

BUCKLE HENRY THOMAS

HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION
IN ENGLAND, VOL. 2 OF 3

Henry Buckley
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in England, Vol. 2 of 3

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CHAPTER I

OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF THE FRENCH INTELLECT FROM THE MIDDLE OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY TO THE ACCESSION TO POWER OF LOUIS XIV

The consideration of these great changes in the English mind, has led me into a digression, which, so far from being foreign to the design of this Introduction, is absolutely necessary for a right understanding of it. In this, as in many other respects, there is a marked analogy between investigations concerning the structure of society and investigations concerning the human body. Thus, it has been found, that the best way of arriving at a theory of disease is by beginning with the theory of health; and that the foundation of all sound pathology must be first sought in an

observation, not of the abnormal, but of the normal functions of life. Just in the same way, it will, I believe, be found, that the best method of arriving at great social truths, is by first investigating those cases in which society has developed itself according to its own laws, and in which the governing powers have least opposed themselves to the spirit of their times.¹ It is on

¹ The question as to whether the study of normal phenomena should or should not precede the study of abnormal ones, is of the greatest importance; and a neglect of it has introduced confusion into every work I have seen on general or comparative history. For this preliminary being unsettled, there has been no recognized principle of arrangement; and historians, instead of following a scientific method suited to the actual exigencies of our knowledge, have adopted an empirical method suited to their own exigencies; and have given priority to different countries, sometimes according to their size, sometimes according to their antiquity, sometimes according to their geographical position, sometimes according to their wealth, sometimes according to their religion, sometimes according to the brilliancy of their literature, and sometimes according to the facilities which the historian himself possessed for collecting materials. All these are factitious considerations; and, in a philosophic view, it is evident that precedence should be given to countries by the historian solely in reference to the ease with which their history can be generalized; following in this respect the scientific plan of proceeding from the simple to the complex. This leads us to the conclusion that, in the study of Man, as in the study of Nature, the question of priority resolves itself into a question of aberration; and that the more aberrant any people have been, that is to say, the more they have been interfered with, the lower they must be placed in an arrangement of the history of various countries. Coleridge (*Lit. Remains*, vol. i. p. 326, and elsewhere in his works) seems to suppose that the order should be the reverse of what I have stated, and that the laws both of mind and body can be generalized from pathological data. Without wishing to express myself too positively in opposition to so profound a thinker as Coleridge, I cannot help saying that this is contradicted by an immense amount of evidence, and, so far as I am aware, is supported by none. It is contradicted by the fact, that those branches of inquiry which deal with phenomena little affected by foreign causes,

this account that, in order to understand the position of France, I have begun by examining the position of England. In order to

have been raised to sciences sooner than those which deal with phenomena greatly affected by foreign causes. The organic world, for example, is more perturbed by the inorganic world, than the inorganic world is perturbed by it. Hence we find that the inorganic sciences have always been cultivated before the organic ones, and at the present moment are far more advanced than they. In the same way, human physiology is older than human pathology; and while the physiology of the vegetable kingdom has been successfully prosecuted since the latter half of the seventeenth century, the pathology of the vegetable kingdom can scarcely be said to exist, since none of its laws have been generalized, and no systematic researches, on a large scale, have yet been made into the morbid anatomy of plants. It appears, therefore, that different ages and different sciences bear unconscious testimony to the uselessness of paying much attention to the abnormal, until considerable progress has been made in the study of the normal; and this conclusion might be confirmed by innumerable authorities, who, differing from Coleridge, hold that physiology is the basis of pathology, and that the laws of disease are to be raised, not from the phenomena presented in disease, but from those presented in health; in other words, that pathology should be investigated deductively rather than inductively, and that morbid anatomy and clinical observations may verify the conclusions of science, but can never supply the means of creating the science itself. On this extremely interesting question, compare *Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, Hist. des Anomalies de l'Organisation*, vol. ii. pp. 9, 10, 127; *Bowman's Surgery*, in *Encyclop. of the Medical Sciences*, p. 824; *Bichat, Anatomie Générale*, vol. i. p. 20; *Cullen's Works*, vol. i. p. 424; *Comte, Philos. Positive*, vol. iii. pp. 334, 335; *Robin et Verdeil, Chimie Anatomique*, vol. i. p. 68; *Esquirol, Maladies Mentales*, vol. i. p. 111; *Georget, de la Folie*, pp. 2, 391, 392; *Brodie's Pathology and Surgery*, p. 3; *Blainville, Physiologie comparée*, vol. i. p. 20; *Feuchtersleben's Medical Psychology*, p. 200; *Lawrence's Lectures on Man*, 1844, p. 45; *Simon's Pathology*, p. 5. Another confirmation of the accuracy of this view is, that pathological investigations of the nervous system, numerous as they have been, have effected scarcely anything; the reason evidently being, that the preliminary knowledge of the normal state is not sufficiently advanced. See *Noble on the Brain*, pp. 76–92, 337, 338; *Henry on the Nervous System*, in *Third Report of Brit. Assoc.* p. 78; *Holland's Medical Notes*, p. 608; *Jones and Sieveking's Patholog. Anat.* p. 211.

understand the way in which the diseases of the first country were aggravated by the quackery of ignorant rulers, it was necessary to understand the way in which the health of the second country was preserved by being subjected to smaller interference, and allowed with greater liberty to continue its natural march. With the light, therefore, which we have acquired by a study of the normal condition of the English mind, we can, with the greater ease, now apply our principles to that abnormal condition of French society, by the operations of which, at the close of the eighteenth century, some of the dearest interests of civilization were imperilled.

