, shewed themselves very little favourable to the transalpine pretensions. More than once did the sovereigns threaten to follow the example of Henry VIII. The undaunted Gallican church has produced successors at various times worthy of Gerson * and Richer †, and far was she from forming

* “ John Gerson, chancellor of the university of Paris, the most illustrious ornament that the 15th century can boast of, a man of the greatest influence and authority, whom the council of Constance looked upon as its oracle, the lovers of liberty as their patron, and whose memory is yet precious to such among the French, as are at all zealous for the maintenance of their privileges against papal despotism. This excellent man published a considerable number of treatises that were admirably adapted to reform the corruptions of a superstitious worship, to

an integral part of the patrimony of St. Peter. The council assembled at Trent, in order to reconcile the whole church of CHRIST, only made the divisions more remarkable. This assembly passed a multitude of decrees, which most of the Catholic states adopted not but under great modifications, and which soon fell into oblivion for want of a power to watch over their execution. That council, by which all the functions of the Popes were to be restored, produced the book of *Sarpi*,* which did them more evil than ten

Excite a spirit of genuine piety, and to heal the wounds of a divided church: though, in some respects, he does not seem to have understood thoroughly the demands and injunctions of the Gospel of CHRIST." Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, Cent. XV. Part II.

† Edmund Richer, a doctor in the university of Paris in the 16th century, remarkable for his strenuous opposition to the encroachments made by the pontiffs on the liberties of the Gallican church, and for his being one of the first commentators in that church who followed the liberal sense, and the direct, natural signification of the words of scripture, in opposition to those who strove continually to find some mysterious and sublim interpretation. Baillet, Vie d' Edmund Richer.

* The following character of this extraordinary man is by an author of great judgment, the late Dr. Campbell of Aberdeen, in his Lectures on Ecclesiastical History :

" I cannot conclude without acquainting you what will probably appear surprising, that, for a great part of the account now given; I am indebted to the writings of a Romish priest, Fra Paola Sarpi, the celebrated historian of the council of Trent, one who, in my judgment, understood more of the

councils could do them good. That which Sarpi so happily began was completed by M. de *Marca*,

liberal spirit of the Gospel, and the genuine character of the christian institution, than any writer of his age. Why he chose to continue in that communion, as I judge no man, I do not take upon me to say. As little do I pretend to vindicate it. The bishop of Meaux (*Histoire des Variations des Eglises Protestantes*, liv. 7me. ch. 110me.) calls him a protestant, and a Calvinist under a friar's frock. That he was no Calvinist, is evident from several parts of his writings. I think it is also fairly deducible from these, that there was no protestant sect then in existence with whose doctrine his principles would have entirely coincided. A sense of this, as much as any thing, contributed, in my opinion, to make him remain in the communion to which he originally belonged. Certain it is, that as no man was more sensible of the corruptions and usurpations of that church, no man could, with greater plainness, express his sentiments concerning them. In this he acted very differently from those who, from worldly motives, are led to profess what they do not believe. Such, the more effectually to disguise their hypocrisy, are commonly the loudest in expressing their admiration of a system which they secretly despise. This was not the manner of Fra Paola. The freedoms, indeed, which he used, would have brought him early to feel the weight of the church's resentment, had he not been protected by the state of Venice, of which he was a most useful citizen. At last, however, he fell a sacrifice to the enemies which his inviolable regard to truth, in his conversation and writings, had procured him. He was privately assassinated by a friar, an emissary of the holy see. He wrote, in Italian, his native language; but his works are translated into Latin, and into several European tongues. His *History of the Council of Trent*, and his *Treatise on ecclesiastical benefices*, are both capital performances.

archbishop of Toulouse, in his treatise *De concordia sacerdotii et imperii*, and more especially by M. de Hontheim, suffragan bishop of Treves, in a work which he published under the fictitious name of *Justinus Febronius*.* The successive efforts of independence made by the states of Christendom are connected by an uninterrupted chain with those of the first reformers. It is impossible therefore not to regard as consequences of the same influence the reforms attempted, and in part accomplished, of the Austrian church by Joseph II; the spoliation also, and political extinction of the French clergy under the constituent assembly; and in fine, the general secularization which has been effected in Catholic Germany.† It is evident how easy it would be to

One knows not, in reading them, whether to admire most the erudition and the penetration, or the noble freedom of spirit every where displayed in those works. All these qualities have, besides, the advantage of coming recommended to the reader, by the greatest accuracy of composition and perspicuity of diction. This tribute I could not avoid paying to the memory of an author, to whom the republic of letters is so much indebted, and for whom I have the highest regard."

* *De Statu Ecclesiæ et legitima potestate Romani Pontificis. Ad conciliandos dissidentes in religione Christianos.* Bullione 1763.

† Still more important losses in that country await perhaps the Papal authority and the Romish clergy. What friend of knowledge and of human nature admires not the measures adopted in Bavaria by an enlightened and benevolent prince,

shew that those great transactions had their remote origin in the Reformation, and that the decline of the Romish clergy, then begun, has been completed only in our own days.

who is regenerating that fine country by encouraging in it knowledge and industry, at the expence of superstition and monkery? May his beneficent intentions be all happily accomplished! Immortality, which awaits him, the admiration of all men of worth, and the benedictions of his subjects will be his infallible recompense. Author.

SECTION II.

On the principal States of Christendom.

TWO inquiries naturally suggest themselves with regard to this part of the subject, that concerning the internal situation of each state considered in itself, and that concerning the external situation of the states in regard to one another. The first relates to the degree of their strength, to their prosperity, the extent of the power of the prince, and of the liberty of the people; the second regards only the system of the balance of power introduced into Europe since the Reformation.

FIRST INQUIRY.—INTERNAL SITUATION OF THE STATES.

The influence of the Reformation has been more remarkable in those countries in which it began, and was established, than in those by which it was rejected. With the former then it should seem natural, and fit to begin our investigation.

And first let us consider their common fate, in so far as they are *Protestant countries*.

I. The vast sums which under all sorts of pretexts

and titles those countries perpetually sent to Rome, and by which they exhausted themselves, are retained at home, circulate there, give activity to commerce and industry, and create a new source of happiness to the people, and of strength to the government; while on the other hand public credit is subject to momentary derangements. Treasures, frightened away by the prospect of futurity, are concealed; coin is made to change its denomination. The frequency of emigration, the insecurity of property, a consequence of the insecure ascendancy of parties, sinks the value of land. Silver, more exportable, is more valued. But at the same time man himself acquires a greater value than either of those commodities. His intrinsic worth, far more important, is better perceived, and becomes the highest prized of all human possessions. This is one of the happiest effects of those terrible commotions, which, displacing property, the offspring of social institutions, leave in its room only the virtues and talents of the mind, the offspring of nature.

The immense possessions of the clergy, as well, secular as regular, are placed at the disposal of governments. These in general wisely profit by this good fortune; pay their debts, fill their coffers, apply large portions of the newly gotten wealth to useful establishments; to schools, universities, hospitals, houses for the rearing of or-

phans, and for the reception and maintenance of old servants of the state; uses by which those possessions are restored to their original destination. And finally those governments place themselves in a condition to support the wars in which the existing crisis must infallibly involve them. Some of them, however, dissipate inconsiderately the wealth acquired. Others are constrained to abandon the greater part of it to the nobility, as Denmark, of which more will be spoken hereafter.*

* There is no country into which the Reformation was introduced, in which the clergy were not stripped of the whole or a great part of their wealth. Even in England, where the hierarchy was preserved, the revenues of the monasteries which were seized upon by the crown amounted to one-twentieth part of the national income; and besides this a considerable part of the benefices of the whole kingdom, with the tythes annexed to them, were wrested from the church. In Scotland, the whole property of the church was confiscated, and the most moderate salaries appointed to the Protestant teachers of religion. These alienations we have never heard represented as remarkable evils. We have never been accustomed to regard them as such. We have always considered them as parts of a most important and necessary reform, not on every occasion, perhaps not on any occasion, conducted with all the wisdom which might be wished, but on all occasions productive of a better state of things than that which it removed. It is remarkable how passion and prejudice will sometimes blind the eyes of the most intelligent men. The confiscation of the property of the church in France by the constituent assembly was not in fact different from that every where produced by the

Not only do the governments dispose of the wealth of the church; they find themselves also

Reformation, except that it was more complete than at least in every instance under the Reformation. On this occasion, however, Mr. Burke is perfectly frantic. It was an act fit to blot out the sun. It will be instructive to compare his reflections on this subject with those which every one has made to himself on the similar transactions in England, Scotland, Holland, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and Switzerland, in the sixteenth century.

“ It is with the exultation of a little national pride I tell you, that those amongst us who have wished to pledge the societies of Paris in the cup of their abominations, have been disappointed. The robbery of your church has proved a security to the possessions of ours. It has roused the people. They see with horror and alarm that enormous and shameless act of proscription. It has opened, and will more and more open their eyes upon the selfish enlargement of mind, and the narrow liberality of sentiment of insidious men, which commencing in close hypocrisy and fraud have ended in open violence and rapine. At home we behold similar beginnings. We are on our guard against similar conclusions.

“ I hope we shall never be so totally lost to all sense of the duties imposed upon us by the law of social union, as, upon any pretext of public service, to confiscate the goods of a single unoffending citizen. Who but a tyrant (a name expressive of every thing which can vitiate and degrade human nature) could think of seizing on the property of men, unaccused, unheard, untried, by whole descriptions, by hundreds and thousands together? who that had not lost every trace of humanity could think of casting down men of exalted rank and sacred function, some of them of an age to call at once for reverence and compassion, of casting them down from the highest situation in the

entrusted with the disposal of the wealth, the persons, and whole power of their people. The

commonwealth, wherein they were maintained by their own landed property, to a state of indigence, depression and contempt?

“ The confiscators truly have made some allowance to their victims from the scraps and fragments of their own tables from which they have been so harshly driven, and which have been so bountifully spread for a feast to the harpies of usury. But to drive men from independence to live on alms is itself great cruelty. That which might be a tolerable condition to men in one state of life, and not habituated to other things, may, when all these circumstances are altered, be a dreadful revolution; and one to which a virtuous mind would feel pain in condemning any guilt except that which should demand the life of the offender. But to many minds this punishment of *degradation* and *infamy* is worse than death. Undoubtedly it is an infinite aggravation of this cruel suffering, that the persons who were taught a double prejudice in favour of religion, by education and by the place they held in the administration of its functions, are to receive the remnants of their property as alms from the profane and impious hands of those who had plundered them of all the rest; to receive (if they are at all to receive) not from the charitable contributions of the faithful, but from the insolent tenderness of known and avowed Atheism, the maintenance of religion, measured out to them on the standard of the contempt in which it is held: and for the purpose of rendering those who receive the allowance vile and of no estimation in the eyes of mankind.

“ But this act of seizure of property, it seems, is a judgment in law, and not a confiscation. They have, it seems, found out in the academies of the *Palais Royale*, and the *Jacobins*, that certain men had no right to the possessions which

cause of religion has become that of every individual: The resources which this state of mind

they held under law, usage, the decisions of courts, and the accumulated prescription of a thousand years. They say that ecclesiastics are fictitious persons, creatures of the state; whom at pleasure they may destroy, and of course limit and modify in every particular; that the goods they possess are not properly theirs, but belong to the state which created the fiction; and we are therefore not to trouble ourselves with what they may suffer in their natural feelings and natural persons, on account of what is done towards them in this their constructive character. Of what import is it, under what names you injure men, and deprive them of the just emoluments of a profession, in which they were not only permitted but encouraged by the state to engage; and upon the supposed certainty of which emoluments they had formed the plan of their lives, contracted debts, and led multitudes to an entire independence upon them?

“ You do not imagine, Sir, that I am going to compliment this miserable distinction of persons with any long discussion. The arguments of tyranny are as contemptible as its force is dreadful. Had not your confiscators by their early crimes obtained a power which secures indemnity to all the crimes of which they have since been guilty, or that they can commit, it is not the syllogism of the logician but the lash of the executioner that would have refuted a sophistry which becomes an accomplice of theft and murder. The sophistic tyrants of Paris are loud in their declamations against the departed regal tyrants who in former ages have vexed the world. They are thus bold, because they are safe from the dungeons and iron cages of their old masters. Shall we be more tender of the tyrants of our own time, when we see them acting worse tragedies under our eyes? shall we not use the same liberty that they do, when

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affords to rulers are incalculable. The effects which it is capable of producing were seen in the first war against Charles V, and afterwards in the war of thirty years against the two Ferdinands. What the most imminent danger of the state could not have obtained from individuals, zeal for religion obtained with ease. For this, artists, burghers, peasants, ran to arms; and not one of them thought of murmuring at taxes, thrice as heavy as those sustained before. In the violent agitation into which the danger of religion threw the mind, people offered goods and life, and they perceived not the efforts or the burthens with which they would have considered themselves oppressed in a more calm situation. The fear of beholding an inquisition, a St. Bartholomew, opened to the league of Smalcalde, to the Prince of Orange, to Queen Elizabeth, to Admiral Coligny, sources of power which had remained shut in any other situation of affairs.

we can use it with the same safety? when to speak honest truth only requires a contempt of the opinions of those whose actions we abhor?" *Reflec. on Rev. in France.*

The very same invectives, word for word, may be poured upon those who established the Reformation in every country in Europe. They were poured with equal fury by the patrons of the ancient abuses. The Reformation, however, has stood; and posterity, more enlightened, acknowledges the merits of its early promoters.

When once a people have, with full accord, with enthusiasm, and during several successive generations, made common cause with their sovereigns, there arises hence a public spirit of union and harmony between the people and the government, between the head and the members, which is salutary to the country, and which is sometimes preserved for several centuries together. It is impossible for a near observer not to perceive this principle in the Protestant states; and their history, that of Prussia in particular, presents more instances than one in which it has been remarkably displayed.

But if a Protestant prince, by his new character of head of the church, and by the confidence of his people, consolidated and strengthened his power, the nature of the movement by which this authority was placed in his hands directed him to use it in the most lawful and equitable manner. He was strengthened only for the purpose of serving and defending the nation, not of oppressing it. The most profound observers have remarked that nature has particularly disposed the people of the north for being republicans; and it cannot be denied that several of those nations which embraced the Reformation, as the Saxons, the Swiss, the Dutch and the English, have always appeared animated with that spirit; of which the Reformation itself indeed was only a positive atchieve-

ment.* By that concussion, in its turn, all the energy of the original sentiment, and all the

* A confession to this effect is even extorted from Mr. Hume.

“ In that great revolution of manners which happened during the sixteenth and the seventeenth century, the only nations who had the honourable, though often melancholy advantage, of making an effort for their expiring privileges, were such as, together with the principles of civil liberty, were animated with a zeal for religious parties and opinions. Besides the irresistible force of standing armies, the European princes possessed this advantage, that they were descended from the ancient royal families ; that they continued the same appellations of magistrates, the same appearance of civil government ; and restraining themselves by all the forms of legal administration, could insensibly impose the yoke on their unguarded subjects. Even the German nations, who formerly broke the Roman chains, and restored liberty to mankind, now lost their own liberty, and saw with grief the absolute authority of their princes firmly established among them. In their circumstances, nothing but a pious zeal, which disregards all motives of human prudence, could have made them entertain hopes of preserving any longer those privileges which their ancestors, through so many ages, had transmitted to them.

“ As the house of Austria, throughout all her extensive dominions, had ever made religion the pretence for her usurpations, she now met with resistance from a like principle ; and the Catholic religion, as usual, had ranged itself on the side of monarchy ; the Protestant, on that of liberty. The states of Bohemia, having taken arms against the emperor Matthias, continued their revolt against his successor Ferdinand, and claimed the observance of all the edicts enacted in favour of the new religion, together with the restoration of their ancient

ideas with which it is associated, were awakened. The will to be free in matters of conscience is the same at bottom with the will to be free in matters of state. Now this will is every thing; and there are no slaves but those who will to be so, or who have not the courage to will the termination of their slavery. It is the energy of mind by which in the long run all despotism is erected. The constitution of England has been much admired. I have no intention to dispute its value; but what renders that heterogeneous compound so excellent is the patriotism, the pride, and independence of the English peasant, burgher, and gentleman. Introduce into all these hearts, which beat with liberty, the sentiments of slaves, and you will see of what advantage, that fine *palladium*, the constitution, will be found.* Prussia and Denmark have neither parliaments,

laws and constitution. The neighbouring principalities, Silesia, Moravia, Lusatia, Austria, even the kingdom of Hungary took part in the quarrel; and throughout all these populous and martial provinces, the spirit of discord and civil war had universally diffused itself." *Hist. of Eng.* c. 48.

* The bosom of an Englishman justly swells with pride to hear these praises extorted from all disinterested foreigners, of that manly and independent spirit with which he has at all times resisted oppression, and vindicated his rights. Long may that spirit continue to actuate him; and far be from him the hour of selling his birthright, either through sottish indifference, mean fear, or execrable cupidity!

nor any other visible barrier to the power of their kings; and yet the most admirable liberty is enjoyed in those countries.* There, however, the invisible barrier exists in every heart, in that of the prince himself, who is nursed and reared in the spirit which animates the nation; it exists in the manners, which continue simple and unadulterated with pomp and insolence. There, potent sovereigns are to be seen, clothed like their subjects, walking like their subjects on foot, or attended with the simplest equipage, without retinue, without etiquette; mere officers in their youth in the national army which they must learn one day to command. What kingdom in modern times can boast of such a monarch as the immortal Frederic II? What nations can boast of an union of princes as eminent and wise as the Protestant communities of Germany? Two extraordinary women, during the latter ages, have been found on the thrones of Europe; Elizabeth and Catharine. Both of them were reared in the Protestant principles. Can France, too, forget that the best of

* This representation is by far too favourable, particularly in regard to Prussia, where the government is despotical, not only in power but in exercise. The government of Denmark is truly mild, where, at the same time that the power of the king is restrained by the power of the aristocracy, the lower orders are more independent of the higher, and in happier circumstances than in almost any other part of the continent.

her kings, and the best minister of that king, were pupils of the Reformation?

Having been led to speak of this disposition of the public mind among the Protestant people, ought I here to introduce what I have to advance on the steps which among them have been made in the science of legislation, and the other branches of knowledge connected with it, as that of executive administration, statistics, &c.; or shall I reserve those topics for the chapter in which I must treat of the progress of knowledge? The doubts I feel on this subject prove that the things which relate to man in society, are all united together by the closest ties; and that the great concern of his liberty is intimately connected with the culture of his mind.

Let it suffice then, at present, to observe that the authority of the church, before the Reformation, being strictly conjoined with the authority of the state in some places, and in others altogether confounded with it, it was impossible to examine and discuss the rights of the one without extending the investigation also to the other. Men inquired by what authority the popes pretended to raise up and cast down kings; and this naturally conducted to the inquiry, by what authority kings were originally set up? When the respective rights of the church and state were discussed; it was difficult, from this important

topic, not to turn sometimes to the rights of the people. It was ascertained that the community, regarded as a religious association, that is to say, as a church, had a right to chuse its own pastors, and to draw up its own creed: It was most natural from this to conclude that the same community, as a political association, had a right to elect its own magistrates, and to form its own constitution. The emperor opposed the new religious creed: Men then inquired if, in matters of faith, they ought to obey the emperor? In 1531 the faculties of law and theology in the university of Wittemberg answered unanimously in the negative. From that time all discussion turned only on the limits of that obedience which is due to sovereigns, and of that resistance which may be opposed to them. Zuinglius pronounced his rigid sentence against the oppressor, *cum Deo potest deponi*. Such a language, before Luther, had never dared to be spoken explicitly and aloud in Europe. He feared not to utter great truths, and he set many others in the same road. The writings on politics of the first Reformers breathe in general this spirit.* When the long wars of

* Luther himself says in his book *on the war* against the Turks; "No one had yet taught or heard, no one knew any thing about the secular power; whence it was derived, what was its object, or how it could be acceptable to God. Persons of the greatest learning regarded the temporal power as a pro-

Germany and Flanders were terminated the same spirit displayed itself in various works of merit, reckoned classical at this day, and in which the rights of the two powers, the rights of the prince and those of the people, and the rights of the

fane and sublunary thing, nay as pagan and impious, and dangerous towards salvation. In a word, the good princes and lords, prone as they were to piety, accounted their state and dignity as less than nothing, and far from agreeable to GOD; and hence became priests and monks in every thing but the hood.*** Besides this, the pope and the clergy were all in all, above all and over all, as GOD himself in the world; and the civil authority was thrown into the back ground, oppressed, and unknown.*** At present they accuse me of being a seditious person, because, forsooth, I have written on the secular power wisely and usefully, and so as no doctor since the time of the apostles, unless perhaps St. Augustin. This is what I can declare with a good conscience, and of which the world can bear me witness." Author.

Luther has indeed the merit of being the very first-man who wrote with freedom on politics in modern Europe, and set a most important example of the application of the natural reason of men to the business of government, as well as to the concerns of religion. With what noble success has this example been followed? And what advantage do the nations at this moment derive from the light thrown upon the nature of government by the discoveries and disclosures of private individuals? It is worthy of attention that every thing, almost without exception, which has been done to illustrate the principles of government, and to point out the best modes of governing men, has been done not by men engaged in government, but by private individuals.

bodies politic toward one another are discussed with a precision and a spirit, very different both from the ancient spirit of the schools and from the democratical exaggerations of the 18th century. Germany, Switzerland, Holland, England, and France herself, in which the Reformation made great progress, though it was not embraced by the government, produced a number of similar works about this period. We shall mention some of the principal hereafter in one of the articles of the second section.

The Reformation then, which at first was a recurrence to liberty only in religious things, became by all these causes a recurrence to liberty in political things also. Princes supported themselves by this liberty, aspired to it, and embraced it as well as their people. Accordingly Protestant princes have always used a very different language towards their people, and have professed very different principles of liberality and humanity from those of the Catholic sovereigns their contemporaries.* Of this the *Prussian code* is a

* This is a very remarkable fact. It is confirmed by every part of the history of Europe since the time of the Reformation. It is a striking proof of what sovereigns themselves may become in the midst of a truly enlightened and spirited people. The cordial co-operation of princes in establishing that order of things which is most conducive to the interests of man, from what we have seen them already capable of doing, is by no

conspicuous monument, and undoubtedly the finest system of laws, of which any modern nation can boast.* In this code we find the substance and principles of those famous *Rights of Man*, which in 1789 appeared in France so great a novelty, and produced such an explosion.† In

means to be despaired of. Those who set the first and the greatest example will illustrate their name above all their predecessors. This is the species of heroism which alone now remains for princes to display. It is unspeakably the greatest and most glorious. The admiration of it will last and grow to all posterity.

* We have already had occasion to remark the terms of exaggerated praise in which our author is disposed to speak of Prussia. The jurisprudence of the Prussian code is certainly good; the principles of equity between man and man are stated with precision and simplicity; and it has infinite advantages over those codes which consist of vast and unmanageable accumulations of cases and precedents. It certainly however does not surpass, if it equal, the simplicity and precision of the Danish code. Besides all this the constitution of the courts of law is bad; the judges are dependent not only upon the king, but in some measure upon the great men; they have no juries in Prussia; and no man but would trust his life and property in an English court, on all trying occasions, rather than in a Prussian, notwithstanding the defects of our code. Not to mention that the king is master of the law; and though the practice and spirit of the country retain him within certain bounds, exerts an arbitrary power which sets liberty in Prussia out of the question.

† Hence the eccentricity truly ridiculous of our demagogues of 1793 and 1794, who fancied they had discovered things

Protestant nations the people have long been familiar with this language, and with these principles. They know them to form the foundation of their government; and are accustomed to the discussion of such matters. It excites no extraordinary emotion among them. The liberty of thought and writing is as natural to them as the air they breathe. This may reasonably lead us to conclude that a revolution, similar to that in France, can never have place in the countries which are not Catholic. The most essential results of such a revolution are there previously established, and cupidity cannot be thrown into action by the temptation of the riches of the clergy. Accordingly no people are more submissive to their princes and the laws of their country than the Protestants, because these laws are of an excellent nature, and both princes and subjects are equally patriotic and republican.

It is asserted that Francis the First shewed himself at the beginning rather favourable to the doc

unknown, and unheard of by the rest of the world. Like scholars who are tempted to make a parade of the most common notions which they have just received, our jacobins wanted to make a present by violence of their mode of being free to other nations. But in several of those nations the cause was already tried; and the people knew the moderate and middle course which it was proper to hold between speculative and practical democracy. Author.

trines of the Reformers. His favourite sister Margaret, queen of Navarre, openly protected them. The fate of the kingdom depended at that moment on the determination he was to make. Had he adopted the Reformation, France without doubt would have followed him; the fate of protestantism in Europe would have been sooner decided; the civil wars in France would certainly have been prevented, as well as the revolution of the 18th century. Every thing assumed a different appearance, because he conceived violent apprehensions with regard to the political consequences of the Reformation. Brantome relates that one day when the king was conversing on this subject, the following expression escaped from him; "These novelties tend to nothing less than the overthrow of all monarchy divine and human." In fact, that prince afterwards displayed against protestantism an irreconcilable hatred, which his successors inherited but too completely; the lesson was not lost.* But if

* Was not this opinion of Francis the result of ecclesiastical suggestions? That king (says the president Henault, for the year 1534) complaining of the pope to his nuncio, and hinting at the example of Henry VIII, the nuncio replied; "To speak freely, sire, you would be the first sufferer yourself: a new religion introduced among a people only requires afterwards the change of the prince."—Francis might have replied that neither Henry VIII, Gustavus Vasa, nor any of the

such was the opinion of Francis the First, and if it is to be regarded as just, may not the French re-

Saxon princes had been dethroned after having embraced the Reformation. Author.

The difference in the destiny of France occasioned by this single circumstance ought deeply to arrest the attention of the contemplative statesman. Had Francis First embraced the Reformation, his descendents, instead of wandering as fugitives about Europe, would in all probability at this hour have inherited a free and flourishing kingdom in peace and security. How wonderfully short-sighted the policy of Francis! that very event which he wanted to avert by confirming popery he brought about; and that state of things, the continuance of which he wished to ensure by removing Protestantism, Protestantism would have most probably preserved. The vast wealth of the clergy would have been reduced to moderation, most probably to the slender salaries of parish ministers, as the Protestants of France were all Presbyterians; the great influence of the clergy, by which the king was so powerfully supported in establishing despotism, would have been removed, and the new spirit of liberty infused into the people would have rendered important reforms unavoidable; the lower orders would have been emancipated from their dependence upon the great lords; trade and manufactures, which made such progress among the Hugonots, would not have been extinguished by the revocation of the edict of Nantz, but would have advanced to the greatest height. France was in circumstances fully as favourable for all the happy products of freedom at the time of the Reformation as England; and the same career of prosperity and glory would in all probability have awaited her. A mixed and limited monarchy would have been established; the people would have been prosperous and contented; and all the horrible effects of the revolution, and all the alarm which it

volution be considered as a remote but necessary consequence of the Reformation, of which the republic of the United Provinces was an immediate consequence, and that of America one less remote than our times? We find among some of the extravagant sects produced by the Reformation, as that of the Anabaptists, the same pre-

has created in Europe would have been prevented. It is difficult to say how universally the Reformation itself would have been extended by the influence of that country, situated in the heart of Europe, and so much an object of admiration to all its neighbours. In all probability Spain, notwithstanding her bigotry, would not have resisted the effects of contiguity, aided by the prospect of the prosperity which France would then have exhibited. It is indeed difficult to say to what extent Francis, aided by that animation of his subjects, and that union with their prince which was the consequence of the Reformation in all the Protestant countries, would have been able to limit and circumscribe the power of Charles V. It is rather certain that the ascendancy which, by the great weight of Francis, the association of Protestant princes would have gained, would have given so much confidence and strength to the principles of disaffection which were every where spread against the Romish church that a general Reformation would have been the necessary consequence. It may be safely asserted that the descendents of Francis are now eating the bitter fruits of his illiberal policy. How much resembling the spirit of that policy are many things which we have seen and heard within a few late years! It is however fast hastening away; and it is to be hoped that the re-action which it meets with from the necessary course of things will not produce any more of those violent explosions, the evil effects of which are so long felt.

tensions to absolute equality and liberty as those which gave occasion to all the excesses of the jacobins in France. Agrarian laws, the plunder of the rich, formed part of their doctrine also; and on their standards might have been already written, *war with castles, and peace with cottages*. These enthusiasts created at first no little trouble to the princes of Germany. Luther experienced the most violent grief at their excesses; and often reproached himself with having, though innocently, given occasion to them. They were soon however repressed. England did not so hastily deliver herself from the disorders occasioned by her Presbyterians and Independents, as will be seen in the article relating to that country, to which we shall shortly proceed.

It is material further to add that the Protestant princes and states all gained more or less by the persons and industry of a multitude of proscribed Protestants, who emigrated from the Catholic countries in which they were persecuted, as happened particularly to those of France on the revocation of the edict of Nantz; while the Catholics, who were tranquil and tolerated under the dominion of the Protestants, never thought of quitting and impoverishing their country.

We may also remark that agriculture and industry in Protestant countries were greatly aided by the suppression of a multitude of festival days,

lost to business in Catholic countries; negative quantities truly in the sum of national labour and riches.

GERMANY.

Before the Reformation the empire of Germany was an irregular collection of states, which accident, convenience, events had united into an ill formed confederacy; and the constitution of which was a real chaos. The power of all these different states, without direction, without unity, was insignificant in their confederate capacity, and incapable of a foreign application. The *golden bull*, that strange monument of the fourteenth century, fixed, it is true, a few relations of the head with the members; but nothing could be more indistinct than the public law of all those states; independent, though at the same time united. The personal character and power of the emperor were the sole motives which in general determined the degree of deference which the other princes paid him. During the long reign of the indolent Frederic III, known by the title of *pacific*, who slept on the imperial throne from 1440 to 1492, that throne lost almost all its consideration. Maximilian the First found great difficulty in restoring it, notwithstanding all the efforts he employed. Among all the electors and other leading princes, none was of importance

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enough to command the respect of foreign powers. All lived in their own countries rather as private gentlemen and masters of families than as sovereigns, and were only the richest proprietors in their provinces. There was no probability that in the bosom of this general lethargy any of the reigning families should contrive to raise itself above the others. Each prince divided his states among his sons, often sufficiently numerous; which weakened the dynasty instead of strengthening it. No territory was indivisible, but such as had particularly annexed to it the electoral dignity. From these partitions and other causes, wars between one prince and other, disorders and troubles arose to which it was difficult to put an end. Younger brothers whose portions had been small, and private gentlemen, engaged in depredations which at present would meet with the severest punishment, but to which at that time was annexed some sort of chivalrous honour. Nothing could be weaker than a body so constituted. A diet, it is true, was assembled to deliberate on the common affairs; but Frederic had never appeared in it during more than half a century in which he had reigned; and Maximilian his son appeared there only to ask money, of which he was always in want for the execution of his numerous projects. Had not the Turks, at that time the violent enemies of all christendom, come;

during the first years of the reign of Frederic, to plant the crescent in Europe, and menaced incessantly the empire with invasion, it is not easy to see how the feeble tie which bound that body together could have remained unbroken. The terror inspired by Mahomet II and his ferocious soldiers was the first common interest which led the princes of Germany to unite themselves to one another, and around the imperial throne.

It was in these circumstances that Charles, already master of the flourishing kingdom of Spain, of a part of Italy, of the states of the house of Burgundy and of the house of Austria, obtained possession of that throne. The extraordinary power of the new emperor soon excited uneasiness in most of the states respecting their future existence, menaced by the ambition of their young sovereign. The Reformation held out to them a rallying point, new powers, and the means of forming a respectable opposition. They embraced it as much from those political motives as from religious persuasion. Charles V rejected it, and on his part regarded it merely as a happy circumstance which, affording him a pretext for attacking by force of arms the new opposition, presented the finest opportunity for realizing his designs in a plausible manner and with the greatest ease. This is the leading idea which forms as it were the plan of the whole history of his reign.

The Protestant princes and states solemnly bound themselves together in a sort of particular diet at Smalcalde, under the direction of the two most considerable princes of the league; *Frederic the wise*, elector of Saxony, the protector of Luther, and his first disciple among sovereigns; and *Philip*, landgrave of Hesse, entitled the *generous*.*

* It is not, perhaps, necessary to inquire very scrupulously, with regard to the actions of public men, in how great a degree their conduct was influenced by reason, and in how great a degree by feeling, when their feelings and reason were both carried in the same direction. That it was altogether the interest of those confederate princes to combine together against the emperor, is abundantly evident; and that their eyes could not long have remained shut to that interest, though they had not ceased to be Catholics. It is not to be doubted, however, that their ceasing to be Catholics led them sooner to perceive that interest, and led them to a clearer and stronger view of it. It is not doubtful too that the ardour and union of their people in one interesting cause afforded them means of action infinitely beyond what they could, in any other circumstances, have commanded. But all these motives would probably have failed in giving them courage to face the mighty danger, and to brave the gigantic power of their master, if their own minds had not been inflamed, and if their imaginations, as well as those of their people, had not been touched with that enthusiasm which, whether in matters religious or political, disregards all difficulties, and springs directly from the wish to the accomplishment. It is true therefore in one sense that political motives induced the princes of Germany to support the Reformation. Because without those political motives the religious ones would probably have been too feeble to induce them

Long did that league stand in the presence of Charles in a proud and independent attitude. What prevented the rupture from being sooner made were the continual attacks as well of the French, the Venetians, the Milanese, and the Popes, as of the Turks under Soliman II, which gave the emperor sufficient employment in the south and east. The Protestants during that interval exacted of the emperor frequent concessions; and Charles, who had need of them, was obliged to submit to the greater number.

At last the moment arrived, (in 1546, the very year of Luther's death, who had exerted continual efforts to avert any bloody catastrophe,) when Charles, disengaged from all his other enemies, might commence his conflict with the Protestant party. At first it was favourable to him. The power and military talents of the confederate princes did not correspond to their courage; and the brilliant victory of Muhlberg, in the second year of the war, in which the chief of them were taken prisoners, seemed to bring it to a period. But scarcely had Charles begun to enjoy his triumph, when *Maurice* of Saxony, by a blow

to risk so much. But it is equally true that religious motives were the cause of their resolution; as the political ones without these would also have been too feeble. It is to the happy combination of both that we owe the blessings of the Reformation.

equally impossible to be foreseen and prevented, snatched from him the laurels which he had just gathered, as well as almost all the rest which he had collected in his laborious career. It was by a narrow escape that the Saxon prince missed obtaining possession even of the person of the emperor in Inspruck. This monarch himself by the peace signed at Passau in 1552, confirmed more than ever the existence of the evangelical body, and saw the fine projects he had formed of bringing Germany under his controul vanish. Henry II, king of France, who had assisted the Protestants in that war, assumed publicly the title of *protector of the Germanic liberty and avenger of the captive princes*. By aid of those civil disturbances in the empire he took possession also of the bishoprics of Metz, Toul, and Verdun. Charles lost not an instant to assist and recover those cities. He failed before Metz; and this was one of the last reverses of fortune which he experienced.

Germany was now very different from what Germany was before that crisis. Its ancient indolence was changed into an active vigilance. The confederated princes had made trial of their strength, and acquired confidence in themselves. The general union of the empire still subsisted; but it was composed of two opposite parties, jealous of one another, both enjoying a constitu-

tional existence, watching one another, and always on the point of carrying their animosities to extremity. This open enmity, this reciprocal irritation became a new principle of life to the whole body, and called forth all its powers. In spite of the peace (too speedy to be thoroughly secure) the empire exhibited a picture of the ocean, the waves of which are still terrible after a tempest. The universal agitation foreboded a succeeding storm; and undoubtedly it would be an historical phenomenon almost inexplicable that till 1618 that storm was retarded, if the personal character of three emperors, who succeeded Charles V, did not assist us in discovering the causes.

At last Ferdinand II, on ascending the imperial throne found already kindled that destructive war which lasted during the whole of his reign, and the greater part of that of his successor. Austria availed herself of her open rupture with the Protestant party, of her frequent successes, and the presence of her armies to annihilate the arch-duchy, Silesia, Moravia, the privileges antecedently accorded to the numerous Protestants who more than once had given uneasiness to their jealous sovereigns, and the privileges which belonged to the states, and mitigated the rigour of the constitution. She accomplished the same object in Bohemia and Hungary, where she not only destroyed all religious liberty, but

usurped as an hereditary possession the crown, elective till that epoch. It is to the Reformation that the Austrian monarchs are indebted for the final establishment of their real powers; for the hope which they were obliged to abandon of ruling over other states abroad was certainly not worth the real advantage of being absolute and unlimited masters in their own dominions, and of acquiring in perpetual patrimony two kingdoms to such a degree inexhaustible in resources and natural riches. The fate of Bohemia was decided in 1620, after the bloody battle of Prague. That of Hungary indeed was not finally determined till sixty years after; but was no less an immediate consequence of the religious war, and of the oppression of the Protestant party in that country.* After

* Whether the establishment of Austrian despotism would or would not have been effected by other means, certain it is that immediate occasion was given to it by the Reformation. And this is a remarkable instance of that mixture of evil with good which commonly attends the noblest of human transactions. We are not masters of consequences and events. And if we were to impose it upon ourselves as a law to abstain from accomplishing a great good, because it might be attended with some evil, we must cease altogether to think of benefiting mankind. The general timidity of men preserves them steadily enough from risking too much. This is a very powerful agent. They seldom attempt the accomplishment of a great good, where evils of any magnitude are apparent, except the motive be very urgent, and they feel themselves stimulated by the pre-

the treaty of Westphalia the Austrian power had no other internal principle of weakness than the detached situation of the possessions in Swabia, Belgium, and Italy, which thence were rendered difficult to defend; an inconvenience severely felt in the subsequent wars. The last war between that country and France stripped her of these fine but burthensome domains. She has obtained

sence of worse evils than any they have to apprehend. This was the case with regard to the Reformation. The oppression of the church, and the impending ruin of their liberties by the emperor, were greater evils to the German princes and people than the conflict they had to sustain in opposing the two despots. The inhabitants however of the emperor's own dominions suffered by this effort toward liberty. Occasion was taken of it, as always is of every effort toward liberty which is not successful, to fasten the chains of a double slavery more strongly upon them. At the time of the Reformation his dominions were probably the freest in Europe. The people retained in their own hands exclusively the right of taxation, that right which became the parent of British liberty; and Charles obtained no supplies but by the consent of the cortes or states of his dominions; which always too supplied him very scantily. But great powers were entrusted into his hands for the suppression of the Reformation. He claimed and solicited them for this object, which he represented as most sacred and important. The people foolishly consented to them, not reflecting on the consequences. And by these powers were their liberties destroyed. The efforts of the emperor against the great revolution were vain; but they were too successful against his own people; and at this moment the states over which he ruled groan under the heaviest and most destructive despotism.

others in Germany and Poland much more suitable to her real interests. Austria can no longer form designs against the liberty of Europe, because rivals too powerful have risen up and confine her on all sides; but she will always hold an honourable rank among the principal powers if she makes a wise use of the lessons afforded her by the Reformation, respecting her want of power abroad, and her ample possession of it at home.

During that civil discord so long and cruel among the nations of Germany, the ancient bond which existed between them was never broken. One part wished the whole to be Catholic, the other wished to continue Protestant; but with this exception, all wished to remain united together, and to their general head. Had the empire been divided into two kingdoms, forming two weak confederacies, they would have become the prey of a powerful neighbour. On the other hand experience has shewn that the existence of an evangelical body, and its definitive organization, has become an institution salutary to the empire in general, and a firm guarantee of its constitution, which both parties have an equal interest in watching over and maintaining. Even now when so many of its members have changed their form and name, the life perhaps which preserves the whole body will only become the more active. However this may be, all was disjointed

and disordered in that vast country before the Reformation, all has become order and connection since that event, and by its means.*

Protestant Germany at first stood by its federative power, and with considerable equality among its principal members. As none of those states, except one, has since risen to such magnitude as to produce a sensible influence upon the political situation of the states of Europe, we shall here pass them over in silence. That a series of religious troubles carried the house of Brunswick to the throne of Great Britain, is indeed an interesting circumstance in several respects; but upon the whole it more concerns a particular family than a state. The king of England, being a member

* That the situation of Germany is more happy in consequence of that degree of independence preserved to it by the efforts of the Protestant princes, than if it had been universally reduced under the dominion of the Austrian emperors, and subject to the despotism established in their own states, is not doubtful. But that its situation is in any considerable degree good is far from being true. The constitution of the empire is still a chaos; and is neither favourable to the happiness of each particular state, nor to the strength of the whole. Its situation is at this moment one great cause of the insecurity and disorder of Europe. A change in that part of the world appears unavoidable. The fabric of the German empire is completely disjointed. And a regeneration of the political order cannot in that quarter be at any great distance. It might easily be prevented from coming by a convulsion; but the means alone capable of preventing it will probably not be employed.

of the empire, has sometimes been able to move that body more easily according to his interests: he may have drawn some regiments from Hanover. But let any one calculate also what England has spent in the defence of that country, and by the attachment of the kings of the house of Brunswick to their German estates; let him consider that species of dependence on Prussia and France, on which that royal crown has always been placed by its amalgamation with the electoral; the state of humiliation to which it has sometimes been reduced by that circumstance; and he will confess that the disadvantages counterbalance at least the advantages. The real power of Great Britain consists in its riches; and its riches proceed from its fleets.* We shall see

* M. Villers does not appear to have studied political economy so well as history, and the balance and oscillations of power between states and parties, with the motives and causes from which those positions and changes proceed. Wherein does the real power of any country consist, but in its riches? For what are riches but the means of maintaining in peace and war a great number of men? and what is the cause of power but this? In what conceivable sense also do the riches of Great Britain proceed from its fleets. Does the nation draw any money from the royal navy? Perhaps the expression denotes that our riches depend upon our foreign commerce, which is sea-born. This is the language of the old, wretched, mercantile system, so completely exposed by Smith, and exploded by all enlightened inquirers into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations. There does not proceed from our foreign com-

hereafter what influence the Reformation had on the first growth of that maritime power. A circumstance of greater effect in modifying the existence of Germany was the establishment of the Prussian monarchy, the foundations of which were laid by the Reformation. At the beginning of the sixteenth century Prussia was still an ecclesiastical country, governed by the grand master of the Teutonic order. *Albert* of Brandenburg, at that time grand master, followed the example set him by more than one ecclesiastical prince. He secularised Prussia in 1525, and converted it into an hereditary duchy for himself and his descendants, as vassals of the kings of Poland. He married, had children, and the last heiress of that branch, named *Anne*, espoused the hereditary prince, afterwards elector of Brandenburg, under the name of *John-Sigismund*. Prussia ceased to be a fief of Poland in 1657, by the treaty of Wehlau, and definitively by that of Oliva, three years after. In 1701 it was erected into a kingdom, and has since risen to the rank of the first powers in Europe. It is very true that in the secularization of the duchy of Prussia it was impossible at the time to suspect the future power of the Prussian monarchs; it is however equally true

merce one hundredth part of the national riches which proceed from domestic commerce.

that without that event we should at this time have reckoned an elector of Brandenburg, but not a king of Prussia, among the sovereigns of Europe.