In France, a long train of events, which I shall hereafter relate, had, from an early period, given to the clergy a share of power larger than that which they possessed in England. The results of this were for a time decidedly beneficial, inasmuch as the church restrained the lawlessness of a barbarous age, and secured a refuge for the weak and oppressed. But as the French advanced in knowledge, the spiritual authority, which had done so much to curb their passions, began to press heavily upon their genius, and impede its movements. That same ecclesiastical power, which to an ignorant age is an unmixed benefit, is to a more enlightened age a serious evil. The proof of this was soon apparent. For when the Reformation broke out, the church had in England been so weakened, that it fell almost at the first assault; its revenues were seized by the crown,² and its offices,

² A circumstance which Harris relates with evident delight, and goes out of his way

after being greatly diminished both in authority and in wealth, were bestowed upon new men, who, from the uncertainty of their tenure, and the novelty of their doctrines, lacked that long-established prescription by which the claims of the profession are mainly supported. This, as we have already seen, was the beginning of an uninterrupted progress, in which, at every successive step, the ecclesiastical spirit lost some of its influence. In France, on the other hand, the clergy were so powerful, that they were able to withstand the Reformation, and thus preserve for themselves those exclusive privileges which their English brethren vainly attempted to retain.

This was the beginning of that second marked divergence between French and English civilization,³ which had its origin, indeed, at a much earlier period, but which now first produced conspicuous results. Both countries had, in their infancy, been greatly benefited by the church, which always showed itself ready to protect the people against the oppressions of the crown and the nobles.⁴ But in both countries, as society advanced,

to mention it. *Lives of the Stuarts*, vol. iii. p. 300. On the amount of loss the church thus sustained, see *Sinclair's Hist. of the Revenue*, vol. i. pp. 181–184, and *Eccleston's English Antiquities*, p. 228.

³ The first divergence arose from the influence of the protective spirit, as I shall endeavour to explain in the next chapter.

⁴ On the obligations Europe is under to the Catholic clergy, see some liberal and very just remarks in *Kemble's Saxons in England*, vol. ii. pp. 374, 375; and in *Guizot's Civilisation en France*. See also *Neander's Hist. of the Church*, vol. iii. pp. 199–206, 255–257, vol. v. p. 138, vol. vi. pp. 406, 407; *Palgrave's Anglo-Saxon Commonwealth*, vol. i. p. 655; *Lingard's Hist. of England*, vol. ii. p. 44; *Klimrath, Travaux sur l'Hist.*

there arose a capacity for self-protection; and early in the sixteenth, or probably even in the fifteenth century, it became urgently necessary to diminish that spiritual authority, which, by prejudging the opinions of men, has impeded the march of their knowledge.⁵ It is on this account that Protestantism, so far from being, as its enemies have called it, an aberration arising from accidental causes, was essentially a normal movement, and was the legitimate expression of the wants of the European intellect. Indeed, the Reformation owed its success, not to a desire of purifying the church, but to a desire of lightening its pressure; and it may be broadly stated, that it was adopted in every civilized country, except in those where preceding events had increased the influence of the ecclesiastical order, either among the people or among their rulers. This was, unhappily, the case with France, where the clergy not only triumphed over the Protestants, but appeared, for a time, to have gained fresh authority by the defeat of such dangerous enemies.⁶

du droit, vol. i. p. 394; *Carwithen's Hist. of the Church of England*, vol. i. p. 157.

⁵ The way in which this acted is concisely stated by Tennemann: 'Wenn sich nun auch ein freierer Geist der Forschung regte, so fand er sich gleich durch zwei Grundsätze, welche aus jenem Supremat der Theologie flossen, beengt und gehemmt. Der erste war: die menschliche Vernunft kann nicht über die Offenbarung hinausgehen... Der zweite: die Vernunft kann nichts als wahr erkennen, was dem Inhalte der Offenbarung widerspricht, und nichts für falsch erkennen, was derselben angemessen ist, – folgte aus dem ersten.' *Gesch. der Philos.* vol. viii. part i. p. 8.

⁶ As to the influence of the Reformation generally, in increasing the power of the Catholic clergy, see M. Ranke's important work on the *History of the Popes*; and as to the result in France, see *Monteil, Hist. des divers Etats*, vol. v. pp. 233–235.

The consequence of all this was, that in France, every thing assumed a more theological aspect than in England. In our country, the ecclesiastical spirit had, by the middle of the sixteenth century, become so feeble, that even intelligent foreigners were struck by the peculiarity.⁷ The same nation, which, during the Crusades, had sacrificed innumerable lives in the hope of planting the Christian standard in the heart of

Corero, who was ambassador in France in 1569, writes, 'Il papa può dire a mio giudizio, d'aver in questi romori piuttosto guadagnato che perduto, perciocchè tanta era la licenza del vivere, secondo che ho inteso, prima che quel regno si dividesse in due parti, era tanta poca la devozione che avevano in Roma e in quei che vi abitavano, che il papa era più considerato come principe grande in Italia, che come capo della chiesa e pastore universale. Ma scoperti che si furono gli ugonotti, cominciarono i cattolici a riverire il suo nome, e riconoscerlo per vero vicario di Cristo, confirmandosi tanto più in opinione di doverlo tener per tale, quanto più lo sentivano sprezzare e negare da essi ugonotti.' *Relations des Ambassadeurs Vénitiens*, vol. ii. p. 162. This interesting passage is one of many proofs that the immediate advantages derived from the Reformation have been overrated; though the remote advantages were undoubtedly immense.

⁷ The indifference of the English to theological disputes, and the facility with which they changed their religion, caused many foreigners to censure their fickleness. See, for instance, *Essais de Montaigne*, livre ii. chap. xii. p. 365. Perlin, who travelled in England in the middle of the sixteenth century, says, 'The people are reprobates, and thorough enemies to good manners and letters; for they don't know whether they belong to God or the devil, which St. Paul has reprehended in many people, saying, Be not transported with divers sorts of winds, but be constant and steady to your belief.' *Antiquarian Repertory*, vol. iv. p. 511, 4to, 1809. See also the remarks of Michele in 1557, and of Crespet in 1590; *Ellis's Original Letters*, 2nd series, vol. ii. p. 239; *Hallam's Constitutional History*, vol. i. p. 102; *Southey's Commonplace Book*, 3rd series, p. 408.

Asia,⁸ was now almost indifferent to the religion even of its own sovereign. Henry VIII., by his sole will, regulated the national creed, and fixed the formularies of the church, which, if the people had been in earnest, he could not possibly have done; for he had no means of compelling submission; he had no standing army; and even his personal guards were so scanty, that at any moment they could have been destroyed by a rising of the warlike apprentices of London.⁹ After his death, there came Edward, who, as a Protestant king, undid the work of his father; and, a few years later, there came Mary, who, as a Popish queen, undid the work of her brother; while she, in her turn, was succeeded by Elizabeth, under whom another great alteration was effected in the established faith.¹⁰ Such was the indifference of the people,

⁸ An historian of the thirteenth century strikingly expresses the theological feelings of the English crusaders, and the complete subordination of the political ones: 'Indignum quippe judicabant animarum suarum salutem omittere, et obsequium cœlestis Regis, clientelæ regis alicujus terreni postponere; constituerunt igitur terminum, videlicet festum nativitatis beati Johannis Baptistæ.' *Matthæi Paris Historia Major*, p. 671. It is said, that the first tax ever imposed in England on personal property was in 1166, and was for the purpose of crusading. *Sinclair's Hist. of the Revenue*, vol. i. p. 88: 'It would not probably have been easily submitted to, had it not been appropriated for so popular a purpose.'

⁹ Henry VIII. had, at one time, fifty horse-guards, but they being expensive, were soon given up; and his only protection consisted of 'the yeomen of the guard, fifty in number, and the common servants of the king's household.' *Hallam's Const. Hist.* vol. i. p. 46. These 'yeomen of the guard were raised by Henry VII. in 1485.' *Grose's Military Antiquities*, vol. i. p. 167. Compare *Turner's Hist. of England*, vol. vii. p. 54; and *Lingard's Hist. of England*, vol. iii. p. 298.

¹⁰ Locke, in his first Letter on Toleration, has made some pungent, and, I should

that these vast changes were accompanied without any serious risk.¹¹ In France, on the other hand, at the mere name of religion, thousands of men were ready for the field. In England, our civil wars have all been secular; they have been waged, either for a change of dynasty, or for an increase of liberty. But those far more horrible wars, by which, in the sixteenth century, France was desolated, were conducted in the name of Christianity, and even the political struggles of the great families were merged in a deadly contest between Catholics and Protestants.¹²

The effect this difference produced on the intellect of the two countries is very obvious. The English, concentrating their abilities upon great secular matters, had, by the close of the sixteenth century, produced a literature which never can perish. But the French, down to that period, had not put forth a single work, the destruction of which would now be a loss to Europe.

suppose, very offensive, observations on these rapid changes. *Locke's Works*, vol. v. p. 27.

¹¹ But, although Mary easily effected a change of religion, the anti-ecclesiastical spirit was far too strong to allow her to restore to the church its property. 'In Mary's reign, accordingly, her parliament, so obsequious in all matters of religion, adhered with a firm grasp to the possession of church-lands.' *Hallam's Const. Hist.* vol. i. p. 77. See also *Short's Hist. of the Church of England*, p. 213; *Lingard's Hist. of England*, vol. iv. pp. 339, 340; *Butler's Mem. of the Catholics*, vol. i. p. 253; and *Carwithen's Hist. of the Church of England*, vol. i. p. 346.

¹² 'Quand éclata la guerre des opinions religieuses, les antiques rivalités des barons se transformèrent en haine du prêche ou de la messe.' *Capecigüe, Hist. de la Réforme et de la Ligue*, vol. iv. p. 32. Compare *Duplessis Mornay, Mém. et Correspond.*, vol. ii. pp. 422, 563; and *Boullier, Maison Militaire des Rois de France*, p. 25, 'des querelles d'autant plus vives, qu'elles avoient la religion pour base.'

What makes this contrast the more remarkable is, that in France the civilization, such as it was, had a longer standing; the material resources of the country had been earlier developed; its geographical position made it the centre of European thought;¹³ and it had possessed a literature at a time when our ancestors were a mere tribe of wild and ignorant barbarians.

The simple fact is, that this is one of those innumerable instances which teach us that no country can rise to eminence so long as the ecclesiastical power possesses much authority. For, the predominance of the spiritual classes is necessarily accompanied by a corresponding predominance of the topics in which those classes delight. Whenever the ecclesiastical profession is very influential, ecclesiastical literature will be very abundant, and what is called profane literature will be very scanty. Hence it occurred, that the minds of the French, being almost entirely occupied with religious disputes, had no leisure for those great inquiries into which we in England were beginning to enter;¹⁴ and there was, as we shall presently see, an interval of a whole generation between the progress of the French and English intellects, simply because there was about the same interval between the progress of their scepticism. The

¹³ The intellectual advantages of France, arising from its position between Italy, Germany, and England, are very fairly stated by M. Lermnier (*Philosophie du Droit*, vol. i. p. 9).

¹⁴ Just in the same way, the religious disputes in Alexandria injured the interests of knowledge. See the instructive remarks of M. Matter (*Hist. de l'Ecole d'Alexandrie*, vol. ii. p. 131).

theological literature, indeed, rapidly increased;¹⁵ but it was not until the seventeenth century that France produced that great secular literature, the counterpart of which was to be found in England before the sixteenth century had come to a close.

Such was, in France, the natural consequence of the power of the church being prolonged beyond the period which the exigencies of society required. But while this was the intellectual result, the moral and physical results were still more serious. While the minds of men were thus heated by religious strife, it would have been idle to expect any of those maxims of charity to which theological faction is always a stranger. While the Protestants were murdering the Catholics,¹⁶ and the Catholics murdering the Protestants, it was hardly likely that either sect should feel tolerance for the opinions of its enemy.¹⁷ During

¹⁵ *Monteil, Hist. des divers Etats*, vol. vi. p. 136. Indeed, the theological spirit seized the theatre, and the different sectarians ridiculed each other's principles on the stage. See a curious passage at p. 182 of the same learned work.