That power has preserved, during its progress, the character ascribed above to all the Protestant states; a high degree of public spirit, a fervent patriotism, a strong reciprocal attachment between the prince and the people, a spirit of liberty and genuine republicanism, which extends from the throne to the meanest of the people. Add to this that a great part of the ancient possessions of the clergy is still united to the domains of the crown and another employed in institutions useful to the country; and you will understand whence arose that internal force which Prussia has exhibited on several trying occasions, and which so well seconded the genius of her great Frederic during the seven years war. It is not doubtful that the character of Protestant belonging to that prince was greatly favourable to his success. The numbers of those who secretly followed that faith in Silesia, Bohemia, and other Austrian countries, was great. When the tolerating banners of Prussia were displayed, all sects were necessarily more friendly to them than to the Catholic colours of persecuting Austria.

Since Prussia, by a concurrence of many other causes, foreign to the design of this work, has

attained the rank of a power of the first order, her sovereigns have supplied the place of the Electors of Saxony in the important station of heads of the Protestant party in Germany. They are vested in Europe with a double trust, that of counterbalancing Austria within the empire, and that of contributing powerfully without to the maintenance of the balance in the general system of Europe.*

* It is necessary to state here again that the representation given of Prussia is by far too favourable. Prussia has undoubtedly risen to a great preponderance over the petty princes of the empire, and stands therefore at the head of the party which opposes the power of Austria. It has thus a confederate importance in the empire of great magnitude. Its central position too, amid the great powers of Europe, gives it considerable weight in adjusting the general balance. But its intrinsic strength, after all, is trifling. It has neither frontiers, nor center. It has no unity, nor connection. It is made up of a number of provinces, scattered at great distances from one another, differing in laws, customs, habits, temper, and manners, nay, in a great measure, even in language. The subjects of the king of Prussia have no country, and by consequence no patriotism. Industry has hardly made any advances among them, and cannot; because, whatever M. Villers may say, they are subject to an odious tyranny. The very manner in which they are held in requisition for supplying the army constitutes actual tyranny, if every thing else were wanting. The celebrity of Prussia has been altogether owing to the personal character of its sovereigns. It wants some important acquisitions, as those of Hanover and the Netherlands, to make it completely a balancing power in Europe. And if at the same

Let us further remark that the treaties of Augsburg and Munster, while they consolidated in the empire the union of the evangelical states, left however a certain priority and preponderance to the Catholics as well in the electoral colleges as in the rest of the common affairs.* No Protestant head has yet been adorned with the imperial crown. Since the interest which religion excited has been replaced by political interest, the evangelical body might with more propriety be denominated the Prussian party, and the rest the Austrian party; though more than one Catholic prince has found it advisable to unite himself with Prussia, and some Protestant states to adhere to Austria. It is credible that the imperial dignity will remain long, and perhaps till its extinction, upon the head of a prince of that latter house.

It is to the period too of the wars of the Reformation, and of the long intervals of peace which followed them, that we may refer the origin of that custom, among some of the German princes, of selling their troops to foreign powers. Raised for the present necessity, warlike, accus-

time, with those acquisitions, it were obliged to establish a free and excellent government over the whole territory, it might be of the utmost benefit in the heart of Europe.

* Were it only by the clause which enacted that if an ecclesiastical prince should change his faith, far from being allowed to secularise his dominions, he should forfeit them. Author.

tomed to the life of a camp, to plunder, and excesses, those troops, in time of peace, became extremely burthensome to their master and to the country. They were very glad to be delivered from them by any one who was willing to pay for them; and rendered those bargains a source of profit. Philip II attacked Holland with German soldiers, and Holland defended herself with Germans. This custom, it is well known, has remained, to the great scandal of human nature.*

DENMARK.

In the time of the celebrated Margaret, called the Semiramis of the north before Catherine the second, Denmark was aggrandised with Norway; and to her hands, besides, the states of Sweden

* This review of the situation of Germany at the time of the Reformation is very valuable, more particularly to Britons, because Robertson's Charles V is chiefly defective in this part. The principal attention in that work seems to have been directed to Spanish affairs. He is known to have studied the Spanish language for the express purpose. With the German language he was unacquainted; and he seems not to have been at all sensible that German affairs were by far the most important in that age. It is very observable to an attentive reader that there is not the same vigilance of inquiry, the same minuteness of information respecting this part of his subject as the Spanish, French and Italian; and his general views, when duly weighed, are found to be not far removed, except in language, from the common and superficial.

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intrusted the sceptre of their country. Her successors endeavoured to raise this election into an hereditary title; and hence the violent wars between the Danish monarchs and the Swedish aristocracy; by which the monarchs lost the throne of Sweden, but happily lost at the same time the temptation of wasting their strength in foreign enterprises. The clergy and great nobility of their own states gave them sufficient employment at home. They embraced the Reformation along with their people in 1527; but it was not completely established in that country till twelve years after by the sage Christiern III. He was obliged to divide the spoils of the clergy with the grandees of his kingdom, and was able to retain only the smaller part. That portion of the revenues of the prelates which was destined for the supply of their tables was all that was adjudged to the crown, and even that was further charged with the maintenance of several public institutions. The royal dignity, besides, remained elective. The warlike reign of the enterprising Christiern IV, and still more the ascendant which the burghers began to acquire, were necessary to reduce the nobles, and to conduct affairs to the situation in which they were found by Frederic III in 1660, when he was enabled to render the crown hereditary, and his power unlimited. The only fundamental law which remained clear

and untouched was that which established Lutheranism as the governing religion of the state.* During the thirty years war the king of Denmark was for a moment the Agamemnon of the Protestant army. This was the first effort toward the south made by that government in the general affairs of Europe.

SWEDEN.

The Reformation found in Sweden also an elective crown, and a powerful aristocracy. But Vasa was a conqueror. He had just raised himself to the throne by a revolution, and delivered his country from the Danish yoke. He was in a condition, therefore, to draw more advantage from the Reformation than had been done by his neighbour Christiern. In 1527 he seized upon the greater part of the possessions of the clergy, and gave up to the nobles only small portions. His wise and vigorous government employed these new resources in strengthening the royal authority; and he procured a constitutional decree establishing the crown hereditary.

This power, framed by nature more weak than any of the great European powers, speedily how-

* M. Spittler, lately Professor of Gottingen, and minister of the duke of Wirtemberg, has written a very good history of that revolution, translated into French, under the eye of the author, by M. d'Artaud, and which will soon be published.

Author.

ever arose by the genius of her kings and their ministers, as well as by the benefits of the Reformation, to a sort of supremacy in Europe. Protestantism was saved by her arms, by which the imperial forces were beaten in almost every rencounter. She had the honour of presiding at Osnaburg in the European congress of Westphalia, as France presided in that of Munster. The other advantages she derived from her victories were trifling. A sum of money was payed her to obtain the removal of her troops from Germany, where they became as burthensome to their friends as they had formerly been to their enemies; and a part of Pomerania only, with some other small districts in the north of the empire, was ceded to her in place of all that she demanded. By this grant the kings of Sweden became members of the Germanic body, as the king of Denmark is by Holstein, and the king of England by Hanover. Since that time Sweden, exhausted as she was, has perpetually declined. Twenty years after the peace of Westphalia, in 1688, this country, notwithstanding the obligations she owed to France her ally, was, through the interest of religion, or perhaps through jealousy, led to combine against that power with England and Holland, during the war of Flanders and Franche-comté. Christina, whose sole merit as a queen, is her having protected learned men, and particu-

larly honoured our great Descartes, contributed powerfully to the decline of Sweden. A queen, weak, and fond of gallantry; a king, despotic, and a conqueror, dissipated the advantages procured to that country by the Reformation. Had Gustavus Adolphus and Oxenstiern obtained always successors worthy of them, the Czars would not probably have built their imperial city on the Newa; they would not have reached the shores of the Baltic; and the face of the north, and consequently that of Europe, would have been different from what it is. But Sweden shone only for an instant; and like those sudden meteors which shoot a momentary light through the long darkness of the night, it quickly disappeared from the political horizon.

SWITZERLAND.

Switzerland had her own Reformer in the person of Zwinglius, a monk as well as Luther, roused like him by the infamy of the indulgence-venders, and appearing nearly at the same time. Republicans and ardent friends of liberty as were the Swiss, they should in appearance have flown to meet a Reformation. Seven cantons, however, remained Catholic; and another thing remarkable is, that the cantons which were most decidedly republican were of that number. This phenomenon is not easy to explain by those who are not

well acquainted with the local circumstances. It has been already observed that the Catholic religion neither is nor can be in all places the same; being modified in different situations by the nature and circumstances of each. The Catholicism of the little cantons of Schwitz, Uri and Underwald, precisely because it was established among those mountaineers, naturally republican, had assumed a form agreeable to their character, and bent itself to their manners. The imagination, besides, of the inhabitants of mountains is lively, and receives a strong impression from external objects. A worship therefore clothed with many forms and ceremonies must naturally please them better than one more simple and severe. Here had lived the founders of Helvetic liberty; and the memory of all the events, and of all the great characters of that epoch, were intimately associated in their fancy with the Catholic worship and its ceremonies. The fields of famous battles, the acts of their ancestors, were on their soil designated, not by obelisks, but by chapels. Who has travelled in Switzerland, and not been to see the chapel of William Tell? A species of idolatry, a national fanaticism, was excited in the little cantons by this mixture of the worship of liberty with that of religion. Such even at this day is their Catholicism. They do not conceive that there is any other. The abuses of the church had

scarcely been felt among them.* The Popes scarcely exacted any tribute of those poor mountaineers; and their priests, being the only persons of any information in their villages and towns, acquired, and have still preserved, a great ascendancy in the deliberations of their assemblies, and in all their affairs. Add to this, that knowledge had made less progress among them than among their rich allies of the plains; and that having already made to these as it were the present of liberty, they were not in a temper to let them prescribe to them a change in their religion. Other local circumstances retained Lucerne, Friburg, and Soleure, in the Catholic faith. Bloody contests, and a religious civil war ensued, which was several times suspended, but prolonged by in-

* Nothing can be more unjust than the accusations that the people are fickle and desirous of change in their public institutions. They are in general wedded to ancient forms far beyond reason and expediency; and till these exhibit themselves by effects of immediate and great mischief will neither seek nor permit their alteration. This is exemplified by those Swiss who, because the Popish superstition, deformed and hostile to improvement as it is, had worn its most beneficent appearance among them, could not consent to its removal. And had the unlimited power of the church been exerted with equal mildness every where, it is highly probable that we should yet have all been under the constraint, and involved in the darkness of her dominion. It thus appears that the excess of tyranny may sometimes become a good; as it provokes to that resistance without which the tyranny could never be broken,

tervals, even to the 18th century, between the members of this modern Achaia. And a remain of derision still exists.

Spain, the Pope, Austria, vigorously supported the Catholic party; France and England supported alternately the Protestant cantons; hence the sympathies and antipathies of the different members of the Helvetic confederacy toward those different powers. Even late events have exhibited an example both of the animosity of the little cantons against the French, the ancient protectors of the reformed cantons, and of the attachment of the Bernese to the same people.

Switzerland, occupied and weakened by her civil dissensions, has lost since the Reformation any influence which previously she possessed in the affairs of Europe. But the Protestant cantons were in the number of those countries which derived most advantage from the revocation of the edict of Nantz. The refugees in multitudes repaired thither with their industry and capital. It is well known to what a degree science and good morals have flourished in these cantons by reason of the durable peace, and that species of inviolability which this respectable confederacy so long enjoyed.

GENEVA.

In this faint sketch, in which I have neglected to assign particular articles even to considerable

states, such, for example, as Bavaria, it will no doubt appear surprising, that I should stop at a single city, containing only a few thousand inhabitants. But this insignificant spot in the physical map of Europe is of great importance in the moral. There it was that the two Frenchmen, Calvin and Theodore Beza, ejected by their own country, established a new and powerful focus of religious reformation. Its first effect was the liberty of Geneva; which banished its Prince-bishop, and afterwards governed itself for nearly three centuries. It found sufficient resources in the energy of its inhabitants, and sufficient power in the benefits of the Reformation to support protracted wars and to defend itself by force of arms against the dukes of Savoy and the kings of Sardinia, its dangerous neighbours, who long strove to subdue it, and acknowledged its independence only about the middle of the last century. The influence of this small democratical state, the offspring of the Reformation, and so eminent for knowledge, patriotism and activity, on some powerful states, particularly on France and England, is incalculable. Geneva was the cradle of the religion professed by Henry IV, and which the ambition of the house of Guise, the craft of a Medicis, the interest and intrigues of Rome, and of Spain, prevented him from carrying to the throne of France. It was at Geneva, where the

exiled, the proscribed Englishmen, chased from their island by the intolerance of the first Mary, the wife of Philip II, drunk deep of the spirit of republicanism and independence. It was from this school proceeded those sects of presbyterians and independents which agitated Great Britain so long, and conducted the unfortunate Charles the First to the scaffold. We find in the works of Doctor Swift a sermon which he preached on the anniversary of the death of this royal martyr, (for so the English afterwards denominated him,) in which he explains, with great exactness, the whole genealogy. But let us withdraw our eyes from this disagreeable scene. What doctrine so sacred and true as not to be abused by fanaticism, both religious and political? Let us rather direct them to those multitudes of Protestants of all denominations who, under the banners of *Pem*, proceeded to lay in the North of America the foundations of a free state, already powerful, and the high destiny of which cannot as yet be ascertained. In fine, from Geneva proceeded a great number of men of genius who, as writers, or in places of power, have had the greatest influence on France, on her moral and political condition; on opinions and knowledge. Voltaire himself, of whom it was so truly said, that his genius was a power in Europe, boasted of having gone to support himself by the vicinity of Geneva;

and from that corner of the world it was, that like a new Calvin, he extended his influence in all directions. Geneva, besides the great men whom she formed, has always been visited by the numerous travellers from all countries who went to see Italy and Switzerland. She always communicated less or more of her own spirit to those who were constituted to receive it; and from all these considerations it may be truly affirmed that this little republic had as great an influence on the destiny and improvement of Europe as several mighty monarchies.

This is a new proof of the immense advantage to human nature of little states, and of the employment which is made by their means of the concentrated power of each district of the globe. This proof is repeated at every step in Germany; where we meet with free cities and principalities of moderate extent, all of which have their principle of life, active; peculiar and independent. Each prides itself on making industry, the sciences and arts, flourish in its little capital. Universities and schools are multiplied; and knowledge becomes more general in the nation. If truth is persecuted by fanaticism in one quarter, it has only to make a step, and it finds a secure asylum on passing the next frontier. In fine, each state in this confederate system regards itself as something in itself; and by that single circumstance becomes

something. Every city, of moderate size, is not struck with a palsy by the idea that it is nothing, that at one or two hundred leagues distance is another greater city which is every thing, a gulph in which its labours are swallowed up, a place where the whole glory of the empire is concentrated in one luminous point, away from which there is no safety, nothing but Helotism, political, moral, and literary, throughout an immense country. Had Athens, had Delphi, Corinth, Lacedemon, Mytilene, Smyrna, not enjoyed this individuality, and had one sovereign city monopolised the whole splendour of Greece, would so many great men, and great virtues, have every where appeared? Had not the arts and muses of Italy every where beheld courts and flourishing republics in their neighbourhood which smiled upon them; had genius not been awakened by immediate celebrity and encouragements at Ferrara, Mantua, Venice, Florence, Guastalla, and Sienna, as at Rome and Naples; had there not been in all Italy but one center, one point, one city, would that country have become in the arts the most classical of modern times?*

* Some advantages are enjoyed by small states undoubtedly. But the question of the superiority of them or great states is not so certainly decided as it appears to be to M. Villers. The insecurity under which they are placed, unless all great states could be removed, is an unfavourable circumstance which

HOLLAND.

Another offspring of the Reformation, of more immediate importance in the affairs of Europe, was the republic of the United Provinces. This new state formed a part of the possessions of the house of Austria, and had remained in the hands of the Spanish branch, that is to say, in those of Philip II, after the death of Charles V. Here reigned the same serious turn of mind, the same free and upright spirit, as in Lower Saxony. The manners were the same; the language was almost the same; and the origin the same. The Low Countries, before their independence, formed a part of the empire, and of the circle of Burgundy. In these the Reformation had made rapid progress. Its mortal enemy, Philip II, wished to extinguish it on a soil over which he reigned; and he opposed, headlong, force to opinion. But opinion is a smooth

overbalances all the good things which otherwise they bring. Very great empires are certainly not friendly to human nature. For the government of them such mighty powers are necessary that they must always be despotal; and before the master of one of them a private individual is as nothing. In moderate states, probably, the happiest combination of circumstances for the human species is found; states in which the public security is sufficiently guaranteed by the public strength, though such a degree of power is not necessarily entrusted to the chief magistrate as to set him above the power and controul of the people.

file which grinds the iron that is rubbed upon it. The inquisition, designed to preserve Holland to the king of Spain and to the Catholic faith, was only productive of a more speedy revolt against both. After fifteen years of vexation, of resistance, and of punishment, the exasperated Batavians declared themselves emancipated from the yoke of Philip.

The idea of forming a republic altogether independent appears not at first to have presented itself to their minds; they only desired to save their privileges and charters. The confederated provinces offered to several neighbouring princes the patronage of their country under the provision of their ancient capitalations. The duke of Alençon, brother of Henry III, quitted that office on account of incapacity and misconduct. Queen Elizabeth refused it, from a policy which looked farther than to the apparent advantage of the day. At last, not knowing to whom they should offer themselves, the Batavians conceived the design of remaining their own masters. Each province formed itself into a republic; and entered into the bonds of a confederacy with the rest. The system produced by this means was complicated and awkward. But the spirit was good; and had its good effects in spite of the defective machine in which it was contained. Great men, animated with this spirit, carried the republic to that height of gran-

deur and prosperity at which we know that it arrived. Having to contend with Spain, at that time the first maritime power in the world, and to oppose its fleets with which it came to the contest, it behoved the new state also to become maritime to be able to cope with its enemy, and to find resources in commerce. The Dutch fleets attained quickly the rank of the first in Europe. The genius of patriotism and of liberty performed on the ocean the same miracles as on the soil of Belgium. It is thus to the Reformation that Holland owes intermediately that source of its power and prosperity. Let us return to what happened within the republic.

Religious enthusiasm had been the principle of the revolution. What wonder, if under a new and free government it continued to operate, produced powerful effects upon the body of the state, and gave birth to a multitude of fanatical and formidable sects! The difference was great here and in the states of Germany, for example, where the prince as well as the people became Protestant, and along with the new religion maintained almost entire the ancient police. Here every one thought himself at liberty to behave as he pleased; and the theologians acted parts of very great importance. This is the reason why in no country the bigotry of Protestantism was carried to such excess as in Holland; and why re-

ligious controversies always there produced political storms and revolutions in the government. Of this the history of the republic presents abundance of examples. It is well known what advantage the Stadtholders derived from the dissensions between the sects of Armenians and Gomarists to advance their authority, and to reduce that of the states. The rage of Maurice, Prince of Orange, even led him to take advantage of his triumph so far as to make fall upon a scaffold the head of the venerable Barneveld, that aged patriot, who had rendered the most eminent services to his country, and who supported the cause of the states. These troubles form, as it were, the ground work of the whole internal history of the republic from the time that its existence was secured. Religious opinions were their original cause; though it is true that, afterwards, those troubles were fomented both by the vices of the constitution itself, and by external causes, the explication of which does not belong to our subject.

ENGLAND.

Among the passions of Henry VIII, king of England, ought to be reckoned his admiration of St. Thomas Aquinas. His veneration for this vigorous champion of orthodoxy ran so high, that when Luther sharply contradicted St. Thomas Henry thought himself obliged to enter the lists,

and to defend his master. He wrote accordingly a treatise, or a *Vindication of the Seven Sacraments*, against Luther, who contended that there were only two. Luther took up his new adversary on a footing of perfect equality, and laughed at him. The royal doctor conceived the most violent hatred against his opponent. The Pope, who despised the book as much perhaps as Luther, comforted the author to the utmost of his power, by giving him the title of *Defender of the Faith*. Six years had not elapsed, when Henry, unfaithful to the Pope, separated himself and his kingdom from the Holy See; retaining however the title of *Defender of the Faith*, which his successors still preserve. This first operation was the beginning of a series of revolutions, and miseries, which have scarcely ceased, even in our days, to ravage the three kingdoms; for the late disorders in Ireland are a consequence of the same event. In no country did the Reformation produce effects so strange and contradictory. The detached situation of Great-Britain contributed to this as much as the gloomy and inflexible character of its inhabitants. The neighbouring nations cannot bring effectual assistance to any party, and the activity of the people cannot be carried and wasted abroad. When a fire breaks out in an edifice, so inaccessible, it must needs be consumed, and the combustion is only extinguished when it has nothing

more to support it. Other causes contributed to those contests so long and violent in the English church; and it is necessary to pay them some attention.

In the first place Henry the Eighth did not intend to become Protestant; he only wanted to marry the beautiful Anne Boleyn. But as, for this purpose, it was necessary to obtain a divorce from his first wife, the sister of Charles the Fifth, the pope, who, in other circumstances, would no doubt have been more complaisant, decided between the two princes, in favour of him who appeared the most to be dreaded, and refused his consent to the divorce. Henry enraged against a pope who dared to oppose him in his amours, declares himself head of the English church, and forbids all communication with Rome, by which in return he is excommunicated. But he hated Luther at least as much as the pope; and under his reign it was no less dangerous to pass for a Protestant than a Catholic. He gave to the church an episcopal constitution, in which, with the exception of the monks, whose wealth he had seized, the ancient hierarchical edifice, was found almost entire and in which he himself played, very literally, and very despotically, the part of the sovereign pontiff. This was doing too much, or too little. The æra of an universal crisis admits not of half measures. The Reformation in Ger-

many had found a great number of partisans in England, and the minds of many were devoted to it. The greater number were dissatisfied at finding their expectation frustrated, and placed but little distinction between Catholics, and Episcopalians. The signal of rebellion against Rome was given: It was easy to see that people would not willingly stop mid-way. This was the first cause of trouble. The decided Protestants as well as the Catholics, became sworn enemies of the Episcopalians, and of the government which supported them.

In the next place, far from a steady adherence to this half Reformation of Henry VIII, the people under the subsequent reigns beheld nothing but retractations, and sudden and violent changes from Protestantism to Popery, and from Popery to Episcopacy. After Edward the Sixth, whose reign was too short, had made a step of approximation toward the Reformation, came the reign of the Catholic and bigotted Mary, the daughter of that princess whom Henry had divorced, educated under her mother in Spain, in abhorrence of Protestantism and Episcopacy. When scarcely seated on the throne she married her kinsman, the sanguinary Philip, afterwards king of Spain. Every thing which had been done by Henry VIII and Edward VI was overturned. Protestants and Episcopalians were all deposed, disqualified, per-

secuted, and massacred inhumanly. Four bishops, among whom was the virtuous patriot Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, were burned alive. All offices of state were given to the most intolerant Catholics. The animosity of the different parties ran to the greatest height. Five years of power, from 1553 to 1558, were sufficient for Mary and her popish theologians to disseminate over unhappy England the venom of civil wars, and of implacable dissensions. Persecuted by her, the Protestants fled in multitudes towards Germany, Switzerland, and especially Geneva, whence they brought back the republican ideas of the Anabaptists and Calvinists, which, mixed with the bitter feelings of banishment, produced an explosion so injurious to their country.

Had Henry the Eighth prudently embraced the Reformation of Luther, and his successors steadily adhered to it, the island would probably have remained as calm as Denmark and Sweden. Elizabeth succeeded Mary, and re-established the Reformation, while she preserved Episcopacy. The new ecclesiastical system was modelled at London, by a national council, in 1563; and called *the act of uniformity*. It was intended by this act to form an union between the different parties. It was too late. The people's hearts were too much ulcerated; and their heads were become too eccentric. The separation of the non-conformists,

the Puritans and Presbyterians, from the episcopal church, became hence the more decided and perfect. To complete the confusion, the Irish remained Catholic. There Philip of Spain, who hated Elizabeth because she had refused his hand, and supported his rebellious subjects in the low countries, employed his intrigues, scattered his gold, and excited rebellion. The same was done by Rome, France, and Mary queen of Scotland, who perished afterwards under the axe of the executioner in the irons of her rival.

The long and inveterate war then furiously lighted up between England and Spain rendered the first of those powers ambitious to tear from her adversary all her advantages, and to rival her in every respect. From the epoch of this hostile emulation the navy of England is dated. Spain, since the discovery of America, reigned on the seas, which she covered with her vessels. Elizabeth constructed fleets, formed sailors, and placed herself in a condition to make head against Philip the Second on that element. This prince, who thought himself king of England, because the pope had given it him, and because Elizabeth, being an heretic and excommunicated, could not lawfully possess the crown, prepared, for the conquest of his kingdom, a fleet, to which the nickname of *invincible* has remained attached, and which was all destroyed by the English and by the

winds. By an event thus glorious did the English navy commence; and it is with justice that the origin of this as well as of the Dutch naval power is attributed to the effects produced by the Reformation, inasmuch as the spoils of the clergy supported both governments in that expensive undertaking.

To the immortal Elizabeth succeeded James the First, king of Scotland, hostile to the Presbyterians who predominated in his dominions, and whom he raised against himself by his attempts to place them on the footing of the episcopal church. His reign is nothing but a tissue of false measures which displeased all parties. He married his son to a Catholic princess of the house of France, after having offended the nation by a project of marriage between the same son and a Spanish princess. His errors paved the way for all the miseries of the reign of Charles the First. When this prince came to the throne all the disposable part of the wealth of the clergy had been wasted under the preceding reigns, and upon favourites and enemies of the throne; had been employed in seducing or controuling the minds of men, or in supporting the new navy, and the wars with Spain. The unfortunate Charles found himself without resources, and constrained perpetually to solicit supplies from the house of commons, which, having become almost entirely Presby-

terian, refused them with insolence, or prescribed to him intolerable conditions in order to obtain them; hence the necessity under which he felt himself of employing illegal methods of all sorts to procure money. Favourable, like his father, to the Catholics, and by consequence more partial to the Episcopalians than the Presbyterians, he endeavoured to accomplish, in Scotland, the work of James the First, by establishing in it episcopacy. By this proceeding he drove the inhabitants of that kingdom into open rebellion, and made war upon his Scottish subjects with an army of English almost equally disaffected to him; leaving behind him at London a parliament not much less the object of his fear than the Scottish convention. From this fermentation, political and religious, arose a powerful sect of Independents who obtained the ascendancy in the house of commons, drove the lords from the upper house, and began by obliging the unfortunate Charles, already at bay, to deliver up to the executioner his faithful minister Strafford. The new parliament declares itself independent of the royal prerogation; deposes and persecutes the Episcopalians; distributes offices civil, military, and ecclesiastical to the greatest zealots, men without constraint and without modesty, and often from the lowest order of the people; privately, at the same time, excites the rebels in Ireland, refuses

the king all the means of reducing them; and when Charles at last, to the consumption of all his remaining resources, collected an army to attack them, the Independents had the art to turn that very army against the unhappy monarch.*

* In this account of the struggles between the king and parliament in England in the reigns of James, and Charles the First, a passage of so much importance in the history of British freedom, Villers has allowed himself to be entirely misled by Hume. To correct this erroneous statement we may introduce a few passages from an author who has with so much knowledge and sagacity illustrated the English history, Mr. Millar, in his "Historical View of the English Government."

"During the whole reign of James," says Millar, "the behaviour of the commons was calm, steady, and judicious, and does great honour to the integrity and abilities of those eminent patriots, by whom the determinations of that assembly were chiefly directed. Their apprehensions concerning the prevalence of popery were perhaps greater than there was any good reason to entertain, but this proceeded from the prejudice of the times; and to judge fairly of the spirit with which, in this particular, the members of parliament were animated, we must make allowance for the age and country in which they lived, and for the occurrences which were still fresh in their memory. Though placed in circumstances that were new and critical, though heated by a contest in which their dearest rights were at stake, and doubtless alarmed by the danger to which, from their perseverance in their duty, they were exposed; they seem to have kept at an equal distance from invading the prerogatives of the crown, and betraying the liberties of the people. They defended the ancient government with vigour; but they acted merely upon the defensive; and it

Abandoned by it he throws himself into the arms of the Scots, by whom he is given up to the

will be difficult to shew that they advanced any one claim which was either illegal or unreasonable. The conduct of James, on the other hand, was an uniform system of tyranny, prosecuted according to the scale of his talents. In particular his levying money without consent of parliament, his dispensing with the laws against popish recusants, and his imprisoning and punishing the members of parliament for declaring their opinions in the house, were manifest and atrocious violations of the constitution.

“ The first fifteen years of the reign of Charles presented neatly the same view of political parties, which had occurred in the reign of his father; the king eagerly demanding supplies; threatening that unless his demands are complied with, he must have recourse to other methods of procuring money; and declaring that, as the existence of parliaments depends entirely upon his will, they must expect, according to their behaviour, either to be continued or laid aside;—Parliament, on the other hand, with inflexible resolution, insisting upon the previous redress of grievances; its members imprisoned, and called to account for their behaviour in that assembly; repeated dissolutions of parliament for its perseverance in refusing to grant the sums demanded; and each dissolution followed by the arbitrary exaction of loans and benevolences, and by such other expedients as the crown could put in practice for procuring money.

“ From the whole behaviour of the king during this period,” says Millar, “ from numberless instances in which he declared his political sentiments; from the countenance and favour which he shewed to the authors of doctrines entirely subversive of civil liberty; from his peremptory demands of supply, accompanied with menaces, in case they should not be complied with; from his repeated dissolutions of parliament, for persist-

English. The feeble party of the royalists keep the field in vain. Cromwell subdues them, reigns

ing to inquire into national grievances; and from his continuing, in consequence of an avowed resolution, for so long a period as that of eleven years, to rule without the aid of any national council, and to levy money, both directly and indirectly, by his own authority; from all these circumstances 'it is manifest, that he considered himself as an absolute monarch, and that, although he made repeated applications to parliament for supplies, he was far from admitting the necessity of such an expedient, but claimed the power of imposing taxes as an inherent right of the crown.

“ It appears at the same time indisputable, that such doctrines and claims were inconsistent with the original constitution, and fundamental laws of the kingdom. By the uniform series of statutes, from the reign of William the Conqueror, and according to the principles and maxims recognised and admitted in all public transactions, the legislative power, and that of imposing taxes, were exclusively vested in parliament. These laws, indeed, had been sometimes violated by particular princes, who had not always been called to account for such violations. But these illegal measures of the crown were neither so numerous, so uniform, nor so long continued, as to make the nation forget that they were usurpations, or lose sight of those important privileges which had been thus invaded. The king was no more understood to have acquired a right to such powers, from his having occasionally exercised them, than individuals become entitled to commit rapine or theft, merely because they have sometimes been guilty of those crimes, and have had the good fortune to escape with impunity.

“ In the history of the world,” continues he, “ we shall perhaps discover few instances of pure and genuine patriotism, equal to that which during the reign of James, and during the

more despotically than any monarch would have dared to do; and as the parliament, which he had

first fifteen years of the reign of Charles, was displayed by those leading members of parliament, who persevered, with no less temper than steadiness in opposing the violent measures of the court. The higher exertions of public spirit are often so contrary to common feelings, and to the ordinary measures of conduct in private life, that we are, in many cases, at a loss whether to condemn or admire them. It may also be remarked, that in the most brilliant examples of heroism, the splendour of the achievement, at the same time that it dazzles the beholder, elevates and supports the mind of the actor, and enables him to despise the difficulties and dangers with which he is surrounded. When Brutus took away the life of Cæsar, he ran counter to those ordinary rules which bind society together; but according to the notions of his own age, he secured the applause and veneration of the worthier part of his countrymen. To perform a great service to our country by means that are altogether unexceptionable, merits a purer approbation; and if the action, while it is equally pregnant with danger, procures less admiration and renown, it affords a more unequivocal and convincing proof of true magnanimity and virtue. When Hampden, by an appeal to the laws of his country, exposed himself to the fury of Charles and his ministry, he violated no friendship, he transgressed no duty public or private; and while he stood forth to defend the cause of liberty, he must have been sensible that his efforts, if ineffectual, would soon be neglected and forgotten; and that, even if successful, they were less calculated to procure the applause of his cotemporaries, than to excite the admiration and esteem of a grateful posterity.

“To the illustrious patriots who remained unshaken during this period, we are indebted in a good measure, for the preservation of that freedom which was banished from most of the

already mutilated, did not conduct itself to his honour, he dissolved and dismissed it. The head

of other constitutions of Europe. They set the example of a constitutional resistance to the encroachments of prerogative; accommodated their mode of defence to the variations in the state of society which the times had produced; and taught the house of commons, by a judicious use of their exclusive right of taxation, to maintain and secure the rights of their constituents."

Of the long parliament too, Millar speaks in the following terms:

"Whoever," says he, "examines with attention the proceedings of this parliament, from their first meeting to the commencement of the civil war, will easily perceive, that their views were somewhat different from those of the four preceding parliaments; and perhaps will find reason to conclude, that they did not continue through the whole of this period invariably the same. It was the object of this parliament to reform such parts of the constitution as were grossly defective; but their plan of Reformation was necessarily varied, and extended according to the pressure of circumstances.

"That the parliament had at this time any intention to overturn the monarchy, and to establish a republican form of government, there is no good reason to suppose. After all the regulations which this parliament introduced, the sovereign still remained in the possession of very ample powers. He still would have enjoyed a voice in the legislature. He would still have exercised the power of collecting and disposing of the public revenue at his discretion. He would still have remained the fountain of honour, would have nominated all the judges during pleasure; and have had the sole privilege of declaring peace and war, with that of levying and commanding all the mercenary forces of the kingdom. In a word his direct authority would

of the king falls upon a scaffold. The implacable and inveterate resentments which this struggle created were restrained by the soldiers of the Protector while he lived, but broke out with violence under the anarchy which succeeded his reign. The most extravagant opinions in politics

have been more absolute than that of the British monarch at present.

“ With respect to the conduct of Charles during this period, we meet with no important variation : The same arbitrary system invariably pursued, and by the same unscrupulous means of dissimulation and duplicity. To those indeed who look no further than the immediate transactions; and who are unable to trace the intentions and motives of the parties, it may seem that the ground of the dispute had been changed, while parliament was labouring to introduce a set of palpable innovations; and the king, who certainly consented to these with reluctance, is represented to us in the light of a secret friend to the old constitution. This is the aspect of the controversy, which those authors who attempt to excuse or justify the monarch, are at great pains to exhibit, and to which they would willingly confine the attention of the reader. They endeavour to conceal, or keep out of view the former measures of the sovereign, by which he had subverted the fundamental laws of the kingdom, and the evidence which had occurred of his obstinate resolution to persist in the same designs. Thus they impute to parliament, the offences in reality committed by the king; and represent as violations of the constitution, the regulations which had become absolutely necessary for its preservation; that is, they consider as a poison, the antidote given to prevent its baneful effects.”

Millar's View, &c. V. III. c. 4.

were blended with the most extravagant in religion. Massacre, revenge, civil war, desolated the face of three kingdoms. As a necessary consequence of the abuse of all religious opinions, of the excess to which they had been carried, they fell into universal discredit. They were replaced by atheism, libertinism, and the contempt of all laws divine and human. In this state of things Charles II mounts the throne, favours Catholicism in secret, Episcopacy ostensibly, marries a Catholic princess who draws a multitude of foreigners of that profession into the kingdom, and makes war upon Protestant Holland, the ancient ally of England.

Upon each of those changes so sudden and frequent, changes which were the principal cause of all the miseries of England, the adherents of the oppressed party took refuge in multitudes beyond the seas; the Protestants, as has been already said, in Germany, Holland, Switzerland and America; the Catholics in France and Italy, where their fanaticism acquired new strength, and where they were followed by the Episcopalians, who in that situation generally became Catholics. There in fact it was that James II became so; who succeeded Charles. His impolitic efforts to re-establish popery in England served only to carry the animosity and confusion to a height. He lost therein his crown, and died in exile. His

sister Mary, a sincere Protestant, and her husband William of Orange, were by the nation called to fill the throne. His wisdom contributed to calm the lengthened storm. The waves yet continued long to murmur; but a solemn act of succession having excluded the Catholic princes from the throne, the Protestant house of Hanover received the sceptre of England, and by its mild and equable sway is extinguishing by degrees the animosity of the ancient parties.

Now that this terrible crisis is passed over, what thence has remained to the nation? That energy which rises from long civil commotions, that gloom which rises from the recollection of them, an ardent love of the liberty for which so many contests were endured, a tendency to meditation, which brings along with it lofty sentiments of religion, and that spirit of toleration toward all opinions, which so naturally succeeds the delirium of fanaticism.

One great error of the English monarchs has been to suppose that the episcopal system was a prop of the throne; a feeble support which in its fall so easily carried along with it that very throne which it was expected to uphold, and the downfall of which it could in no case have retarded. In the times of darkness which preceded Luther, the support of the clergy was of importance to princes. But since that Reformer has appeared,

the church, protected in its external polity by the civil power, ought to limit the range of its activity to the cultivation simply of good morals in the state by the influence of religion.

The Reformation, which to other countries has been the source of so many blessings, has been to unhappy Ireland a most disastrous scourge. Treated as a conquered people, and long at the discretion of England, the Irish obstinately remained Catholics precisely because their oppressors were Protestants. Their chains were on that account rendered the heavier. Their island was filled with rapacious Englishmen, by whom nearly all property was grasped. The despair of these exasperated men at last broke out with fury in 1641. A massacre throughout the island ensued of more than a hundred thousand Protestants. Cromwell afterwards took vengeance on them, and delivered up almost the whole island to his soldiers. William III established there a legal and constitutional tyranny. The Catholics were deprived of political existence, of property, and even of education. It pleased England to make of them a horde of gross and barbarous mendicants. It is like barbarians accordingly that they have taken vengeance on every occasion which has presented itself. Animosities of this nature remain and are transmitted through many generations. During the last war the Irish have suffi-

ciently shewn that several reigns of toleration have not entirely obliterated their deep resentments.*

* This opinion of an enlightened foreigner respecting the policy and consequences of that treatment which Ireland has received from this country ought to excite particular attention. It is not the universal opinion of impartial foreigners only, but of almost every well-informed and candid person in Great-Britain itself. We meet with a very striking passage in a work lately published by an Irish gentleman, a Protestant, a member of the last Irish parliament, a man of steady loyalty, of property, and of great moderation, respecting the code of laws established at the revolution, to which our author here alludes.

“ During about three-fourths of the last century, the Roman Catholics, constituting the great majority of the Irish people, were exposed to all the various mischiefs of a rigorous vindictive government, generally much more prone to abet, or at least to tolerate or connive at, than prompt to restrain the diversified outrages and vexations of subordinate tyrants : a government acting almost uniformly towards the great body of its subjects on the destructive and dangerous principles of irritation, instead of the salutary principles of conciliation. The penal laws which affected the Roman Catholics of Ireland formed as oppressive and as impolitic a code as ever continued twenty years unabrogated in the most miserable nation that ever had existence : “ a code,” to use the words of the late Earl of Clare, “ highly injurious to the landed interest of Ireland ; and inevitably diminishing the value of every man’s estate who voted for it.”* A code whereof several of the sad effects are not as yet so entirely obliterated as to escape the observation of the attentive and dispassionate moralist or politician ; but one which a spirit of patriotism now urges the descendants of the sufferers to forgive

* Speech in the House of Lords, 13th March 1793.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

The very mention of this new state, entirely European, on the soil of America, may call to mind that it was created by the partisans of the reformation and liberty, flying before the oppression and intolerance of parties. If the English emigrants, who went to seek an asylum on the continent of Europe during the disturbances which we have related, carried back with them into their country the seeds of hatred and discord, those who took refuge in the wilds of Pennsylvania obtained for themselves peace and tolera-

and forget, while reflection teaches those of the punishers to lament." Newenham's Inquiry into the Progress, &c. of the Population of Ireland.

The same code Mr. Burke stigmatizes in the following energetic and indignant terms.