¹⁶ The crimes of the French Protestants, though hardly noticed in *Felice's History of the Protestants of France*, pp. 138–143, were as revolting as those of the Catholics, and quite as numerous relatively to the numbers and power of the two parties. Compare *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xviii. pp. 516, 517, with *Capefigue, Hist. de la Réforme*, vol. ii. p. 173, vol. vi. p. 54; and *Smedley, Hist. of the Reformed Religion in France*, vol. i. pp. 199, 200, 237.

¹⁷ In 1569 Corero writes: 'Ritrovai quel regno, certo, posto in grandissima confusione; perchè, stante quella divisione di religione (convertita quasi in due fazioni e inimicizie particolari), era causa ch' ognuno, senza che amicizia o parentela potesse aver luoco, stava con l'orecchie attente; e pieno disospetto ascoltava da che parte nasceva qualche romore,' *Relat. des Ambassad. Vénitiens*, vol. ii. p. 106. He emphatically adds, 'Temevano gl' ugonotti, temevano li cattolici, tenieva il prencipe,

the sixteenth century, treaties were occasionally made between the two parties; but they were only made to be immediately broken;¹⁸ and, with the single exception of l'Hôpital, the bare idea of toleration does not seem to have entered the head of any statesman of the age. It was recommended by him;¹⁹ but neither his splendid abilities, nor his unblemished integrity, could make head against the prevailing prejudices, and he eventually retired into private life without effecting any of his noble schemes.²⁰

Indeed, in the leading events of this period of French history, the predominance of the theological spirit was painfully shown. It was shown in the universal determination to subordinate political

temevano li sudditi.' See also, on this horrible state of opinions, *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xviii. pp. 21, 22, 118–120, 296, 430. On both sides, the grossest calumnies were propagated and believed; and one of the charges brought against Catherine de Medici was, that she caused the Cesarean operation to be performed on the wives of Protestants, in order that no new heretics might be born. *Sprengel, Hist. de la Médecine*, vol. vii. p. 294.

¹⁸ *Mably, Observations sur l'Hist. de France*, vol. iii. p. 149. In the reign of Charles IX. alone, there were no less than five of these religious wars, each of which was concluded by a treaty. See *Flassan, Hist. de la Diplomatie Française*, vol. ii. p. 69.

¹⁹ For which l'Hôpital was accused of atheism: 'Homo doctus, sed verus atheus.' *Dict. Philos.* article *Athéisme*, in *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. xxxvii. pp. 181, 182.

²⁰ I have not been able to meet with any good life of this great man: that by Charles Butler is very superficial, and so is that by Bernardi, in *Biog. Univ.* vol. xxiv. pp. 412–424. My own information respecting l'Hôpital is from *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xviii. pp. 431–436; *Capefigue, Hist. de la Réforme*, vol. ii. pp. 135–137, 168–170; *De Thou, Hist. Univ.* vol. iii. pp. 519–523, vol. iv. pp. 2–8, 152–159, vol. v. pp. 180–182, 520, 521, 535, vol. vi. pp. 703, 704; *Sully, Œconomies Royales*, vol. i. p. 234. Duvernet (*Hist. de la Sorbonne*, vol. i. pp. 215–218) is unsatisfactory, though fully recognizing his merit.

acts to religious opinions.²¹ It was shown in the conspiracy of Amboise, and in the conference of Poissy; and still more was it shown in those revolting crimes so natural to superstition, the massacres of Vassy and of St. Bartholomew, the murder of Guise by Poltrot, and of Henry III. by Clement. These were the legitimate results of the spirit of religious bigotry. They were the results of that accursed spirit, which, whenever it has had the power, has punished even to the death those who dared to differ from it; and which, now that the power has passed away, still continues to dogmatize on the most mysterious subjects, tamper with the most sacred principles of the human heart, and darken with its miserable superstitions those sublime questions that no one should rudely touch, because they are for each according to the measure of his own soul, because they lie in that unknown tract which separates the Finite from the Infinite, and because they are as a secret and individual covenant between Man and his God.

How long these sad days²² would, in the ordinary course

²¹ 'Ce fut alors que la nation ne prit conseil que de son fanatisme. Les esprits, de jour en jour plus échauffés, ne virent plus d'autre objet que celui de la religion, et par piété se firent les injures les plus atroces.' *Mably, Observations sur l'Hist. de France*, vol. iii. p. 145.

²² The 19th and 20th volumes of *Sismondi's Histoire des Français* contain painful evidence of the internal condition of France before the accession of Henry IV. Indeed, as Sismondi says (vol. xx. pp. 11–16), it seemed at one time as if the only prospect was a relapse into feudalism. See also *Monteil, Hist. des divers Etats*, vol. v. pp. 242–249: 'plus de trois cent mille maisons détruites.' De Thou, in the memoirs of his own life, says, 'Les loix furent méprisées, et l'honneur de la France fut presque anéanti ...

of affairs, have been prolonged in France, is a question which we now perhaps have no means of answering; though there is no doubt that the progress even of empirical knowledge must, according to the process already pointed out, have eventually sufficed to rescue so great a country from her degraded position. Fortunately, however, there now took place what we must be content to call an accident, but which was the beginning of a most important change. In the year 1589, Henry IV. ascended the throne of France. This great prince, who was far superior to any of the French sovereigns of the sixteenth century,²³ made small

et sous le voile de la religion, on ne respiroit que la haine, la vengeance, le massacre et l'incendie,' *Mém. de la Vie*, in *Histoire Univ.* vol. i. p. 120; and the same writer, in his great history, gives almost innumerable instances of the crimes and persecutions constantly occurring. See, for some of the most striking cases, vol. ii. p. 383, vol. iv. pp. 378, 380, 387, 495, 496, 539, vol. v. pp. 189, 518, 561, 647, vol. vi. pp. 421, 422, 424, 426, 427, 430, 469. Compare *Duplessis, Mém. et Correspond.* vol. ii. pp. 41, 42, 322, 335, 611, 612, vol. iii. pp. 344, 445, vol. iv. pp. 112–114; *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. i. pp. 307, 308; *Duvernet, Hist. de la Sorbonne*, vol. i. p. 217.