"All the penal laws," says he, "of that unparalleled code of oppression were manifestly the effects of national hatred and scorn towards a conquered people, whom the victors delighted to trample upon, and were not at all afraid to provoke." *Letter to Sir H. Langrishe*. In the same letter he says afterwards, "you hated it (the penal code against the Catholics) as I did, for its vicious perfection. For I must do it justice. It was a complete system, full of coherence and consistency; well digested and well composed in all its parts. It was a machine of wise and elaborate contrivance; and as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment, and degradation of a people, and the debasement in them of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man."

tion. They founded there Philadelphia, *the city of brothers*, the finest name undoubtedly ever given to an abode of men. Escaped from the storms on that distant coast, recalled to nature and the primitive destination of the human race, those planters, who carried knowledge and civilization along with them, had leisure to reflect on the origin and laws of civil society, and on the respective duties of governments and people. Having, moreover, to organize a political body entirely new, they were led by necessity to study with primary care the elements of legislation. We have accordingly derived from them fine precepts and still finer examples. It is well known that after having remained for a time under the laws of the mother country, this association of free and energetic men of almost all nations resolved at last to resume the right of governing themselves. In this enterprize they were seconded by Louis XVI, who sent an army to their assistance. The Frenchmen who composed it arrived as friends among those republicans, were admitted into intimacy with them, and saw, for the first time, a spectacle very surprising to them, simplicity of manners, and evangelical peace among men who had taken up arms in defence of their rights. Reflection was generated among them. They compared the principles and the government of their own country with what they observed among

the descendants of *Penn*; and it is well known in what manner those Frenchmen, whom a king had thus made the soldiers of liberty, exhibited themselves such in reality during the first years of the revolution. Among the vast number of remote and immediate causes which contributed to this great event must not be forgotten the American republic, and the Reformation of which it was a direct consequence.

This state, hitherto not powerful, and placed at a distance from Europe, has not yet been directly of great influence in the political system. But who can calculate the influence which it may one day acquire in the colonial and commercial systems, of so much importance to Europe? Who can tell what may happen to both worlds from the seducing example of that independence which the Americans obtained by conquest? What new position would the world acquire, if that example were followed? And without doubt, in the end, it will be so. Thus will two Saxon monks have changed the face of the globe. The dominican *Tetzel* impudently comes to preach indulgences at the gates of Wittemberg; the indignation of the honest and vehement Luther is raised; he attacks indulgences; all Europe is roused; it is thrown into fermentation; and an explosion takes place. A new order of things arises. New commonwealths are founded. Their principles, still

more powerful than their arms, are introduced into every country. Hence great revolutions are produced; and those which will hence be produced hereafter are certainly incalculable.

II. *States of which the governments have not embraced the Reformation.*

SPAIN.

This country, governed by one of the branches of the house of Austria, acted a principal part among the powers which opposed the Reformation. The contest into which her kings entered for the destruction, first of Holland, then of England, and afterwards of both together, was fatal to her. Not only was she by this means exhausted both of men and money; but those rival nations, obliged to protect themselves with arms similar to those employed by their enemy, created navies which in a short time crushed those of Spain. From that time many of the sources of her prosperity were dried up. A rivalry of this kind, once established between Spain and England, necessarily drove Portugal, in the sequel, into the arms of the latter power. The patronage which England by that means acquired yet remains, and affords her great commercial advantages.*

* It is curious how prone all foreigners, more especially Frenchmen, are to form erroneous opinions of the sources of

In the mean time the violent struggle which Spain supported abroad could not be maintained but by violent exactions and vigorous measures employed at home. The people exasperated, and worn out with oppression, prepared to repel it. However ignorant the Spaniards might be, yet the two examples, of the Bohemians who had recovered their religious liberty, and of the Dutch who had recovered their political liberty from the despotic house of Austria, were sufficiently known to them, and sufficiently tempting to inspire the thought of imitation. Hence proceeded the rebellions of Andalusia, Catalonia, Portugal, and

British greatness. The naval and commercial splendour of the country they perceive, and the weight which this gives her among the nations; and they are in general ignorant enough to ascribe it all to extraneous and accidental causes, not to the excellence of her government and the freedom of her people, causes which would have rendered almost any of the other nations of Europe as flourishing as herself. Sometimes they ascribe all her greatness to her navy, without considering that this navy itself must have a cause; sometimes they ascribe it to her colonies, without considering that both Spain and Portugal have colonies far better than her's. Here a great part of it is ascribed to Portugal, though all that we ever gained by Portugal was her trade; and we should have enjoyed as good a trade if no particular connection had ever subsisted between us and Portugal. By debarring ourselves from the commerce of other nations, of France, for example, in those articles for which we dealt with Portugal, we lost more than we gained by the privileges she afforded us.

the states of Italy. Portugal was powerful enough under her new sovereigns to maintain her independence. But what befel the other revolted provinces, Catalonia, in particular, which cost a war of nineteen years to reduce? They lost all their rights and privileges, and received the treatment of conquered countries. The authority of the kings of Spain therefore became really enlarged and confirmed in consequence of that crisis; the numerous armies, which on the termination of the war returned into the country, served to complete the subjection of the nation. In the mean time, it must be observed that those internal disturbances, and the war of Catalonia, compelled Spain to accept of pretty severe terms in order to obtain peace. She became, on that account, more disposed to recognise the republic of the United Provinces. And she was obliged to cede Roussillon, Perpignan, Conflans, with a considerable portion of the Low Countries, to France, and the important island of Jamaica to England.

The reformation in religion however found little or no admission into Spain. Her geographical position, and still more the difference between her language and those of the other nations of Europe, occasioned interruptions. The Inquisition, introduced into the kingdom by Ferdinand, stood more vigilantly than ever upon its guard: and more than one of the acts of cruelty

which it perpetrated were owing to the terror with which it was struck by the noise of the storm which resounded from afar. Nevertheless the effects, which the Reformation in general has produced upon the spirit of the human race, have reached at last the Inquisition itself. At present, when perhaps there are more heretics and infidels in Spain than ever, the pile is more seldom than ever lighted up. Important reforms seem to be preparing in that country: and the kings of French extraction who are placed on the throne commit other errors in the management of the church than those of *Philip II.*

FRANCE.

While the Reformation spoke German it made few converts in France. When the Swiss of Berne, and Calvin taught it to express itself in French, it penetrated into that kingdom on all sides; and presented itself in the form which it had received at Geneva. The nation was too enlightened, and too spirited, not to admit the most rapid progress of the new ideas. From the very steps of the throne to the most obscure hamlets the doctrine of the reformers found numerous partisans; and the Romish communion was unquestionably at the moment of its extinction in France, if the consent of the monarchs had been obtained. All the persons of ordinary mind, who

compose the great bulk and majority of nations, would have been carried over. The Catholics, who might have desired to continue such, would have enjoyed the free exercise of their religion; the country would not have been torn to pieces by a long civil war; there would have been no revocation of an edict of Nantz; the immense power, which France might then have freely put forth, would have enabled her to guide at her pleasure, and with ease, the course of the storms of Germany and England; she would have remained tranquil at home, and abroad would have been the arbitress of Europe.

Francis the first remained a Catholic. Some explanation has been given of the reasons which induced him to this conduct.* With this determination it was necessary to act consistently, and to cut up heresy by the roots. Francis accordingly made such of his subjects as openly embraced the Reformation be burned and massacred without mercy. Out of his own kingdom he supported it, and became the ally of the German princes. This double and incoherent conduct of the French government destroyed the better part of its power,

* At the end of the article of the present chapter intitled; *First Inquiry, Internal Situation of the States.* Author.

In the same place are found in a note some observations on the probable course of events in France, if the Reformation had been established in that country.

and cramped all its movements. The Protestants required to be watched at home. They refused their assistance, or served with great reluctance; and chose rather to desert, to emigrate, to join the ranks of their brethren in Germany, Switzerland, Holland, than to remain exposed to persecution while they fought in company with their oppressors. By this means it became impossible for France to acquire that preponderance which, in another situation of things, would have belonged to her.

That the blood of the martyrs nourishes the church is a hackneyed observation. Henry II showed himself more intolerant than his father, and the Protestants united strongly together for their mutual support, and to prevent their total ruin. They began accordingly to form within the kingdom a formidable opposition, the effects of which were strongly felt during the sanguinary course of three succeeding reigns. The throne ceased to be a tribunal of justice and peace to the people; the king to be a father to his subjects. France tore her own bowels; and the aggression made on the side of authority drove the unhappy victims into the arms of rebellion. The shocking scenes of St. Bartholomew will afford a deplorable and eternal proof of the implacable hatred which guided the behaviour of the court to the Protestants. By this means, however, they were

consolidated into a political party. Princes and great men were at their head. They had armies, allies, and places of strength in the kingdom. The history of the intestine wars which desolated France on that occasion from the year 1562 to 1598, when an end was put to them by the edict of Nantz, is too well known to require even an outline of it to be here presented.

But animosities and commotions of this violence never take place without leaving behind them deep traces in the constitution of the government as well as in the character of the nation. They determine accordingly, for a long time to come, its mode of existence, and its political circumstances. Let us endeavour to point out the principal consequences of the religious troubles in France at the end of the sixteenth century, as well in what relates to government as to the political character of the nation.

The most fortunate event which can happen to a monarch whose authority in his dominions is still limited by the power of the great, or by any political body, is some decided opposition, an open rebellion, which he may attack and subdue with arms in his hands. During that moment of general alarm and submission he finds he may do every thing; no one dares to challenge the infringement either of rights or privileges; and he has the field clear to erect his power into greater indepen-

dence of his people ever after. Many examples are afforded by history of this issue to the revolts and commotions of states. Undoubtedly this is not always the case; and the prince, on the other hand, if he is reduced to accommodation, loses a part of his authority, or is entirely stripped of it. The house of Austria appeared in these two situations at one and the same time by the events of the thirty years war; being obliged to yield to the German princes whom it expected to reduce to the state of vassals; but engrossing all authority in its own dominions, particularly those of Hungary and Bohemia, in which it established an unlimited and hereditary monarchy. The failure, however, of the emperors, in their attempts against the Protestant princes of Germany was contrasted by the success of the kings of France against the Protestant party in that country. A great extension and confirmation of the regal power was the consequence. Had France, at the period when the government became unlimited, and when its arm was the most vigorous, had a Louis XI, or a Philip II of Spain upon the throne, with what despotism would not its annals have been stained! But Providence, at that epoch, placed on it Henry IV, who, having so many injuries to revenge, so many crimes to punish, studied only to throw all resentments into oblivion, and to heal every wound. Then was seen, what

is but too rarely seen in the government of nations, absolute power employed solely in advancing the prosperity of the state and the happiness of each individual. The Catholic religion continued the religion of the state. But the edict of Nantz effaced its intolerance, and smoothed the irritation of the vanquished party, to whom liberty of conscience and a political existence were secured.

These wise regulations satisfied reason and justice. With fanaticism the case was different. It aimed several blows at the life of the saviour of France, and at last accomplished his assassination. After that unfortunate day (the 14th of May 1610) the Protestant party, most reasonably alarmed by the intrigues of the new court, bestirred itself afresh, took up arms, and put itself in a position to support its rights. The impartiality of history cannot blame this conduct; but neither can it blame that of Richelieu in resisting an armed faction, which formed a state within the state, which invited foreigners to enter it, often frustrated the best schemes of the government, and continually threatened its existence. In the situation to which things were brought, it was his duty to attack them. How he proceeded is sufficiently well known, and what increase the royal authority gained from his new victories. It is to the final subjugation of the religious opposition under Louis XIII, that the legal despotism of the

three succeeding reigns is to be ascribed, which were terminated by the horrible catastrophe of the last revolution.

If on the one hand the government had thus succeeded in rendering its power unlimited, there remained in the nation, on the other, a fermentation, a spirit of animosity, of resistance and contradiction, which here and there exhibited itself against the ordinances which issued from the throne. From the edict of Nantz to the times immediately preceding its revocation, when it began to be openly violated, the parliaments had partly been composed of Huguenots. During this period it was natural for that body to shew itself refractory, and to be animated with a certain spirit of republicanism and of opposition to the court. When the huguenots were excluded, this spirit did not depart with them. The parliaments were elated with their influence, and with the trial which they had sometimes made of their power. This is not the sole cause of the subsequent conduct of the Parliaments, but this contributed to it strongly. Among them accordingly it was that the spirit of independence which remained in the nation took refuge, and there the nation found it in 1788, when ruined finances, an effeminate court, the principles of republican liberty propagated by some writers from the books of the English and other Protestants, or imported

from Pennsylvania by the French army, when a thousand circumstances in short gave it the impulse which it then received, and which was rapidly communicated through the nation. It is no secret what influence in the general commotion was produced by the ancient resentments of the huguenot party, which was far from being extinct, and which it had pleased the government too often to exasperate before the reign of Louis XVI.*

Richelieu, in fact, wanted only to subdue the

* Those who are but superficially acquainted with the history of France, who unfortunately are too many in this country, as the currency of so much nonsense with regard to France has sufficiently proved, will no doubt feel a little surprised when they read that the reformation in religion had a direct and powerful influence in bringing about the Revolution. The concatenation of events, however, here pointed out will satisfy all those who are capable of tracing the progress of nations with an enlightened eye. In fact the revocation of the edict of Nantz, which produced effects so violent in the nation, which exhibited such an example of the government, and left such a feeling among the people, is not a very distant event. Till that period Protestantism had been widely spread in the nation; and during the long course of years in which it continued to produce its effects, communicated a great portion of its free and enlightened spirit. This spirit, before the revocation of the edict of Nantz, had taken such root even among the Catholics as that disastrous event itself was not able to extirpate. It lay for near a whole century gaining strength unperceived: till at last it burst forth with irresistible violence; and by means of the folly and knavery with which it was unfortunately endeavoured to be guided, produced so much mischief.

dissenters, not to exterminate them. The peace of Rochelle, in 1629, left to them some privileges and the free exercise of their religion. In a short time, in spite of the word of a king, all those promises were violated. Persecution, both secret and open, increased every day, till the formal revocation of the edict of Nantz, which gave it free course; a lamentable epoch, which reduced to beggary a multitude of families, produced the emigration of the best and most industrious citizens, the descendants of whom are still found in all the Protestant states of Europe, to whose prosperity they have greatly contributed while their loss was proportional to their unjust country. Such of the unfortunate Protestants as remained in France lost all political existence; they were incessantly, mercilessly pursued; and like beasts of the chase, their blood often flowed under the knife of the executioner and soldier. Usage such as this deeply penetrates the heart; and the resentment is propagated from father to son.* The final explosion of popish intolerance was over

* May we not here be allowed to consider the execution of Calas, as one of the events, which, by the celebrity which Voltaire gave to it, and the animated things which he wrote and published on that occasion contributed most powerfully to inflame the minds of the people against the fanaticism of the Catholic priests, and against the authority which supported it.

Author:

at last. The unfortunate Louis XVI, whom a great deal of Catholicism had not been able to render inhuman, was labouring to heal those wounds, when the storm arose of which he was the most illustrious victim. Since religion has risen again, tolerating and friendly to liberty in France, the French dissenters have rebuilt their peaceful temples, and enjoy the right of professing the religion of the Gospel according to their own ideas. By this wise procedure, if it is regularly maintained, the consular government will eradicate for ever in the nation the tares of religion, which produce the most noxious of all the seeds of discord.

ITALY.

We have already spoken of the causes which rendered a Reformation in religion impracticable in Italy.* Let us add the vicinity of the holy see, the interest which all the little powers of Italy felt in avoiding its displeasure, and above all the dread of the imperial arms, which would have overrun in an instant, and without resistance, the first state which should have dared to appear friendly to Luther. Besides, the elegant Italians regarded as in a great measure barbarians those people of the north, among whom the Reformation was carried on. The more enlightened

* In the article of Part 1st, entitled Reformation. Author.

among them rejoiced at it in secret; more than one prince felt satisfaction at seeing the Pope humbled; but no one ventured to expose himself openly. Those whom the Reformation gained repaired to Switzerland, or other countries, where they might enjoy it at their ease, as the two Socinuses, natives of Sienna. Italy, which had already lost so great a part of its commercial importance by the discovery of America and the Cape of Good Hope, completed this misfortune by the loss of that also which the capital of the church brought into it. The first circumstance had deprived it of the commerce of spiceries, and other luxuries of the east; the second deprived it partly of that of indulgences and benefices, and dried up several of the sources of its wealth. The arts of painting and music, attached to that delightful soil, continued to flourish there; but in true civilization, and the high improvement of the mind, the people, in general, remained behind the other nations of Europe. The events which since have agitated Italy, and even changed its appearance, are little, or not at all connected with the Reformation.

POLAND.

The vicinity of Poland to Bohemia and Germany, and the general use made in it of the Latin language, afforded a ready admission into that

country of the Reformation. It made rapid and vigorous progress there during the latter part of the sixteenth century. The weak and negligent police which was maintained in the small cities, and in the flat country, where every great lord usurped a species of sovereignty, made Poland a place of refuge for the most audacious innovators, such as were not tolerated even among the Protestants. They repaired thither in multitudes from Moravia, Silesia, Bohemia, Sweden, Germany, and even Switzerland. The two Socinuses, uncle and nephew, but particularly the last, made a great numbers of proselites, and founded there the sect which goes by their name; a sect very powerful in Poland, of whose system the distinguishing article is the respect paid to **JESUS CHRIST**, whom they honour as an extraordinary character sent by **GOD**, but not as one of the persons of the Godhead. All those different sects, which in Poland neither met with encouragement nor opposition from the central government, could not at first, on account of this relaxing indifference, obtain the same life and importance, or unfold themselves as they did in other places. Their systems remained the opinions of individuals in a nation not much enlightened, and produced in it no salutary fermentation. The business was, at first, all confined, to some disputes between the theologians themselves, and to the title of dissenters

applied in general to all who were not Catholics. But when Charles XII marched to conquer Poland, and had gained some partisans in the country; notwithstanding perhaps the smallest part of them only were Protestants, yet as the king of Sweden was a Lutheran, the suspicions of the Catholics fell upon that sect; animosity was lighted up; and the dissenters became then a political party, obliged to take arms to defend themselves, and to maintain their rights. Dissenter, and partisan of Sweden, became synonymous terms. This event completed the accumulation of discord in a country, the constitution of which exposed it but too much to the animosity of faction. When Charles XII, the promoter of these new divisions, was conquered and reduced, the Catholics became persecutors, and the dissenters were oppressed. The diet of 1717 began even to deprive them of their civil rights. From that time the rancour of the two parties was not to be mollified, even though no Swedish faction was concerned. To crush the dissenters became a principle of government, and of the Catholic party. The Jesuits, more especially, were employed in that work, and acquitted themselves in their employment on a systematic plan, and with a steadiness which do honour to their sagacity. It is to those circumstances that this society owes the advantage of subsisting as yet in that country. Thus at a period

when religious troubles had ceased throughout Europe, they began in unhappy Poland. Her neighbours had long been in the habit of interfering in her domestic affairs. It did not escape the penetrating eye of the great Catharine, when she ascended the throne of Russia, to what advantage her politics might turn the anarchy in which the Poles were involved. In the years 1764 and 1766 she declared herself the Protectress of the dissenters. In 1768 a Russian minister and Russian soldiers gave law to the diet, and arrested several of its principal members. The Catholics, reduced to despair, assembled; in confederacy, at Baar. They invited to their assistance the Turks and the French. The first only obeyed the invitation; to ravage the country wherever they appeared. The confederated Catholics, as barbarous as their foreign allies, exercised unparalleled cruelties on all dissenters, with a fanaticism worthy of the 16th century. At last Russia, having brought Prussia and Austria to enter into her views, proceeded to a first partition of the territory of Poland; this was followed by a second, and soon after, as is well known, by a third, which finally erased that country from the list of European nations. The bloody expedition which produced this last catastrophe recalls the memory of that period when the right of war consisted in the general massacre and extermi-

nation of the vanquished. It properly terminates the history of a community, in which civil war, intestine convulsions, and the madness of political and religious factions presented the ordinary scenes which each generation was condemned to witness.*

RUSSIA.

The lion's share which Russia obtained in the division of Poland is the circumstance by which the political influence of the Reformation, and of the religious disturbances of Europe, has been chiefly felt in that country. Into this account,

* The first misery of Poland arose from the form of her government; a mixed government, composed of monarchy and aristocracy, in which the aristocracy predominated as the monarchy did in the old government of France. The effect of a bad government in general is to convert into poison that which in its own nature is most salutary. It is not generally understood how closely connected with the Reformation are many of those events in Poland which have been most deplored. The short sketch here presented of the latter part of the history of that country opens some general views of great importance which politicians have too little observed. The weakness of the government, and the vicinity to powerful and rapacious states, have made those intestine seeds operate to the destruction of the state which in other situations, as in Ireland, for example, the strength of the defending government, and the distance from neighbours have only permitted to operate to the propagation of misery and disorder, the absolute weakness of that particular island, and the diminution of the power and resources of the whole empire.

however, ought also to be taken certain ideas of administration and government which Peter the first acquired in Holland and England. At the time of the Reformation, Russia, reposing in the bosom of the Grecian church, took no interest in the dissensions which harassed the western. But Peter the first, after he had seen what was passing among the Protestant sovereigns, executed on his return a reform in the Russian church, of which he declared himself the supreme head, and renounced subjection to the patriarchs of Constantinople, as the kings of England had done with regard to Rome. Perhaps too allowance ought to be made for the influence which the Protestant and liberal education of the young princess of *Zerbst*, at the court of Brunswick, had upon the ever memorable reign of Catharine II.* At any rate the tolerating policy of the Czars attracted in several corners of the vast empire of Russia colonies of Protestant dissenters, as well from our southern countries as from Poland, Germany, and Holland. The anabaptists and Moravian brethren have there several establishments. In some provinces certain sects of ascetic christians have

* Catharine II was the daughter of the Prince of Anbált-Zerbst; and educated in all the knowledge which distinguished the most enlightened part of Germany; an advantage by which her own quick and vigorous understanding enabled her fully to benefit.

been propagated, who lead a sort of monkish life, under the title of Theodosians, Philippons, and Raskolnies, and who have all the enthusiasm and fervour of the ancient Cenobites. Several Dutchmen, attracted by this religious toleration, during the first years of the reign of Catharine II, established some flourishing colonies on the banks of the Volga. The robber Pugatschew soon after exterminated them.

SECOND INQUIRY.

EXTERNAL SITUATION OF THE STATES OF EUROPE, IN REGARD TO ONE ANOTHER.—THE BALANCE OF POWER.

Before the fifth century of our æra the greater part of Europe was Roman, and by consequence subject to a certain unity of action. What part of it was not so endeavoured to maintain its independence against the common enemy of all nations; and in this was comprehended nearly the whole political system of the time. When the people of the north and north-east invaded the south and west, a chaos, which lasted for several ages, confounded all Europe. The wandering hordes of new conquerors founded empires of a day's duration, destroyed immediately by new hordes, which forced the others on before them. By degrees however those irregular movements abated, dominions were formed, and groups of people were established within the boundaries of

the ancient divisions of Europe. In Germany, in Italy, Gaul, Iberia, and England a sort of communities was formed, the limits and constitution of which were often changed, and in which there was scarcely any public law but that of the strongest. This new situation was only a step, to arrive at another more advantageous. The heads of those disorderly combinations, in which every feudal lord acted the sovereign, confirmed at last their supreme authority, reduced a number of little princes to the condition of subjects, and thus founded a stable authority, and created monarchies and empires. In the first feeble condition however of this new order of affairs, the confusion and anarchy were still great. The Gothic kings of Spain were engaged in conflict with the Moorish kings from Africa: the kings of France were contending with the kings of England who had invaded a part of their provinces; with the dukes of Britany, Burgundy, Lorraine, and others. Italy was the prey of eternal invasions, of conquests followed by defeats, of the flux and reflux of armies in perpetual succession: Hungary was given up to the Mussulmans and Imperialists: Germany beheld civil wars without object and without end maintained between her different princes. There were in Europe accordingly as many political systems as there were groups of states within the limits of each country; and in

each of those systems ignorance and disorder usually reigned. Momentary or local interests decided every thing. No one thought of any thing but his own danger or his own project. Alliances were ill formed and of short duration. The eye of the statesman seldom reached beyond the boundaries of a single country. Hungary was nothing to England. Sweden was nothing to Spain. The bodies politic were not as yet in that universal contact with one another, which at present forms in Europe a confederacy of states, embracing already almost the whole both of the old and new worlds. Leagues and alliances had, indeed, before this time been formed, of a momentary duration; but they had in general been loose, and without any fixed and durable plan. Let any one, to be convinced of this, read the history of most of those alliances; that, for example, of the absurd and ridiculous league of Cambray, of which our upright Louis XII was the dupe. It must however be granted that the numerous negotiations, and short lived coalitions of that period, discover the perception which began generally to be obtained of the utility of a general combination, of a mutual support, and of principles by which to be directed. The partial systems had nearly found, already, their centers of gravity. That of the general system was now attempted to be ascertained.

It has been already stated that the crusades had in the first instance accustomed the people of the west to a general union, to a sort of European brotherhood. Catholicism always produced this good effect. The pontifical monarchy taught the princes and nations of Europe to regard themselves all as countrymen, being all equally subjects of Rome. This center of unity was, during those ages, a real benefit to mankind. But it derived its strength from opinion, and the condescension of princes. As soon as abuses, too gross, made opinion revolt, after the princes had brought down the power of the popes, and a long schism had presented to doubtful christendom the spectacle of several popes pretending at once to the same power, and of councils which in their turn pretended to a power above all popes, that center of unity lost its attractive power, and the general system which fell from it by degrees appeared in danger of being thrown into the ancient chaos. Meanwhile certain ponderous bodies had been formed, sufficiently powerful to become centers of action in the new state of things. Austria, which then predominated, France, England, and Spain, had acquired a strong internal vigour; their eyes were directed to one another, and nothing was wanting but some decisive event to bring those great bodies in contact, to make them rivals or friends, in a word to combine them in a gene-

ral system. Such an event was the Reformation, and the wars to which it gave occasion.*

* "Those interests," says a writer of great genius, "which before that time had been national, continued so no longer, when the interest of religion bound together the men of different countries, and the subjects of different governments, who formerly had been unknown to one another. The difference of language, of manners, and character had reared a wall of separation between the different people of Europe, which nothing as yet had been able to shake. It was destroyed by the reformation of the church. A sentiment more powerful over the heart of man, than even the love of his country, rendered him capable of perceiving and feeling beyond the limits of that country. The French Calvinist found himself more in contact with the Calvinist in England, Germany, Holland, Geneva, than with the Catholic of his own country. The triumph of the Batavian armies was much more agreeable to him than the triumph of the armies of his own sovereign, which fought for popery. Thus did the men, who antecedently were troops employed by princes in their personal affairs, become by degrees the judges of their own destiny, and their minds were determined by views suggested by their dearest affections. One zealously offers to a partner in the same faith that assistance which would have been given with reluctance to a mere neighbour. The German quits his family to defend, against the enemy of his religion, the Frenchman who has embraced it. The Frenchman abandons a country in which his conscience is not free, and in which he is subject to a thousand hardships, and goes to shed his blood for the safety of Holland. On the banks of the Loire and Seine, Swiss and Gernans were seen fighting with Swiss and Germans for the order of succession to the throne of France. The Dane quits his marshes, and the Swede his snows, and come to break the chains which had been

That interest, new both to princes and people, which the revolution in the church generated in the minds of men, became a general concern throughout christendom, a concern not dependent upon the local circumstances of any particular country, and superior to them all in importance. States, the existence of which was previously of very little consequence with regard to one another, then began to feel a sort of sympathy which prepared the way for their union. France joined with Sweden, England with Holland, and Bavaria with Spain. As the views of men extended, these extended their foresight, and raised a spirit of precaution. When a common interest was once created, this required common measures. The designs of the house of Austria had been clearly discovered; and they had been openly resisted. To find a weight to counterbalance that ambitious power, and prevent it from loading its own scale at its pleasure, became the most important object of Europe in its new confederated situation. Hence the grand idea of a balance among the powers of Europe, an idea which formed the soul

forged for Germany. All learn by these new connections to extend their benevolence beyond the narrow boundaries of their country, and to mix in the great family of human beings. Loosening their attachment to the soil of a particular district of the earth, they become Europeans, they become citizens of the world." Scheller, *Histoire de la guerre de trente ans*. Author.

of the negotiations of Westphalia, and of all the public affairs of Europe since the treaty which was the result of those negotiations.

At that time 'Austria, with the Catholic states, was at one end of the beam; at the other all the powers which had contended for the Reformation; with France also included. The original principle then of the balance of power in Europe was, in fact, nothing but the opposition of the Catholic and Protestant parties. New circumstances quickly appeared which gave the thing a very different aspect. But, in general, it may be regarded as the division of the bodies politic of Europe into two groups, nearly equal in power, and in each of which sometimes one state plays the principal character, and sometimes another.*

Long before the states of Europe became united together in a common system, Italy and Germany had formed partial systems or confederacies, within which the politics of each of those countries endeavoured to maintain a certain balance, and to restrain one party by another. It is possi-

* So very imperfect and confused are the ideas in general entertained of the balance of power, about which, however, so many people are always ready to talk so much, that the statement, simple and obvious as it is, that this balance is formed by the division of the bodies politic of Europe into two groups, nearly equal in strength, appears, in some sort, a discovery.

ble that this confined system was the type after which the idea of the universal balance was formed; but how much more extensive and valuable the views which were derived from this! Politics, which in Italy particularly had hitherto been only a tissue of petty trick, and low craft, of perfidy, cruelty, and meanness, became more elevated and liberal; its principles more evident and better known. The greater number of the powerful governments which by their ministers took part in negotiations communicated light to one another. Among those governments some were animated with probity, and candour. The little Italian spirit was by degrees banished from cabinets. No doubt some degree of craft and guile is still mixed with politics; and deceit is practised here and there: but mutual deceit is not so easy, nor even so necessary. Since the long and universal struggle in which, by the Reformation, all the powers of Europe were engaged, it has been seen that true politics always studied real strength, and that of this the source was found in the prosperity of the state, in commerce, in the worth of the public spirit, and in the veneration of the people for their government. The power and resources of each country are known to all the rest. The science of statistics is daily rendering this knowledge more exact; and in this particular it is now hardly possible for governments to

impose upon one another. Each perceives the necessity of protecting its ally against the enterprises of an enemy; that the weak ought to be defended against the strong, whose power would become too great if allowed to proceed. Exclusive nationality then has ceased to be the ruling principle in European politics. That which rises is observed and depressed; that which threatens to fall is supported. The disproportionate elevation of one power serves only to draw closer the tie which binds together the rest. Even the most inconsiderable states have, in that system, acquired a real importance. To watch other countries, while you wish them well; to unfold the powers of your own by a wise administration; such is in general the new direction which politics have taken since the Reformation.

*First period of the balance of Europe, from
1520 to 1556.*

Charles V and Francis the First are the principal authors of the events of that period. The colossal magnitude of the Austrian power afforded the first occasion to the other states of perceiving the necessity of combining closely together against too powerful a neighbour. From that moment the course which France had to pursue was decided, and her sovereign became, by the nature of things, the most formidable rival of Charles. But

to effect the alliance of the states concerned, and to make this confederacy act with the requisite spirit and energy, was not an easy enterprise. The Reformation was the event by which the means of accomplishing this object were obtained ; and by its assistance the grand opposition was systematized. Henry VIII who might have held in it a high rank, acted with duplicity, was afraid of appearing subordinate to Francis the First, in a word was too much engaged with his mistresses and theology. In compensation Francis introduced the Ottoman power into the new system. France, Turkey, and the Protestant princes of the north, composed the first united mass destined to form a counterpoise to German Austria, Spain, and Burgundy. These two contending masses were drawn, the one around the Protestant party, and the other around the Catholic party in Germany. It was generally felt that the balance in the empire would decide the balance in the rest of Europe, and that if Charles V triumphed over the Protestant princes, his power would become irresistible. Henry II, who succeeded Francis the First, formed a close alliance with Maurice of Saxony. At last in 1556 the formidable Charles disappeared from the stage of events, and shut himself up in a cloister. His German states were separated from Spain and Burgundy, which formed the inherit-

T

ance of his son Philip. A change was experienced in the system of Europe.

Second period, from 1556 to 1603.

Philip II of Spain and Elizabeth of England become now the two most conspicuous personages; the one at the head of the Catholic, and the other at the head of the Protestant party. The peaceable Rodolphus II leaves Austria and the rest of Germany to breathe. The drama is brought upon a new stage. Great Britain is Protestant, and the Low Countries revolt from Philip. Spain, on the one hand, at the head of the Catholic party; England and the United Provinces, on the other, at the head of the Protestant party, occupy the history of that period. The new republic, while yet in its infancy, ascended to the rank of the greatest powers. The spring of oppression, too violently bent, had in her produced the re-action of the spring of liberty. The efforts employed to subdue her tended only to make her unfold more rapidly the whole of her powers. Had not France then languished under feeble princes who appeared to have no energy but in nourishing faction, indulging fanaticism, and prosecuting their Protestant subjects; had she not been reduced to the miserable, contradictory, and difficult task; of protecting the Reformation abroad, while she

destroyed it at home, it cannot be doubted but that she might have easily with a powerful hand assisted the Batavian league, and attached it to herself for ever, to the prejudice of England. That country has since understood well how to derive advantage from that friendship of Holland which France had neglected. It would be superfluous here to relate at length all that we have thus lost during two centuries, and all that our rivals have gained. Every one knows it but too well.*

In the preceding period land forces decided

* This is another instance of the anxiety of Villers to ascribe the power of Great Britain to extraneous and accidental, not to internal and independent causes. It is astonishing that prejudice should have betrayed him into so weak a statement. Had France assisted Holland with her utmost powers she would have only established the independence of Holland a little sooner: Her government absolutely prevented her from reaping those commercial advantages from Holland which England reaped, and which she would have reaped, whatever connection might have subsisted between Holland and France. Besides, whenever the power of France came to be predominant in Europe, and to threaten in its turn the general independence, as in the time of Louis XIV, it was so absolutely necessary for the existence of Holland that she should join the enemies of France, that her alliance with them must have taken place, whatever friendship might formerly have subsisted between her and that country; a friendship too by which France would most probably have only hastened the maturity of the principles of liberty, as she did by her friendship with the united states of America.

the fortune of war; in the present period the geographical position of the combatants required fleets, and the phenomenon of maritime powers meeting in hostile shock on the ocean was beheld for the first time in modern Europe. Since that epoch the superiority of naval has been found of consequence still more decisive than that of military armaments. The merchants of Holland engrossed a great part of the navigation of both worlds; and shewed what a commercial state, by the assistance of its ships alone, is capable of becoming. The religious spirit had given birth to the new republic; but this gave birth to the spirit of commerce, which by degrees deprived the other of its influence, and at last entirely expelled it from politics, to reign in its stead. Thus in the destiny of states are all things connected together and serve to unfold one another.

In the struggle which occupies this whole period the opposition of the two religious parties is more distinct than ever, as the one was altogether Catholic without any mixture, and the other altogether Protestant. As the Catholic party accordingly contended for the royal authority in opposition to rebellious subjects, and as the Protestant party contended in support of those rebellious subjects, and for the establishment of a republic, it thence was formed into an express and fundamental maxim of state, that Catholicism was the

best support of absolute power, while Protestantism was favourable to rebellion and the republican spirit. It would not, even in our days, be possible to drive this maxim out of the heads of many statesmen. It may in one respect be true; but we have already sufficiently shewn in what sense.

The powerful Elizabeth died after Philip: The United Provinces stood by their own strength: And a new epoch was formed in the balance of Europe.

Third Period, from 1603 to 1648.

The preceding period formed only an intermediate act of the long tragedy of German troubles, an act filled up by the scenes of Dutch freedom, and of the civil wars of France. After six years of war, and three of disorder and uncertainty, the league of Smalcalde had extorted from Charles V, fatigued and weakened, the peace of Augsburg, which is dated from 1553, but was not entirely confirmed by the emperor till 1555, a short time before he retired from the throne. In 1618 the war was kindled anew with more intensity than before, and lasted for thirty years together between the emperor and the Protestant princes, till the treaty of Westphalia put an end to it in 1648.

Spain was fallen into a lethargy. England was

agitated by those terrible convulsions, of which we made mention above in the article assigned to that country. Henry IV had ascended the throne of France; but the first years of the reign of that great prince had been spent in rectifying and restoring what had been disordered and destroyed within his kingdom by so many violent proceedings. Had it been the will of Providence to leave him a little longer to the people whose idol he was, from what evils would not his genius have saved Europe! The thirty years war would either have been prevented by him, or would have been much sooner terminated. Already had he restored to France her position and importance. He had placed her in her natural situation, that is, in counterpoise to Austria, the power of which he had resolved to restrain. He had become the protector of the Protestant party in Germany, and resolved to maintain peace and equilibrium in the European republic. Who can say to what extent the will of such a hero, seconded by a minister like Sully, would have operated upon the fate of the world? The scheme of peace is well known, which in the head of the Abbe St. Pierre could be nothing but a dream, but in that of a powerful monarch had at least some means of being carried into execution. Henry was cut off in the midst of his noble career. France again, after his loss, fell into the depths of weakness and anarchy under

a minor king. She formed an alliance with Spain, which had been the cause to her of so many evils, and became the sport of all the petty intrigues of the Italian court of Mary of Medicis. It was not till the year 1624 that the skilful hand of Richelieu was applied with efficacy to save her. During the early part, therefore, of this period, she was of no importance in the general system.

Sweden speedily declined: France arose, and new alterations occurred in the balance of power in Europe. But it belongs not to us to trace them. After this the influence, at least the direct influence, of the Reformation ceased to be felt. The interests of religion no longer formed the prevailing principle of activity in the councils of princes. The ambition of Louis XIV, the Spanish succession, colonies, the establishment of Prussia, the interference of Great Britain in the affairs of the continent, and other events, succeeded to occupy the field. Still, however, the maintenance of the balance continues to be the fundamental principle of the public law of Europe; and when in our own days new events disturb it for a few moments, we behold the leaders of nations exerting themselves to re-establish it, not indeed with the same materials, but at least on the same foundation as before. Individuals change in the political order, as in the rest of nature; but the

laws of the great whole remain constantly the same.

*Recapitulation of the Effects of the Reformation,
in regard to Politics.*

Europe, plunged during several centuries into stupor and apathy, interrupted only by wars, or rather incursions and depredations, without an object useful to the human species, all at once receives new life and activity. A mighty and universal interest agitates the nations; their powers are unfolded; and their minds opened to new political ideas. Preceding revolutions had thrown into action only the arms of men, this set their minds also to work. The people, who till now had been counted only as cattle, passively subject to the caprice of their leaders, begin to act from themselves, and to feel their own importance and utility. Those who embrace the Reformation make a common cause with their sovereigns, and hence arises a close union, a community of interest and action between the prince and his subjects. Both are for ever delivered from the excessive and burthensome power of the clergy, as well as from the struggle, injurious to all Europe, and which lasted so long between the popes and the emperors, for the supreme dominion in that quarter of the globe. The social order is regulated and improved,

The Austrian power is restrained within due limits; that of France is raised and opposes it; the importance of durable alliances begins to be felt; the bodies politic of Europe form a connected system in which one part is balanced by another; a whole regularly organised, of which formerly not even an idea was conceived. States, such as Sweden and Turkey, which scarcely till that time existed with regard to the rest, obtain rank and importance in that system. Others, such as Holland, are at once produced by the mighty shock, and from the beginning acquire preponderance. The foundations are laid of the Prussian monarchy, and of the American republic. In politics a general spirit is formed which embraces all Europe. The art of negociation is improved; becomes more frank and more certain; and the course of affairs more clear and simple. In this state of union and contact, commotions and wars become more general, but they become also of shorter duration, and their rigour is softened by better and more humane laws of nations.

In one part of Europe the church ceases to form a foreign state within the state; whence it is easy to foresee that this change will every where be produced; and that the head of the church will be confined to the mere spiritual supremacy. Finally the Catholic clergy reform their conduct by the example of the Protestants; and they gain

in morals, in knowledge, and esteem, what they lose in power and riches.

At the same time all the governments in Europe increase their internal power; those which are Protestant by the union which they form with the mass of the people, and by the wealth, prerogatives, and jurisdiction of the church, upon which they seize; those which are Catholic by placing themselves on a formidable footing of war, by reducing the protestants in their own dominions, and thus subduing one part of their subjects by the other, the citizens by the soldiers.

Since the discovery of America and the Cape of Good Hope, the commerce of the two worlds had been concentrated in the hands of Spain and Portugal. Those two countries, however, as almost all other countries before the 16th century, had but a throne, and no people. All national activity proceeded from the government. The ignorance of princes directed a commerce, avaricious, as well as ill understood, and the profits of which were absorbed by the luxury of the court, and mismanagement. How long might the true spirit of commerce, might navigation and discovery have yet languished, if two states, rendered active by the Reformation (states in which the whole nation unfolded its powers, employed all its resources, and seconded the operations of government) had not found themselves drawn, and

as it were constrained to seize upon the trident? Without the religious impulse produced by Luther such would not have been the order of events. Holland, a poor portion of the Austrian dominions, would have remained without a navy and without commerce; England would not have had that volcanic power she exerted against Spain, nor would it have been turned in that direction. In place of this the maritime and commercial system in Europe has, by means of those two nations, acquired a magnitude and power proportioned to the vigour which inspired them. Their fleets, and skilful sailors, have traversed every sea, and surrounded the globe itself with their track. Their example has been followed by France, ever emulous of all that is grand and useful. Thus has the fermentation produced in Europe by religious opinions raised up a new order of things more beneficial to human nature, and extended its effects to both divisions of the globe.

CHAPTER SECOND.

On the Progress of Knowledge.

“ABOUT two hundred years ago, a man of genius, for having discovered and collected the incontestible proofs of the motion of the earth, was condemned as an heretic to perpetual imprisonment by the court of inquisition. Now, a complete treatise on the celestial motions is published without restraint. Its illustrious author beholds the sciences honoured in his person by the first dignities of the state.*** How much progress made in so short a time; and how vast a space gone over since the days of Galileo!”