²³ This, indeed, is not saying much; and far higher praise might be justly bestowed. As to his domestic policy, there can be only one opinion; and M. Flassan speaks in the most favourable terms of his management of foreign affairs. *Flassan, Hist. de la Diplomatie Franç.* vol. ii. pp. 191, 192, 294–297, vol. iii. p. 243. And see, to the same effect, the testimony of M. Capefigue, an unfriendly judge. *Hist. de la Réforme*, vol. vii. p. xiv. vol. viii. p. 156. Fontenay Mareuil, who was a contemporary of Henry IV., though he wrote many years after the king was murdered, says, 'Ce grand roy, qui estoit en plus de considération dans le monde que pas un de ses prédécesseurs n'avoit esté depuis Charlesmagne.' *Mém. de Fontenay*, vol. i. p. 46. Duplessis Mornay calls him 'le plus grand roy que la chrestienté ait porté depuis cinq cens ans;' and Sully pronounces him to be 'le plus grand de nos rois.' *Duplessis Mornay, Mém. et Correspond.* vol. xi. pp. 30, 77, 131; *Sully, Œconomies Royales*, vol. vii. p. 15. Compare vol. vi. pp. 397, 398, vol. ix. pp. 35, 242, with some sensible remarks in *Mém. de Genlis*, Paris, 1825,

account of those theological disputes which his predecessors had thought to be of paramount importance. Before him, the kings of France, animated by the piety natural to the guardians of the church, had exerted all their authority to uphold the interests of the sacred profession. Francis I. said, that if his right hand were a heretic, he would cut it off.²⁴ Henry II., whose zeal was still greater,²⁵ ordered the judges to proceed against the Protestants, and publicly declared that he would 'make the extirpation of the heretics his principal business.'²⁶ Charles IX., on the celebrated day of St. Bartholomew, attempted to relieve the church by destroying them at a single blow. Henry III. promised to 'oppose heresy even at the risk of his life;' for he said, 'he could not find

vol. ix. p. 299.

²⁴ So it is generally related: but there is a slightly different version of this orthodox declaration in *Smedley's Hist. of the Reformation in France*, vol. i. p. 30. Compare *Maclaine's note in Mosheim's Eccles. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 24, with *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xvi. pp. 453, 454, and *Relat. des Ambassad. Vénitiens*, vol. i. p. 50, vol. ii. p. 48. It was also Francis I. who advised Charles V. to expel all the Mohammedans from Spain, *Llorente, Hist. de l'Inquisition*, vol. i. p. 429.

²⁵ The historian of the French Protestants says, in 1548, 'le nouveau roi Henry II. fut encore plus rigoureux que son père.' *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. i. p. 12.

²⁶ M. Ranke (*Civil Wars in France*, vol. i. pp. 240, 241) says, that he issued a circular 'addressed to the parliaments and to the judicial tribunals, in which they were urged to proceed against the Lutherans with the greatest severity, and the judges informed that they would be held responsible, should they neglect these orders; and in which he declared plainly, that as soon as the peace with Spain was concluded, he was determined to make the extirpation of the heretics his principal business.' See also, on Henry II., in connexion with the Protestants, *Mably, Observ. sur l'Hist. de France*, vol. iii. pp. 133, 134; *De Thou, Hist. Univ.* vol. i. pp. 334, 335, 387, vol. ii. p. 640, vol. iii. pp. 365, 366; *Felice's Hist. of the French Protestants*, p. 58.

a prouder grave than amidst the ruins of heresy.²⁷

These were the opinions expressed, in the sixteenth century, by the heads of the oldest monarchy in Europe.²⁸ But with such feelings, the powerful intellect of Henry IV. had not the slightest sympathy. To suit the shifting politics of his age, he had already changed his religion twice; and he did not hesitate to change it a third time,²⁹ when he found that by doing so he could ensure tranquillity to his country. As he had displayed such indifference about his own creed, he could not with decency show much bigotry about the creed of his subjects.³⁰ We find, accordingly, that he was the author of the first public act of

²⁷ He said this to the Estates of Blois in 1588. *Ranke's Civil Wars in France*, vol. ii. p. 202. Compare his edict, in 1585, in *Capefigue, Hist. de la Réforme*, vol. iv. pp. 244, 245, and his speech in vol. v. p. 122; and see *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. i. p. 328; *Duplessis Mornay, Mém. et Corresp.* vol. i. p. 110; *De Thou, Hist. Univ.* vol. i. p. 250, vol. viii. p. 651, vol. x. pp. 294, 589, 674, 675.

²⁸ With what zeal these opinions were enforced, appears, besides many other authorities, from Marino Cavalli, who writes in 1546, 'Li maestri di Sorbona hanno autorità estrema di castigare li eretici, il che fanno con il fuoco, brustolandoli vivi a poco a poco.' *Relat. des Ambassad. Vénitiens*, vol. i. 262; and see vol. ii. p. 24.

²⁹ Indeed, Clement VIII. was afterwards apprehensive of a fourth apostasy: 'Er meinte noch immer, Heinrich IV. werde zuletzt vielleicht wieder zum Protestantismus zurückkehren, wie er es schon einmal gethan.' *Ranke, die Päpste*, vol. ii. p. 246. M. Ranke, from his great knowledge of Italian manuscripts, has thrown more light on these transactions than the French historians have been able to do.

³⁰ On his conversion, the character of which was as obvious then as it is now, compare *Duplessis Mornay, Mém. et Correspond.* vol. i. p. 257, with *Sully, Œconomies Royales*, vol. ii. p. 126. See also *Howell's Letters*, book i. p. 42; and a letter from Sir H. Wotton in 1593, printed in *Reliquiæ Wottonianæ*, p. 711. See also *Ranke, Civil Wars in France*, vol. ii. pp. 257, 355; *Capefigue, Hist. de la Réforme*, vol. vi. pp. 305, 358.

toleration which any government promulgated in France since Christianity had been the religion of the country. Only five years after he had solemnly abjured Protestantism, he published the celebrated Edict of Nantes,³¹ by which, for the first time, a Catholic government granted to heretics a fair share of civil and religious rights. This was, unquestionably, the most important event that had yet occurred in the history of French civilization.³² If it is considered by itself, it is merely an evidence of the enlightened principles of the king; but when we look at its general success, and at the cessation of religious war which followed it, we cannot fail to perceive that it was part of a vast movement, in which the people themselves participated. Those who recognize the truth of the principles I have laboured to establish, will expect that this great step towards religious liberty was accompanied by that spirit of scepticism, in the absence of which toleration has always been unknown. And that this was actually the case, may be easily proved by an examination of the transitional state which France began to enter towards the end of the sixteenth century.

The writings of Rabelais are often considered to afford the

³¹ The edict of Nantes was in 1598; the abjuration in 1593. *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xxi. pp. 202, 486. But in 1590 it was intimated to the pope as probable, if not certain, that Henry would 'in den Schooss der katholischen Kirche zurückkehren.' *Ranke, die Päpste*, vol. ii. p. 210.

³² Of this edict, Sismondi says, 'Aucune époque dans l'histoire de France ne marque mieux peut-être la fin d'un monde ancien, le commencement d'un monde nouveau.' *Hist. des Français*, vol. xxi. p. 489.

first instance of religious scepticism in the French language.³³ But, after a tolerably intimate acquaintance with the works of this remarkable man, I have found nothing to justify such an opinion. He certainly treats the clergy with great disrespect, and takes every opportunity of covering them with ridicule.³⁴ His attacks, however, are always made upon their personal vices, and not upon that narrow and intolerant spirit to which those vices were chiefly to be ascribed. In not a single instance does he show any thing like consistent scepticism;³⁵ nor does he appear to be aware that the disgraceful lives of the French clergy were but the inevitable consequence of a system, which, corrupt as it was,

³³ On Rabelais, as the supposed founder of French scepticism, compare *Lavallée, Hist. des Français*, vol. ii. p. 306; *Stephen's Lectures on the History of France*, vol. ii. p. 242; *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xvi. p. 376.

³⁴ Particularly the monks. See, among numerous other instances, vol. i. pp. 278, 282, vol. ii. pp. 284, 285, of *Œuvres de Rabelais*, edit. Amsterdam, 1725. However, the high dignitaries of the church are not spared; for he says that Gargantua 'se morvoit en archidiacre,' vol. i. p. 132; and on two occasions (vol. iii. p. 65, vol. iv. pp. 199, 200) he makes a very indecent allusion to the pope. In vol. i. pp. 260, 261, he satirically notices the way in which the services of the church were performed: 'Dont luy dist le moyne: Je ne dors jamais à mon aise, sinon quand je suis au sermon, ou quand je prie Dieu.'

³⁵ His joke on the strength of Samson (*Œuvres de Rabelais*, vol. ii. pp. 29, 30), and his ridicule of one of the Mosaic laws (vol. iii. p. 34), are so unconnected with other parts of his work, as to have no appearance of belonging to a general scheme. The commentators, who find a hidden meaning in every author they annotate, have represented Rabelais as aiming at the highest objects, and seeking to effect the most extensive social and religious reforms. This I greatly doubt, at all events I have seen no proof of it; and I cannot help thinking that Rabelais owes a large share of his reputation to the obscurity of his language. On the other side of the question, and in favour of his comprehensiveness, see a bold passage in *Coleridge's Lit. Remains*, vol. i. pp. 138, 139.

still possessed every appearance of strength and vitality. Indeed, the immense popularity which he enjoyed is, almost of itself, a decisive consideration; since no one, who is well informed as to the condition of the French early in the sixteenth century, will believe it possible that a people, so sunk in superstition, should delight in a writer by whom superstition is constantly attacked.

But the extension of experience, and the consequent increase of knowledge, were preparing the way for a great change in the French intellect. The process, which had just taken place in England, was now beginning to take place in France; and in both countries the order of events was precisely the same. The spirit of doubt, hitherto confined to an occasional solitary thinker, gradually assumed a bolder form: first it found a vent in the national literature, and then it influenced the conduct of practical statesmen. That there was, in France, an intimate connexion between scepticism and toleration, is proved, not only by those general arguments which make us infer that such connexion must always exist, but also by the circumstance, that only a few years before the promulgation of the Edict of Nantes, there appeared the first systematic sceptic who wrote in the French language. The *Essays of Montaigne* were published in 1588,³⁶ and form an epoch, not only in the literature, but also in the civilization, of France. Putting aside personal peculiarities, which have less weight than is commonly supposed, it will be found that the

³⁶ The two first books in 1580; the third in 1588, with additions to the first two. See *Niceron, Mém. pour servir à l'Hist. des Hommes illustres*, vol. xvi. p. 210, Paris, 1731.

difference between Rabelais and Montaigne is a measure of the difference between 1545³⁷ and 1588, and that it, in some degree, corresponds with the relation I have indicated between Jewel and Hooker, and between Hooker and Chillingworth. For, the law which governs all these relations is the law of a progressive scepticism. What Rabelais was to the supporters of theology, that was Montaigne to the theology itself. The writings of Rabelais were only directed against the clergy; but the writings of Montaigne were directed against the system of which the clergy were the offspring.³⁸ Under the guise of a mere man

³⁷ The first impression of the *Pantagruel* of Rabelais has no date on the title-page; but it is known that the third book was printed in 1545, and the fourth book in 1546. See *Brunet, Manuel du Libraire*, vol. iv. pp. 4–6, Paris, 1843. The statement in *Biog. Univ.* vol. xxxvi. pp. 482, 483, is rather confused.