Such were the late expressions of M. Biot, when he announced the third volume of the immortal work of Senator *Laplace*. This natural and just reflection of a distinguished votary of the sciences, who perhaps in penning it never thought of the Reformation of Luther, implies however expressly this certain conclusion; that the ancient system of Romish Catholicism was directly hostile to the progress of knowledge; and that the event which contributed to deliver the human mind from such an adversary ought to be regarded as one of the happiest epochs in the in-

Intellectual improvement of modern times. The contrary system, of liberality, of inquiry, and free criticism, established by the Reformation, became the ægis under which the Galileos of succeeding times, the Keplers, the Newtons, the Leibnitzes, the Hevels, and finally the Laplaces, have been enabled with confidence to disclose their high speculations.

But of this amazing space over which the human mind has travelled in the course of three centuries, how shall we be able to discern the steps which the Reformation alone has caused it to make? How many circumstances have concurred to favour the intellectual progress of that period? The Reformation itself, as we have before remarked, was only a primary effect of the revival of knowledge. That effect, however, became, of course, a cause in its turn, and had an influence on the events which succeeded. But to what extent, and in what manner? Has the Reformation accelerated, or has it retarded the progress of the human mind? Has it been favourable to it; or has it been hurtful? Celebrated writers have with equal ardour supported both opinions. Must we implicitly adopt one of the two? Is it better to pursue a middle course? The author of the present essay proceeds to announce freely his sentiments on the subject, and to adduce the reasons which he thinks support them.

It was impossible that the Reformation, the child of reviving knowledge, should not be favourable to its progress. But this offspring of knowledge was conceived in an age still ignorant, in a world as yet in a state of chaos, where a multitude of opposite principles fermented. Abandoned to all the passions which then prevailed, and receiving often bad external forms by the ignorance or superstition even of those who contributed to its establishment, the Reformation, the original tendency of which was purely good, has become the source of many evils. The good which it ought to have produced was the effect of the spirit which formed its essence: the evils of which it was the occasion depended for the most part on the incidents with which it was accompanied, on the opposition raised to it, and the extraneous motives with which it was associated. We ought here then to consider two things; which can never with propriety be confounded together: the one, the moral impulse primarily given by the Reformation; the other, the convulsion which resulted from it, when with that primary impulse were joined so many others, by which it was modified and perverted. In short we must, in the Reformation, consider both the spirit and the event, the intention and the effect.

SECTION I.

Effects of the moral Impulse communicated by the Reformation.

BY what has been already advanced in several parts of this discourse, concerning the nature of the Reformation; the direction of its moral impulse, and the objects to which it extended, may be easily conjectured. The intention of the reformers was, in the beginning, to emancipate themselves from the despotism and infallibility of the Pope; to depend upon the sacred books alone for the foundation of their faith; and to overturn the scholastic doctrine which had become the soul, as it were, of the Romish theology, and a powerful support of the hierarchy. Hence it follows, that the Reformation, from its very nature, must have affected the liberty of thinking, so precious to man, and the basis of his political liberty; his manner of viewing religion and establishing its proofs, and his manner of interpreting Scripture; and in the third place it must have affected philosophy, and all the ramifications of the tree of knowledge, which proceed from any of those three main branches. Order and perspicuity require that we should treat of each of these articles separately.

In regard to the liberty of thought.

I should consider myself as violating that respect which I owe to my judges, and to the enlightened part of the public, if I allowed myself to run into a long enumeration of the advantages which the human mind has derived from the unlimited power of exercising freely its faculties. Let us only reflect upon the immense apparatus of censures, of prohibitions, and of inquisitors which the Romish church employed to keep all eyes shut, at a time when every new opinion was a heresy, that is, a crime worthy of the direst punishment, and against which all the rigour of the secular arm was required, and we shall shudder at the danger to which the human species was exposed before the sixteenth century. Had not the mind, by the happiest and most extraordinary concurrence of favourable circumstances obtained; in rapid succession, new aids, and fresh fuel to its activity, what would have become of that feeble spark of light, which began to shine, under the system of extinguishment and *obscuration* adopted by the court of Rome? Had not the Greeks of Constantinople emigrated toward the west; had not Copernicus in the heavens, and Columbus on the earth, extended the boundaries of knowledge; and the art of printing and the reformation of religion proceeded from the bosom of laborious Germany; had not the colossal power which bound

the consciences and oppressed the minds of men received so many shocks in rapid succession, for how many ages might not the culture of the human mind, and the improvement of the political condition of man have been retarded! Let us put the question to the southern parts of Germany, to the people of the Two Sicilies, of Spain, and of Ireland. Let any impartial observer, after having fairly ascertained the state of knowledge in those countries, make himself acquainted with the degree in which it exists in Switzerland, in the two Saxonies, in Holland, and England; the contrast cannot escape him. It is not asserted that in the Catholic countries above-named superior men, persons on a level with the most elevated of their age, are not to be found; but they are rare; and only the masses of the people in different countries ought to be compared. True it is that in the close connection in which the different nations of our little Europe live together, it is impossible that the knowledge existing in one country should not in some degree penetrate into the others. The wall of separation cannot be so raised, cannot be so vigilantly guarded, as to prevent individuals in all from communicating with one another. But undoubtedly on the part of the Catholics no precautions have hitherto been neglected to ward off, as a dangerous disease, the liberal ideas of Protestantism from their boundaries. It was at Rome

that the censorship of books was first invented, and the example was religiously followed by the governments devoted to Rome. Leo X, that vaunted protector of the arts, issued, in 1515, severe restrictions against printing and publishing any books translated from the Greek, Hebrew, or Arabic. At the same period that, five years afterwards, he fulminated against the Reformation that famous bull which began; "*Exsurge, Deus, judica causam tuam,*" (Arise, O God, judge thy own cause,) in which Luther and his adherents were attacked with the most terrible anathemas, and in which all men were prohibited indiscriminately from reading any of their books whatsoever, and on what subject soever they might treat; at that very moment, I say, this pontiff did not blush to publish, in the name of JESUS CHRIST, a bull in favour of the profane poems of Ariosto, threatening with excommunication those who should find fault with them, or obstruct their sale. What was to be expected from such a spirit as this, from such an abuse of things, violently converted into things sacred, nay thrust into the place of the very oracles of heaven itself? France, the most enlightened of all the Catholic countries, more enlightened than several Protestant countries, and in which popery never reigned with unlimited sway, in spite of all its efforts to confirm its hold and to introduce the inquisition—France

itself, in which even a species of half reform existed, under the title of Gallican liberties, was not entirely exempted from that system of extinguishment.* In Spain, in Italy, and Austria the prohibitions and censures went much farther; and in those countries still impose many shackles on the liberty of writing and thinking. Several of the governments in the south of Germany renew from time to time those salutary regulations against the reading of books written by *heretics*, or bold speculators. (*les esprits forts.*) The works of Rousseau, of Voltaire, of Helvetius, of Diderot, &c. are kept under lock and key in the public li-

* The history of all the books, juridically condemned, would form a most interesting performance, if it were philosophically written. We should behold many destroyed for having ventured to speak what every good man ought to be proud of having thought. Let us quote a single example out of a thousand. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, the Missionary *Lecomte* published his *New memoirs on the present state of China*; in which he was ingenuous enough to say, "That the Chinese had worshipped the true God for two thousand years; that they were the first nation who had sacrificed to their Creator, and taught a pure morality." At the present day we cannot form a conception of the uproar which this simple narration of an historical fact excited. The Abbe Boileau, the brother of the celebrated satyrist, thundered in the Sorbonne, and denounced the good missionary as a *blasphemer*. The Sorbonne in 1700 condemned the book, and the parliament also had the weakness to make it be torn to pieces and burnt by the hands of the common executioner. Author.

braries; and it is expressly ordered "that they shall not be communicated to any person but those who engage to refute them." These are the words themselves of a very recent edict. A professor of an university of Bavaria was deprived of his employment a few years before the revolution in France for having required that a copy of Bayle's critical dictionary should be placed in the common library. These facts, and an immense number of others, which are repeated every day, characterise the spirit of Catholicism in regard to the propagation of knowledge, and the liberality of instruction. The maxim of the middle ages is yet preserved in those countries in all the vigour in which it is possible to preserve it in the present times; "to retain the minds of men on certain subjects in complete stupidity; to keep them as much as possible empty, that they may be afterwards filled with any thing which is found agreeable, and that superstition may find a convenient reception." Has any pope as yet retracted the bull *In coena Domini*, by which were excommunicated all persons who should read any books composed by heretics? Father Paul, mentioning the first index of prohibited books which was published at Rome in 1559, says among other things: "That under pretext of religion the pope in this consigned to excommunication the authors of works in which only the authority of princes and magistrates was

supported against the usurpation of ecclesiastics.— Besides this, the Romish inquisitors prohibited in the mass all books printed by sixty-two printers which they denounced without any regard to their contents; adding further, a general prohibition to read any book issuing from the press of a printer who but once in his life had printed any thing produced by an heretic. By this means, says the historian, nothing was left to read. Never was a better secret found to benumb and corrupt men by religion." (History of the Council of Trent, B. 6.)

The Reformation broke all those shackles imposed upon the human mind, and overthrew all the barriers erected against the free communication of thought. Within its boundaries nothing remained forbidden except productions offensive to modesty and public morals. By recalling the memory of those shackles and barriers, by considering the long continuance of barbarity which they might still have maintained upon the earth, have we not sufficiently proved how much the Reformation has contributed to the progress and to the diffusion of knowledge? As soon, indeed, as by its means the path was opened, men proceeded boldly and publicly to discuss the best interests of human kind, and to speak like men of things pertaining unto men.*

* If any doubt can be entertained by any person about the effects here ascribed to the Reformation, it must arise from the

The church of Rome said; "*Submit, without examination, to authority.*" The Protestant church

apprehension that other circumstances then existed in the state of society which would have produced the same effects, whether such a Reformation as that of Luther had taken place or not. The Reformation itself no doubt was an effect of such circumstances. And if these produced the Reformation, why may they not be supposed capable of producing the other things, which are only considered as effects of the Reformation? In contemplating the course of human affairs in any given period the circumstances which attract our attention may be divided into two classes. The first are those which constitute the general tendency of things, which determine their course either forward on the one hand, or backward on the other; those circumstances, in short, which mark the direction, and the degree of velocity. The second are those circumstances which every now and then occur, by which this progress is either retarded, or accelerated beyond the regular and stated degree. Thus in the latter years of the Roman republic, the general tendency of things was toward a dissolution of the free government; but this progress was undoubtedly accelerated by the circumstance of the disputes between two such men as Pompey and Cæsar. The tendency again of the monarchical government under the emperors was toward ultimate weakness and subjugation; but this progress was retarded by such emperors as Trajan. The tendency toward freedom in this country was very great in the time of Charles the First, but that tendency was still farther strengthened by such men as Hampden and Pym. In like manner the general tendency of things at the time of the Reformation was toward liberty, both in thought and action, but the Reformation was a circumstance which in a most extraordinary manner accelerated that progress. And the effects which M. Villers ascribes to the Reformation he does not say would

said, "Examine, and submit only to thy own conviction."—The one commanded men to believe blindly, the other taught them, with the apostle,* "to reject the bad, and choose only that which is good."

"Protestantism," says an excellent author, "is the repulsive power with which reason is endowed

never have taken place, except in consequence of the Reformation, but that they were produced much sooner by the Reformation than otherwise there is any reason to suppose they would have been. Not only would the old barriers, almost insurmountable, which the church had raised to oppose knowledge have remained, but new ones would have been raised with the utmost industry, as the danger grew more visible; and had not an immediate victory been gained over the church, by which a great portion of Europe was delivered from her yoke, she would have punished the rebellion by strengthening to the utmost of her power the chains of slavery. So favourable also were many circumstances, in such an event, to the confirmation of her power, that any new attempt to break it might have been removed to a very great distance. Spain is a practical and melancholy proof of this. In what a state of slavery, ignorance, and barbarity does that country yet remain? It was at the time of the Reformation one of the most free and enlightened in Europe. The confirmation of the Catholic religion is possibly the entire cause of its degradation and wretchedness. Whoever reflects upon this single example, as well as upon the state of human nature, in Austria, in Naples, in Portugal, and other countries purely Catholic, will not complain that effects too great have been ascribed by Villers to the Reformation.

* "Quench not the spirit."** But examine all things, and hold fast that which is good." 2 Thess. v. 19, 21. Author.

to remove and throw off whatever would occupy its place."* I will refrain myself from adding anything more, and from falling into vague declamation on this subject. It is sufficient to reflect a single moment on the immense difference between those two principles adopted respectively by the two parties as the basis of moral culture; on the one side *believe!* on the other *examine!* Every thing it is evident must of necessity assume a different aspect under the supreme authority of those two opposite principles. The principle of examination calls forth light, of which it is the friend, as that of blind submission is the promoter of darkness. And who can calculate the immense extent of the influence of a fundamental principle, admitted as the basis of religious, and by consequence of moral instruction, in a nation? The man who is free in the inmost sanctuary of his soul looks freely and boldly around him. He becomes enterprising, active, and disposed for every thing that is great and useful. He who is a slave in his conscience, in the very centre of his being, is, without knowing that he is so, a slave in his whole conduct. He is by birth a slave, from the stupefaction and apathy which unnerve his faculties.

* M. Greiling, in a valuable German work, entitled *Hieropolis*, or the mutual relations of the church and state. Author

In regard to the Study of Religion; ancient Languages, Exegesis, Archeology, History.

Agreeably to the terms of the question proposed by the National Institute, we cannot here consider the study of religion but in so far as the nature of that study has had an immediate influence upon literature and the sciences. We shall not therefore attend to the speculative tenets of the different reformed churches, their mode of religious instruction, which relates to the doctrine termed *catechetical*, or to the doctrine of the sacred orators, called *homiletical*,* &c.*** subjects which at another time, and in other circumstances, might afford matter for a very extensive and interesting work.

When the Romish church reigned alone in the West, the absence of all contradiction produced at the same time that of all examination, and of all study of theological antiquities. The church, as we have already seen, even presented an active opposition to all inquiry respecting the subject. It prevented to the utmost of its power the acquisition of a knowledge of the oriental languages, and the reading of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. The system which it owned

* Those are terms in use chiefly among the German divines. *Catechetical* refers to the abstract principles of christian faith; and *homiletical* is applied more particularly to the practical.

rested upon passages and expressions of that book, which it interpreted according to its own purposes; and upon traditions, passages in the writings of the fathers, decisions of councils, pontifical bulls, decretals, charters, and other historical monuments, real, or supposed. To attack this system with efficacy, and in all its parts, as well as to establish their own on a solid foundation, the Protestant theologians were obliged to employ the profoundest criticism, as well in regard to the original languages in which the sacred books were written, as in regard to the different branches of sacred and ecclesiastical history. Particularly it behoved them to shew clearly that such or such a passage was either mutilated or misinterpreted; that such or such an expression had, in the age in which it was written, a very different meaning from that now ascribed to it; and so in other things. From these causes, oriental knowledge, the study of sacred antiquities, (which are intimately connected with the profane antiquities of the East,) and that of the languages which are the necessary key to this study, became indispensable. It was necessary to arrive at an exact knowledge of the places, the manners, the events, the ideas, the whole intellectual affairs, and the political and private condition of the different nations during the ages in which such and such a prophet or evangelist existed. We have already

seen that the great leaders in the Reformation were precisely men devoted to this species of study, which is peculiarly suited to the assiduity and cool temperament of the north. What occasion have I to call here to the recollection of my judges the immense services rendered by the Protestants of different denominations, from Luther, Melancthon, Camerarius, Zwinglius, Calvin, the Buxtorfs, &c, *** to Michaelis, Eickhorn, Schultens, Lowth, Kennicott, and others, to literature and oriental antiquities? The study of the Greek language, so important on account of the New Testament; the Fathers, and the Septuagint version, was prosecuted at least with equal ardour. The knowledge of the requisite productions of antiquity in that language gave to it new attractions. Shall I name here the celebrated Grecian scholars whom Protestant Europe has produced? Shall I display the catalogue of their productions? I should require for that purpose a space, containing titles merely, larger than that of this whole dissertation. Who, that has even stept upon classical ground, but is acquainted with the names of Ernesti, Heyne, Heeren, Schutz, Wolf, Hemsterhusius, Bentley, Voss, Spanheim? Who knows not that in Protestant countries the knowledge of the Greek language is more common perhaps than that of the Latin in the greater part of Catholic countries? In England, in Holland, in Germany,

every man who has received a good education is as well acquainted with the language of Homer as with that of Virgil.* With regard to churchmen that knowledge is indispensable; and it is not uncommon to find them conversant with the language and antiquities of the East. Thus was the impulse given by the necessity in which at first the Protestants found themselves of acting offensively against the Romish church. They were the aggressors; and their existence depended on their combating victoriously the Catholic theologians. Thus were the attention and efforts of men directed towards historical criticism and philology. Public education was modeled accordingly; and that study came into esteem and celebrity in each country in proportion to the splendour of the progress made by those who cultivated it.†

* No doubt the Greek language is studied with considerable care in those countries. But it is going rather too far to say it is studied with the same care as the Latin. Many persons, complete Greek scholars, are to be found in them; and many more who have a slight acquaintance with the language. But there are ten persons in them all who have a tolerable knowledge of Latin, and know little or nothing about Greek.

† The great attention which, in Protestant countries, is paid to the study of the ancient languages, is undoubtedly one of the causes of the facility with which people there learn also the modern and living languages. A Protestant, of the cultivated class, understands in general two or three European languages, besides his own. Author.

In the mean time it was impossible that the study of the languages, and of sacred and ecclesiastical antiquities, should be confined to the Protestants. It was necessary for the Catholics to take measures for their own defence, and to prove against their learned adversaries, that the passages and expressions accused by them of being falsely interpreted, were on the contrary justly and truly interpreted. Besides when once the impulse was given in the European republic of letters, no one could remain behind, and submit to the shame of appearing less instructed than the opposite party.* A great number of Catholics, as well as Protestants, distinguished themselves in criticism and philology. But at the same time it must be acknowledged that this study was never so much encouraged or so universal among the nations attached to Rome, as among those which separated from it. In the one place men gave themselves up to those sciences with the ardour and vehemence of enthusiasm; they revered them as the protectors of the public weal, as the sources

* Even the Jews were awaked by that general activity; and produced some grammars and lexicons for the study of the Hebrew. They have continued in general more instructed and enlightened in Protestant countries than elsewhere. It was in Holland that Spinoza lived, as at Berlin Moses Mendelsohn, where at present some men of letters and philosophers of the first rank are found among the Jews. Author.

of religious and political independence. In the other they were only handled as dangerous weapons from which the first blow had been received; they were cultivated only from compulsion; and by the necessity of combating on equal terms. Thus the islanders of Great Britain are naturally sailors; which does not prevent any inhabitant of any inland province on the continent from becoming a very great seaman.

In this manner it was that Protestantism, by its new method of studying religion, of viewing and establishing its proofs, fomented in Europe, and particularly within its own boundaries, a more profound study of antiquity, sacred, ecclesiastical, and profane. Even in our own days we behold sufficient proofs of this in the erudition of the learned men of the north, who, though more removed than the other Europeans from the countries in which renowned antiquity flourished, appear nevertheless to secure the sovereignty of it by their learned excursions. The Italians walk over Herculaneum, and dig up its wonders; they multiply museums and collections. It is for Winkelmann they amass those materials. By their assistance he discovers the secret of the art, he writes the annals of it, and becomes its legislator.

From this profound study by the Protestant divines of Oriental and Grecian archeology, applied to the interpretation of the sacred books, the

science called *exegesis*,* or the critical examination of the text of scripture, which forms an important branch of their studies, derived a perfection and richness, which before it was far from possessing. This study consists of several parts. That which is directed particularly to the languages, to antiquities, to the knowledge of times, places, and authors, is called *hermeneutical*. The English, in a peculiar manner; the Swiss, the Dutch, and Germans, have prosecuted this science to a great extent. There it is we behold the different fragments, books, poems or treatises which compose the Bible, (considered as works written in a certain age and nation,) interpreted, commented upon, and restored to their true meaning. There the Pentateuch is explained with the same care and the same profundity, as are, in profane archeology, the poems of Hesiod or Homer. The commentaries written on the book of Job, on those of Isaiah and Jeremiah, on the Psalms, on the Song of Songs, &c. throw entirely a new light on those precious remains of eastern antiquity, on their authors, and on the spirit of the age in which

* This is another theological term employed by the divines in Germany, and but little known to the people of this country. The acceptation in which it is received is sufficiently explained by the context. *Hermeneutical*, which immediately follows, is another of the same kind, and its meaning is here equally well defined.

they were written. The mythologies of the nation, and of those in its neighbourhood, are illustrated and explained. The hermeneutical inquiries into the books of the New Testament are not less important. The Gospels, and the Acts and Epistles of the Apostles, even the Apocalypse, committed to criticism, as pieces of history, give occasion to researches and dissertations, which cannot be read without the highest interest. By following, in this manner, the sacred historians and bards* through Egyptian, Arabian, Syrian,

* There is something in the manner in which the sacred books are here talked of which is offensive. They are introduced as mere scraps of the literature of distant ages and countries. No doubt the meaning of those books is to be sought out by the very same means exactly as the meaning of any portion of the literary remains of antiquity; and these means are here very justly described by Villers. But we know that those books were not originally produced, nor have they been preserved like ordinary books, or for ordinary purposes. They compose the extraordinary code of laws communicated by a benevolent divinity to man, which, though given at different times, and in various forms constitute a perfect whole, the value of which M. Villers does not call in question. Whether he thought it proper to talk of the sacred books in a literary point of view merely, as he was confined to speak of the Reformation in regard solely to its literary and political effects, I know not. I am unwilling to ascribe infidelity to any man who does not give certain indications of his being an unbeliever. But I could not allow expressions concerning the Bible, which appeared to be not sufficiently respectful, to pass without notice.

Chaldean, Samaritan, Persian, Grecian, and Roman antiquity; by analysing their language, their manners, their spirit, and the mental improvement and ideas of their cotemporaries, we find cultivated a large space in the field of antiquity, and light thrown upon the archives of the human race.*

All the Protestant universities have chairs in which all the branches of exegesis, and the other sciences connected with it are taught generally with distinction. A course of lectures, intended, for example, to interpret the *Proverbs*, or the *Epistle to the Galatians*, proves frequently an accomplished exposition of the political, literary, and religious history of the period in which those writings were produced; a performance in which we are often obliged to admire the erudition, the criticism, and the philosophy, united in its com-

* See upon this subject a discourse delivered at the opening of the Protestant academy of Strasburg, on the 15th Brumaire, year 12, by M. Haffner, and entitled, "*On the assistance which the study of the languages, of history, of philosophy, and literature, affords to theology.*" This excellent piece has been too little read. The Journals have not spoken of it sufficiently. Indeed we may say of it what Condorcet said of a very good discourse concerning the Protestants which appeared in his time: "It would have made a great deal of noise if the people of Paris occupied themselves seriously with any other thing than their pleasures, intrigues, and money." (Tom. 10 Œuvres. p. 289.) Author.

position. The Protestant states, as well as Protestant individuals, omit nothing to carry to the highest degree of possible perfection this science of the interpretation of the sacred books. The libraries of the ancient monasteries of the East and of the West were long incessantly visited by the indefatigable philologists of England, Germany and Denmark. Manuscripts, and monuments of every description, were sought for, deciphered, and compared; obscure passages were illustrated; light sprung from the center of those old dusty storehouses; it was for the skilful and practised eye of the Protestant that the indolent cenobite had preserved those treasures. How many rich and invaluable discoveries have the enemies of Rome made in those magazines of science which undoubtedly the honour belongs to the Catholic monks of having kept, but of which the greater part of them were incapable of making any use, and which the most learned among them too often only disfigured in their writings. It suits not with the plan of this limited essay to enter into the extensive details which this subject would require, to do it perfect justice, and to produce all the documents which would be necessary. From the zealous Pocke to the present time, how many persons have been sent, for the same purpose, by Protestant princes, even by private societies, to explore the Levant, Asia, Palestine

the Thebaid, Ethiopia? I will mention only the expedition on which, with others, Niebuhr the Dane, well known by his travels in Arabia and Egypt, was sent, and which was an expedition fitted out with this intention. All those who are acquainted with the narrative of Neibuhr know too the interesting series of questions which the celebrated Michaelis of Gottingen drew up for him before his departure, and which such a man as he alone could conceive.

I cannot forbear, before concluding the article which relates to this beautiful and profound science of exegesis among the Protestants, remarking by the way how much the whole system of studies relating to Protestant theology differs from that of Catholic theology. They are two worlds in opposite hemispheres, which have nothing common except the name. But that unhappily is sufficient to deceive all those who never go farther than the name.* The Catholic theology rests on the in-

* I read a few years ago, in a French journal, intitled *The Propagator*, a severe reprimand to those ill-advised people who praised German literature. In the article *Theology*, among others, the Journalist ironically remarked that at the last Leipsic fair there had appeared a hundred, and so many more works on that subject. "Thanks to heaven," added he, "we no longer behold such nonsense among us!" Those who know what is treated of in books of Protestant theology, even those who know a little of the literary history of France during the last two centuries under Nicoli, Fenelon, Fleury, &c.

flexible authority of the decisions of the church, and therefore debars the man who studies it from all free exercise of his reason. It has preserved the jargon, and all the barbarous appendages of the scholastic philosophy. We perceive in it the work of darkness of the monks of the tenth century. In short the happiest thing which can befall him who has unfortunately learnt it, is speedily to forget it. The Protestant theology, on the contrary, rests on a system of examination, on the unlimited use of reason. The most liberal exegesis opens for it the knowledge of sacred antiquity; criticism, that of the history of the church; it regards the doctrinal part, reduced to purity and simplicity, as only the body of religion, the positive form which it requires; and it is supported by philosophy in the examination of the laws of nature, of morality, and of the relations of man to the Divine Being. Whoever wishes to be instructed in history, in classical literature, and philosophy, can chuse nothing better than a course of Protestant theology.* Clergymen reared in

can appreciate nonsense of this sort in the mouth of a Journalist. Author.

* It is undoubtedly true that the education given to clergymen in Protestant countries is far superior to that given to any other class of men, the course of instruction is far more complete, better fitted both to cultivate and strengthen the faculties, and to store the mind with useful knowledge. So perfect a

this manner, proceeding from the universities, go to fill the place of pastors and teachers in little villages, and in the country. It very often happens that there they establish excellent schools, and spread around them the light which they have received from their masters. The class of our village curates and vicars has in general been always very respectable and exemplary; yet, it must be acknowledged, and all those who have been enabled to observe it will acknowledge without difficulty, that this class is not less exemplary among the Protestants, and among them it is much more, and much *better* instructed.*

Another advantage which the new mode of studying religion, introduced by the Reformation,

preparatory discipline is not thought necessary for any other set of men. By the growing vices of the principal establishments for education, in other countries as well as in this, many of the effects which might result from this in the present state of the world are prevented.

* In several Protestant countries they require of the ministers who are to be placed in the country to have gone through a course of agriculture and rural economy, and to possess also some knowledge of medicine and pharmacy. The young ecclesiastics at Geneva underwent an examination on their study of the ancient languages, and of the sciences, before commencing their theological studies; and after the four years which these continued, they underwent a new examination on the same subjects, to know that they had forgotten nothing of this sort of knowledge. This excellent custom has been continued at Geneva since the re-establishment of study. Author.

procured to the sciences, is, that it contributed so powerfully to draw the history of the church, and in a great measure that of the state also, out of the hands of the monks, the common chroniclers of the ages preceding the sixteenth. Those solitary personages, very little acquainted with the affairs of the world, seldom impartial, praised sovereigns only in proportion as they had endowed their convents, and done good to the church. They mixed abundance of fables, of superstition, and of maledictions against heretics, in those unseemly annals. Where was the muse of history with priests like these? Here and there they have been of some service. But how much sooner would human reason, which they held captive for ages, have been restored to itself, if it had been allowed to act with freedom! At last Reineccius, Melancton, Carion, Sleidan, De Thou, Puffendorf, restored to history its true form. It has, since their time, been united to criticism and philosophy, from which it should never have been disjoined. Bayle, and many other Protestant historians, wrote with a freedom, a discernment, and a spirit, which many Catholics afterwards imitated.

The history of the church, as well that of doctrines, as that of the external events which connect the church as a society with the other bodies politic, acquired a coherence, a truth, an impartiality, and a discrimination, which have formed

it into one of the most important branches of human knowledge. Frenchmen are acquainted with the essays of the two Basnages, of Lenfant, Beausobre, Le Bret, and others; the works too, now become almost ancient, of the centuriators of Magdeburg, the fathers of real ecclesiastical history, are well known, as are those of Seckendorf, of Mosheim in Latin, and those of Walch and Cramer in German. They have had successors worthy of them in the latter historians of that country, the only one in which that history, so full of great lessons, and of great ideas, has been properly cultivated by men profoundly instructed, such as Semler, Schroek, Plank, Spittler, Henke, Munter, Thym; and relating to the history of the Gospel itself, and its critical exposition by M. Paulus, the Michaelis of the New Testament. Let us, in conclusion, add, that the history of literature, that species of history the object of which is to exhibit the progress of the revolutions of the human mind in the sciences and arts, was also indebted for a new species of life to the same impulse. It was at Kiel that the illustrious Morhoff gave, in his book entitled *Polyhistor*, the first specimen of a similar performance.

In regard to Philosophy; and to the moral and political Sciences.

A revolution which began by a Reformation in religious opinions could not fail to awaken the philosophical spirit so intimately connected in man with speculations about, invisible things, with ideas of the divine nature, of a future life for him in another world, and of his moral duties in this. It has been already sufficiently shewn what an imperfect philosophy reigned in the schools before the Reformation, and in what manner an extravagant and puerile system of dialectics had blended itself with the system of Romish theology which was supported by its aid. To uphold that system was indeed the only object of philosophy during many ages. The theologians, in general monks, were the only philosophers. Their subtle, and sometimes ridiculous argumentations, tended only to the maintenance of orthodoxy in opposition to innovators and heretics. Never did it enter into their minds to teach a morality useful to human society. They only employed themselves in establishing the rights of the Pope and the clergy, never those of the people or of individuals. To reason conformably to the views of the Romish church at that time, it was necessary, as is evident, to do it only in a certain manner, and upon certain subjects. To reason in a new manner, to

extend the reasonings to subjects till then held sacred and inviolable, was to shake the foundations of the edifice. A firm, independent philosophy, which pretended to become universal, was something monstrous in that state of things. Accordingly nothing of that kind, before the Reformation, exists. A strange mixture of some disfigured propositions of the peripatetic philosophy, which was applied in the most extraordinary manner to matters of faith and controversy, formed the whole stock of the scholastic doctrine.

After the revival of letters, some men of genius, with the famous Erasmus at their head, had already risen in opposition to this monkish barbarity. But how, remaining as they did in the bosom of a church to which the scholastic philosophy had become an indispensable auxiliary, could they labour successfully in demolishing that supporter. Such an enterprise could only be accomplished by reformers courageous enough to escape from that church, and to establish one independent of it on the pure principles of the Gospel and of reason. In this manner it was that the Reformation dethroned the doctrine of the schools.

Protestants and Catholics having betaken themselves with emulation to the study of Greek, to become acquainted with the originals written in that language, they read among other things the works of Aristotle, which they drew from eht

dust of libraries. With what surprise did they perceive that they contained something very different from what had been taught for ages under the name of that great man? They found that the grotesque pagoda, so revered in the schools under the imposing name of Aristotle, in no respect resembled the philosopher of Stagira. Melancthon resolved to carry this truth to certainty. He explained the true doctrine of Aristotle, and declared in its favour, representing it as just in all things not superior to human reason; but at the same time stating very positively that it ought to be entirely excluded from the domains of theology. Men did not confine themselves to the perusal of the original books of Aristotle: the discoveries which had been made in them inspired the learned men of the age with the desire of extending their researches to all the remaining monuments of ancient philosophy. The writings of the Pythagoreans, those of the two Platonic schools, the old and the new Academy, those of the Stoical and Epicurean schools, were read, interpreted, and the different doctrines contained in them publicly taught. Then began a philosophical period, during which the passion for truths of a superior order, for the discussion of the highest principles of logic, of metaphysics, and morality, acquired a power which had not been witnessed for many ages. The perusal of the precious remains of an-

tiquity became again, in regard to philosophy, what, in the age of Petrarch, it had been in regard to poetry. It would be necessary to follow all the deviations of the philosophical spirit during that period, to display all the different forms which it assumed, as well in the successively borrowed and modified systems of the ancients, as in those formed by the genius of the moderns, it would be necessary to explain what those deviations have been among so many profound thinkers, Agrippa, Bacon, Cherburg, Descartes, Spinoza, Gassendi, Pascal, Mallebranche, Locke, Leibnitz, Wolf, Bayle, Berkeley, &c. to give a complete idea of that period.* But so vast a picture cannot be brought within the narrow limits of this performance. It is sufficient for our purpose to have marked the share which the Reformation had in this grand movement of the human mind.†

* It is to be remarked that philosophy had, at that time its martyrs. Bruno was burnt alive at Rome in 1660, Vanini at Toulouse in 1619, Kuhlmann at Moscow in 1689, and the first two Italians and Atheists. Author.

† It would be very easy to render this essay, which can be nothing but a mere sketch, a voluminous history, full of particulars, and compilations. It would only be necessary, in this article, for example, relating to the influence of the Reformation on philosophical studies, to copy all the interesting things which Brucker has advanced on this subject in the fourth volume of his history of philosophy; then to levy contributions from the learned works of Rexinger and Edzard ("Dissert.

In the mean time it ought to be observed that this movement could have free and unlimited course only in Protestant countries. It was alien and contradictory to the system established in the Catholic states. Among these, philosophy is to be regarded as a disturber of the public peace, or, if you will, of the public apathy; which in the opinion of many people comes nearly to the same thing. In Austria, in Italy, and Spain, this philosophical impulse was soon spent; and the usual lethargy quickly recovered the ascendant. Even in France, a country which ought by no means, as we have already demonstrated, to be ranked in the same class with the other Catholic countries, the philosophical spirit was soon extinguished after the death of Descartes, who indeed, as is well known, found the greatest number of his partisans in Holland. The interest excited by philosophical truths and systems among the English, the Swedes, and the northern Germans, on the other hand, far from losing any of its force, appeared to go on invariably increasing. London, Halle, Geneva, became the schools from which Frenchmen drew their information. Locke

quantum reformatio Lutheri Logicæ profuerit,") of Lehman (De utilitate quam morali disciplinæ reformatio Lutheri attulit,) of Seelen (de Incrementis quæ studium politicum e reformatione Lutheri cepit,) and many other performances of the same sort. Author.

and Hume, Wolf and Bonnet, became our masters. The modest majority of the very limited number of thinking men in our nation attached themselves sometimes to one, sometimes to another of those great philosophers, and more especially to the first of them.* Their works, the produce of a Protestant soil, became our classical and fundamental books in philosophy.

While again the philosophical spirit has for a course of years appeared dead in England† and

* This assertion respecting the very small number of thinking men, comparatively speaking, who have appeared in France, is very contrary to the vain glorious prepossessions of Frenchmen themselves, but is a very remarkable truth. These vain glorious representations, respecting both their own knowledge and refinement, have had a wonderful effect in deceiving the rest of Europe into a great admiration of France. This opinion of Villers, distinctly expressed, even in France itself, respecting its inferiority in science to many other countries in Europe, will lead many persons in the different countries to recognise the very obvious truth. And those who desire illustrations of the real want of civilization and refinement in the habitual manners of Frenchmen, may consult Holcroft's travels, who asserts that even in this respect they are a century or two behind the English.

† That the philosophical spirit has been less alive during late than former years in England, is an assertion which seems to be owing to an unaccountable degree of ignorance in an author of so much accuracy and knowledge. The latest English philosophers with whom he appears to be acquainted are Locke and Hume. But he might have known that Reid had written since their time, and even Degerando, a living French author, would

Holland, it has revived in Germany, and exhibited a depth and energy which it has never possessed since the happy days of Greece. To the immortal Kant it is indebted for this new impulse. Kant has established and deduced incontrovertible principles and conclusions, which will for ever remain as the cardinal points of thought, as brilliant pharoses in the obscurity of metaphysical inquiries.* The schools, which have descended from his, are powerful in his doctrine when they follow it out, and enter into the depths of it; they go astray when they depart from it. But, however this may be, it is evident to every man who observes with attention the intellectual progress of nations that the doctrines of the sage of Königs-

have told him, that to Reid we are indebted for the introduction of the true method of philosophising into the science of mind, and for some of the noblest discoveries which have been made by any one man in any science. Degerando would have also informed him of the labours of Stuart, Campbell, Beattie, and other followers of Reid, and of the assistance which philosophy has derived from their efforts.

* This is the language of an enthusiastic disciple, but altogether unsupported by reason. The metaphysical philosophy of Kant is founded on hypotheses and theories, not induction. It is not drawn from experiment and observation; nor will it bear an exact and enlightened analysis. It is ingenious, however, and supported by subtle reasonings, which produce conviction best where they are least understood. It has been adopted with astonishing ardour in Germany, and the explanation of its several doctrines has given rise to different schools.

berg could not on the one side have raised so warm an enthusiasm, or found an opposition on the other so keen, and well supported by argument, except in a country in which the great questions concerning the relations of human reason to nature, and to universal reason, habitually occupy the minds of men; that is to say, in a country in which men think freely concerning the objects of a pure religion, and in which the noblest ideas relating to the high destination of man are universally disseminated. Nothing can be more pure, more religious, more severe, and more stoical, than the moral doctrines of the most celebrated schools of Germany, as well those of Kant as those of Jacobi. The superficial and erroneous principles of Helvetius and his confederates have never been able to take root in that soil. For the influence of the Reformation on the study of morality has not been less decisive than on the other branches of philosophy. That science, which is the same thing with regard to the conduct of man that metaphysics are with regard to his knowledge, had fallen from the time of the last Roman moralists into almost total oblivion. It is well known that the fathers of the church, who exhausted all the resources of their minds in doctrinal controversies, did little, or indeed nothing toward the moral sciences; the schoolmen less; and under their long reign true morality disappeared

altogether, giving place to casuistry; a degenerate species of morality, in which the duties of man towards God, and even towards his fellow-creatures, were reduced almost entirely to his duties toward the church; in which a multitude of superstitions and practical subtleties corresponded but too well with the superstitions and subtleties of the theology of that dark period. When the Gospel recovered its station, and resumed the place of casuistry, the pure and divine morality which it teaches recovered its station likewise in the pulpits and the writings of the spiritual pastors. The study besides of the ancient philosophers, in the original, necessarily familiarized the minds of men with their moral principles. They compared those principles with one another, and with the principles of the Gospel. The study of morality acquired by this means a high degree of interest, which undoubtedly it never would have obtained, if casuistry had remained predominant, and the chairs of colleges and pulpits had remained in the possession of monks. It has now become among the ministers of the Protestant worship the most essential, and indeed almost the entire subject of their instructions to the people, the inexhaustible theme of their discourses. It forms one of the important branches of public instruction in the universities. It is well known how many excellent works on this subject have been produced, particularly during the last century, by the Pro-

testant churches; what spirit of purity, of humanity, and religion they at once exhibit; as far removed from the ascetic fanaticism of the ages of ignorance, as from the dry and cyrenaical selfishness of more enlightened ages.

As to that morality of nations, which, rising above the relations of individuals, determines the mutual rights and duties of societies and of their members, those of princes and of citizens, as well as those of nation and nation; that science which exhibits the theory of laws, that of the law of nature, and that of positive law in civil society; it has been already observed, in several passages of this discourse, what advancement it received from the Reformation.* The great questions, which then at last were discussed for the first time in modern Europe, and appeared before the tribunal of the European public, turned the minds of men towards those objects so universally interesting. Luther composed his treatise *on the civil magistrate*; his *appeal to the German nobility*, &c. * * * Melancthon, Zwinglius, John Sturm, and other reformers discussed similar subjects; and reduced them to the capacity even of those who were most imperfectly instructed.†

* It was particularly spoken of in the article, *Internal situation of the Protestant states in general*. Author.

† It is scarcely necessary to remark that the canon law underwent a total Reformation in Protestant countries. It was

Buchanan published his bold and celebrated tract, *de Jure regni apud Scotos*, while Hubert Languet on the continent wrote his *Vindiciæ contra tyrannos*, and Etienne de la Boetie, his discourse on voluntary slavery. Milton, who wished to defend before the world the long parliament of England, and the punishment of Charles the First, produced several political works which breathed the most exalted republicanism, and among others his defence of the English people against Salmasius. Some of those performances, full of the vehemence and animosity of the parties which then contended together with so much fury, too often passed the proper limits; but at any rate they served to point out the proper object, excited the desire of obtaining it, and awakened the most lively interest. In a short time they gave place to better regulated productions of sage and profound minds, which created anew the science of the law of nature

there strictly disjoined from the civil law, upon which, until that time, it had made continual encroachments, and it was rendered subordinate to the local statutes of each particular state. Whilst the Protestants simplified their ecclesiastical law, and reduced it to a small number of indispensable regulations, the popes augmented still farther the immense code of apostolical law, by incorporating with it all the decrees of the council of Trent, and the institutes which they caused to be composed by Lancellot de Perouse, of bulls, decisions, &c. Nevertheless the Catholic lawyers endeavoured also to give a better form, more consistency, and coherence to their code. Author.

and nations. Bacon foresaw the want of it, and planned the foundation of this, as well as of almost all the parts of the philosophical edifice. It was reserved for the immortal Grotius to carry light into the midst of darkness, to classify and arrange its principles, and to present to Europe the first code of which the wisdom and humanity of modern times had to boast. Why has Rousseau, so great a man, so much the friend of truth, without a shadow of reason, calumniated Grotius in so strange a manner in his social contract? Had he not read the law of peace and war, or had he forgotten what he had read?—After Grotius, shall I speak of his rival Selden, of his commentator Baecler, of Puffendorf, who produced a work on the law of nature even superior to that on the law of peace and war,* of Barbeyrac, the happy translator, and Aristarchus of those two works. In the meantime Hobbes, supporting in England a different system, was no less useful to the science, as well by the truths which he delivered, as by the refutations which he called forth. Algernon Sidney followed the principles opposed to those of Hobbes in his treatise on government, and died the

* The work of Puffendorf, as well as that of Grotius, was inserted in the *index*, and forbidden to be read under grievous penalties in certain Catholic countries, as at Rome, in Austria, Spain, &c. Author.

martyr of his attachment to the cause of the people. I must put an end to my quotations, notwithstanding the importance of labours like these, and though I have still to produce such names as Justus Lipsius, Conring, Forstner, Locke, Leibnitz, Wolf, Thomasius, Jurieu, Burlamaqui, Vattel, Bolingbroke, and so many others more modern, in the north of Europe and America. Let this suffice to indicate what influence the moral impulse communicated by the Reformation had upon the progress which has been made by the science of legislation, till that time plunged in the same scholastic barbarity which reigned in theology. But while we justly attribute this influence on the minds of the Europeans to the Reformation, let us beware of regarding it as an exclusive cause, confining its effects entirely to those countries in which the Reformation gained the ascendancy. Italy has had its Machiavel, Spain its Mariana, France its Bodin, (suspected indeed of being secretly partisans of the Reformation.) The passion for these studies increased still more by the disputes carried on between the different parties. We have, in the eighteenth century, seen publications supplant those of the sixteenth and seventeenth, but they were enabled to surpass them only by the advantages they derived from them. Would Montesquieu have become, as he did, the pride of our political literature, had he

not enjoyed so many laborious predecessors, by whom the way was smoothed and prepared?

From all these facts it is easy to deduce this evident conclusion; that the Reformation, which from its birth was placed in such close contact with politics, and all the objects of public good, necessarily turned the minds of men toward the sciences which relate to the economy, and administration of nations. On the other hand, men, who in their own country lived under the continual influence of a foreign authority, who beheld around them a powerful body of clergy, both secular and regular, in possession of the finest estates, seizing also on the tythes, the clearest produce of the farmers industry, such men were incapable of every generous movement; the interest which they took in the cultivation of their natal soil was without energy. The members of that clerical body were besides the pastors, the instructors, the depositaries of all knowledge, the masters of all minds. Occupied with the external practices of devotion, with the maintenance of the rights of the church, these were almost the only subjects too on which they addressed the people. Hence resulted a profound ignorance and indifference with regard to the most precious interests of man in society. Agriculture, and all kinds of industry were in a state of the most deplorable degradation. Such is nearly, at this day,

their condition in the fine provinces of Naples and Rome, in Spain and Portugal. Misery, laziness, immorality, and every species of vice, arise among a people from such dispositions; and the state remains weak and ill governed. What activity on the other hand, what perfection in agriculture, in rural economy, in the general administration of affairs, strikes the eye of the observer amid the cold and barren fields of Scotland, in Great Britain, and in Holland! There the hand of man creates every thing, because there it labours for itself; it is there all-powerful, because there it is free, and because information corresponding directs it. The contrast of these indubitable effects of the two religions is more especially perceptible in Germany, where the different territories intersecting one another make the traveller every moment pass from a Protestant country to a Catholic one.

The mental activity produced in every country by the Reformation naturally then directed itself toward the objects of public interest in the state. A science of government was created which taught how to administer the national revenues; agriculture and commerce obtained their liberties, and rose above the daily repeated course of procedure, by the researches of genius, and the aid derived from other sciences, such as geography and navigation, which hence received improvement in their turn. The knowledge of mechanical arts, and of

all the objects of human industry, recovered, under the name of technology, a rank, among the sciences, which it had lost since the days of Pliny. And it must not be forgotten that it was on Protestant ground that the science of statistics was produced and reared to maturity, that science which presents the register of the resources of every country, and of which statesmen begin, even among the Catholic nations, to perceive the great importance. The study of these subjects has long formed a branch of public instruction among the Protestants; and their universities, in which are formed all the men who occupy in the state places of more or less importance, are provided with able professors in the sciences of politics and government, political and rural economy, commerce, technology, and statistics. It is well known how many excellent performances on those subjects had been produced by the Germans, the English, the Scots, the Dutch, the Swiss, before they were generally cultivated in the rest of Europe. It was from the Dutch that Colbert chiefly drew his views. Every body knows that it was the example of Frederic the Great, which made Joseph II and his brother Leopold conceive the plans of regeneration which the one attempted in his Austrian states, the other in Tuscany.*

* This is the proper place to observe that in whatever degree

The whole system of knowledge to be acquired having changed its appearance, it was absolutely necessary that a considerable change should also be produced in the system of public instruction. Luther was the first who discovered the want of a reform in this great concern, and laboured effectually to bring it about.* Melancthon, and the other principal reformers, being moreover, as well as Luther, professors in universities, naturally turned their attention toward those institutions, and toward the preparatory, and inferior seminaries. They purged them, as far as circumstances would permit, of the vices of the monkish and scholastic period. What they could not effect themselves, the good spirit which they had

the liberty of thought and public spirit pervades a nation, in the same degree communication becomes free and active between the different parties of which the community is composed, and all the classes of persons in the nation. The journals, the newspapers, and other periodical works in Protestant countries bear the strongest possible marks of those dispositions, common both to the authors and readers of those productions. They form in those countries an object of much more serious attention than they do in Spain and in Italy, and than they did in France; till 1789. I will therefore advance, without any fear of being belied by facts, that the journals, both political and literary, of England and Saxon Germany have a connection and order, of which the inhabitants of other countries have not perhaps a very just idea. Author.

* Seelen has written a treatise of considerable merit, entitled, *Lutherus de scholis optimè meritis*, 1716. Author.

introduced accomplished naturally and by degrees in the end. It is remarkable that during the last three centuries, beside a great number of inferior establishments, Germany has been enriched with more than twenty universities, of which three-fourths are Protestant.* England founded three and Holland five.† On the part of the Catholics, six were founded in Italy, eight in Spain, and three in France. Not only have the Protestants the advantage, which might be equivocal, in point of number; but no reasonable person will entertain a doubt that they have it also in respect to the instruction which is given in those universities. It would not, I apprehend, be considered a very extravagant paradox if I were to assert that there is more real knowledge in a single university, such as that of Gottingen, or Halle, or Jena, then in the eight Spanish universities of San-Yago-de Compostella, of Alcalá, Orihuela, &c. In these is taught what must be believed whether agreeable

* If the Protestants have founded and endowed a great number of schools it is because their existence depended upon being the best informed; it is because the Reformation is essentially learned; because it received its first impulse from knowledge; and because it can, by knowledge only, be maintained. Knowledge is an affair of state among the Protestant people.

Author.

† I forget to mention too those which were created in Switzerland, in Sweden, and Denmark, the Protestant university of Dorpat in Livonia, &c. Author.

to reason or not; in the other is taught how a person may arrive at a reasonable belief in whatever is presented to his mind. In the one place the Decretals are given as infallible oracles. In the other no oracle is acknowledged but reason, and well established facts. On this account it is natural, that pedantry, the child of the scholastic discipline, should be infinitely more rare in the Protestant schools than in the others. Some external forms, different from those in fashion among us, have given rise to a prejudice vulgarly entertained and very ill founded that a German professor is a pedant. But manners different from ours, Greek or Latin quotations in a book in which they may be necessary, and such things, do not constitute a pedant; not even the long robe and the furred bonnet. Erasinus had all this and was not a pedant. The real essence of pedantry is, to be the enemy of reason and of liberal inquiry in the sciences; to rest, like a slave, one's belief on the authority of another; and to endeavour like a tyrant, in turn, to impose that belief arbitrarily upon others. If such, in truth, be the pedant, it will be acknowledged that a learned Protestant cannot easily be one—a man, whose leading principle it is to maintain the right of every reasonable being to examine, to use his reason freely, and to keep himself exempt from all authority. This temper rather leads to the public spi-

rit of literature, which ought to be regarded as directly the reverse of pedantry. The science therefore of instruction and education could not fail to gain by the new spirit which directed study. The art of teaching was improved. Bacon, whom we constantly meet wherever we search for improvements in the intellectual concerns of man, Comenius, the celebrated author of the *Janua linguarum*, Sturm, Locke, and several others, laid the foundations of a better system of education. After them it was that Fenelon, Lachalotais, Schlæser, and Pestalozzi wrote. Their language it was that the citizen of Geneva swelled into his sublime hyperbolés. To all these great men, in short, and to the memorable event which unloosed their tongues do the present generation, and the generations to come owe the milder and at the same time more efficacious plans of culture and instruction.

It was shewn in the preceding article in what manner history, since the Reformation, has gained by the freedom of criticism and the depth of research. It remains for us to add here that since that period it has been enlightened by more philosophical views. It has been made to yield great lessons, and great precepts; the mind, become more inquisitive, has endeavoured to arrange the shapeless mass of unconnected facts; it has laid hold of a conducting thread in the labyrinth of

time; it has observed the progress of human nature, and hence arose the philosophy of history. The labours, in this province, of the Scots and English are particularly known in France, and those of the French are known in all Europe. Those of the Germans are less so, though they have a considerable number of works which deserve to be known, and comprised under the general title of "history of the improvement of the mind," a species which holds a sort of middle place between political history and literary history, and partakes of the nature of both. Meanwhile the opinions of men in pursuing these new speculations are divided concerning the destiny of the human race. One party will see nothing but the tempestuous fluctuation of an ocean without shore, a blind and endless series of crimes, absurdities, barbarities, of a few happy moments followed by terrible reverses; chance dictating his decrees; necessity executing them; braying with his iron hand the generations as they succeed, and throwing them into the gulph of oblivion. Others, adopting more consolatory views, behold in the progressive steps of the human species a conducting Providence, an approximation towards a better order of things, a state of civil and moral perfection. Many Protestants are to be met with who have adopted this latter opinion, and who pretend to demonstrate the certainty of it. Persons, in

truth, who find themselves arrived by the influence of a Reformation, of a commotion so terrible, so long, and so universal in Europe, at a state more reasonable and happy, ought to be permitted to indulge in this fine conception of the perfectibility of our species. Perhaps those who are of a contrary opinion are led into it by the contrary circumstances in which they are placed, or by some particular disposition in themselves which allows them not to believe any perfection in their fellow creatures possible.

In regard to the physical and mathematical sciences.

It appears at first sight that the Reformation, though its influence may have been direct and considerable on the study of the historical and philosophical sciences, can have had no immediate effect upon the exact and physical sciences. But if we consider that a redoubled activity, that a spirit of inquiry communicated to the human mind by any great event, cannot stop without some effect in regard to every thing within the sphere of its operation, we must be convinced that the study of those sciences also must have received an advantageous impression from the moral impulse communicated by the Reformation. To this presumption pointed out by the nature of things is joined this historical and local consideration, that at the moment when Luther was ac-

completing at Wittenberg the reformation of the theological system, at sixty miles distance in another city of the north Copernicus was preparing that of the astronomical system. Of those two revolutions, accomplished by two cotemporaries, thus advancing in concert, it is not easy to discriminate precisely how much the one assisted the other, what the consequences have been of their combination, or what are the effects which belong precisely to each. For this purpose it would be necessary to have penetrated into the secrets of all thoughts, and to have followed the most hidden steps of the progress of the human mind, of which few traces and monuments remain. Let us however here observe, as we did at the beginning of this second part, that under the egis of the Reformation Galileos were at least delivered from the fear and the shame of retractations. Under this egis it was that Kepler crowned the work of Copernicus and communicated mathematical certainty to the new system, which in the eyes of its author probably appeared but logically certain. It is besides remarkable, to whatever cause it may have been owing, that the two inventors of the differential calculus, Leibnitz and Newton, lived, the one in Protestant Germany, the other in England. The Catholic countries have since produced an equal number of great mathematicians, and natural philosophers,

with the Protestant countries. It is however reasonable to suppose that the improved direction of study, and the greater freedom of inquiry enjoyed since the Reformation are one of the causes which have most powerfully contributed to the growth of those important branches of the tree of human knowledge.* It is more especially certain that the philosophical spirit, cherished as we have seen that it was by the Reformation, has operated in a very perceptible manner upon the study of mathematics and physics. It has not been thought perfectly sufficient to extend and improve those sciences in themselves; it has been accounted desirable to generalize their principles, to examine their foundation, and to shew whereon it rests. The learned Protestants have cultivated this species of inquiry more than the inhabitants of Catholic countries, who appear not to regard it as of so much value.† *The philosophy of nature*, a science different from that called *general physics*, has received improvements which exalt it into one of the most sublime branches of knowledge of

* See on this subject the dissertation of Wucherer *De incrementis physices a Reformationis tempore*. Author.

† It was Kant who first laid the principles of a theory of mathematical certainty, by drawing the line of distinction between that certainty and the evidence which is obtained in metaphysics; on the occasion of the question which was proposed on that subject by the academy of Berlin, in 1771. Author.

which the human mind has to boast. To Kant too it is indebted for its revival, and many of the principles on which it is founded. The bold *Schelling* has enriched it with views still more sublime.* The system of *Brown*, which is the philosophy of organized nature only, was produced in Scotland, and has been cultivated and improved in Germany. It is despised in France, where it is still imperfectly known.†

With regard to the military science, which is usually treated as an appendix to the mathematical sciences, the north of Germany appears to have been destined in modern times to contribute most remarkably to its improvement. The imperfect state of tactics before the thirty years war

* It may not be improper to remark that the doctrine here applauded by our author, which in this country has received the name of the metaphysics of mathematics, though some very extensive views have been opened in it, is yet chiefly composed of arbitrary theories, unsupported by any just evidence, and leading to no useful conclusion. Of this nature are the greater number of the speculations of Kant:

† It will appear amusing to the persons in this country who are acquainted with the subject to hear the Brownian system spoken of in this grave and solemn manner. They will not so much wonder how it is despised in France, as how it comes to be admired in Germany. In this country it has been regarded as a very good display of ingenuity, and a subject about which to converse and laugh, among those who considered the subject; but hardly ever has it been regarded in a more serious light.

is well known. Gustavus Adolphus was the reformer in this art, and it assumed under him a new physiognomy in the fields of Saxony and Bohemia. On the same ground, about a century later, Frederick II king of Prussia, still contending with that same house of Austria which the hero of Sweden had humbled, had the fortune to complete the work of Gustavus Adolphus, and to carry modern tactics to a state of perfection, in which for the future it will certainly remain fixed, with regard, at least, to its essential elements.*

In regard to the Belles-Lettres.

By redoubling the passion for the study of the ancient languages, by rendering it more necessary and more general, both among Catholics and Protestants, the Reformation, it will not be disputed; has contributed powerfully to the cultivation of the belles-lettres, and the revival of good taste. According as the classical works of antiquity, those eternal models of composition, simple and sublime as nature herself, became generally known, the minds of men rose by degrees

* It is violently to be suspected that on this subject M. Vilers has allowed himself to speak without knowledge. Men who have most deeply studied the matter, it is known, are of opinion that the radical principles of Frederic, even in the discipline of armies, are entirely wrong; as indeed the success of some innovations by the French republicans have led even the most ignorant of us to surmise.

to their elevation, and escaped from the barbarity of gothic times.† This revolution was begun in Italy by the emigrant Greeks who there chiefly established themselves. The Reformation assisted in propagating the benefit to the countries of Europe which were the farthest removed from that centre.

To those, however, whose enthusiasm was kindled by the sparks of ancient genius, a language was wanting of which they might make use, a pliant and animate organ to express their animated conceptions. The modern languages were in that gross and uncultivated state in which a long disuse had sunk them. Only in the south the Italian, and perhaps the provençal its relative, had received considerable purification. In the rest of Europe all men wrote in Latin: Latin was the language of schools and of books. And what Latin? A jargon which bore all the blemishes of eleven centuries of corruption and bad taste. Even if the study of Cicero, and of the other masters of the Roman language could have amended and purified that jargon, as in fact it did, still this Latin, whether good or bad, was the language of a small number only of indivi-

† See the work of Stock, entitled *De bonarum literarum Palingenesia sub et post reformationem.*—See also Morhoff, &c. Author.

duals, and remained a sealed letter to the people. Now, the profound sciences might without inconvenience be delivered in the language of the adepts. Did the learned treat in Latin of those things which the learned only ought to read, let them do so. We might still on those terms behold mathematics, physics, and other branches of philosophy advanced to some perfection. But how would it be possible to see literature flourish, without a common language, without a people, or, if you will, without a public? Of the productions of taste, and imagination, it belongs to every one to judge. The audience of a poet, or of the writer in prose who addresses himself to the fancy, and the feelings of his readers, cannot be confined to Latin people. He requires all classes, all ages, and all sexes. He must speak the language of courts and of taverns, of counting-houses, and of camps, of the inhabitants of the town, and of the inhabitants of the country. He has to do with all minds and with all hearts, more especially the most ingenuous, the most open to all impressions, those least acquainted with Latin. Where Vaniere finds scarcely a hundred readers, Delille reckons thousands. To enable every nation to have a national literature it was necessary to write in its language; it was necessary that all classes of the people should become accustomed to read. Some great event,

some powerful interest was required, something which might become the favourite entertainment of every body, which would agitate every mind, and find universal reception. After such a change only could authors be found who would write for the people, and a people who would eagerly read what they wrote. Such an event was the Reformation, which became the living source of an interest inexhaustible and common to all classes of mankind.

The Reformation begun by learned men, and first produced within the narrow circle of the public who spoke Latin, could never have been accomplished had it remained within those limits. It was necessary for it to go beyond them; to become the cause of the multitude; to gain millions of minds, that it might arm millions of hands in its favour. An appeal to the people was the first step of the reformers; and it was requisite to make it in their own language. When the people had thus been called upon to judge and decide, the adversaries of the Reformation were soon obliged to come and plead before the same tribunal, and they spared no efforts to preserve the people on their side, or to recover them if drawn away. This controversy, removed from the schools, and become the principal concern of all Europe, was the first active principle by which our modern languages were enriched. Previously they were

only jargons, as rude as the multitude who made use of them. Some amorous poetry was not sufficient to give them that fertility and variety which were necessary to fit them for treating all sorts of subjects. The universal animosity between the Papists and the Protestants, the long troubles of Germany and Switzerland, those of the league in France, those of the low countries, those of Scotland and England, became so many forges in which the different languages of those countries were wrought and purified. The Marquis d'Argens, in his *History of the Human Mind*, after having described the state of literature before the sixteenth century, says, "In this time of ignorance Luther appeared, like one of those happy lights, which, after a long tempest, appear to sailors assuring them of an approaching calm. This great man did as much good to science as he did evil to the court of Rome. He shewed the absurdity of the errors which old respect, and ancient custom had rendered sacred. He ridiculed not only the opinions of theologians, but their language and their mode of writing. He was seconded in his views by Calvin, and to the disputes about religion it is that we are indebted for the return of elegance and beauty in stile. The theologians of the different parties, vied with one another in obtaining the honour of writing

correctly, and of engaging their readers by the purity of their stile."

The German nation acknowledges Luther as the reformer of its literature and of its language. One of his first cares was to publish a faithful translation of the Bible in the vulgar tongue, done by himself and a few coadjutors from the originals. We may easily imagine with what avidity this mighty work was received, and how great and general a sensation it excited. It is considered at this day as an authority, and forms the chief classical foundation of what is called *High-German*. It was in this language that he wrote the greater part of his books, treatises, letters, discourses, poems, of which the collection forms twenty-two quarto volumes. One of the first of those performances was that entitled, "Of Christian Liberty," to which he prefixed an epistle dedicatory equally decent, free, and liberal, to Pope Leo X. "No writer for many centuries," says M. Georges Muller de Schaffouse, in his letters on the sciences, "had seen his works carried off with so much rapidity, and so universally read from the throne to the cottage. All were several times reprinted, pirated, and retailed through the whole empire. The popularity, the natural vehemence, the energy of expression by which they were distinguished, and his principles which exhilarated and raised the soul, gained for him all

the most sensible and upright people of all classes. A multitude of pamphlets, of temporary papers, and of ballads, which have come down to us from that period, afford testimony of the ravishment inspired by that vivifying light."*** Wickliff had already translated the New Testament into English; and as soon as the Reformation had in England rendered the perusal of the Scriptures a matter of the first necessity for the people, Tindal, Ray, and others, published a version of them. The same thing happened in France, where the Reformation multiplied French bibles, and put them into every person's hands.* When the Catholic theologians saw those great mysteries of religion become the prey of the ignorant, they resolved to countermine, to publish also their translations, their commentaries, and explications of the Holy Scriptures. It does not concern our inquiry to determine whether they or their

* Father Simon, indeed, pretends, in his *Critical History of the Old Testament*, p. 322, that the first French bible was that of Antwerp, in 1530, reviewed by the theologians of Louvain, and that the Catholics were thus the first authors of the French bibles which are now in use. But Father Simon knew not that this bible was the work of Jacques Lefevre, commonly known by the name of Faber Stapulensis, the confidant of the Queen of Navarre, suspected on good grounds of being a partisan of Luther, declared an heretic by the Sorbonne, and deprived of his doctor's degree. This translation of the bible even served as the foundation of that of Geneva. Author.

adversaries were right. We shall be satisfied with remarking in general that the languages of Europe were improved by these religious and political controversies, by these translations and expositions, which is enough for the object we have in view.

It would certainly be too bold to advance farther in ascribing effects on polite literature to the Reformation.* So many different causes have contributed to its cultivation, and to the different modifications which it has received in the different European nations, that any man who should venture into this labyrinth would be in danger of losing himself, of confounding objects, and giving as certain conclusions what would be only ingenious conjectures. The Protestant nations, which may be considered as of the German race, have all so many points of resemblance in their manners, language, climate, that we must not at once regard some coincidence in the character and genius of their literary productions as the imme-

* However we may still add that the people of cities, and of the country, who hear regularly the services of religion in their own language, who sing psalms, hymns, and fine pieces of poetry, written as they are in Germany by the best poets of the nation, acquire by that means a multitude of ideas, a taste and perception of what is beautiful, which cannot be acquired by those who attend services performed in bad Latin which they do not understand. Author,

mediate effects of the great revolution which they all experienced. The spirit of each people, so deeply modified by many events and generations, has its peculiar tendency, its natural disposition, which cannot be attributed to a single and unconnected circumstance. The unanimity with which the nations, at present reformed, embraced the Reformation as soon as it presented itself, was only a consequence of that uniformity of mind which prevailed among them. Their tendency in the same course (regarding the subject in general) has always been to simplify religion, to render it more austere and intellectual, while they remain inviolably attached to theism and morality, which are its foundation. The manners of Protestant nations too are incontestibly more severe and better than those of Catholic nations. Is it because those nations are Protestant that they have acquired this character? Or is it because they have this character that they have become Protestant? This I leave others to decide. I only propose to shew the influence of this character on the cultivation of polite literature. The French and Italian literature abounds with works in which love is treated of with the most exquisite delicacy and grace. In vain should we search among the English and Germans for so many of those agreeable productions. I will even venture to say that the few which they have are entirely imitations,

and that they are not indigenious plants in those soils. Love durst not there exhibit himself as excited by the desires and the companion of voluptuousness. Their Bocaccios, their Grecourts, even their Lafontaines, have yet to be produced.* Should they appear, they would be coldly received; and it is not by the softened imitations of them which Wieland has attempted that he has obtained his esteem among his countrymen. In short, their songs, their romances, the ideal world of their poets, differ entirely from what is found among their neighbours. I venture not to describe this as a consequence of the Reformation, but at least as one of those coincidences. It is however highly worthy of remark that the two most sublime epic poems, in which the God of the Christians, and the inhabitants of heaven are the actors, and in which those actors speak a language worthy of them, the two most wonderful pictures of innocence and celestial virtue, that of the fall of our first parents, and that of their redemption, are Protestant productions. Had not the short

* This is a profound and an important remark. Nothing is worthy of more serious attention than the difference in point of morals which is found between Catholic and Protestant countries. A degree of dissoluteness and licentiousness appears in the former, which always forms a striking contrast with what is seen in the latter, which had as they are, may be reckoned pure and correct, when compared with the Catholic countries.

golden age of Italian poetry produced the Jerusalem of Tasso; the Paradise Lost, and the Messiah would be the only two epic poems of which modern literature has to boast.

In fine the reasonings and analysing spirit to which the Reformation, as we have already shewn, opened a free course, introduced itself into the territories of the imagination also, and took post there where it could; that is to say, in the theoretical part of the belles-lettres, in systems concerning taste, sentiment, the beautiful, the sublime, &c. and it is well-known that the men of letters among the Protestants have laboured beyond their proportion in this field, and perhaps with more skill and success than their neighbours. It is among them that the abstract part of literary criticism has become formally a science under the name of Esthetics. This name was given to it by the German Baumgarten, from the Greek word which signifies feeling. Lessing has produced some fine pieces of this description. Kant has founded a new esthetical school by his *criticism of the Judgment*. He has had many ingenious disciples. The most remarkable among them both in theory and practice is the illustrious Schiller.

In regard to the Fine Arts.

When a pompous worship requires magnificent temples, imposing ceremonies, and splendid deco-

rations; when religion presents to men's eyes the sensible images of the objects of public worship; when it rests on a sacred mythology; when the earth and heavens are peopled with supernatural beings to whom the imagination may lend a form; then it is that the arts, encouraged and ennobled, attain the height of their glory and perfection. The architect, called to honours and fortune, conceives the plan of those temples and cathedrals, the sight of which imposes a religious awe, and of which the walls are adorned with the finest productions of art. This temple, those altars are ornamented with marble and precious metals, which sculpture has formed into angels, saints, and the images of illustrious men. All the different apartments are decorated and filled with pictures. In one place is JESUS expiring upon a cross. In another he is shining on mount Tabor in all the Divine Majesty. Art, so nearly allied to what is ideal, and which delights in ascending to heaven, repairs thither to seek for its most sublime creations; a St. John, a Cecilia, and particularly a Mary, that patroness of all tender and ardent souls, that virgin model of all mothers, the intercessor of grace placed between man and his God, that elysian, that august, and interesting Being, whom no other religion offers any thing that resembles. During those solemnities the finest stuffs, precious stones, and embroideries, cover

the altars, the vases, the priests, and even the partitions of the sacred place. Music completes the charm by the most exquisite strains, and the harmony of various instruments. Those powerful encouragements are repeated in a thousand different places. Capitals, parishes, the numerous convents, even the most humble congregations, strive to excel in splendour, and to captivate all the faculties of the devout and religious mind. Thus a taste for the arts becomes general by means of so powerful an exciting cause. Artists multiply and vie with one another in their efforts. The celebrated schools of Italy and Flanders flourished under that influence, and their beautiful productions which have come down to us afford abundant testimony of the greatness of the encouragements which they derived from the Catholic worship.

According to this natural progress of things, it is not to be doubted that the Reformation has been unfavourable to the fine arts, and has considerably restrained their exercise. It has broken the chain which united them to religion, which rendered them sacred, and secured to them a share in the veneration of the people. The liturgy of the Lutherans, and still more that of the Calvinists, is simple and austere. A stone and a piece of cloth form the altar; a pulpit and benches are all the decorations required in the temple. Nothing is wanted here but the Gospel and a few hymns

sung by the congregation, which treat of morality and the duties of the Christian. All ornament, pomp and elegance, are removed. The priest is covered with a modest black robe. The worship of no saint, of no angel, and still less of their images, is recommended to the pious soul. This mode of worship might be denominated dull and heavy in comparison of that of the Catholics; if indeed an assembly of men united to worship their Maker in company could be consistent with the idea of dulness. However it is certain that this species of worship, though it may elevate the heart, has a tendency to dissolve the enchantment of the imagination; it renders superb churches, statues, and paintings useless; it destroys the popularity of the arts, and deprives them of one of their most powerful stimulants.

Besides this general disposition, suited to a worship which so severely restricts itself to the pure spirit of the primitive church, and indulges in no coquetry with the senses, we must likewise attend to the particular disposition of the people who have embraced the Reformation. They in general live under the severest climate in Europe. They are more phlegmatic, more cold, and more given to meditation than the people of the south. Their eyes are not presented with so fine an appearance of nature; they breathe not the voluptuous, sweet, and intoxicating air of an Italian

sky. Independently of the Reformation then, they are not so well situated, they are not in such favourable circumstances for the practice of the arts, as the Italians for example. No doubt they have produced, and do still produce valuable artists, but not of a kind to excel those of Italy, or even to equal them. Their real service to the arts, which proceeds from their reflecting, analysing spirit, consists in treating of the theory of them with peculiar profundity; in observing and tracing out the principles, which guide the great artists even without their own knowledge: in marking the operations of the imagination and the intellect in their productions; in discovering the connection between the ideal nature of the arts and real nature; in short in developing the principles and the philosophy of the arts. The Italian feels, and produces: Hemsterhusius, Kant, Burke, Goethe think, and analyse the production and the faculty of producing. The one has the instinct of the art; the other has the intelligence. The one creates; the other judges the creation, and investigates its laws. These two functions equally imply genius. The first bodies it forth in external forms; the second exhibits it in the discoveries of the understanding. The one may be called the legislative, the other the executive power in the fine arts.

SECTION II.

Consequences of the Events which accompanied and followed the Reformation.

*Disturbances and Wars in the political World;
Controversies in the theological World.*

HAD the Reformation concerned only doctrinal points, and had nothing been attacked by Luther but transubstantiation or grace, this obscure dispute would have remained in the schools, and would scarcely have obtained the honour of a bull to condemn it. The Holy Father would carelessly have treated the new heresy like a thousand others which have passed away without producing any memorable effect. The people, and their rulers, would probably have never heard of a quarrel in which they had no interest. But Luther not only attacked the spirit or the doctrines of Popery; he carried the sword all at once into the most vulnerable part of the temporalities of the church, and began his heresy with the apostolical finances. No one, after this, could remain indifferent; those who levied the taxes naturally uttered loud complaints; those who were relieved from paying them naturally joined with zeal the

innovators. The most powerful, however, of the Christian princes, he who menaced the independence of all the rest, thought proper to support the pretensions of Rome. Others who beheld at that juncture the double opportunity of delivering themselves at once from the papal despotism, and from the yoke of Austria, resolved to take arms in defence of the Reformation, and permitted themselves, together with their people, to be carried along by the torrent. Hence resulted also this double misfortune that the wars which arose assumed a religious and fanatical character; by consequence more violent, more terrible and sanguinary than the character of other wars; and that the controversies of theologians acquired a political importance, and an universality which rendered their effects more fatal, more protracted, and more extensive, than those of all the numerous controversies which till that time had agitated the Christian church.

This was the source of those frightful evils and disasters which accompanied and followed the Reformation; this was the cause of a century and a half of terrible convulsions, of bloody wars, insurrections, and troubles in Europe. A spark, struck by Luther to light a torch, fell among heaps of gunpowder, on a spot full of mines. The explosion shook all the West, and threatened to bring back the night of barbarity which had just

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begun to be dissipated. But fortunately the torch also was lighted; and when the clouds of the vapours raised by the volcano began to disperse, its beneficent light appeared like the star obscured by the tempest, which, on the return of calm, serves to direct the mariner in his course.*

It is necessary then to say, with some adversaries of the Reformation, that for a moment it turned the course of knowledge and science backwards. Let us only think of the unparalleled devastations of which unhappy Germany became the prey; of the war of the peasants in Swabia, that of the anabaptists of Munster, that of the league of Smalcald against Charles V; and of that terrible war which lasted till the treaty of Westphalia, and even after that treaty till its entire execution. The empire was by this means changed into a vast sepulchre, in which two generations were swallowed up; when the cities were converted into

* Were it not that we are not yet come to an end of the commotions and disturbances occasioned by the French revolution, it would be a curious task to compare the disastrous consequences of this event with those of the Reformation. If near a whole century of war and bloodshed was necessary to restore tranquillity after this tempest, we have still to augur no little evil from the present aspect of affairs in Europe. Hereafter it will form an important object to the philosophical historian to compare both the good and the bad effects of those two events, the greatest in themselves, and the most pregnant with consequences, in the history of modern Europe.

smoking ruins and heaps of ashes, the schools deserted and without teachers, agriculture was destroyed, and manufactures burned. Let us consider farther that in this desolated country the minds of men were exasperated, disunited, and full of rancour, on account of their long discordance. Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, Anabaptists, Moravians, all accused one another, and attributed each to the rest the dismal wounds their country had sustained; that country which had not only been torn to pieces by her own children, but abandoned for such a length of time to the troops of Spain and Italy, the fanatics of Bohemia, the hordes of Turkey, the French, Swedish, and Danish armies, which vied with one another in spreading the carnage and desolation of war; of war, such as it manifested itself in the seventeenth century, that is, with all the characteristics of a civil and religious war. Much time is necessary for a country to recover from commotions of this nature, and a state of ruin so complete. We see accordingly that the German nation, after having at first made rapid steps in the culture of the sciences, till the end of the peace which was preserved during the life of Luther, fell back during part of the seventeenth century into a sort of stupor, an almost total loss of cultivation. Its literature during that period remained behind that of the Italians, of the French, and of the Eng-

The reformants have IVZ, whom a
 of all Catholicism but not less able to
 support the labouring in that other
 more the more even if what he was
 themselves. From signs he
 gathering and finally he they
 in French literature has still
 a language, and way to get at
 the religion of the Gospel among
 us. By this we perceive, if it is
 indeed, the more progress
 he ever in the way to love of
 his people the more it is
 desired.

1621

Andly wishes if the commercial
 literature is religious literature
 and the study of it may
 be that of the letter just as
 reading is experience, which is
 the spirit of man, which will be
 in spirit, and without measure, in
 which should have the spirit
 Letter. Hence the great failure
 of a great man because there
 the words, which may be before
 learned are. In some manner
 which he has, which is, and

lish; and hence is dated the prejudice, not yet entirely extinct among these nations, against the German genius. Since that era things have greatly changed their aspect; but prejudices last longer than things; and national vanity, strengthened by habit which inclines to believe, by laziness which prevents examination, will probably render this prepossession very difficult to eradicate.

It was not alone on its natal soil where its cause was disputed with so much fury and bloodshed, that the Reformation occasioned unfortunate commotions. France could not escape them; but the disturbances in that country were neither so long nor so destructive as those in Germany. That latter country was in the most deplorable situation at the time when France had finally healed all her wounds, under Sully, Richelieu, Mazarin, and attained the summit of her political and literary glory. The Low Countries were the field of the convulsive struggle of Spain against the new republic of Holland. The evils which this produced in that part of Europe almost equalled those of the rest of the empire. Finally England was harassed by internal commotions, which have been already briefly described in the particular article in which we treated of that power. These circumstances are sufficient to extort from us the confession, that since the time of the irruption of the northern nations into the Roman empire, no event

had produced in Europe ravages of such duration and extent as the war lighted up by the furnace of the Reformation. In this point of view it is but too true that it retarded the progress of general improvement. But after the conflagration was at an end, the solid advantages were reaped which we owe to it, in the better direction, the new activity, the freedom which it gave to the human mind, and in the removal of those vast obstacles which obstructed its path, and invincibly impeded its progress.

Besides, I ask; was it the Reformation which called the monarchs and people to battle? The Reformation, in itself, was nothing but the act by which reason declared itself emancipated from the yoke of arbitrary authority; an emancipation which was nothing but a natural and necessary consequence of the restoration of learning. The object was to present to Christians the Gospel in its purity, and obtain deliverance from the exorbitant pretensions of the Popes. The opponents of this Reformation were sufficiently enraged, sufficiently wicked, to seek to extinguish it in the blood of its promoters. They alone are guilty of all the evils which resulted from it. The terrible efforts made to destroy the Reformation only prove to every man who is incapable of estimating the event, how necessary it was.

A more direct and apparently a more just accu-

sation which might be urged against the Reformation is, that it lighted up with inconceivable fury the flames of theological disputation, which seized upon every mind, were every where diffused, and wasted to no purpose so much knowledge, genius, labour, and erudition, which were so lavishly employed to feed them. The attention of the learned world was turned for more than a century toward those miserable quarrels about dogmas and forms, which became a powerful obstacle to the progress of science. They strengthened the disposition towards the mystic reveries and absurdities of some over-heated brains. Controversies naturally arose between the theologians of Rome and those of the Reformation. On both sides they were violent, accompanied by anger and abuse.* The bitterness, too natural in such dis-

* Luther has been greatly reproached, and by Voltaire among others, for some invectives and expressions of contempt which he allowed himself to use against the Pope. Voltaire himself has used much more indecent ones, and with less reason, against his adversaries. Luther at the beginning shewed himself very submissive and very respectful to the head of the church. He expressed himself at first, and very frequently afterwards, with great moderation and decorum. But let any man think of the horrible abuse which was heaped upon him, let any one read the libels of the Hochstratens, of the Eckiuses, of the Tetzels, &c. and he will then be able to say whether he can condemn the indignation and intemperance which Luther sometimes exhibits. Had he not been ardent and

cussions, and in such circumstances, was propagated from year to year, from controversy to controversy, and has contributed not a little to give to the literary quarrels of succeeding times that tone of animosity which is observed in them more than at any other period.

Not only were these disputes maintained between the Catholics and the innovators; but in the bosom of the Reformation itself, and among its partisans, furious contests quickly arose. I cannot here recapitulate the history of all the sects, and of all the theories which the unlimited freedom of the Reformation produced in such multitudes. Those sects, all hostile to Rome, treated one another no better than they treated the Papists. Besides the fanatical fraternities of Anabaptists, of Memnonites, of Adamites, of Muntzerians, of Puritans, &c.; besides the violent contests which Luther, Melanchton, and others, had

irritable, how could he have become the leader of so great a revolution? His enemies, had it been in their power, would have burned him like John Huss. For his part he was satisfied with ridiculing them; and made nobody be burned. Against opponents who employed tortures and burning piles, is it so unpardonable a crime to employ sarcasms, even though not conformable to the purest taste? Good taste was very little the taste of the sixteenth century. Besides good taste requires moderation and tranquillity; but how could moderation be found in a struggle where every interest and passion was engaged?

Author.

to support against Carlostadius, Ecolampadius, &c. concerning certain sacraments, important schisms arose in the evangelical church, which became connected with politics, and had even some influence on the fate of nations. The Reformation in Switzerland dissented from the Reformation in Saxony; and the English church was established independent of both. The struggle was long and violent between Lutheranism and Calvinism.* So many vain disputes could not have taken place but at the expense of useful inquiry and knowledge, of which the culture became neglected by their means. This does not contradict what I advanced above concerning the happy effects of the moral impulse communicated by the Reformation. I have presented those effects

* If I have not spoken more of the schism between the Lutherans and Calvinists, the reason is that it was not my business to give an account of the influence of the Reformation upon religious opinions and faith. That schism produced few important effects with regard to the political situation of states, since the Calvinists obtained in the Empire the same privileges as the Lutherans. It only introduced some misunderstandings and intestine disorders into the evangelical body, to which, on that account, it has been hurtful. The electoral houses of Saxony and the Palatinate, among others, had violent disputes on this subject. But I could not enter into them. My sole object necessarily was to exhibit the effects which were important to the rest of Europe. Those domestic squabbles of the Reformation had no effects of this description. Author.

such as they in reality were, without restricting myself to the order of time. And thus should be understood and interpreted any thing which may appear contradictory in what I have previously stated in favour, and what I have now advanced to the disadvantage, of the Reformation.

Let us observe, however, that those religious disputes, relating only to different opinions in matters of theology and faith, have contributed to preserve alive in Protestant countries that spirit of religion, and that attachment to Christianity, which is found much more conspicuous than in Catholic countries. Far better is it, after all, to dispute about religion, than peaceably to consent to have none. Much rather dispute about the manner of worshipping God, than disbelieve in him altogether, and lie down in neglect and indifference about every thing which concerns our relation to the Divine Being. Still better is it, undoubtedly, sincerely to worship God, and leave every man at liberty to perform this great act in his own way. This is precisely what the different Protestant people, some sooner, some later, came at last to do. They began with argumentation and controversy; they have ended with philosophy and toleration; and the religious spirit remains.*

* Religious discussion has produced some other good effects by the propensity which it has cultivated in the minds of men

Let us still farther remark, that this theological restlessness, which produced among the Protestants so many useless and even pernicious controversies, was by no means in the nature of the Reformation; it belonged to the age, and to Christianity in general. The first reformers were Catholic theologians, reared in the bosom of the Romish church, who carried its punctilious irritability into their new system. It was not because they were Lutherans or Calvinists, that the new doctors were full of subtleties, trifling, and quarrelsome; it was because they had been Catholics, and because they were continually engaged in defending themselves against Catholic doctors. This disputatious spirit was transmitted, as may be readily supposed, to their immediate successors. But it was at last subdued and extinguished by the true spirit of the Reformation, which is no other than

for philosophy and speculation. Would our great Descartes have founded a school, would his doctrines have produced the sensation and the benefits which they did, had they not found in Holland so ardent controverters and ardent supporters. Holland was the real country of Cartesianism. There too it was that all those emigrant theologians, Saurin, Jurieu, Bagnage, wrote and discussed; whose works excited the zeal of our Arnaulds, Bossuets, Nicoles, in whose answers, as well as in the replies of their opponents, we can name several exquisite performances, works remarkable for that eloquence which arises from the warmth of the soul, for their beauty of stile, and the erudition by which they are distinguished. Author.

that of the Gospel; and by that of science and philosophy, which is no other than that of the human race.

Abelard and St. Bernard were not Protestants; nor yet the two parties of Franciscans in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. What a deluge of controversy and scholastic barbarity did both produce? The Christian church, since the time of the Apostles, has always been afflicted with this rage for disputation about opinions. From Simon Magus, Cerinthus, and Ebbion, to Jansenius, Quesnel, and the last days of the Sorbonne, nothing has been seen but disputes, outrageous parties, hatreds, and condemnations. How, in this church could a sudden revolution be produced without exhibiting the same scenes? How could such a volcano burst without shedding torrents of lava? Poor reason had been so long held captive in the schools of theology, that it could not at first make the most proper use of its liberty. A prisoner, when his chains are broken off, when the door of his dungeon is opened, walks out with unsteady steps; his benumbed limbs cannot support him; the light of day, intended to make him see, strikes him with blindness; he wanders without knowing where he is going; strikes against every obstacle; falls, and bruises himself. Would it on this account have been better to leave the

man in his dungeon? The adversaries of the Reformation say that it would.