³⁸ Mr. Hallam (*Lit. of Europe*, vol. ii. p. 29) says, that his scepticism 'is not displayed in religion.' But if we use the word 'religion' in its ordinary sense, as connected with dogma, it is evident, from Montaigne's language, that he was a sceptic, and an unflinching one too. Indeed, he goes so far as to say that all religious opinions are the result of custom: 'Comme de vray nous n'avons aultre mire de la vérité et de la raison, que l'exemple et idée des opinions et usances du païs où nous sommes: là est tousiours la parfaite religion, la parfaite police, parfaict et accomply usage de toutes choses.' *Essais de Montaigne*, p. 121, livre i. chap. xxx. As a natural consequence, he lays down that religious error is not criminal, p. 53; compare p. 28. See also how he notices the usurpations of the theological spirit, pp. 116, 508, 528. The fact seems to be, that Montaigne, while recognizing abstractedly the existence of religious truths, doubted our capacity for knowing them; that is to say, he doubted if, out of the immense number of religious opinions, there were any means of ascertaining which were accurate. His observations on miracles (pp. 541, 653, 654, 675) illustrate the character of his mind; and what he says on prophetic visions is quoted and confirmed by Pinel, in his profound work *Aliénation Mentale*, p. 256. Compare *Maury, Légendes Pieuses*, p. 268 note.

of the world, expressing natural thoughts in common language, Montaigne concealed a spirit of lofty and audacious inquiry.³⁹ Although he lacked that comprehensiveness which is the highest form of genius, he possessed other qualities essential to a great mind. He was very cautious, and yet he was very bold. He was cautious, since he would not believe strange things because they had been handed down by his forefathers; and he was bold, since he was undaunted by the reproaches with which the ignorant, who love to dogmatize, always cover those whose knowledge makes them ready to doubt.⁴⁰ These peculiarities would, in any age, have made Montaigne a useful man: in the sixteenth century they made him an important one. At the same time, his easy and amusing style⁴¹ increased the circulation of his works, and thus contributed to popularize those opinions which he ventured to recommend for general adoption.

³⁹ His friend, the celebrated De Thou, calls him 'homme franc, ennemi de toute contrainte.' *Mémoires*, in *De Thou, Hist. Univ.* vol. i. p. 59: see also vol. xi. p. 590. And M. Lamartine classes him with Montesquieu, as 'ces deux grands républicains de la pensée française.' *Hist. des Girondins*, vol. i. p. 174.

⁴⁰ He says (*Essais*, p. 97), 'Ce n'est pas à l'aventure sans raison que nous attribuons à simplesse et ignorance la facilité de croire et de se laisser persuader.' Compare two striking passages, pp. 199 and 685. Nothing of this sort had ever appeared before in the French language.

⁴¹ Dugald Stewart, whose turn of mind was very different from that of Montaigne, calls him 'this most amusing author.' *Stewart's Philos. of the Mind*, vol. i. p. 468. But Rousseau, in every respect a more competent judge, enthusiastically praises 'la naïveté, la grâce et l'énergie de son style inimitable.' *Musset Pathay, Vie de Rousseau*, vol. i. p. 185. Compare *Lettres de Sévigné*, vol. iii. p. 491, edit. Paris, 1843, and *Lettres de Duffield à Walpole*, vol. i. p. 94.

This, then, is the first open declaration of that scepticism, which, towards the end of the sixteenth century, publicly appeared in France.⁴² During nearly three generations, it continued its course with a constantly increasing activity, and developed itself in a manner similar to that which took place in England. It will not be necessary to follow all the steps of this great process; but I will endeavour to trace those which, by their prominence, seem to be the most important.

A few years after the appearance of the *Essays of Montaigne*, there was published in France a work, which though now little read, possessed in the seventeenth century a reputation of the highest order. This was the celebrated *Treatise on Wisdom*, by Charron, in which we find, for the first time, an attempt made in a modern language to construct a system of morals without the aid of theology.⁴³ What rendered this book, in some respects, even more formidable than Montaigne's, was the air of gravity with which it was written. Charron was evidently deeply impressed with the importance of the task he had undertaken, and he is honourably distinguished from his contemporaries,

⁴² 'Mais celui qui a répandu et popularisé en France le scepticisme, c'est Montaigne.' *Cousin, Hist. de la Philos.*, II. série, vol. ii. pp. 288, 289. 'Die erste Regung des skeptischen Geistes finden wir in den Versuchen des Michael von Montaigne.' *Tennemann, Gesch. der Philos.* vol. ix. p. 443. On the immense influence of Montaigne, compare *Tennemann*, vol. ix. p. 458; *Monteil, Divers Etats*, vol. v. pp. 263–265; *Sorel, Bibliothèque Française*, pp. 80–91; *Le Long, Bibliothèque Historique*, vol. iv. p. 527.

⁴³ Compare the remarks on Charron in *Tennemann, Geschichte der Philosophie*, vol. ix. p. 527, with two insidious passages in *Charron, De la Sagesse*, vol. i. pp. 4, 366.

by a remarkable purity both of language and of sentiment. His work is almost the only one of that age in which nothing can be found to offend the chastest ears. Although he borrowed from Montaigne innumerable illustrations,⁴⁴ he has carefully omitted those indecencies into which that otherwise charming writer was often betrayed. Besides this, there is about the work of Charron a systematic completeness which never fails to attract attention. In originality, he was, in some respects, inferior to Montaigne; but he had the advantage of coming after him, and there can be no doubt that he rose to an elevation which, to Montaigne, would have been inaccessible. Taking his stand, as it were, on the summit of knowledge, he boldly attempts to enumerate the elements of wisdom, and the conditions under which those elements will work. In the scheme which

⁴⁴ The obligations of Charron to Montaigne were very considerable, but are stated too strongly by many writers. *Sorel, Bibliothèque Française*, p. 93; and *Hallam's Literature of Europe*, vol. ii. pp. 362, 509. On the most important subjects, Charron was a bolder and deeper thinker than Montaigne; though he is now so little read, that the only tolerably complete account I have seen of his system is in *Tennemann, Gesch. der Philosophie*, vol. ix. pp. 458–487. Buhle (*Geschichte der neuern Philosophie*, vol. ii. pp. 918–925) and Cousin (*Hist. de la Philos.* II. série, vol. ii. p. 289) are short and unsatisfactory. Even Dr. Parr, who was extensively read in this sort of literature, appears only to have known Charron through Bayle (see notes on the Spital Sermon, in *Parr's Works*, vol. ii. pp. 520, 521); while Dugald Stewart, with suspicious tautology, quotes, in three different places, the same passage from Charron. *Stewart's Philosophy of the Mind*, vol. ii. p. 233, vol. iii. pp. 365, 393. Singularly enough, Talleyrand was a great admirer of *De la Sagesse*, and presented his favourite copy of it to Madame de Genlis! See her own account, in *Mém. de Genlis*, vol. iv. pp. 352, 353.