Secret Societies; Freemasons; Rosycrucians; Mystics; Illuminati.

When a certain number of individuals, forming a feeble minority in the midst of nations, find themselves possessed of opinions which they regard as important, and which they dare not make public, either because they consider them as dangerous for the multitude, or because they would expose themselves to persecution by professing them openly, or from any other cause, then arises for those individuals the necessity of secret meetings in which they may profess their doctrines with freedom; an intimate fraternity must be established among the members of the association; oaths not to betray, marks and signs to distinguish one another among strangers must be employed. Hence the mysteries of Egypt, and Greece, of Pythagoras, &c. It is abundantly certain that from the fall of the Roman empire several of those mysterious confederacies have existed, and that some of them have passed down to us through all the middle ages. Without attending to all the stories real or fabulous which several of them give concerning their origin, and which are often founded only on romantic traditions, deceitful symbols, or supposed monuments, we will stop to

remark that the course of things could never have rendered those so necessary and so mysterious as they were rendered by the abuses of hierarchical despotism, the inquisition and all the kinds of vexation which the agents of Rome exercised in the times which preceded the Reformation. Many individuals, of all classes, there were, whose eyes were opened to those abuses, and who were sensible of their enormity; but they carefully shut up within their own bosoms a secret, which, had it escaped, would have conducted them to the stake. Only when in some concealed place they met with a trusty friend who shared in their opinions, did they give vent to the sentiments with which their bosoms laboured; they relieved themselves by whispers of the load which oppressed them; devised the means of uniting together, of supporting one another, and of forming a narrow circle in which the tyrants of thought could not reach them. It is more than probable that such societies existed at the time of the Reformation. The Wickliffites in England and Scotland, the Hussites in Bohemia, Silesia, and Moravia, as well as the remains of the Albigenses in France, must undoubtedly have experienced this want of mental communication, as well as the necessity of carefully concealing themselves; two conditions which are of chief importance in the foundation of those societies. How much

more pressing, and general did those causes become when the Reformation broke out openly in Saxony, and every where redoubled the activity and vigilance of the spies and inquisitors of Rome? There was no Catholic country in which the principles of Luther had not gained a great many partisans. The situation of those secret adherents of the Reformation was perilous in the extreme. A single suspicion ruined them, and gave them up to punishment. The excessive constraint which they imposed upon themselves could attain no intermission or alleviation, except in the secrecy of those mysterious assemblies. If the order of Freemasons did not then receive its birth, that is to say about the end of the sixteenth or the beginning of the seventeenth century, it received at that time new modifications at least, and became more extensive. No documents have yet been found, entirely free from objection, in which formal mention is made of it before the year 1610. The temple of Jerusalem, and the strict filiation of the templars belong probably to the mythology of that order rather than to its history. Ancient statutes are found which exclude the Catholics, and confine the order to Protestants alone. The principles of equality and fraternity among the members are very conformable to what we still see among several open and avowed sects. The geographical position of Bo-

hemia and Saxony, whence came the light of the Reformation in regard to Scotland, England, and France, appears to explain the denomination of the *east* which the lodges there in general assume. In the state of disorder and enthusiasm in which nations were then placed the coincidence of opinion had become more important to individuals than the coincidence of country. A Lutheran of Bavaria was more connected with a Lutheran of Saxony, than with a Bavarian Catholic. The Swiss Calvinist, who hated the Swiss Catholic, regarded the French and Dutch Calvinists as his real countrymen. The Scottish Puritan fraternized with the Englishman of the same principles in spite of their national antipathy. The long and bloody wars however both civil and national which followed, above all in England and Scotland, frequently brought into the field against one another, and to the danger of mutual destruction, these brethren, these secret allies. Every one followed at a venture the colours under which chance had placed him. How many soldiers, zealous Protestants in their hearts, served in the imperial armies of Ferdinand, and in those of Philip II! How many Calvinists in the army of the league, and Presbyterians in the ranks of Episcopacy! A mysterious sign then was necessary to discover the brother to the brother in the middle of the contest and carnage. It is well known that in fact

the Freemasons have one destined to answer this end; and that single circumstance appears evidently to prove that this order belongs to the bloody period of the wars of the seventeenth century, in which many examples were seen of individuals saved in the midst of the greatest dangers, even by their enemies, who upon that sign recognized them for associates and brothers.

That state of fermentation in which the human mind laboured as in birth at the time when Luther appeared, the efforts which it made in several directions to arrive at the light, and escape from the darkness of the middle ages, gave occasion to several coincident events in the reign of the sciences, which combined in a thousand different ways both with the religious ideas of the time, and with the mysterious doctrine of the secret societies. A strange mixture of some pretended aphorisms of Hermes, Pythagoras, and Plato, adjusted to the Hebrew text of the books of the Old Testament, and of those of some Rabbins, had renewed the Jewish reveries known under the title of *Cabbalism*. The pupils of this obscure doctrine, called also by them the Hermetical, and Pythagorean philosophy, &c. pretended to find in it the principles of universal science and wisdom. Reuchlin, Zorzi, Agrippa, reduced it to some form in the sixteenth century. Cardan and others joined to it judicial astrology.

The famous Swiss, Theophrastus Bombastus de Hohenheim, better known under the title of Paracelsus, a laborious chemist, united his science to Cabbalism, and pretended to penetrate all the secrets of God and nature, which according to him were the same thing. To find the primitive elements, the grand menstruum, to fix light, and render it subservient to his operations; in a word, to find the philosopher's stone, and by it to cure all diseases and make gold, was the end, the great business of the new science, which its numerous partisans denominated sometimes theosophy, sometimes the philosophy of fire, &c. He who after Paracelsus gave it the greatest celebrity was the famous Englishman Robert Fludd. In the laboratories of this sect were prepared the oriental ideas of magic, of apparitions, genii; ideas which reigned at that period, and are not entirely extinct even in our days. The doctrine which formed the common basis of that of all those cabbalists, astrologers, alchemists, was the pantheism of the school of Alexandria; by consequence, in spite of all its deviations, a species of Platonism, which, as such, necessarily contended with all its powers against the famous Aristotelism defended by the schoolmen, and the principal support of the Romish theology.* The

* It cannot be denied that these Theosophists, as well as

Protestant sects, therefore, hostile to Rome, favoured and encouraged in various places all those novelties. They introduced themselves more particularly into those secret associations of which we have spoken, and which, here and there admitted those magical persons, those makers of gold, &c. Religious ideas of all sorts, from the most extravagant Cabbalism, to the most reasonable Protestantism; the moral ideas of equality, fraternity, and universal benevolence; those of judicial astrology, theosophy, and alchemy, with all their relations and consequences; such were the elements, so various and heterogeneous, of which the mysterious basis of the secrets of all the new associations was formed. According as an individual or a lodge inclined more to one or another of those views, his doctrine more nearly approached either to religious mysticism, political mysticism, astrology, or alchemy, &c. Meanwhile the moral elements by degrees separated entirely from the mysteries of alchemy and the phi-

the Protestant theologians prepared the way for Descartes in that fatal combat in which he engaged with the remains of the scholastic philosophy. It is impossible to understand completely the works of that philosopher, as well as those of his adversaries, such as Gassendi, Poiret, &c. and in general all the philosophical works of that period, if one possesses not completely the key to them in the works of the reformers, and of those of the followers of Paracelsus. Author.

osopher's stone. They took refuge in the society, so well known under the title of Freemasonry, which, whether its origin should be referred to a date prior to that of the Reformation or not, received from it new growth and vigour. That estimable society, for a long time past, since the religious disturbances in Europe have been quelled, and all sects of Christians have been admitted into it, has preserved of its early age nothing but a few mysterious forms, and a secret, which only appears to be used to render the association more close, or more enticing; and a great respect for the sacred books, which was the distinguishing characteristic of the Protestants. The remainder became the property of the order of the Rosy-crucians, which in spite of the imposing history of its pretended founder Rosenencreutz, his burial, and the rose surmounted with a cross which Luther bore in his seal, owes, in all probability, its origin to the theologian of Wirtemberg, Valentine Andreae, who contributed his endeavours with good intentions, and afterwards withdrew them.*

* There will appear in a little time in Germany a work of the learned M. Buhlé, professor of philosophy in the university of Gottingen, which will reduce to certainty what is here advanced concerning the origin of masonry, and will exhibit all the proofs. M. Buhle read a Latin dissertation on the same subject before the royal society of sciences at Gottingen in the

Sometimes also the religious ideas of the theosophists remained united with their metaphysics of pantheism with their mythology of supernatural beings, with their chemistry, and with their views of nature. Hence was produced, in some heads which were disposed for that mixture, the most eccentric, and fantastical systems. The most famous of those mystical theosophists was a shoemaker of Goerlitz in Lusatia, Jacob Behmen, whose writings, read with avidity, procured him a multitude of followers in all the north of Europe. Among them were some even illustrious for their knowledge. I will only mention the two Vanhelmonts, father and son, of Brussels, and Peter Poiret of Metz. At a very late period we have had Swedenburg and the sect of Martinists, among whom Paracelsus and Behmen are still in great repute. It is certain that this Behmen, and some other mystics were men of extraordinary genius; and that some of their ideas merit as honourable a rank in philosophy, as some of the discoveries of Paracelsus and of the makers of gold, in chemistry. If there is no great genius, according to Seneca, without some mixture of

end of the year 1802; and there appeared an extract from the same piece in the literary journals of that city in January 1803.

Author.

madness, there is perhaps also no great madness without some mixture of genius.*

Those secret societies have not however been without some influence on moral improvement, and even on the political events which have occurred in Europe since the Reformation. It was not therefore improper to make mention of the influence to which they may have been subject from this transaction. It is on these that some more recent associations have been grafted and modeled, of which the best known is the order of *illuminati*, a general appellation which has served for a mask, and afforded pretexts to many villains. The object of the real *illuminati* was, as I believe, no other than to disseminate knowledge, and to realize the liberal ideas of the law of nature, by establishing an union of energetic and well intentioned men, who should labour with all their combined powers, to oppose a system of *obscuration* leading to a second barbarity, a system zealously supported by certain courts. The illu-

* Both parts of this pointed sentence are equally foolish; though the first part at least is very often repeated. "No great genius without a mixture of madness."—Do we read of any symptoms of madness in Newton, in Bacon, in Locke, in Milton, in Shakspeare, in Smith, in Reid? As for the last part, a visit to Bedlam will convince any man that there may be very strong madness without any genius. This is a pitiful aphorism which might have been overlooked, if it had not been often productive of the worst practical consequences.

minati, during the short period of their existence, neglected no means to render their views triumphant, and to make them be adopted by the great ones of the earth. In this respect they may be regarded as the Jesuits of philosophy, and the apostles of a political sect, whose faith is built upon this beautiful dream, that virtue and talents ought to have the pre-eminence and authority among men.

Jesuits, Jansenists, &c.

The sixteenth century saw Luther and Loyola produced nearly at the same moment, the one in the north, the other in the south of Europe. The latter, a Spaniard, appears to be a natural product of the soil and spirit of the country where he was reared. A century sooner, Loyola would probably have only founded an order like so many others, a fraternity of worshippers of the virgin, to whom his devotion was particularly addressed. The religious innovations which then threatened the existence of the Romish church gave to the enthusiasm of the pious and warlike Ignatius another direction. He conceived the idea of a sort of spiritual crusade against heresy. His scheme was eagerly adopted at Rome after some hesitation; and the design was seriously formed of converting the new society into a formidable phalanx which might be employed against

the boldest champions of the Reformation. To the re-action therefore excited by that event may be ascribed, as we have already remarked, the species of existence enjoyed by the society of Jesus. It will probably be satisfactory to read the words of Damianus himself, one of the first historians of the order, who thus expresses himself in his *Synopsis Historiæ Soc. I. primo sæculo*, printed in 1640.*

“ In the same year, 1521, Luther, with con-

* “ Eodem anno vigesimo-primo, adulta jam nequitia, palam Ecclesiæ bellum indixit Lutherus: læsus in Pampelonensi arce Ignatius alius ex vulnere, fortiorque quasi defendendæ religionis signum sustulit.

“ Lutherus Petri sedem probris, convitiisque lacessere aggreditur: Ignatius, quasi ad suscipiendam causam, a S. Petro prodigiose curatur.

“ Lutherus ira, ambitione, libidine victus, a religiosa vita desciscit: Ignatius Deo vocante impigre obsecutus, a profana ad religiosam transit.

“ Lutherus cum sacra Deo virgine incestas nuptias inquit sacrilegus: perpetuæ continentiæ voto se adstringit Ignatius.

“ Lutherus omnem superiorum contemnit autoritatem: prima Ignatii monita sunt, plena Christianæ demissionis, subesse et parere.

“ In sedem apostolicam, furentis in morem, declamat Lutherus: illam ubique tuetur Ignatius.

“ Ab ea quotquot potest Lutherus avertit: quotquot potest conciliat, reducitque Ignatius.

“ Adversus illam nitentur omnia Lutheri studia atque conatus: Ignatius suos, suorumque labores peculiari voto illi consecrat.

summate wickedness, openly declared war against the church. Wounded in the fortress of Pampeluna, renovated and strengthened by his accident, Ignatius raised the standard in defence of religion.

“Luther attacks the chair of St. Peter with abuse and blasphemy; Ignatius is miraculously cured by St. Peter in order to become its defender.

“Luther tempted by rage, ambition, lust, abandons the religious life; Ignatius, eagerly obeying the call of God, quits the profane for the religious life.

“Luther, with the guilt of sacrilege, contracts an incestuous marriage with a virgin of the Lord; Ignatius binds himself in the vow of perpetual continence.

“Luther despises all authority of superiors; the first precepts of Ignatius, full of Christian humility, are to submit and obey.

“Lutherus sacris Ecclesiæ ritibus venerationem, cultumque detraxit: Ignatius omnem illis reverentiam assertit.

“Missæque sacrificio, Eucharistiæ, Dei paræ, Tutelaribus divis, et illis, tanto Lutheri furore impugnatis, Pontificum indulgentiis; in quibus novo semper invento celebrandis Ignatiæ sociorumque desudat industria.

“Luthero illo Germaniæ probro, Epicuri porco, Europæ exitio, orbis infelici portento, Dei atque hominum odio, etc.—æterno consilio Deus opposuit Ignatium.”

(Synopsis, etc. —, l. I, diss. VI. p. 18.)

“ Luther, like a madman, declaims against the apostolic See: Ignatius every where undertakes its defence.

“ Luther withdraws from it as many as he can; as many as he can Ignatius reconciles, and restores to it.

“ All the devices and efforts of Luther are directed against it; Ignatius consecrates to it by a special vow all his own labours and all those of his companions.

“ Luther has stripped the sacred rites of the church of all their venerable solemnity; Ignatius studies to procure them reverence.

“ The sacrifice of the mass, the eucharist, the virgin, mother of God, the guardian angels, and the indulgences of popes, which Luther attacks with so much fury, are the objects which Ignatius and his companions exert themselves continually to celebrate by new inventions and indefatigable industry.

“ To Luther, that disgrace of Germany, that Epicurean hog, that curse of Europe, that monster destructive to the whole earth, hateful to God and man, &c. God by his eternal decree has opposed Ignatius.”

In truth, the new society acquitted itself faithfully in the new service to which it was destined from its birth. A great number of Catholic associations and fraternities, to which the general

movement of the human mind gave rise at that period, appeared and eclipsed one another without glory, like those meteors which shine for a short time in the atmosphere, and leave no trace behind them. The society of Jesus rose above the horizon, like an awful comet which scatters terror among the nations. While it was scarcely yet established it rendered important service to the holy see during the sitting of the council of Trent, and powerfully influenced the decrees of that assembly. The ancient orders, especially the mendicant, conceived great envy against those new comers, who set out with so much celebrity, and attracted all consideration, and all favours. This emulation redoubled the activity of all such as were not Jesuits, and in particular of the Dominicans who wielded in a more terrible manner than ever the sword of the inquisition entrusted to their hands. The Jesuits however outstripped all their rivals, acquired the unlimited favour of the pontiffs and an immense power through the whole Catholic world. To them, and to the popes, missions were the same as colonies to the political governments, a source of wealth and power. At last this militia of the Holy See rendered itself formidable by degrees to its masters themselves. They discovered, as they thought, a secret design formed by it to secure to itself the universal monarchy, which it ought to have pro-

cured only for the popes. Discussions followed, in which the society several times shewed itself intractable, and that it knew the value of its services. But let us return to the particular subject of this article; the influence of the Jesuits on the progress of knowledge.

It has been already stated that they were put in possession of the principal direction of public instruction in all Catholic countries. Europe had tasted of the tree of knowledge; light was diffused on all sides and had made rapid progress. It had become impossible to oppose it directly. The most salutary expedient now was no longer to attack science, but to manage it in such a manner as to prevent its becoming hurtful. As the torrent could no longer be excluded, it was necessary to dig for it a channel in which it might fertilize, instead of desolating, the territory of the church. To well informed adversaries therefore, the court of Rome resolved to oppose defenders equally well informed. To satisfy the universal desire for knowledge manifested by the age, they destined the artful companions of Ignatius. In this province it was that the inconceivable talents of the new instructors of the human species were displayed. Their directing principle was to cultivate and carry to the highest possible degree of perfection all those kinds of knowledge from which no immediate danger could result to the system

of hierarchical power, and to acquire by this means the character and renown of the most able and learned personages in the Christian world. By means of this command of the opinions of men, it became easy for them either to prevent the growth of those branches of knowledge which might bear fruit dangerous to the papal power, or to bend, direct, and graft upon them at their pleasure. Thus by inspiring a taste for classical learning, profane history, and mathematics, they contrived dexterously to extinguish the taste for inquiry into matters of religion and state, the spirit of philosophy and investigation. The philosophy taught in their schools was calculated to excite aversion and disgust. It was no other than the scholastic system, reviewed and corrected by them, applied to present circumstances, and the controversy with the reformers, whose arguments, it may well be supposed, were always there presented in a manner to fall before the artillery of the schools. With regard to the study of religion, it was confined to the books of theology composed for that purpose by the members of the society, to the Casuists, and the Jesuitical moralists. The study of the original charters of religion was prevented; or if the gospels, and other pieces appeared sometimes in the books of devotion, (and this it was impossible to avoid, when the translations given by the Protestants were

public,) they were accompanied with interpretations, and even alterations suitable to the main views of the society. Their great watch word was the utility of the sciences, and the beauty of the belles lettres. All that relates to the moral improvement, to the ennobling of human nature, all that relates to the philosophical and theological sciences, the Jesuits endeavoured, and in reality were enabled, to retain in oblivion; to render theology as well as philosophy a barbarous system of subtleties, and even ridiculous to men of the world. How can it be determined to what a degree this jesuitical mode of instruction, which became the prevailing mode in Catholic countries, and differs so prodigiously from the mode of instruction among the Protestants, modified the species of culture, and the particular turn of mind in Catholic countries, so different in general from what is discovered in the Protestant. From all this however it follows (and this consideration appears to me the key of the very contradictory judgments passed on the plans of the Jesuits in the cultivation of the sciences) that this society performed immense services to certain parts of literature, which it improved; but that on the other hand, it retained, designedly, certain other important parts in the dark, or so obstructed the avenues to them with thorns, that nobody was tempted to enter. Thus, considered generally,

the instruction given in their schools, very brilliant in one respect; continued very dark in another, was a system partial, incomplete, and which set the mind in a wrong direction. But, as on the one side all was clearness, and illumination, and on the other all mystery and obscurity, the eyes of men were naturally directed to the illuminated side, and disdained to dwell upon the other, which they acquired the habit of considering as altogether insignificant.

To model science according to the interests of the pontifical power, and render even science ignorant in all things in which it was requisite that she should be ignorant; to produce some things in the clearest light, and to retain others in the thickest darkness; to fertilize the kingdoms of the memory and the imagination, by rendering that of thought and reason barren; to form minds submissive without being ignorant of any thing but what could affect their submission; like those highly valued slaves of the great men of antiquity, who were grammarians, rhetoricians, poets, fine dancers, and musicians, and knew every thing except how to become free; I cannot fear that I shall be contradicted by any impartial man, in stating that such was the system of instruction adopted by the Jesuits. It was ingenious, and inimitably adapted to the end they had in view. It was calculated to form illustrious, and elegant au-

thors, learned men, orators, good Roman Catholics, Jesuits, if you please, but not Men in the full acceptation of that term. He who became a man under their management, became so independently of that management, and in spite of it.*

Besides, if the system of papal infallibility, and of blind submission to the Apostolic See, was incompatible with reason and with the progress of knowledge (which no moderate Catholic at present makes any difficulty in acknowledging) must we not regard, as the most pernicious thing which could happen, the existence of a learned society, which proposed to itself, as the sole aim of its labours, to make reason and knowledge themselves

* This is one of the secrets of the society, for it too had its secrets. It had its signs, its degrees, its apprentices, and its masters. If it existed legally and openly, this was because its principles suited the authority which protected them. It found itself, from its very nature, opposed to the society of free-masons, to that of the illuminati, &c. which it attacked with all its might. Formerly, when the Jesuits highly triumphed, the free-masons concealed themselves, and met together by stealth. Things are now remarkably changed. The free-masons have hardly any secrets which an enlightened public does not share with them; their society exhibits itself freely and openly; that of the Jesuits, on the contrary, conceals its feeble remains from the public eye in almost every part of Europe, and has become, in reality, a secret society of Anti-illuminati. We may decide which of the two ages has the better spirit, that in which they displayed, or that in which they conceal themselves. Author.

operate to the consolidation of a system hostile to reason and knowledge? If an ignorant Franciscan delivered from the pulpit transalpine propositions, the danger was not great, and he might easily be refuted; but when the learned and ingenious Jesuits of Clermont declared before all Paris, *That the Pope was as infallible as JESUS CHRIST himself*, and when they employed all their knowledge and talents to inculcate that doctrine, and make of it an article of faith,* the danger then, it must be acknowledged, became imminent; and the ideas of man ran the hazard of being irrecoverably perverted. As nothing can be more fatal to the liberties of a people than a despotism which renders itself amiable and plausible; nothing too is more calculated radically to deprave the minds of men, than artfully to contrive to make lies appear to them true, and absurdity reasonable.†

* See what the celebrated Arnaud wrote on this occasion, under the title of *The new heresy of the Jesuits*. Author.

† Nothing can be more important than this disclosure of the plan adopted by the Jesuits in the cultivation of literature, and of its consequences. The reflections are profound, as well as just; and throw light on a great many remarkable differences found between the Catholic and Protestant people in Europe. The difference here remarked between the effects upon the mind by the study of philology, criticism, rhetoric, of the mathematical and physical sciences, and those produced by the study of the moral sciences, of the faculties, the duties, and the rights of man, and the order of his affairs in society is a

It may easily be conceived in what manner the universal employment and the pretensions of the

circumstance of the most interesting nature. The first has a tendency to amuse and delight, but it leads to no discovery of the abuses of society, and to no impatience under them. It has a tendency perhaps to polish the mind, to give it the command of trains of fine imagery and expression, and one department of it, the mathematical and physical, to produce inventions and discoveries important for the accommodation of animal life. But it does not elevate and strengthen the mind like the study of the moral and political sciences. It renders not the reasoning faculty penetrating, active, and bold. It carries not the mind to observe the affairs of man in the world, the modes in which they are conducted, and the means by which improvement in them might be effected. This explains the difficulty with which the speculations of our best authors in this country, as Smith, for example, in political, and Reid in intellectual philosophy, come even to be understood in France, a country which stands so high in polite literature, and the mathematical sciences. It explains too in a great measure the various speculative excesses into which the promoters of the revolution ran. Their minds had not been accustomed to profound and accurate reflection on the great interests of humanity. They were capable of catching up a particular theory, and of becoming inflamed by the thought of it, because this required no previous discipline. But they were incapable of trying the theories presented, by an extensive comparison with human affairs. The ideas of the economists, a political theory, founded perhaps on the most extensive comparison of circumstances of all that had been presented to Frenchmen, were still only a theory, founded on a partial view of human affairs, and which hardly ever made any proselytes out of France. I will add, because I believe it to be true, though I shall perhaps only

Jesuits raised envy and enemies to them among all classes of the people. They desired to be the preachers, the theologians, the defenders of the holy see, and they found themselves in collision with the Dominicans, and almost all the other religious orders; they wanted to direct the consciences of men, particularly those of princes, and of all persons who had influence in the politics of courts, and they exasperated courtiers and ministers: they wanted to engross the direction of education and of public instruction, and they raised against them the ancient universities, the masters and professors of all the schools which they did not succeed in ranging under their authority. It is far from doubtful that the powerful competition of the Jesuits, the erection of their new schools, their plans, their writings, and still more their covert machinations, were the secret poison which then corrupted the universities of France, which made them languish, decline, and at last fall into that insignificance which placed them far below those of the Protestant countries.

subject myself to the reproach of national partiality, that the great difference between the English and Scottish universities at present consists in this, that in the English attention is chiefly directed to philology, criticism, and the mathematical sciences, and in the Scottish to the moral and political sciences. This, I think too, sufficiently appears in the works which we have received from the authors produced by the two nations during the last fifty or sixty years.

The most formidable enemies to themselves whom the Jesuits raised, and the most capable of opposing them, were the Jansenists. They fancied they saw, in the pains taken by those others to propagate and recommend the doctrines of St. Augustin concerning grace, a plan to bring down the society whose principles were not consistent with those of that father of the church. But whatever may have been the secret design of the partisans of Jansenius with regard to the Jesuits, it is not the less true that all this controversy concerning grace was immediately produced by the religious quarrels which flowed from the Reformation. That terrible shock which had separated from the Romish church a great part of the Christians of the West, had shaken that church herself to the very foundation, and had left within her a leaven and principles of fermentation not soon to be purged off. The spirit of inquiry, of chicane and controversy, was also awakened within her. The greater part of Catholics would have been happy to see certain reforms in the church herself, certain amendments and regulations with regard to doctrine and discipline, which were not produced, or not in the manner which they desired. There were many discontented Catholics. Many abuses attacked by the Protestants appeared to those Catholics extremely reprehensible; and several points of doctrine controverted by the

former, had induced the latter to think. The council of Trent had satisfied scarcely any body but the people beyond the Alps. What concerned the rights of the Pope and the hierarchy was there carefully settled; but some essential points of doctrine were still left in a painful state of uncertainty; as that of grace, for example, which held so important a place in the systems of the Lutherans and Calvinists. Baius, a theologian and professor of Louvain, who had been a member of the council, brought the subject under discussion, and occasioned considerable noise in his time. After him Jansenius, a professor in the same university of Louvain, followed the same errors, wrote his book intitled *Augustinus*, was the friend of the Abbe de St Cyran, and some other leaders of the party, which was called the Jansenist party from his name. It is well known how many illustrious defenders this party produced, of whom Port-royal became the principal seat. The war of opinions which was lighted up between the Jansenists and the Jesuits was the most violent which ever raged within the church. The Jansenists who in reality had so many opinions in common with Luther and the other reformers, and were most heartily adverse to the pretensions of Rome, and of the Jesuits, the satellites of Rome, dreaded above all things the reproach of heresy, which was liberally bestowed upon them. It became, in

some measure, a point of honour with them to write vigorously against the Protestants, in order to give striking proof that they were as good Catholics as their adversaries. At the same time they wrote at least as vigorously against the Jesuits, and acquitted themselves in this essential office, *con amore*, with still more eloquence than in the other. As the Jesuits had entered the lists of science and genius with the Protestants, their adversaries the Jansenists aspired in like manner to shew themselves superior to the Jesuits in those very respects in which the Jesuits excelled. They composed grammars, books of education and piety, treatises of logic, morality, history, erudition.* The names of Lancelot, Arnauld, Tillemont, Nicole, Pascal, Sully, &c. are immortal as the memory of the services which they rendered to the sciences, and to French literature.

It was to arrive at this result that I allowed myself to deviate into the preceding digression; which has appeared, perhaps, to carry me too far from my subject. If, however, we consider that

* It is curious to observe in those books, when one reads them attentively, and is acquainted with the literary history of the time, how they are interspersed (even such of them as appear the least adapted to this species of controversy, as grammars and the like) with hints against the Jesuits, against their classical books, their method of teaching, &c. though they are never named, or openly pointed at. Author.

the society of the Jesuits became what it was only because the Popes endeavoured to make it a counterpoise to the Reformation, a body of troops always capable of resisting it, and preserving the security of the Holy See; we shall, no doubt acknowledge that this society ought to be reckoned among the important effects of the Reformation, as well as the principal events of which that society was the cause, and the opposition to which it gave occasion. Without the Reformation there would have been no Jesuits; and without the Jesuits no Jansenists or Port-royal. Now to this rivalry with one another, and to the activity of mind which it produced, we owe a multitude of valuable works which appeared during the seventeenth century, works by which our language, and French prose, in particular, acquired a richness, a flexibility, and a perfection, which it was far from possessing before that time. Controversial writings moulded over language to all the forms of argumentation, gave it precision, force, and accuracy. I need only name the *Lettres Provinciales*, and the Cleanthes of Barbier-d'Aucour, and I need not fear contradiction. All these literary events, in which we are so deeply interested, are intimately connected with the great event of the Reformation; and it is not a thread which I have arbitrarily employed to connect them together; I

have only followed with fidelity the natural series of historical facts.

The Jesuits continued, even to the time of their destruction, to act always a principal part in all religious and ecclesiastical, and often in political contentions. Jealous in China and Japan of the missionaries who belonged not to their society, the enemies in Europe of the learned and modest fathers of the oratory, who gave them offence, they produced the discredit of the missions, the condemnation of father Quesnel, and other disorders which belong to our present subject only by the connection which they have with learning, and by the works to which they gave occasion. Under this point of view we must yet mention the disputes raised with the mystics of the seventeenth century, at the head of whom appeared the Abbe de Rancé, Madams Bourignon and Guyon, and particularly the noble and pious Fenelon, whom this circumstance involved in a very sharp controversy with Bossuet. The name of those two illustrious adversaries are sufficient reason for placing, among the events of some importance in literature, that quietism about which they disputed, a doctrine belonging more perhaps to philosophy than to theology, and not entirely disconnected either with the dissensions of Jansenism, or those of the church in general since the Reformation.

*A Reflection concerning the uses made of the Wealth
of the Church.*

It is sufficiently evident that the administration of the finances is the object which governments esteem the most worthy of all their attention; and the most important purpose to which they commonly think that the finances of the state can be turned is war; to attack or defend; to overawe their neighbours by a formidable army constantly on foot, by fortresses and arsenals. In all this there is nothing but what is very laudable. War, however, is not the sole end of man in society. Every war itself has peace for its object; and peace has that of furnishing to the citizens of every state the means of unfolding all their moral and productive powers. Study and knowledge, which direct the efforts of men in improving and ennobling all the constituents of their nature, are therefore, in the last result, the final object of the labours of finance, of war, and of peace. But in this case, as in many others, the means take precedence of the end. What treasures are lavished on war; what pittance is allowed for the promotion of study!

In what order of things, in what age, in what country of the earth, could the cultivation of the sciences be more favoured than in a Catholic

country? Without any new expence to be defrayed by the established government, any new taxes to be paid by the people, there is found an entire cast of rich citizens, whom their destination withdraws from all the professions of civil life, who are dedicated to a contemplative life, and to that leisure which they might render learned and useful. A multitude of lucrative places, instead of being given to idle persons, might ensure a succession of active men devoted to the sciences. Every monastery, provided with an opulent library, might, instead of pious drones, contain retired students, whose labours would belong to the state. If the Spanish nation, for example, were so disposed, it might with ease transform the whole body of its superstitious clergy into an army of students and philosophers. This at last would consecrate to the spirit what has been so long consecrated to the senses; and who knows how much a legion of this kind, peopling the chapters and abbeys, relieved from matins, but not from labour, or study, or meditation, would produce in ten years to be added to the general stock of knowledge?—This is not altogether a dream. It has been seen what could be done by a congregation of St. Maur, an oratory, a Port-royal, &c. By the good, and even by the evil which these have done, let any one judge what they might have done, if moved by a power di-

rected solely to the promotion of knowledge! And how often has literary merit been rewarded by our kings with a bishopric; how many men of letters by means of a priory, or a benefice, have lived in France above dependence, and been enabled to devote themselves to labours which have enlightened and honoured the nation! Under the modest title of Abbé, and with no other distinction than the tonsure they became in reality the priests of the temple of science. From Amyot to the author of Anacharsis, what honour and glory have been derived to the title of Abbé! It has been given to a multitude of eminent men, who probably would have remained obscure and inactive without that portion of the wealth of the church by which they were animated, and enabled, with minds free from care, and at ease, to pursue their important labours.

The revolution has, among us, dried up this productive spring, which might have been rendered so useful to the progress of knowledge. Several Protestant states have preserved some means for the encouragement of learning. In Sweden and England some ecclesiastical dignities remain, which the sovereigns generally give to men respectable for their knowledge.* More than one

* It is probable that M. Villers overrates the effects of the ecclesiastical riches in England in encouraging literature. It is no doubt true that the more eligible stations in the church are

archbishop of Upsal or York, more than one bishop of Abo or Chester, &c. stand high in the ranks of literature. Holland, Switzerland, and Germany, are not so well provided with those honourable and lucrative posts for men of letters.

seldom bestowed without some regard to the literary qualifications of the candidate; sometimes, perhaps, those qualifications may even form the principal recommendation. But no person, who wishes to speak the truth, will say that literary qualifications upon the whole have the principal influence, or any thing like the principal influence, in regulating the appointments of the church; and it is certainly the opinion of very few people in England that literature is much promoted by the application of them. If we consider the great proportion which churchmen bear to all the well-educated people in the country, the great advantages which their situation, above that of almost any other class of men, affords for the prosecution of learning, and the small proportion which the works of churchmen bear among the literary productions of England, we shall be pretty strongly confirmed in the same opinion. In fact the chief encouragement to literature in England arises from the approbation of an enlightened public. But this is no doubt attended with the inconvenience complained of by Villers in Germany, that authors are thus tempted to write much, rather than to write well; and fewer persons are induced to engage in the literary profession, from the smallness of the rewards to be derived from their labours. It has not certainly for a good many years past been the system of government to encourage literature. This has not been the spirit of the men at the head of affairs. It has now become a proverb in England, and not without reason, that the booksellers are the best patrons of learning. If there be any exception to this rule it is the editors of London newspapers, who are sometimes pretty liberally rewarded.

The wealth of the church was there employed chiefly in establishing universities and other schools; whence the greater number of authors in those countries are professors, with very moderate salaries, of the principal or other schools, who, often burthened with numerous families, lay some stress on the rewards of authorship; and are by that motive often tempted to write hastily that they may write much,

Recapitulation of the Effects of the Reformation in regard to the Progress of Knowledge.

The human mind was delivered both from the external constraint imposed upon it by the hierarchical despotism, and from the internal constraint which it endured from the apathy of a blind superstition. It escaped suddenly from a state of tutelage, and began to make a more free, and, by consequence, a more energetic and a juster use of its faculties. The documents of religion, the charters of the hierarchy, were subjected to a severe and profound criticism, and as the study of the sacred books, of the fathers, of councils and decretals, is connected with that of antiquity, history, the languages, the fine productions of Greece and Rome, all those great branches of classical literature were entirely new modeled, and presented in a new and more brilliant light. The scholastic philosophy, the support and ally of the

ancient system, met with formidable adversaries in the innovators, who unveiled its errors, and attacked its weak sides. The torch of reason which the scholastic edifice held concealed began to shine. The vain science of the casuists vanished before the morality of the Gospel, which was laid open to the perusal of all Christians. The human intellect having no longer before it the obstacles which impeded its march during the course of the middle ages, unfolded all its activity, examined the foundations of shaken institutions, discussed the rights of people and governments, and of the state and the church. This activity made its happy influence be felt in all the departments of human knowledge; and the spirit of investigation inspired by the Reformation led to the path of philosophical discovery, and the highest speculations in the sciences and arts. D'Alembert has sketched this picture with the hand of a master, and by a single stroke. "The middle of the sixteenth century," says he, "beheld a sudden change in religion, and in the system of a great part of Europe. The new doctrines of the reformers, defended on one side, and attacked on the other, with that ardour which the cause of God, well or ill understood, is alone able to inspire, equally obliged their defenders, and their opponents, to acquire instruction. Emulation, animated by this powerful motive, rapidly increased

all kinds of knowledge; and light, raised from amidst error and dissension, was cast upon all objects, even such as appeared most foreign to those disputes."*

The long, multiplied, and destructive wars, to which this commotion gave birth, retarded some of the effects which naturally would have flowed from it. The moral culture of nations, which was about to take a new flight, made for a short time a retrograde movement. The souls of men, however, tempered by misfortune, resumed their energy, and that immortal spirit, which had been awaked, displayed all its activity. Long it wandered in the false paths of theological controversy, from which at last it returned more alert and vigorous for the contest. Meanwhile the necessity felt by the different parties of attracting the people, and acquiring popularity, produced the cultivation of the vulgar languages; multiplied in them valuable works; and the French, English, and German prose, was fashioned, polished, and enriched, amidst the disputes of sects, and the shock of religious opinions.

Particular associations were formed, or corroborated on the different sides, both for attack and defence; some mysterious and persecuted, others open and privileged. The order of Jesuits,

* Elements of Philosophy, I.

the most important of all, was placed in opposition to the Reformation. It acquired a preponderance proportioned to the enormous mass which it was intended to counterbalance. Carried along by the torrent of the general spirit, this order, which should have supported only the hierarchy and the logic of the schools, contributed by itself, and by its powerful adversaries, the Jansenists, to the progress of knowledge. It fell when the time arrived at which it was necessary to give place to institutions more conformable to the new age. Thus, by its own direct action, and the re-action which it produced, did the Reformation accomplished by Luther hurry the European nations forward in the career of knowledge and intellectual improvement.

Conclusion.

Such are the principal effects which, in my opinion, have flowed from the influence produced on Europe by the Reformation of Luther. In examining the complicated causes of all the more considerable transactions during the lapse of three centuries, both in the political and literary worlds, it is difficult to escape error, not to be deceived with regard to some causes, and not to lose sight of some effects. Amid the confusion of all those embarrassed trains of things in the politics and intellectual improvement of Europe, the man who

tries to discover those which are immediately connected with the quarrels in religion, what care soever he employs, incurs the danger of being often deceived. Some of them are connected with the establishment of Christianity itself, with the preaching of the alcoran, with chivalry, with the crusades, the use of artillery, the discovery of the new world, the revival of letters, the institutions of Peter the first, the war of the succession, and other great events. Were any one to examine the influence of any of those events, perhaps he would challenge, as belonging to it, some of the consequences which I have ascribed to the Reformation. The historians who deliver facts are commonly silent with respect to causes, and indeed often know nothing about them. The writers of the opposite parties are exclusive, and render the truth uncertain. Whether should we believe the Catholics or the Protestants, Duperron or Dumoulin, Platina or Mornay? How should we decide between Varillas and Maimbourg on the one side, Sleidan, Bayle, and Seckendorf, on the other, between Pallavicini and Fra-Paolo, between Bossuet and Claude? The one class behold nothing in the work of the Reformation but a source of infinite errors and calamities; the other nothing but illumination and happiness to the human race. In the midst of so many different opinions a man must have his own. We are now

in better circumstances than ever to judge of a revolution which happened three hundred years ago. Let us consider what was before it, what has been after it: let us hear all parties, look around us, observe what is now, and judge.

When, after the long sleep of the European nations and of their reason during the middle ages, we fix our eyes upon the condition of the human species in that fine part of the world in the fifteenth or the beginning of the sixteenth century, we behold them awake from their lethargy, rise, move restlessly in all directions, seize instruments for their activity, forge new ones, make trial of them, unfold their powers, take possession of the field of science, throw off the swaddling clothes which embarrassed them, and enter upon a new epoch. How decisive events and inventions crowd upon one another during this interval! The fortunate application of the magnet, the telescope, printing, the taking of Constantinople, the new World, the depression of the great vassals of the crown in France, the golden age of poetry and the arts in Italy, the erection of numerous schools, the books of the ancients revived, the establishment of posts which facilitated communication, the famous peace of the empire and the imperial chamber, the exorbitant increase of the Austrian power which terrified Europe, and obliged it to take arms, Copernicus by whom

the celestial system was reformed, Luther and Loyola, who appeared nearly at the same time! It was necessary that the crisis should come to an end, and the state of things undergo a change both in the structure of civil society, and, in the system of human knowledge.

The better is the enemy of the good, says a proverb of modern Italy. This ridiculous adage which never ought to have come out of the language in which it was originally produced, is a lively and ingenuous expression of the transalpine character. Happily it is not in the power of a degraded cast, or an unnatural maxim, thus to manacle the destinies of science and civilization. Mankind pass on, and pay very little attention to clamours like these; the clamours, says Chenier,* *of those lazy and jealous minds, whose stationary reason would paralyse human thought.* None of the institutions of the middle ages was now adapted to the new state of human affairs. As lances and shields had been laid aside on the appearance of fire arms, the logic of the schools was necessarily displaced by the new arms of reason, the inextricable circles of Ptolemy by the simple idea of the motion of the earth; and the false decretals, fell to the ground at the first touch

* In his *Discours sur le progres de connaissances.* An. 9, impr. chez Didot.

of criticism. The external form of religion no longer suited the new state of improvement, any more than the representation of the mysteries suited the stage on which Corneille and Moliere were about to appear, or the gothic architecture the same place with the church of St. Peter. Every thing was under the necessity of changing. The new spirit could not exist in the ancient forms; a correspondence, an harmony was necessary to be established between it and things; and as it possessed all the energy of the morning, the omnipotent power of youth, it operated in all directions with force and efficacy, and every where under the aids of enthusiasm.

Under this point of view then, it is that we ought to regard the Reformation; as a necessary product of the new age, as a manifestation of the new spirit. What Dante and Petrarch were in regard to poetry, Michael Angelo and Raphael to the arts of design, Bacon and Descartes to philosophy, Copernicus and Galileo to astronomy, Columbus and Gama to geography, the same was Luther in regard to religion. Those eminent men, the organs of the universal spirit, expressed correctly the thoughts which brooded in the minds of a great number of their cotemporaries; and they satisfied at once the wants of their age. From their genius as soon as the spark escaped, the flame, ready to appear, broke forth in all di-

rections. What had only been an immature, a vague conception, floating privately in the minds of a multitude of men, became clear and steady, made an open appearance, was communicated from intellect to intellect, and an uninterrupted chain united all thinking minds together. Such is the natural progress of that tacit conspiracy which presides over all reformations. Those which take place in the dominions of the arts, and in most of those of the sciences, disconnected with the passions and volcanic eruptions of the people, are generally accompanied with peace, and accomplished without costing tears to humanity. Different was necessarily the fate of that produced by Luther. Religion was not then a matter of simple opinion, a purely moral being. It had an immense corporal organ, which oppressed all bodies politic, and had pretensions to all the thrones, and to all the possessions in the world. By the very first wound which it received the Colossus trembled, and the earth was shaken by its motion. Princes and nations ran to arms, and gave themselves up to a terrible conflict; a conflict of opinions and interests, the consequences of which were so various, and so important.

The Institute required an account of such of those consequences as have had an influence on the political situation of the states of Europe and on the progress of knowledge. This task was

enormous, and far superior to my powers. What would the undertaking have been, if besides its political and literary effects, the Institute had directed an account to be given it also of the influence of the Reformation on the morals of the European nations, and on their religious faith and character? This new inquiry however will form perhaps the subject of a labour more extensive and difficult than mine. Me it behoved to confine myself within the appointed limits, which indeed comprehend a field sufficiently vast. It has been my intention to disguise neither the good nor the evil produced by the Reformation. I have only endeavoured to prove, that after every thing has been compensated and the final balance struck, the effects of that revolution present a surplus of good to the human race; and that on the whole it ought to be ranked among those important events which have most powerfully contributed to the progress of civilization and knowledge, not only in Europe, but in all parts of the earth to which the Europeans have carried their improvement.

I have also considered myself at liberty to express myself with all the freedom of an historian, who, if it were possible, ought to belong to no age or country; encouraging myself by this reflection, that no prejudice had admission into the

sanctuary of the sciences; and that an illustrious society endowed with the spirit of philosophy so far as to choose this subject, and to call for the truth, was undoubtedly disposed to hear it.

A SKETCH
OF
THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH,
FROM ITS FOUNDER
TO
THE REFORMATION;

*Intended as an Appendix to the Essay on the Spirit and
Influence of the Reformation of Luther:*

BY CHARLES VILLERS,

1804,

A SKETCH
OF
THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH;

OR,

A short view of the principal events which have concurred in establishing the doctrines, and regulating the constitution of the Christian church, from its Founder to the Reformation.

FIRST PERIOD.—DEMOCRACY.

(From JESUS to Constantine,—the year 1, to the year 325.)

The first Christians form a religious society, distinct from all others. This society becomes gradually an organized body. The system of equality prevails at first, and gives place afterwards to an hierarchical system of subordination.

AFTER a duration of eight hundred years Rome, which had long been free, had recently submitted to the rod of a master. She had carried her arms and conquests around her in the circumference of

an immense circle which reached almost the boundaries of the known world. But the powers of the republic dispersed over so vast an empire became enfeebled at the center; and a monarchical power had there usurped its place. Cæsar was the author of this revolution, and founded in Rome a reigning dynasty. After him Augustus ruled the empire. He had reigned forty years, when Jesus was born at Palestine of obscure and indigent parents.

The mythology of Paganism, calculated for the infancy of the world, had grown old along with it. At the period of which we speak, it had lost its ancient credit in the minds of men, and the vacuum left by it only wanted to be filled up. Alexander, along with his conquests, had carried the cultivation of Greece into the east. And from the time that his successors had erected thrones filled by Grecian princes in Egypt, in Persia, in Syria, in Asia Minor, in Armenia, the Grecian philosophy had flourished in those countries, and modified their local character. This had felt re-action in its turn; and the mystical theism of India, the two principles of Persia, and the mysteries of Egypt were united to the doctrines of the Academy, and the Portico. This new mixture of ideas produced a fermentation. The principal tendency of all those elements, in other respects sufficiently heterogeneous, was to-

wards the acknowledgment and worship of an invisible God. Polytheism, the adoration of gross and visible deities, was gradually and necessarily undermined by this operation of thought among the more enlightened people. In this situation the Romans found Greece and Asia, when they next took possession of them; and the men and spirit of the east the conquerors found after them in the west. The literature and philosophy of the Greeks became the basis of instruction among the Romans, and produced, with some modifications, the same effects as in Greece and Egypt. The ancient worship was despised, the augurs officiated, not without a smile on their countenance. Deism brooded in the schools of Rome, as in those of Athens, Smyrna, and Alexandria. But this speculative doctrine wanted a substantial form, by which it might receive a practical and positive existence, and by which it might become a religion.

It is necessary to remark that the Mediterranean was then the great sea, the common domain, of the nations which constituted the Roman empire, and their medium of communication. The shores by which it was surrounded made all the people who inhabited them citizens in some measure of the same country. Athens, Joppa, and Rome were nearer to one another than places separated by a very inconsiderable distance on land.

The commerce of the world which was carried on that sea, and all the movements which were directed towards Rome, made communication on it easy and rapid.

On one of the coasts of this sea, in the center of the empire founded by the Macedonian conqueror, on the territory of the ancient Phenicia, in contact with Egypt and Arabia on the south, with Persia and India on the east, on the north with Syria, Armenia, and the nations of Scythia, and by its ports with Greece, Italy, and the other maritime countries, lived a people, small in number, despised, repeatedly overthrown and subdued by their various neighbours, hating all other nations from principle, commercial and industrious by necessity, the agents of Asia and Europe, spread every where, but never mixing with strangers, and forming in every place a society separated from others, in which they preserved their laws, their worship, and their temples. This people had a national religion founded upon the worship of one God. In the midst of Syrian, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman polytheism, theism was here formed into a positive religion; a phenomenon without a parallel in the vast empire of the Cæsars. I need not say that I speak of the Jews. Proud of their origin, which they carried back to illustrious patriarchs, united together by the ties of one blood, exclusive objects of the

favour of God, and chosen by him from among all the nations of the earth, they were assured by ancient prophecies that among them would arise a king of the world, who would wash away all their reproach, and raise them above the rest of mankind. They lived in the impatient expectation of this Messiah, and calculated eagerly the time, obscurely signified, of his appearance. A similar spirit at that time existed not among any people. They, gloomy, confined to themselves, full of the pride with which their more than terrestrial nobility inspired them, and wounded by the degradation in which they were constrained to live, consoled themselves by the one feeling for the other, and returned a hundred fold to their idolatrous neighbours the contempt which they received from them. This deep rooted disposition has not yet perished, and the unbending Israelite, degraded every where in his universal captivity almost to the rank of the brute, says in his heart, "I am the man of God."

It was natural, considering the state in which the minds of men then were with regard to the unity of the divine being, and a purer worship due to him, that the philosophers, and men of thought and leisure, who during the tranquillity of the long reign of Augustus had become very numerous, should bestow some attention on this people, on its doctrines and books, of which there

erited a Greek translation. The eyes of mankind then began to be directed towards them. In the cities of the empire where the Jews had erected synagogues, many Pagans frequented their assemblies, from a still stronger motive than curiosity. The Jews, on their part too, could not elude the operation of the general spirit of the times. If their ideas began to penetrate into the schools, the ideas of the philosophers penetrated also into the synagogues. Jews were found who shone as philosophers among the Pagans, especially at Alexandria, which was then the seat of the new academy, and moreover the greatest city in the neighbourhood of Judea. These innovations made their way even within the walls of Jerusalem. The theosophy of the eastern magians entered the same place. People began to dispute to refine, and to think of modifying the Jewish orthodoxy. Hence sects arose which violently opposed one another. Many Jews, examining their religion more closely, found in it what the Pagans had found in theirs, too many external forms, too many accessories, too many superstitions and abuses. Some of them desired a reformer, others a Saviour to deliver them from this crisis. To Jewish minds this, in either case, could be no other than the Messiah himself. The expectation of this supernatural being then was more enflamed than ever. Flocks of impatient

people quitted the cities and went to hear preachers and prophets in the desert. John baptized and preached on the banks of the Jordan. He announced too the Messiah; and the number of his followers was considerable.

In the midst of this people, and in the midst of these circumstances Jesus appeared. He carried away the disciples of John, and the rest of the multitude, and the other prophets were silenced. He preached with the tranquil majesty of a mind invested with a superior mission, and which had no other business on the earth, but that of establishing truth, piety, and love among mortals. Serious and circumspect in his actions, ingenuous, simple and sublime in his discourses, his mind appeared calm, transparent, and profound as the ether of heaven. Supremely mild and benevolent, a holy zeal against impiety and vice could alone move or affect him with passion for an instant. Thus is Jesus described to us by his four historians. If he was not such, undoubtedly we must admire the genius of those who imagined so fine a picture, and still more the happy chance by which the same picture presented itself exactly to four evangelists who, in all probability, could not each copy from the other. But if he was such, as it is impossible to doubt, what then was the nature of this extraordinary being, who resembles none of the great personages represented to us in

history, and whose life, without blemish and without affectation, exhibits not one of the weaknesses of human nature?

JESUS, during the few years of his public ministry, sowed the imperishable seeds of a doctrine of pure adoration, of love and justice; or rather he only sanctioned and vivified those seeds naturally sown in every heart. And what is not less wonderful and extraordinary than his whole mission and character is that a Jew, a member apparently of a nation unparalleled for its selfishness, its exclusive spirit, and its enmity to the rest of mankind, first presented the notion of an universal religion, of a church for the human race, of a fraternity of all men under the authority of a common father.—One father, one family, one service, one love; this idea was miraculous in that age; it was so in a much greater degree produced and established in Judea. JESUS offered it as his only precept; explained, and applied it to every case. He gave charge to his apostles, plain, unlettered men, to go and diffuse it among all nations, declaring to them that every where its effects would be great. They go, they speak, and the world becomes Christian. JESUS meanwhile, pursued by the fanaticism of the priests of the ancient law, was the same amid executioners and torments which he had been in the midst of his disciples, a pattern more than human of patience and firm-

ness, of mildness and sublimity. "Father," said he, praying for his executioners, "father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." This last proof was wanting to enable him to offer a practical example of the most difficult virtues. After this, nothing more remained for him to do: all was *finished*, to use his own expression; and he died the noble death of a martyr to truth and virtue.—This picture of the pure spirit of Christianity in the person of its Founder cannot appear misplaced in an attempt to appreciate a revolution, the principal object of which was to restore Christianity to the spirit of its institution.

After the death of Jesus a great number of his disciples met at Jerusalem, there celebrated together and in his name the Jewish festival of Pentecost, and thus formed the first community of Christians. This feeble church was soon after almost entirely dispersed; when in the course of two years fanaticism again pursued them, and Stephen, the deacon, that is, the depositary of the alms, became its victim. This blow, perhaps, would have been mortal to the new church, if at the same time a man full of that spirit which vivifies, of that force and courage which surmounts every thing, *Paul*, hitherto a persecutor of the Christians, had not joined their cause. This new apostle, who alone did more for the infant faith than all the rest together, called upon all the men of every country

and of every religion to become the followers of CHRIST. Jews only had as yet entered into that association, to the members of which was given the name of Nazarenes. Paul, into his eloquent sermons, introduced new ideas, new prospects. He announced the doctrine of the Founder with a spirit which did not and which could not belong to the other disciples, more attached to Judaism, and more fed with its prejudices; a circumstance, which even at that early period produced among Christians a division; between his partisans, and those who remained attached to the peculiarities of Judaism; whence it was found necessary to have a general meeting to come to a mutual understanding. This assembly, the first image of councils, was held at Jerusalem, and lasted till the subversion of the Hebrew commonwealth. That event dispersed it. But from that time Judaism and Christianity, between which St. Paul had drawn an eternal line of distinction, remained separate. His travels, his discourses, his letters, some of which have come down to us, established in most of the churches which were founded during his life-time, that sublime doctrine, modified by him, and preserved to us by his indefatigable zeal. In less than forty years after the death of JESUS, all his first confidants had perished, either by a natural death, or the hands of the executioner; and there remained only the

apostle John, who, flying from the persecution under Domitian, took refuge in Patmos, where he wrote the apocalypse, which has been placed in the number of the sacred books, (if indeed it be really his.) Already arose among the Christians, persecuted by the princes of the earth, those disputes concerning doctrines, which essentially belong to all speculative systems, whether philosophical or religious. These internal maladies of the church appear to have created more apprehension to the apostle of Patmos than the external evil of persecution. Cerinthus, and some others, even then denied the divinity of JESUS; and almost all the writings of John are directed against that opinion. Mean while the number of Christian churches multiplied every day, and in every country. A peaceful state of things would perhaps have confined for ever the religion of CHRIST to the walls of Jerusalem. But the Jews themselves, who at first expelled the innovators, by that measure compelled them to go and preach in other places. Almost every where those exiles met with other Jews, whom commerce, and the restless spirit of that people, had so universally dispersed. With them the Jewish Christians coalesced, and preached in their synagogues, attended by numbers of pagans, who, as we have already remarked, were attracted by the spectacle of a new worship, founded upon the

adoration of one God. The Romans, by destroying Jerusalem, and dispersing the Jewish people, added still more to the favourableness of those circumstances. Great cities, such as Alexandria, were peopled with Jews, and by consequence also with Christians. The new doctrine became a subject of interest and discussion. Paganism, too absurd in itself, to suit those ages which were removed from the infancy of the world, and decried by the philosophers, had become an object of ridicule among all enlightened men. Such, no doubt, was the true cause of the cessation of oracles about this time. They became silent, when all men began to disbelieve them. The want of a religion capable of replacing the ancient, which was perishing through age and imbecility, began to be felt. Besides, as the Gods were national patrons among the ancients, every nation had respected its own Gods so long as it had continued a nation. Vanquished and enslaved by the Romans, the people became indifferent to all the objects of local patriotism, and to religion as well as the rest. The Romans themselves, by the effects of receiving foreign Gods into their temples, were nearly prepared to despise them all, the old as well as the new. Every thing positive in religion had fallen to ruin in the empire. The religious spirit, which serves for the foundation to all positive systems, was yet alive,

and only waited for a new form in which it might fix itself. Christianity, favoured by the circumstances which have just been pointed out, presented itself, and found a welcome reception. But how many foreign ideas and adventitious doctrines came to be mixed with it, and modified it in a thousand ways!—The history of doctrines in the first ages of the church is a labyrinth in which the honest historian can never find his way. Before a system of doctrines was ascertained and established, what fluctuations and changes had they not undergone? And when at last a dogma was settled, how different was it from what had been in the mind, and in the simple views of the author of Christianity?—It was more particularly at Alexandria, at that time a very learned city, and the chief seat of the Grecian philosophers, among others of the new Platonicians, that the religion of JESUS, to which so many heterogeneous elements had been added, assumed a form more speculative, or if you will, more mystical, than it had as yet displayed. To this, Clement, a Grecian philosopher, who had become a Christian, more than any one contributed. Such of the Orientals as embraced Christianity introduced into it the views of the Oriental philosophy concerning the origin of the world, of good and evil. Hence arose the forms of Christianity and the sects called Gnostic and Manichean. Al-

though the other Christians afterwards separated from the system of their doctrines those of the Oriental Christians, these latter doctrines, however, have not failed to influence, to a certain degree, the subsequent constitution of Christianity in general, and they have remained more or less unaltered among the Oriental Christians. It would be superfluous to name all the different opinions which arose in different places during those early ages, opinions of which the greater part are known by the names of their authors, or by the characteristic term, which became the watchword of the sect. The names would here form an insipid vocabulary, and to explain them would require too much time. It is sufficient to observe in general, that when a certain majority of Christians, favoured by circumstances, began to form a common system of faith, they gave the name of heresy to every opinion different from their own.

Another circumstance is worthy of remark, that the persecutions of some emperors against Christianity in general induced many individuals of these different sects to fly into solitary and uninhabited places, carrying thither nothing but their fervent devotion, which became quickly inflamed to an extraordinary degree by the silence and gloom of the desert. These ascetics of the Thebaid and Syria were the first monks; their meet-

ings to pray together the first convents. Legislators arose among them who affected to give to Christian people none but laws truly Christian. So many monastic regulations are in fact only so many different modes of explaining Christianity, of purifying and reforming it. The monastic orders greatly changed their form according as the church altered hers, but they were nothing else in the beginning.

The same persecutions which peopled the desert with fugitive Christians constrained those who remained behind to unite more strongly together, to extinguish as much as possible their controversies, to accommodate their differences, to assist one another, to organise themselves, to frame a police, and appoint leaders, and managers. So long as the apostles and first disciples, the cotemporaries of Jesus, lived, they naturally acted as the heads of the communities or churches which they founded. After their death, the people replaced the pastor whom they had lost by his most eminent disciple. Several of these churches united sometimes together, and formed a sort of a confederacy, when they appointed for themselves a common head, a visitor, *episcop*, or bishop; then they separated to remain by themselves, or to unite with others. In general they voluntarily confined themselves within the limits of a province, of a prefecture, or diocese of the Roman

empire. Every christian, however, was a disciple, an active member of the church or confederacy to which he belonged. The pastors were their spiritual magistrates, republican magistrates, whose decision in matters of faith had no force but because they were reckoned wiser, and better informed. Meanwhile, as those Christians and those pastors were men, and as men, without intending it, are always influenced by human institutions and ideas, it happened that those pastors to whom local circumstances gave a church of unusual importance, riches or power, those churches, among others, which were established in the principal cities of the empire, were soon invested with superior consideration and authority, with a sort of supremacy, the origin of the patriarchal or papal system. This primacy, at first, was extremely limited. The Roman emperors had as yet known the new religion only to tolerate or persecute it. When it reached the mind of Constantine, who raised it to the throne, every thing was changed. Temporal power, honours and riches, became the lot of the principal pastors; the humble doctrine of JESUS, formed to console and to support by the hopes of another life those who lived in oppression on the earth, became the doctrine of the great men, and the oppressors. According to the sect, or the particular opinion of the theologian who got possession of the ear

of the master, he made the sects and opinions which were contrary to his own be condemned and persecuted. Christianity, so essentially mild and humane, became persecuting in retaliation, from imitation, and because it had been persecuted. The cruel examples of Diocletian, Decius, and other emperors, produced a re-action of which the terrible effects remained to a late period in modern ages. The passions of men were the cause of so many evils. Let no one accuse of them the pure doctrine of JESUS, to whom mankind owe the worship of one GOD, the sublime principle of love and fraternity among men, the abolition of slavery in several places, and so many other inestimable benefits.

Thus is this first period, beginning with JESUS, who came to promise the kingdom of heaven to the peace makers, terminated by Constantine, who assigned terrestrial riches to the followers of JESUS, and laid for them the foundation of a kingdom in this world.

SECOND PERIOD.—*OLIGARCHY.*

(From Constantine to Mahomet,—325 to 604.)

Establishment of the Patriarchal System.

THE Christian community now assumed a new form, and displayed new operations. The supreme authority had become Christian, and it impressed on every thing connected with that title a temporal character of power and credit. The chief pastors took their station near the throne. He who filled it was their disciple, their protector, sometimes their instrument, at other times their despotical master. The events, and the doctrines of Christianity became objects of public interest. The church acquired a certain unity by combining with the unity of the empire; and the commotions which arose in it were felt more universally under the new organization, which closely united all its parts together. Heresies, and new opinions excited a more general fermentation. What before agitated only a city, or a province, became an object of discussion to the whole Roman empire. The assemblies of the pastors (*synods* according to the Greek term, *councils*, according to the Latin) obtained a form more authoritative and

Imposing. Their decrees became laws of the empire, sanctioned by him who was its head. Already the partisans of the bishop Donatus had been condemned by the council held at Arles. But the first heresy of importance, which made trial of the strength of the church combined, was that of Arius, a philosopher of the new Platonic school, and a priest of Alexandria. It was by this school that the idea was introduced among the Christians of regarding the CHRIST, the son of GOD, as his *Word*. The bishop of Alexandria would have this *Logos*, this word, to be co-eternal, and consubstantial with GOD. Arius, who on other accounts disliked the bishop, and who had been a candidate with him for the bishopric, maintained on the contrary that the *Logos*, proceeding from GOD, could not be co-eternal and consubstantial with him. This debate kept the Christian church in flames during several centuries both in the east and in the west. Constantine assembled the famous council of Nice, the first which received the name of *ecumenical*, or universal. Arius was condemned in it; but this hindered not the Arians from triumphing afterwards on several occasions, and from various causes. Here too was composed against their doctrine the famous symbol of faith, which has since been attributed to the apostles; which bears however but too distinctly the marks of the polemical subtlety

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of this period. Among the other regulations of the same assembly is likewise to be remarked that which appointed a fixed day for the celebration of Easter by all Christians. Meanwhile the bishop who was the adversary of Arius died, and his place in Alexandria was filled by the deacon Athanasius. This personage, like his predecessor, was a zealous supporter of the Nicene orthodoxy; but had the misfortune soon to behold the fickle *Cæsar* change his creed. Eusebius, a bishop of the Arian party gained over the sister of the emperor, and she persuaded her brother. Arius was solemnly re-instated in the communion of the church by an imperial decree, and Athanasius was deprived of his see. It was this, same Eusebius, who a little before Constantine's death, administered to him the sacrament of baptism, which he had till then neglected to receive. Undoubtedly, if he had lived longer, Arianism, which the address of Eusebius had made the doctrine of the imperial court, would have become the ruling doctrine of the Christian world. But he died; his three sons divided the empire between them; and each protected a different party. The votaries of the council of Nice, whose system was fixed by an invariable formula, remained firmly united. The Arians, as happens to all reformers, whose too liberal opinions cannot be bound by an irrevocable form, broke into so many different sects, that they be-

came weak, and were unable to resist, in detail, their united antagonists. Semi-arians were seen opposing Arians, and Pneumatics opposing Eunomians. Every party rallying under its *Cæsar*, the religious became a political and national animosity. The more keenly Constans supported the Niceans in the west, the more ardour Constantius exhibited in the east on the side of Arianism mitigated by Eusebius. The general council which the two emperors convened in Bulgaria to reconcile the two parties had no other effect than that of exasperating the hatred between the Nicene bishops and those of the party of Eusebius, as usually happens when enemies are brought together, who are irreconcilable by the opposition of their interests, and the heat of their passions. After the murder of Constans, his brother, remaining sole master of the empire, procured splendid triumphs to his beloved Arians, among others in the two councils of Sirmium, where Photinus the bishop of that city was condemned. A multitude of sects, which Constantius laboured without intermission to extinguish or keep down, troubled the whole course of his life, and he died amid the tumult which they raised on all sides. His successor Julian, far from seeking, like him, to appease them, took delight in setting them on, encouraged them, ridiculed them in his palace, and in public treated them with the most grave irony.

He could not have chosen a more certain plan to ruin the Christian church which he disliked. The Nicene bishops immediately assembled in council at Paris, and declared all the Arian bishops apostates. Athanasius, returned from his exile, and reseated on the throne of Alexandria, resolved to make it a point of conscience to eject all of those apostates who were within his jurisdiction. Lucifer, bishop of Cagliari in Sicily, went still farther than the council of Paris. He blamed severely the amnesty which it granted to the Arians who should submit to sign the formulary of Nice; and separated from those lukewarm Catholics who consented to allow persons who had been heretics to remain among them. Julian however reigned too short a time to see the success of his artful politics. The two principal parties, the Nicene and Arian, supported themselves with equal powers under the two succeeding emperors, Valens, and Valentinian; the latter protecting the first party in the West, the former the second in the East. Valens, a decided Arian, employed all his power in eradicating Semi-arianism, as well as Catholicism from the provinces under his dominion. His zeal too was seconded by the death of Athanasius, and afterwards by that of Valentinian, in whom the Nicene creed lost its firmest defenders. At the same time this profession itself gave birth to a new, and a very dangerous and active enemy.

The bishop Apollinaris, a man of a subtle and philosophical mind, advanced an opinion concerning the word incarnate in the person of **JESUS**, which, according to him, served only as a living organ to the word, a vehicle entirely passive; and this opinion was the cause of a violent fermentation and schism. Finally, under Gratian and Theodosius the Great, Catholicism rose victorious by the protection of those two princes. They employed every expedient to reduce the Arian doctors to silence, and that system would then have received its mortal blow, if an unexpected asylum had not presented itself. New actors appear on the stage of the world, and from the unknown regions of the north come to dispute with the Cæsars the government of the empire. The Goths advance to the frontiers of the empire; they become Christians, but under the Arian creed; and among them it was this sect fled to seek refuge from the ruin which appeared inevitable.

Meanwhile the Nicene faith became every day stronger in the empire. Theodosius, its sole master during fifteen years, (for who would count the short and feeble reigns of Gratian and Valentinian II?) elevated the clergy to a high degree of power and credit. By him a bishop was rendered a personage still more important than ever. Those of the bishops, to whom circumstances

had given a certain supremacy over others, acquired a peculiar degree of importance; and the most eminent of all, those of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, who assumed the title of patriarchs, of fathers, or popes, came by degrees to be considered as the princes and heads of the Christian church. Lifted up higher than others, to each of them the ambition only remained of raising himself higher than his colleagues. Those of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, too distant from the center of power, could not attain a preponderance sufficient to answer this end. The palm, it is evident, could only remain in dispute between the two patriarchs whose chairs were placed in the two capitals of the empire by the side of the two thrones of the East and the West. The talents, the address, the ambition, the virtues, of those who successively filled those two chairs, the favour of the princes, their predilection at one time for new, at another for old Rome, a multitude of circumstances which belong to the history of the empire as well as to that of the church made the balance incline sometimes to one side and sometimes to another. If the patriarch of Constantinople had for him the more constant residence of the emperor, he had also against him the vicinity of the court, which permitted not a priest to elevate himself too high. The bishops, who at

that time observed the duty of residence within their dioceses very ill, and abounded in the capital, often intrigued against the patriarch of whom they were all jealous, and sometimes were able to humble him. The Roman pastor on the other hand was more delivered from the fear of this inconvenient and dangerous presence of the imperial majesty, and of the intrigues of the court. He had for him the mighty name of Rome, before which the nations were so much accustomed to bend. It is well known that the translation of the government to Constantinople had only the effect of weakening it, and that this second capital never acquired the importance of the first. The patriarch of Constantinople then found himself only a subordinate person in a city regarded as itself subordinate; whilst at Rome his rival was left to represent the principal character in the first city of the world. To this let us add that the people who subdued Rome and the West became Christians, whilst those who subdued Constantinople and all the east, established in it the religion of Mahomet. What wonder then, if the bishop of Rome, aided by a skilful and persevering policy, gained the victory over all the rest?—The magic of the name of Rome has fascinated almost all ages, and it has come down even to ours without having lost entirely its charm.

But these reflections have anticipated the course

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of events; and the bishops and patriarchs yet formed an oligarchy, in which no one was legally subject to the authority of another. The laity and priests still preserved their rights, and the patriarchs yielded submission to the authority of the council, diet, or parliament of this republican church. Let us resume the series of the principal facts. Basil, surnamed the Great, bishop of Cesarea, supported by his rare talents and by his writings the Nicene faith, while Theodosius supported it by his edicts. One of these declared, "That no persons should be considered as Catholic christians but those who would confess with Damasus, bishop of Rome, and Peter, bishop of Alexandria, the consubstantial and eternal divinity of the FATHER, SON, and HOLY SPIRIT. Whoever should refuse should be regarded as an heretic and a madman, and be delivered over to the secular arm." Gregory of Nazianzen, then patriarch of Constantinople, and the friend of Basil, approved of this rigour with reluctance; and if he did not loudly blame it, this undoubtedly arose from the hope of seeing it restore that peace and harmony so much to be desired in the church. But that hope was vain. A second imperial edict, which interdicted from the public exercise of their worship all Christians but those of the Nicene profession, produced no better effects. A second ecumenical council was resolved to be assembled, from which a cure was expected

of all the evils which afflicted the church. The place of convocation was fixed at Constantinople. The new council confirmed, and still more precisely defined, the doctrine of one God in three persons, and the consubstantiality of those persons. The imperial authority sanctioned those decrees, made them be received publicly as the symbol of Catholicism, and denounced corporal punishment upon all who should think otherwise. After having thus fettered the liberty of opinion and the sectarian spirit among Christians, Theodosius betook himself to the pursuit of the remains of Paganism, which no longer found any adherents but among the lowest classes of the people. This passion was much more easy to extinguish than that which animated against one another the Christian theologians. In spite of the edicts of the emperors controversies sprung up every moment. The inflexible obstinacy and fury of the antagonists, the hatred they bore to one another, produced excesses at which the church was made to blush. The noble Priscillian was the first illustrious victim who afforded the spectacle of Christian blood shed by the knives of Christians. Two bishops, unworthy of that title, pursued him furiously before Maximin, the tyrant of Gaul: his knowledge and his virtues could not save him from destruction, and he was sacrificed for his opinions by the sacerdotal hatred of two

men, in whom Christianity beheld its Anitus and Melitus.

So many theological disputes and subtle opinions, among which the original simplicity of the Christian worship had disappeared, began to fatigue the minds of the people, who could no longer follow their pastors in the discussion of dogmas. Under the two sons of Theodosius, the barbarians in different quarters penetrated into the Roman empire, carrying with them ignorance, devastation, and war. The quarrels of religion within; the Goths, the Huns, Swevi, Vandals, and Burgundians, without; these were circumstances sufficient to throw Christianity entirely into the darkest ignorance. The ecclesiastics remained the sole depositaries of knowledge. It was in the east more especially that controversy had raged. There is one general characteristic which distinguishes the two churches, and which their history hardly in any instance contradicts; that in the east where the minds of men are more contemplative, and more enthusiastic, all controversies in general turned upon doctrines; while in the west, where the mind it seems is more directed to solid and temporal things, hardly any disputes arose except about rank and pre-eminence. There articles of faith, here articles of discipline and church government, were disputed. The patriarchs of Rome who found themselves invested

with the primacy in the West carefully cultivated, or rather planted this disposition. The true maxim of that throne was to turn to advantage every circumstance, whether political or religious, for the aggrandisement of its power and dignity. More than once it happened that while the good Orientals were ingeniously disputing about some mystical questions, the Roman pontiff enjoyed the triumph of being erected judge over his colleagues of Constantinople or Alexandria; as happened to Anastasius the First, on the occasion of the disturbances produced by the Origenists.

About this time the priest Hieronymus (whose name we disfigure by calling him Jerome,) a man of great capacity, lived sometimes at Rome and in Greece, sometimes in Syria and at Jerusalem, which gave him an equal knowledge of the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin languages; sometimes in a desert, at other times in the court of the Roman patriarch, or among the ladies of Rome, to whom he delighted to teach the doctrines of the church. He gave a translation of all the scriptures into the vulgar tongue, which forms at present the basis of what is called the *vulgate* version. It is with pain, and not without some doubts concerning the purity of his Christianity, that we behold him among the most eager persecutors of the eloquent patriarch John Chrysostom. About the same time another priest, named Rufinus,

translated the books of Origen, of Josephus, of Eusebius, and promoted in the West the study of ecclesiastical history. His translation of the first of these authors raised a violent persecution against him. At this period also flourished the celebrated doctor of Hippo, *Augustin*, the champion of Catholicism, and the real inventor of the subtle dialectics of the theologians. The sects of Donatists and Pelagians occupied at first his activity. Afterwards he engaged in the refutation of the system of predestination, and of that of the Manicheans, of which he had originally been a defender. He was still disputing, teaching, and writing, when the invasion of the Vandals, who, under Genseric, came to besiege Hippo, accelerated his death. This people, as well as their king, were Christians of the Arian sect. Before the death of Augustin, however, a new quarrel inflamed the eastern church. Nestor, the patriarch of Constantinople, aided by the priest Anastasius, advanced and maintained that CHRIST being at once GOD and man, it was of CHRIST, as he was a man, that Mary was the mother, and not of CHRIST, as he was GOD. "For," said he, "it is absurd to suppose that a human creature, such as Mary was, can have borne GOD." Accordingly he called the Virgin the mother of CHRIST, the mother of the son of GOD, but he refused her the title of the mother of GOD. In all other re-

spects he adhered to the Catholic faith of Nice and quarrelled not even with the single personality of CHRIST. It is very difficult to conceive the degree of animosity to which this unfortunate war of vain subtleties was carried. It became a question whether in JESUS should be recognized one nature in one person, or two natures and two persons. The court, the empire, the bishops, all classes of Christians were agitated by this subject to the most extraordinary degree. The third of the councils denominated ecumenical, was convoked at Ephesus, where the boisterous Cyrillus, at the head of one party, the Nestorians on another side, and a third and middle party, anathematized one another with a scandalous fury. The monk Eutyches, the confidant of Cyrillus, who, during the sitting of the council, had so powerfully contributed to the condemnation of Nestorius, saw himself ten years afterwards condemned at Constantinople by another council for having denied the human nature of CHRIST. These discussions were prolonged, and varied without end. The ruling church, which called itself universal, adopted the opinion of the two natures; an opinion which was solemnly consecrated in the fourth ecumenical council, which was held at Chalcedon, and in which the Roman patriarch, *Leo the Great*, had by his legates the satisfaction to see both his primacy and his doc-

trine acknowledged.* The monophysites, or the defenders of the one nature, were far however from thinking themselves vanquished; and the dispute became only the more hot. Leo died without seeing it terminated; and six years afterwards one of his successors, Simplicius, beheld all Italy conquered by barbarians. Odoacer, king of the Heruli, put, within the walls of Rome, a period, before his eyes, to the empire of the West. The throne of Augustulus was overthrown, and the pontifical chair, which then was the second in rank, became by this means the first in the opinion of the Romans and of all the nations of the West.

The controversy concerning the single or double nature of JESUS, concerning his single or double personality, was the cause of the separation of the two churches, the eastern and the western, the Greek and Roman. The irritation of men's minds had become incapable of cure; and the famous decree, known under the name of the Henoticon, which Zeno the Isaurian framed with a view to reconcile the two parties, only accele-

* The fathers of the council gave as the ground of this primacy, that of the city of Rome in the empire; *Dia to Basileucin ten Polin, &c.* See the twenty-eighth canon of that council, which in all other respects declares the patriarch of Constantinople equal to that of Rome, and places him in the second rank, only because Constantinople was considered as but the second capital in the empire. Author.

rated the schism, and rendered it more conspicuous. This Zeno dishonoured the imperial throne by his debaucheries and excesses; and what was beheld upon the throne, was as usual only a specimen, a more conspicuous instance of what was practised every where. The public morals had become as different from those of the first Christians as the doctrine of the theologians was become different from that of the apostles.

The blow which the Roman pontiff had just sustained by a separation which confined him to his patriarchate of the West, where he was harassed and threatened by so many Arians, was a little compensated by the conquest made about this time of the king of the Franks, Clovis, whom his wife, a zealous Christian, a great battle which he believed he gained by a miracle, and the bishop Remi, converted to the Romish faith. Since the baptism of that barbarian prince, the powerful empire which he founded, has remained devoted to the patriarch of Rome. However during those early ages the pious submission of princes was not so great as to prevent Clovis in Gaul, and Theodoric in Italy, from treating patriarchs, bishops, and priests, with considerable roughness.

About the year 518, Justin, emperor of the East, who had some reasons for wishing to humble the patriarch of Constantinople, who advanced

his pretensions too much at will, conceived the idea of reconciling the two churches, in order by this means to confer the primacy upon the Roman pontiff. But he only succeeded in some detached measures, which raised to a height the animosity of the Oriental church. We may here observe an instance of what we stated above, that the vicinity of the imperial throne at Constantinople was as fatal to the dignity of the patriarch of that city as the distance of that throne was favourable to the patriarch of Rome. Justinian, who succeeded Justin, followed his errors in regard to the preference shown to the western Catholicism above the eastern; and by his impolitic and rash measures drove an immense number of his subjects to desperation. Among the Christians of the Grecian empire was seen renewed what had already been seen a century and a half before, and what was seen among the Calvinists of France on the revocation of the edict of Nantz. The Monophysites, urged by persecution, fled beyond the limits of the empire, and peopled Abyssinia, Nubia, Persia, and Armenia. Several patriarchs established themselves in those countries, and there have remained independent even to our times. The great leader of the Monophysites of the East, during that disastrous period, was a monk of great activity named Jacob Baradæus, who was the soul of the party, who organized, and separated it for ever

from the rest of the church, and established bishops and a patriarch at Antioch. From that time the Christian church was divided into three great parts, the Romans, the Greeks, and the Jacobites, each of whom had their pastors, and maintained no communion with the rest. The last, peculiarly hostile to the Greeks, were, half a century afterwards, of powerful assistance to Mahomet and the Caliphs his successors.

What Basil had done for the monks of the East, Benedict undertook with much more success, and with much sounder views, for those of the West. He became the founder of the order of Benedictins, to whom society and the sciences, as well as the Romish church, have been under so great and so numerous obligations. The rules of Basil have produced only ignorant and fanatical Cenobites. Those of Benedict have produced a multitude of useful men, who have not only cultivated a part of Europe, but have courageously carried knowledge and civilization to the most barbarous countries. A part of Gaul, of England, and Germany, was civilised by them, and delivered from a gross idolatry to embrace a purer and milder religion, which commands men to love one another, and to adore their Creator. The ignorance of the eastern monks contributed not a little to preserve among them the spirit of party and division; as the severe subordination too of

those of the West contributed perhaps to the obedience towards the head of the church, which was gradually established among them.

Justinian, to whose reign we owe the fine code of laws which bears his name, and the Reformation of the calendar by Dionysius the Little, has not merited so well of religion as of jurisprudence and chronology. He nourished and fomented an unfortunate quarrel, which arose concerning three chapters of the acts of the council of Chalcedon. The feeble Virgil, who occupied the chair of Rome, was ordered to Constantinople by the emperor, on purpose to condemn the three unfortunate chapters. Virgil, wavering between the respect which he owed to a council and the obedience which he owed to the emperor, declared at first in favour of the chapters, afterwards condemned them, then retracted, displeased all parties, and was at last banished. This only proves that the Popes at this period were still completely subject to the authority of the emperors. When Justinian had, by the valour of the famous Belisarius, re-conquered a great part of Italy, he established at Ravenna a superior officer of the empire, under the title of Exarch, whom the bishops of Rome obeyed as the lieutenant of the emperor. The Gothic kings and other barbarians, when they found themselves masters of the city of Rome, treated the Popes as their subjects.

they even sent them frequently to negotiate for them at Constantinople. Even then, however, the immense pretensions of that See began to be exhibited. Pelagius, who filled the chair about the end of the sixth century, disputed with John, surnamed the Faster, patriarch of Constantinople, the title of ecumenical or universal bishop. The same, after Pelagius, did Gregory, surnamed the Great. The Popes at that period beheld almost at one and the same time the arms of Belisarius employed in the West for the extirpation of the Arians; and the king of the Goths, Ricaredus; the king of the Swevi, Theodomir, in Spain; and Aigilulf, king of the Lombards, who had already penetrated victoriously into Italy, enter into the Romish communion. The Anglo-Saxons, themselves, who since the invasion of England had there almost extinguished Christianity, soon followed complaisantly their king Ethelbert, who became a Roman Catholic by the persuasion of the eloquent Augustin, a Benedictin friar.

Thus ended the second period, in which we behold the progress and establishment of the patriarchal system. The bishops of the great cities endeavoured to raise themselves above the rest as soon as the first dignities of the church became employments of profit and honour. So long as the church was militant, her humble pastors, strangers to ambition, were only distinguished

from one another by their piety. When she became triumphant the face of things changed. Intrigue and favour disposed of places; and manners became dissolute. St. Jerome, who so well knew Rome and the practices of her clergy, paints them in odious colours in several of his writings, and constantly denominates that city Babylon.

THIRD PERIOD—MONARCHY.

(From Mahomet to Hildebrand—604 to 1073.)

The Authority of the Romish See becomes predominant in the West, both in spiritual and in temporal Concerns.

IN the course of the preceding period we have seen poured upon the Roman empire a torrent of people from the North, who, conquering at last the famous legions which had subdued the world, pushed their exploits so far as to destroy entirely the empire of the West, and to weaken that of the East. The commencement of this is distinguished by an invasion very similar, but of a people from the South, and by consequence of very different manners and character from the former. The arms of those new conquerors were likewise destined to overthrow one of the seats of the empire, the only one which yet remained. In process of time the empire of the East was in fact destroyed by the followers of Mahomet; and the Arabians, whom he had raised to the highest pitch of religious and political fanaticism, penetrated into the West by Spain even to the center of Gaul.

Mahomet died master of Arabia and part of Syria, after having founded a religion and a state closely united together under the worship of one Almighty God. With a few simple dogmas, which satisfied the mental wants of those rude, ardent men, the successors of the prophet, under the title of Califs, extended their conquests, and governed their vast dominions with great moderation and wisdom. They tolerated all sects of Christians who appeared in their eyes as the worshippers of a very great prophet, the fore-runner of their own. But they formed their closest connection with the Jacobites and other Oriental sects, whose inveterate hatred against the Greeks and Romans, their oppressors, afforded prodigious assistance to Islamism. These Christians multiplied in peace under their new masters, and spread over Persia, India, Tartary, even as far as China.

Whilst the storm of Islamism, yet only beginning, was heard making a hollow noise on the Southern frontier of the empire, Phocas, its unworthy ruler, excited its indignation by his debaucheries and cruelties. Heraclius, who succeeded him, did more for the happiness of his subjects, but just as little for the safety of the empire. The most important affair of his reign was that which related to the religious doctrine known by the name of Monothelism, or that of one will. People had long disputed about the

two persons of JESUS, then about his two natures; afterwards having agreed that he had two natures, they started the question, if it was necessary to suppose that each nature too had its particular will, and that JESUS had in fact two wills, one as GOD and another as man; or that on the contrary he had but one will, on account of the strict union between the two natures. For this last opinion the emperor declared himself. He rendered Monothelism victorious, which was keenly supported by Sergius, patriarch of Constantinople, but condemned by the aged Sophronius, patriarch of Jerusalem, who died at the very time when the Saracens took possession of his See. These opinions concerning the single or double will of JESUS CHRIST long troubled the Christian community. In vain Heraclius published the edict entitled *Ektese*, and Constans II. equally in vain published that known under the appellation of *Type*. Meanwhile the new emperor displayed great severity against the disturbers of the church: The haughty Pope Martin the first, died in exile; into which he had been sent by Constans. This rigour cooled the rage for disputation, even of the most ardent. Constantine, surnamed Pogonatus, the son of Constans, at last assembled at Constantinople the sixth of the ecumenical councils, in which Monothelism, and all its partisans, were anathematized, even to the Roman pontiff Hono-

ritus, long since dead, who had shewn himself favourable to the doctrine of one will. The Monothelites of the empire, exasperated by this condemnation, took refuge among the Saracens, who allowed them peaceably to establish themselves in the solitudes of Mount Lebanon, where they still subsist under the name of Maronites. The emperor too who had himself convoked the assembly presided in it, as supreme head of the Christian church. The patriarch of Constantinople was seated on his right hand, and the legates of Rome on his left.

The losses which during more than half a century the church had been made to sustain in the East, by the conquests of the Saracens, redoubled the attention of the Roman pontiffs to recover those losses by new acquisitions in the West. Besides, the scymitar of the Mussulmans, which had thrown terror into all the Christian states, was the cause of uniting them into a more solid mass, and of drawing them more closely round him whom they were gradually becoming accustomed to regard as their head. The Papal throne is under more obligation than is generally apprehended to Mahomet and his successors. But toward the establishment of an empire in the West, in which temporal interests were founded on spiritual, the only soldiers for whom the Pope had occasion were zealous, eloquent, indefatigable missionaries ;

and in England, then devotedly Catholic, he sought for apostles capable of combating idolatry with success among the Saxons and other German nations, as well as in the vast monarchy of the Franks. Columban, Gallus, Kilian, were drawn from the cloisters of Ireland to preach to the nations of the continent. They found in Pepin of Herstal a powerful protector. The Anglo-Saxon Willibrod laboured at the same time, and under the same auspices, in the conversion of the Frisons and Flemings. The Roman pontiffs loaded those missionaries with favour and respect. Gregory II, after having thus attached to himself the English monk Winfried, known as the apostle of Germany under the title of Boniface, made him swear fealty and homage to the See and church of Rome; and then sent him, furnished with magnificent letters of recommendation to all princes and bishops, to labour for the interests of Rome among the Hessians, the Thuringians, the Franks, the Bavarians, and Saxons. But what species of Christianity was preached to the nations by these envoys? Obedience to the Pope was its first principle: to endow and enrich the church, the monasteries and the clergy, was the certain road which they pointed out to salvation, the infallible means by which a man might escape the punishment of all crimes. At the same time too it is necessary to observe that those missionaries

introduced some light and civilization among the barbarians whom they converted: and if their instruction was not altogether pure from interest, or from superstition, it was far better, after all, than the gross mythology, and the idolatrous observances of the north.

But of all the religious schisms the most violent, and that which produced the most dreadful tumults, was that concerning the worship of images, with which it was reserved for the eighth century of the church to be afflicted. This disposition to honour the images of holy characters, whether pictures or statues, had appeared among the Christians for some centuries. It had been regarded sometimes as a pious propensity, sometimes as a superstition, sometimes as a thing indifferent. In the west particularly, where the priests had to conduct so many rude and barbarous people, images were of marvellous use for touching their senses, and exciting them to devotion. The monks had made some coarse attempts, but sufficient for the time, in painting and sculpture; and had created a very lucrative traffic in images. Those, in particular, which adorned their churches, and to which they failed not to attribute miraculous virtues, attracted to them crowds of people and gifts. This is sufficient to shew how necessarily the clergy from the head to the lowest priest were bound to protect images

and the worship which was paid to them. The emperor, Leo the Isaurian, formed, with the most upright intentions, the design of interdicting it. He quickly found how dearly he pays for his rashness who attacks the interest of those who have the power of rousing men's consciences. Revolts and insurrections followed. Blood flowed on all sides. The emperor was regarded as Antichrist, who was come to destroy Christianity. To such a degree were the ideas of that pure and sublime religion already altered! In vain did the emperor assemble councils, and depose his patriarch. He lost all consideration, all peace, the exarchate of Ravenna, and the remainder of his power in the west. His partisans were anathematized, and branded with the mark of heresy, under the name of Iconoclasts. His successors found themselves involved in inextricable difficulties, until the ambitious Irene, courting popularity, restored to the multitude their beloved images, and even found a true cross for them to adore. The Roman pontiffs on the occasion of this long war of images, threw themselves into the arms of the Lombard princes, afterwards into those of the French Pepin the Short, on whose head the complaisant Zachary confirmed by his decision the crown which he had usurped, under the pretext that he was more worthy of it than the unfortunate Childeric whom Pepin had de-

throned. Thus far extended the caprice of the Isaurian against the images of the saints. The popes at that time made an important step towards the prerogative which they afterwards usurped of disposing of crowns. They connected themselves with the French monarchs. Stephen III, the successor of Zachary, called Pepin to his assistance against the Lombards. Pepin flew to the task, conquered, and made a present of the conquered territory and of an effective kingdom to the pontiffs who had assisted him in preserving his crown. From this transaction is dated the sovereignty of the popes over a portion of Italy. The son of Pepin, that Charles who was truly worthy of the surname of Great, had again occasion to go to the assistance of pope Adrian the First against the same Lombards. He destroyed their power and confirmed the donation of his father to the Holy See. A few years afterwards he was crowned at Rome by the grateful pope, and proclaimed Roman emperor of the West. Thus was reproduced, after it had been for nearly three centuries extinct, a phantom of the empire of the Cæsars, which still subsists, but more feeble than ever, in our days, in the dignity become almost vain of the emperors of Germany.

Charles did not confine his zeal for the church of Rome to the extermination of the Lombards. He resolved further to exterminate the ancient

worship of Iremensual among the obstinate Saxons, and waged against them for this purpose a bloody war which lasted thirty-two years. His only crime with regard to papal orthodoxy was his not being favourable to the worship of images which he prohibited. He made great efforts to repress the disorders among the clergy and to promote knowledge; an arduous attempt, in which Paul the deacon, and Alcuin immortalized themselves by seconding the views of their prince. Charlemagne, in other respects, governed the church as composing part of his state, as legislator and sovereign. He further strengthened the line of distinction which separated the Latin from the Greek church, in making it be declared in a council which he held at Aix-la-Chapelle, that the Holy Spirit proceeded equally from the Father and the Son; a doctrine held in abhorrence by the good Orientals who maintained that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father only.

But the prince who had raised the popes so high, died, and carried along with him the vigour and the judgment necessary to restrain and keep them from mounting higher. Louis, so sadly known under the name of *Meeh*, was the weak son of a great man, and the most unfortunate of fathers. He was made to do penance on his knees at Attigny before the prelates of his kingdom. And what a triumph, did the artful Gre

gory behold, what a prospect in futurity opened to his eyes, when his three rebellious sons, contending for the spoils of their father, chose him the judge of their differences, and thus recognised him as the sovereign arbiter of crowned heads. Here begins the period in which the bishopric of Rome became truly a sovereignty, and in which the court of Rome laboured most actively toward the inconceivable aggrandisement of the power which it acquired. In a short time, on the occasion of a difference between an archbishop of Rheims and a bishop of Laon his nephew, first appeared the false decretals, the collection of which was attributed to one Isidore of Seville, an imaginary personage probably, and which were fabricated, as is supposed, at Mayence under the direction of some bishop devoted to Rome. The historical blunders and contradictions which are found in them have discovered their evident falsity. They obtained however but too much authority, in those days of ignorance, especially after pope Nicolas the first recognised them formally as authentic. Their principal object was to weaken the authority of the metropolitans, to withdraw the bishops from their jurisdiction, to make them depend immediately upon Rome, in a word, to establish without limitation the spiritual monarchy of the popes. The bishops themselves found this more agreeable than to be watched and

restrained by censors too near them, and eager to maintain their own privileges, as the archbishops were. They could easily, besides, at Rome, by presents and intrigue, extinguish all accusations. The same ideas which the bishops entertained with regard to the metropolitans, all the inferior clergy, the monks, &c. entertained with regard to the bishops. Every one chose rather to be directly under the jurisdiction of Rome, than under a jurisdiction more severe and clear-sighted by its vicinity. Every one therefore laboured with ardour to increase the immediate power of the popes, who complaisantly yielded to the impulse. The princes too, on their part, found some advantage in those false decretals. They were happy to bring down the most powerful of their prelates, and were afraid of beholding the metropolitans assume too great authority within their realms. It appeared to them more advisable to yield still greater authority to a foreign pontiff, by whose vicinity they were not offended, and whom besides they were accustomed to regard as a temporal prince, their colleague. A melancholy experience brought several princes in the sequel to perceive how false a policy they had pursued; but when they wished to apply a remedy to the evil, they found it was incurable; they only increased by irritating it; and their resistance as well as their submission thus

contributed to the establishment of the papal monarchy.

From the very commencement of Christianity, every age, every generation had taken up some idea, new or old, belonging to that religion, but obscure and undefined in its origin, which they fashioned, completed, fixed, and stamped, if the expression may be used, into current coin of the period.—In the ninth century it became the turn of the Eucharist. It had been always believed that the body and blood of JESUS were present in the bread and wine during the celebration of that sacrament. But in what manner were they present?—With, or under the bread and the wine? Was it the same body which was born of the virgin? And like that body was it born without prejudice to her virginity? Should leavened bread be used or unleavened? Ought the laity to receive the wine, or only the bread? These grave questions exercised particularly the subtle logic of the monks; and Radbert, a benedictin of Corvey in Westphalia, appears to be the person who gave to the doctrine of the Eucharist that form which has since been adopted in the Romish church. Two of his adversaries, much more reasonable and better instructed than himself, Ratramus and the famous Scotus Erigena, declared in favour of an opinion which was nearly the same with that after-

wards delivered by Luther. The same age witnessed also keen disputes concerning predestination. Some were for Predestination; some were against it; and a third party were for two, one for good and another for evil. The popes, once recognised as judges, commonly decided in favour of those who shewed themselves most submissive, most devoted to their throne, or in favour of the opinions which most nearly resembled their own. In all cases they gained by those dissensions. Every division helped to confirm their dominion. Whether between sect and sect; bishops and archbishops; monks and priests; or clergy and laity; from all they derived advantage. Never was the old political adage more carefully put in practice.

At last it was thought requisite to bring the Grecian church and bishops, so long divided from the Latin church, to recognise the supremacy of that church and of its head; or on the other hand to cast them out of its communion, to separate from them, and to declare the Latin alone, the universal church. The learned Photius who filled the See of Constantinople, at the same time that Nicolas the First occupied that of Rome, was not a man to yield to such pretensions, or to be terrified by threats. The two bishops quarreled, excommunicated one another, and concluded by each retaining the title of universal bishop. The

schism was now completed, and no means were afterwards sufficient to reconcile the two churches. Only when the Saracens landed in Sicily and Calabria, and when the pope conceived himself to stand in need of the assistance of the emperor of the east, he shewed himself a little more moderate towards the patriarch. In the west the excessive weakness of the latter princes of the race of Charlemagne, that of the king of France Charles the Bald, who degraded himself so far as publicly to make magnificent presents to pope John VIII, to obtain from him the imperial crown, established completely the power of those spiritual monarchs.

But in the manner in which the pretensions of the See of Rome were increased, they could not fail to give umbrage to the princes who were vested with the imperial dignity, to the rights of which those pretensions were chiefly injurious. Then began the long and obstinate contests between the emperors of Germany and the popes. The latter excommunicated, anathematised, deposed the emperors, and excited against them their own people and other princes both Germans and foreigners. The emperors revenged themselves by arms, imprisoned, deposed the popes, and raised up anti-popes. The temporal and the spiritual chiefs contending together, and inflicting upon one another the most serious wounds, began to appear the principal figures of western history.

Their parties were distinguished by the names which have become so famous, of *Gibelins*, and *Guelphs*. About the two antagonists were ranged the kings of France, of Hungary, of England, of Sicily, the Normans, the Danes, the Poles, who leagued and fought sometimes against one party and sometimes against another. In this struggle the temporal princes had every thing to lose and the popes nothing: for when they had lost their possessions, there remained to them the all-powerful empire of opinion; and the vicar of **JESUS CHRIST** found always a sufficient number of princes who bent the knee before him, and a sufficient number of bishops who submissively courted investiture at his hands.

As soon as the Roman pontiffs attained this summit of power and glory, the radiant circle of holiness which adorned the head of their humble predecessors grew dimmer every day, and at last disappeared altogether. All the vices of courts, and of the most corrupt courts in barbarous times, appeared without reserve in that of the successors of **St. Peter**. A pope who had been the personal enemy of his predecessor was seen ordering him to be dug out of the grave, instituting a process against his dead body, making his head and hand be cut off, and the whole to be thrown into the **Tiber**. During more than thirty years the prostitute **Theodora**, and her two daughters, not less

prostituted than herself, were seen governing the pontiffs whose concubines they were, and by them the Christian church; disposing of the papal chair, and conferring it upon their bastards or their paramours; making a sport of perfidy and murder; thus acting the prelude to the atrocity and debauchery of the reign of Borgia, destined to crown the work four centuries afterwards. To blind the eyes of nations toward so many usurpations, and crimes, the popes had need to maintain ignorance and superstition. The monks, their faithful troops, degenerated also from their founders, served them to their wishes in that work of darkness. That age became the most barbarous within the period of modern history, and still bears the dishonourable epithet of the age of *ignorance*, which it justly receives above all others. While it lasted no heresy arose. The heretic is one who thinks differently from the orthodox man. At that time there was no thinking.

Let us further remark that to the end of this period belongs the honour of having formed Hildebrand, who was pope in the beginning of the next, under the name of Gregory VII. He it is who disposed of the throne before he was placed on it; raised to it his friend Nicolas II, and made him decree in the same council of Rome which

condemned Berenger,* that the election of the sovereign pontiff belonged to the seven suffragan bishops of Rome; and the twenty-eight curates of the city, who all took the title of cardinals. This was the last usurpation on the rights of the people and the emperor, an usurpation which completed the independence of the church upon all civil authority.

* The famous archdeacon of Antwerp, who refused to admit the opinion of the monk Radbert in regard to the eucharist, or to believe in transubstantiation.

FOURTH PERIOD.—DESPOTISM.**(From Hildebrand to Luther—1073 to 1517.)****SECTION FIRST,***The authority of the Romish See becomes unlimited.**The Popes are regarded as the representatives of GOD, and the earth as their domain.*

THE see of Rome had not as yet been occupied by any Pope who, like Hildebrand, united all the qualities requisite for extending its power. Imperious, ardent, inflexible, but full of the most profound dissimulation, he began with making himself be elected without the consent of the emperor, and then wrote to him in submissive terms. Supported by the division of the German princes, the favour of the dukes of Normandy, and above all by the complete sway which the Countess Matilda of Tuscany gave him over her, he displayed in the first moments of his reign, what was to be expected from it, contesting boldly with the emperor the right of investiture, which he maintained belonged to himself. At the same time he put in execution the most politic plan which was ever conceived by any Pope, a plan for procuring to the Holy See as many subjects

as there were priests in the Christian world, by disconnecting them with their respective countries, and yielding them up without reserve to the head of the church; he decreed, I say, in a positive manner, the celibacy of the clergy. Hitherto that species of abstinence had been converted into a practical rule, only in the case of the monks. The German clergy, whom that measure prodigiously offended, joined their discontent to that of the emperor, and in a council assembled at Worms, where that monarch presided, Gregory the Seventh was declared to have forfeited the papal throne. Among other heads of accusation they charged him with being an apostate monk (*falsus monachus*,) a sorcerer, (*divinaculus, somniorum, prodigiorumque conjector, manifestus necromanticus*,) an incendiary, a perpetrator of sacrilege, a murderer, a liar, a favourer of adultery, and incest.* This act of accusation, as well as his condemnation and his life, which had been written for that purpose, and in the above stile, were sent to him by the emperor, to bring him to submission. Gregory, on his side too, had convoked an assembly at Rome, and the imperial envoy had the courage to present to him his dispatches in the midst of the assembly. Gregory took them with a calm air, made them be read in

* Phil. Mornayi Hist. Papat. Ann. 1080. p. 234.

full council, and heard them without the least alteration of countenance; then, still with the same deportment, he made the votes of the bishops be taken. On their decision he declared those of the council of Worms suspended; excommunicated Henry, who had presided in it; condemned that prince to lose his imperial dignity; and absolved all his subjects from their oath of fidelity, forbidding all persons whatsoever to obey him in time to come under the same penalty of excommunication. Philip, king of France, had already been menaced by Hildebrand with an anathema. Spain, Bohemia, Hungary and other Christian countries had been harassed with his pretensions and terrified with his threats. The thunders of Gregory did not fall in vain. Henry, abandoned by all his subjects, was obliged to send his crown and its ornaments to the haughty priest, and to go in person to bend down before him. In the month of December he lived on bread and water during three days and three nights, in an open court, with naked feet. After this penitence, he received absolution for the fault he had committed, in judging too exactly the person of Hildebrand, and too impartially the power of superstition and fanaticism in an age like his. The Pope enjoyed from one of the windows of his castle, where he was shut up with Matilda, the exquisite pleasure of seeing an

emperor in hair cloth and with naked feet, in his court. The reconciliation which followed was only apparent. Gregory ceased not to oppose another emperor to the emperor, as he opposed to him an antipope. Henry having at last assembled an army, passed into Italy, took Rome, and would have got possession of the person of the Pope himself who shut himself up in the castle of St. Angelo, had not Robert Guiscard come from Naples to deliver him. Two years afterwards Hildebrand died at Salerno, without having testified any desire to be reconciled with the emperor.

To Gregory has been attributed the first idea of reconquering Palestine, with an army of Christians, from the Arabians and Turks who then began to be conspicuous. However this may be, it was only a few years after his death, when that great movement began to be accomplished which cost Europe so much blood, but repaid her with some illumination; which accustomed her people to make a common cause, to fight together, and to look upon themselves as a mass of confederate states, animated by a common interest. In an armament of all Christendom, it is easy to perceive that the Pope, recognized as the supreme head of that sacred army, in which every warrior enrolled himself as a soldier of the church, must find a great augmentation of his

authority. The power and activity of the sovereigns which were carried away to be wasted in Asia, left the field more open for him in Europe. The church was enriched by the sale which then took place, of a vast quantity of property, and by the legacies of pious warriors who died in the Holy Land. Powerful orders of chivalry were established, and afforded to the church their swords together with their possessions. The sovereigns on their side, amid all their losses, beheld their great vassals lose still more, and reduced to weakness beyond recovery. These few reflections will suffice to shew what influence the crusades had upon the constitution and civilization of Europe.

It is to Gregory the Seventh too we may refer the origin of indulgences, those pardons for the other life of whatsoever crimes a man can commit in this, those bills of exchange upon heaven, which the Popes made afterwards to be so dearly paid for upon the earth, and the traffic in which, carried to a disgusting abuse, became the first occasional cause of the reformation of Luther. The soldiers of the cross who went to die in the field of battle, and surrounded by infidels, without priests or confessors, had, according to the adopted system, need of those immunities; and their employment in such a case had an appearance of reason. But when they were extended

to people who went not from their own homes, they evidently became then only taxes imposed upon the credulity and the vices of men.

From the period at which we are now arrived, about the end of the eleventh century, till the commencement of the fourteenth, is placed the era of the unlimited power of the Popes over the Christian world. The Romish see was during those two centuries filled by men of great talents and of consummate policy: only a small number of them shewed any moderation, and any christian virtues. The history of the external relations of the church, beside the crusades, at first crowned with success, and afterwards fatal to the princes by whom they were undertaken, presents the spectacle, a hundred times repeated, of nations interdicted, of kings excommunicated, and declared to have forfeited their crowns; of those kings at times inflicting injuries in their turn, creating antipopes, carrying war even to the gates of Rome, at times yielding meanly, and abasing themselves before the Popes so far as even to kiss their feet, to perform the vilest offices in their service, and to confess that they held of them their dominions. To relate all these shameful events is the business of history. The object of this sketch is only to point out hastily the different changes which happened in the constitution of the Christian society.

Gregory VII completed the work of Papal omnipotence. His successors, who were able, during more than two centuries, to support it at the height to which he had raised it, and who sometimes used it with a severity which at present we find it difficult to conceive, thought only of the means of sanctioning and establishing it on a more solid foundation. It was not enough that this omnipotence existed in fact; it was also necessary that it should appear to exist by right, and to be founded on positive laws. The decretals of the pretended Isidore were admirable for this purpose; but efforts were used to add to them, and among several celebrated works composed for that end it is sufficient here to name the famous *Decretum* of the monk Gratian, and the *book of Sentences* of father Lombard, archbishop of Paris, which gave the last blow to the authority of princes as well as to that of bishops; and reduced the despotism of Hildebrand to an argumentative and pious system of canon law, which became from that time the most sacred article of the Christianity of the West. Books alone, however, were not sufficient; interpreters were wanting, living organs, guardians, to maintain their doctrines. The mendicant orders were created; and to them was entrusted the duty of cultivating and training the vine of the lord; dangerous ministers, who speedily quarreled, fought, and often gave abundance

of employment to the sovereign pontiffs. The most remarkable of these orders was that of the Dominicans, because at the same time with them was produced, and in the same cradle was nursed, the horrible inquisition, whose first essay was the massacre of several thousand Albigenes and other Christians, who, in their simplicity, imagined they might believe in CHRIST without believing in the Popes; and the devastation of the dominions of Count Raymond of Thoulouse, who had tolerated them. The institution of the crusades was then turned from its first direction, and employed by the Pope to arm Christians against Christians. Some voices were raised here and there against so many abuses and cruelties, so opposite to the spirit of Christianity; but they were immediately extinguished. Arnould of Brescia, and Peter of Bruys, perished in the flames, a punishment which its resemblance to the fire of hell made afterwards be adopted for all the enemies of the Holy See. *Waldo* established in some retired vallies of the Alps a small independent sect, which long escaped persecution, but which at a later period paid for this good fortune by much blood and torture.

It is therefore not without reason that this period is here characterised by the word despotism, and that it begins with the reign of Hildebrand. The papal omnipotence during its course was dis-

played in the humiliation, pushed to excess, of all Christian princes and people; rebels every where encouraged against legitimate authority when that of the Pope was in any respect opposed by it; sovereigns dispossessed and excommunicated as well as their subjects; crowns taken off, put on, and sold, according to the interests or passions of the Pontiff, the bishops and clergy of all Catholic countries subjected to his will, receiving from him the investiture of their offices, and holding of him almost entirely. So that the hierarchy formed every where a state within the state, under the law of a foreign, despotical chief, who thus disposed of all consciences, and of almost all the riches in the country. The means employed by the court of Rome to support so many usurpations were, beside the false historical proofs which imposed upon the ignorance of the times, boldness, constancy, unity of plan, which always prevail over the weakness and division of adversaries, the celibacy of the clergy, auricular confession, the establishment of the mendicant orders, that of the inquisition, the crusades undertaken by the Christian princes under the authority of the church, the immense sums which all the countries of the West poured, under different denominations (tythes, St. Peter's pence, taxes, dispensations, &c.) into the pontifical treasury,—indulgences, jubilees, the doctrine of purgatory (a powerful support) that

of transubstantiation, the worship of saints, that of relics, of miraculous images, pilgrimages, every thing in short calculated to transfer religion to the senses of man, and by consequence to encourage and excite fanaticism, by depriving the mind of the right of examination and judgment.

This picture, which assuredly is not that of the holy and beneficent religion of CHRIST, but that of the hierarchical constitution of the Western church in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, cannot appear exaggerated, even to the most zealous defenders of popery. History has a right to complete the picture at present with the same fidelity with which in time past she has drawn the different lines. All is written; the deposit, entrusted to ages, has come down to us; and the bitter truth can neither be disguised nor controverted. In addition, however, it cannot be disputed that the greatest talents, perseverance, policy and courage, were necessary to rear to perfection, to uphold and maintain the wonderful edifice of papal domination; that immense Colossus which oppressed the earth, and which derived all its strength from the opinion, so firmly established, that it reigned in the name of heaven.

The successive changes in the constitution and dogmas of the church have been exhibited in this sketch; events fall not within its sphere. It is necessary, however, to remark, that according

to the natural disposition of the human mind amid so much constraint and confusion, philosophy could be nothing but theology, and theology could be nothing but an inextricable labyrinth of sophisms and subtleties. The activity of the finest geniuses of the times being unable to take any other direction, their strength served only to engage them farther in difficulties, and more indissolubly to fasten the cords by which they were entangled. For the reigning system of theology was required a logic, pliable, full of distinctions and divisions, and, by which, means might be furnished of being in the right in spite of all obstacles. That of Aristotle, corrupted and misinterpreted, appeared convenient for this purpose. Hence in the schools it was intimately incorporated with theology, and became almost equally sacred. The logic of the preceptor of Alexander (how strange a destiny!) became one of the strongest pillars of the throne of Hildebrand. Thus was produced the scholastic philosophy, to which, notwithstanding all its absurdities, the human mind was at first indebted for some progress. Its first apostles were Lanfranc, Roscelinus, Abelard, and his intolerant rival Bernard. Though those times were covered with darkness and superstition, we yet find in them, besides the names already mentioned, those of Albert surnamed the Great, of Thomas Aquinas, of John Duns Scotus, of Roger Bacon and

of Raymond Lully. This, however, does not prevent the angels, at the same period, from transporting the house of the Holy Virgin from Palestine to Dalmatia, and thence to Loretto; and the emperor Rodolphus, of Habsburg, from being obliged formally to recognize the sovereignty of Pope Nicolas III, over the exarchate of Ravenna.

SECTION SECOND.

The Dignity of the Romish See is diminished; hence its Authority is impaired. Learning is revived; and the Church feels the Want of a Reformation.

IT is when despotism is proceeding with the greatest violence, that it is in most danger of impinging on an obstacle, and receiving injury from the rudeness of the shock. Intoxicated with his authority, with a power which had sported with crowned heads for ages, the haughty Boniface VIII, instigated by personal resentment against the king of France, conceived he might treat him with the despotical insolence of his predecessors. But he found in Philip the handsome, a firmness worthy of the ruler of a great people. Notwithstanding the second crown which Boniface had just added to the tiara, and the imperial ornaments with which he had publicly vested himself at Rome, Philip found the means of having him arrested in the middle of his dominions by a few soldiers under the conduct of the chancellor Nogaret, who was the soul of the whole enterprise. Boniface died in a few weeks after, perhaps of grief for the affront which he had thus sustained. This check would have been of no consequence

with regard to the papal monarchy; had not the king of France, after the short pontificate of the successor of Boniface, who had by a singular good fortune to dispose of the votes of the sacred college, made the tiara be offered to a French bishop, under the express condition that he should reside in France. The prelate, being dazzled, fell into the snare; promised what was demanded, was elected Pope under the name of Clement V, and fixed his throne at Avignon in France. He quickly found that Rome, destined twice to be mistress of the world, could not yield her prerogative to any other city. What the emperors had lost by transferring their seat, the Popes lost also by transferring theirs; and Avignon was to the last what Byzantium had been to the former. Perhaps it was something worse; for besides the transference of the seat of power, always disadvantageous in itself, Clement V found himself in a foreign soil, and in the power of Philip. This captivity of the Popes continued seventy years. It introduced a principle of destruction into the papal system. The colossus was still seen to move, to live, to languish, to make here and there convulsive efforts; but like certain poisons, which have been described, whose slow effects are produced insensibly, and break out only at a precise term, in like manner the papal system was then attacked with a secret

languor which only allowed it a certain duration of life, which was continually wasting.

The kings of France in this manner taught other potentates how they might brave the common despot, and render his thunders vain, by securing his person. Clement V was speedily constrained to annul solemnly all that Boniface had attempted against Philip, and to institute a process against the memory of that Pope, in which he was charged with the most horrible crimes. He was obliged to sign the destruction of the Templars, whose ruin Philip had sworn. In a word the Popes, during that long series of years, were nothing but an instrument in the hands of the French monarchs, who excommunicated, laid under interdicts, deposed their rivals, and directed the sacred artillery of the pontiff, according as it suited their interest, leaving him free course in other quarters, against other Christian states, such as Venice, for example, which at that time had violent disputes with the pontiffs. Meanwhile the other princes failed not quickly to perceive this management, and to make it be observed by their people. The bishops, and clergy of other countries, awaked from the long trance of their passive obedience, began to despise a master who was no longer his own. The fascination of papacy began to dissolve, and men's

eyes gradually to open. Rome revolted; and became the prey, sometimes of the emperor, sometimes of other conquerors. It had also its intervals of liberty, during which it indulged in the glittering dream of reviving its ancient independence and splendour. A multitude of little tyrants divided among them the states of the successor of St. Peter. The Pope was not even sovereign in his new residence, and when at last he acquired the sovereignty of Avignon, he was still no less blockaded and watched in that little inclosure by the French, who were his masters as before. It is easy to see that incalculable evils to the Holy See must have resulted from this position.

Of all courts that of the pontiff had long been the most brilliant, that whose luxury consumed the greatest treasures. Among the cares which occupied the Popes, one of the most urgent was that of enriching their families. This had long been a prodigious weight upon Christianity; but the streams of gold which hitherto had taken their course towards Rome, were not turned aside towards Avignon. Princes prohibited the exportation of money which would have gone partly to fill the coffers of the kings of France. These granted to their prisoner only a very moderate tribute, making their own clergy contribute to the expences of the state, and of the wars carried on with their neighbours. Hence the necessity under

which the Popes were laid of attempting new means to draw money from the clergy and people. Indulgences and dispensations were multiplied in every shape, and at last became openly scandalous: the Popes exacted a portion of the revenues of vacant benefices, and on that account left the greater part of episcopal sees without incumbents; they exacted a considerable duty, a year's revenue on each change of a see, and for that reason multiplied those changes in such a manner as to excite discontent both among the flocks and pastors. In this manner the papal exchequer invented, with its mischievous activity, its *annates*, its *expectances*, *provisions*, *reservations*, *taxes* of all sorts for the pardon of all crimes, even the most abominable. The patience of people was worn out; murmurs arose on all sides; writers prompted by their own conviction, and by the favour of princes, published bold performances, in which the usurpations of the Popes were attacked, and the rights of princes defended against them. Then it was that the emperor of Germany concluded he might dispense with the custom of making his election be confirmed by the sovereign pontiffs, a custom to which his predecessors had submitted for several generations.

A quarrel which arose among the Franciscans, and in which the Popes engaged, was followed by disagreeable consequences. The pontifical au-

thority supported the party which was notoriously most guilty; and had raised extremely high the resentment of the party which was recommended by the most engaging appearance of sanctity. The discontented Franciscans, exasperated against the Popes, alienated from them the minds of the people. Those good monks and a great number of their partisans, regarded the Holy Father according to the favourite similitude of the times, as nothing but antichrist: they enjoyed great influence and popularity; their sermons augmented the discredit into which the Popes had fallen, and the fermentation which became dangerous.

This was carried to a height by the division of the cardinals into two factions, that of the Italians and that of the French, who had become preponderant during the long residence of the Popes in France. They soon proceeded to an open rupture, and chose, with an authority, and upon reasons which appeared to be equally balanced, the one a Cisalpine, the other a transalpine Pope. The kings of France had acquired a taste for disposing of the Pope of Avignon: most other princes wished to see him again at Rome. Hence that great and scandalous schism which lasted forty years. The church had then two heads and sometimes three, whom with terror it beheld anathematizing one another, fulminating, reproaching one another with the most odious

vices, calling one another antichrist, heretics, usurpers. The people, thrown into astonishment and doubt, knew not in which of the adversaries they ought to believe, and generally concluded with equally despising them all. The assembly of the representatives of the church, the councils, laid hold of the opportunity to recover the authority of which the despotism of Rome had deprived them. Those which assembled at Pisa, at Constance, and Basle, made and unmade Popes, summoned them before them, tried them, made the reformation of the church, so much desired, the order of the day, and proclaimed the long forgotten principle, so often anathematized both before and after this period: *that a council is above the Pope*. But a circumstance more dangerous than all schisms, and all the efforts of princes against a domination established on ignorance and false historical proofs, was the revival of learning, which after a total eclipse of about two centuries, had already here and there manifested some faint dawnings, some symptoms of the morning, and began to throw a pretty clear light about the end of the fourteenth century. It was a matter of some importance that at the beginning of this century Nicolas de Lyre, in the university of Paris, which has so boldly exerted itself in opposition to the pretensions of the Popes, commented

publicly on the text of the Scriptures themselves, and by a learned exposition restored an acquaintance, well nigh lost, with that common charter of Christians. Marsilius of Padua, Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarch, created a taste for literature, extended its rising empire, and attacked the papal system with different arms, yet equally capable of wounding. An ardour for learning; the doubts to which it gives occasion; and criticism by which it is enlightened, sprung up in all quarters. Universities resembling that of Paris were established in Bohemia, Germany and England. At the same time appeared in the latter country the learned Wickliff, with a literal translation of the New Testament, and the most powerful arguments against the papal system, which he attacked with an heroic firmness. Still more courageous, and with equal learning, the unfortunate John Huss preached the same doctrine in Bohemia with much greater success, and founded there a formidable sect, who afterwards defended themselves by arms under the intrepid and fortunate Ziska, their military leader. It is well known with what magnanimity the sage of Prague mounted the pile of Constance, on which he was thrust by the most perfidious fanaticism, in contempt of an imperial safe-conduct and the most sacred promises. His disciple Hieronymus or Jerome displayed on the

same pile, the constancy and firmness of his master. But in vain did the tyrants burn bodies; thoughts were beyond the reach of the flames; and these, flying with rapidity from one mind to another, every where distributed the fruitful seeds of science and liberty.

Here events crowd upon the attention of the historian who seeks only results. He finds himself on a declivity; gravitation makes him accelerate his pace; every thing flies and disappears behind him, till having arrived at another plain, he sees the objects steadfast and in order which had passed so rapidly before his eyes.

The Popes delivered from the captivity, and afterwards from the antipopedom of Avignon, fancied themselves restored to the happy times of Hildebrand and his successors. Every thing about them at Rome crouched before them; opulence had returned to their court; flattery and pleasure rendered them indifferent to the public sentiments which they despised from ignorance. The most artful policy, natural to a power so weak in reality, and only powerful by intrigue, by the talent of fascinating the eyes of men, was put in practice by them, to sow divisions among the princes and to support themselves. Nothing proves more fully how scrupulously this system was followed from Pope to Pope, than the example of *Aeneas Sylvius*, an ardent reformer of the

church under that title, and the author of an energetic composition, which forms part of the acts of the council of Basle, against Eugenius the Fourth. Scarcely was he elected Pope himself, under the title of Pius the Second, when he retracted every thing in an express bull, and became an ardent zealot for all the prerogatives of his see.* At last the disregard to all character and decency, the habit and effrontery of crimes, exhibited themselves in all their deformity in the court of Borgia, Pope under the name of Alexander the Sixth. The very name of this disgrace of the papacy speaks more than that of the Neros and Domitians, under whom Rome had already groaned. It is easy to perceive how much a

* Who would have said that the same man who at Basle had spoken the language of reason, and had supported the authority of the church assembled in council, against that of the Popes, could, a few years afterwards, have expressed himself in the following manner in a bull, against all those who should appeal to a council? "Execrabilis, et pristinis temporibus inauditus, tempestate nostra inolevit abusus, ut a Romano Pontifice, J. C. Vicario, nonnulli spiritu rebellionis imbuti, ad futuram concilium provocare præsumant. Nutritur adversus primam sedem rebellio, . . . volentes igitur hoc pestiferum virus procul pellere, hujusmodi provocaciones damnamus: Si quis autem contra fecerit, cujuscunque status, gradus, ordinis, vel conditionis fuerit; etiam si imperiali, regali, vel pontificali præfulgeat dignitate, ipso facto sententium execrationis incurrat, et eas pœnas ac censuras, quas rei majestatis incurtere dignoscuntur." *BULLAR. MAGN. Tom. I. p. 369.*

pontiff of this description must have alienated the hearts and minds of men from a church of which he was the head. The most sincere Catholics were shocked and confounded. Their indignation was raised to behold the contributions of the Christian world perverted to such shameful purposes, and the censures of the church in so unworthy hands. Ten years after this execrable pontificate, began that of the frivolous Leo the Tenth, a *petit-maitre* Pope, fond of pleasure, averse to business, a great protector of the arts which yielded him pleasure and flattered his vanity; for we must not let this circumstance deceive us. That protection, so much celebrated, which Leo the Tenth afforded to painters, musicians, poets, and some writers of his time, had no other origin than the amusement which he expected from them, than habit, and if you will a certain delicacy of taste which he had acquired in the house of his father, the celebrated Medicis. The Popes protected men of talents so long as they saw in them only courtiers who flattered them, artificers of pleasure, or agreeable companions. When they began to perceive that in the productions of genius was concealed the light before which superstition must fly, they persecuted and mortified genius; they would gladly have extinguished the light which at first they had assisted to produce. Leo, moreover, feigned

like all his predecessors, a wish to make war upon the infidels, and to reconquer the tomb of JESUS CHRIST; an usual pretext for new exactions. The luxury of his court consumed every thing. He wished also to complete the superb church of St. Peter. To supply those demands it was necessary to have recourse to new indulgences. The publication of them roused that impatience and indignation which brooded in all quarters. The Reformation followed, of the consequences of which we have given an account; and the celebrated church erected for the prince of the apostles was the mass which crushed the power of his successors.

Who would suppose, that while in the West men were slaughtering one another to determine whether the head of the church, or the head of the empire, should command, and have the pre-eminence, the Greeks were disputing with the most desperate fury about this question, namely, "What was the nature of the light seen by the Apostles upon Mount Tabor, was it created or uncreated? God or not God?" The leaders, and other considerable members of the vanquished and persecuted party, came to seek refuge in Italy, and there promoted the taste for literature. A short time after, when the seat of the Greek empire itself fell by the power of the Turks, the emigration of men of letters towards Italy was still greater. Those fugitives, to whom nothing

remained but their knowledge, inspired generally a taste for their language, which was the key of classical antiquity, as well as that of the sacred books. The love of the arts, and the love of knowledge, inspired every soul capable of feeling and of thinking; those which were not so, remaining faithful to the barbarity and fanaticism of the preceding ages, formed an opposition irritable and violent in the extreme.* A Pope had already forbidden the study of mathematics, as dangerous. Now it appeared that the study of Greek and Hebrew would yield an insight into the original titles of religion and its ministers. The resolution was formed of prohibiting it. In the universities of Bohemia, England, Scotland, and of the north of Germany, comprehending Holland, the more profound and serious parts of learning, criticism and philosophy, had been particularly cultivated; in Italy, a gayer country, amid a people

* Reason and truth never fail to have similar opponents. It was of of the doctrine protected by them, and of their efforts to propagate it, that the Marquis d'Argens said in his *History of the Human Mind* (Tom. X. p. 380:)

“ And such are the principles, and such the system which certain hypocritical devotees would still applaud, and again introduce among us. When we consider the evils which certain tyrants have inflicted upon men, and the contempt they shewed for human nature, we cannot help conceiving a mortal hatred for people who endeavour to palliate the horror inspired by so many actions which make nature shudder.” Author,

devoted to pleasure, poetry, and the fine arts had taken up their residence as on a more propitious soil. France had the happiness to unite the advantages of both those climates, without however in that age being able to aspire to the palm either of poetry or of erudition, both of which she has in their turns been able to procure in subsequent periods.

Whilst the learned world was in this state of agitation, violent storms were collecting in the political horizon. The young and ambitious Charles had just ascended the imperial throne; Spain, Belgium, and a part of France, joined to his immense dominions in Germany, made him the most powerful monarch in Europe: the fear was raised lest that project of an universal monarchy should be realized in the West, which had never been abandoned by the successors of the Cesars, and particularly by the princes of the house of Austria, since they had arrived at that elevation. The successor of St. Peter still disputed on other grounds the right to that monarchy, but with arms which now began to lose their temper. The German princes saw with terror the destiny preparing for them. Instead of sovereign princes, confederated under one head, they were about to become mere vassals of the emperor. The free cities had the same subjugation to dread. Francis the first only, on the throne of France,

could efficaciously oppose the formidable Charles. Young, ardent, full of courage, and of the desire to signalize himself; powerful by the annexation to his crown of almost all the territory of France; delivered from the English, and from all his too powerful vassals, he could hazard, and it became him to hazard, the contest. Such was the precarious and eventful situation of Europe. Every thing gave indication that the world was on the point of some great explosion, which would form one of the epochs of its history. The new world was discovered; and human thought appeared to have expanded like the ocean on passing the boundaries of our ancient hemisphere. The art of printing, which for ever excluded the return of barbarity, and facilitated the diffusion of knowledge, was invented; when a man of courage arose, who feared not to declare, "that the church of CHRIST wanted Reformation; to be purged of its abuses, and restored to its primitive spirit; that if the bishop of Rome would not consent to this Reformation, it ought to be performed without him." This man was Martin Luther; and the Reformation was accomplished under his conduct in a considerable part of the church.

THE END.

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