he thus constructs, he entirely omits theological dogmas;⁴⁵ and he treats with undissembled scorn many of those conclusions which the people had hitherto universally received. He reminds his countrymen that their religion is the accidental result of their birth and education, and that if they had been born in a Mohammedan country, they would have been as firm believers in Mohammedanism as they then were in Christianity.⁴⁶ From this consideration, he insists on the absurdity of their troubling themselves about the variety of creeds, seeing that such variety is the result of circumstances over which they have no control. Also it is to be observed, that each of these different religions declares itself to be the true one;⁴⁷ and all of them are equally based upon supernatural pretensions, such as mysteries, miracles, prophets, and the like.⁴⁸ It is because men forget these things, that they are the slaves of that confidence which is the great obstacle to all real knowledge, and which can only be removed by taking such a large and comprehensive view, as will show

⁴⁵ See his definition, or rather description, of wisdom, in Charron, *De la Sagesse*, vol. i. p. 295, vol. ii. pp. 113, 115.

⁴⁶ *De la Sagesse*, vol. i. pp. 63, 351.

⁴⁷ 'Chacune se préfère aux autres, et se confie d'être la meilleure et plus vraie que les autres, et s'entre-reprochent aussi les unes aux autres quelque chose, et par-là s'entre-condamnent et rejettent.' *De la Sagesse*, vol. i. p. 348; see also vol. i. pp. 144, 304, 305, 306, vol. ii. p. 116. Expressions almost identical are used by M. Charles Compté, *Traité de Législation*, vol. i. p. 233.

⁴⁸ 'Toutes trouvent et fournissent miracles, prodiges, oracles, mystères sacrés, saints prophètes, fêtes, certains articles de foy et créance nécessaires au salut.' *De la Sagesse*, vol. i. p. 346.

us how all nations cling with equal zeal to the tenets in which they have been educated.⁴⁹ And, says Charron, if we look a little deeper, we shall see that each of the great religions is built upon that which preceded it. Thus, the religion of the Jews is founded upon that of the Egyptians; Christianity is the result of Judaism; and, from these two last, there has naturally sprung Mohammedanism.⁵⁰ We, therefore, adds this great writer, should rise above the pretensions of hostile sects, and, without

⁴⁹ Hence he opposes proselytism, and takes up the philosophic ground, that religious opinions, being governed by undeviating laws, owe their variations to variations in their antecedents, and are always, if left to themselves, suited to the existing state of things: 'Et de ces conclusions, nous apprendrons à n'épouser rien, ne jurer à rien, n'admirer rien, ne se troubler de rien, mais quoi qu'il advienne, que l'on crie, tempête, se resoudre à ce point, que c'est le cours du monde, *c'est nature qui fait des siennes.*' *Dela Sagesse*, vol. i. p. 311.

⁵⁰ 'Mais comme elles naissent l'une après l'autre, la plus jeune bâtit toujours sur son aînée et prochaine précédente, laquelle elle n'improve, ni ne condamne de fond en comble, autrement elle ne seroit pas ouïe, et ne pourroit prendre pied; mais seulement l'accuse ou d'imperfection, ou de son terme fini, et qu'à cette occasion elle vient pour lui succéder et la parfaire, et ainsi la ruine peu-à-peu, et s'enrichit de ses dépouilles, comme la Judaïque a fait à la Gentille et Egyptienne, la Chrétienne à la Judaïque, la Mahometane à la Judaïque et Chrétienne ensemble: mais les vieilles condamnent bien tout-à-fait et entièrement les jeunes, et les tiennent pour ennemies capables.' *De la Sagesse*, vol. i. p. 349. This, I believe, is the first instance in any modern language of the doctrine of religious development; a doctrine which, since Charron, has been steadily advancing, particularly among men whose knowledge is extensive enough to enable them to compare the different religions which have prevailed at different times. In this, as in other subjects, they who are unable to compare, suppose that everything is isolated, simply because to them the continuity is invisible. As to the Alexandrian doctrine of development, found particularly in Clement and Origen, see *Neander's Hist. of the Church*, vol. ii. pp. 234–257; and in particular pp. 241, 246.

being terrified by the fear of future punishment, or allured by the hope of future happiness, we should be content with such practical religion as consists in performing the duties of life; and, uncontrolled by the dogmas of any particular creed, we should strive to make the soul retire inward upon itself, and by the efforts of its own contemplation, admire the ineffable grandeur of the Being of beings, the supreme cause of all created things.⁵¹

Such were the sentiments which, in the year 1601, were for the first time laid before the French people in their own mother-tongue.⁵² The sceptical and secular spirit, of which they were the representatives, continued to increase; and, as the seventeenth century advanced, the decline of fanaticism, so far from being confined to a few isolated thinkers, gradually became common, even among ordinary politicians.⁵³ The clergy, sensible

⁵¹ *De la Sagesse*, vol. i. pp. 356, 365; two magnificent passages. But the whole chapter ought to be read, livre ii. chap. v. In it there is an occasional ambiguity. Tennemann, however, in the most important point, understands Charron as I do in regard to the doctrine of future punishments. *Geschichte der Philosophie*, vol. ix. p. 473.

⁵² The first edition of *La Sagesse* was published at Bourdeaux in 1601. *Niceron, Hommes illustres*, vol. xvi. p. 224; *Hallam's Lit. of Europe*, vol. ii. p. 509; *Biog. Univ.* vol. viii. p. 250. Two editions were subsequently published in Paris, in 1604 and 1607. *Brunet, Manuel du Libraire*, vol. i. p. 639.

⁵³ Sismondi (*Hist. des Français*, vol. xxii. p. 86) and Lavallée (*Hist. des Français*, vol. iii. p. 84) have noticed the diminution of religious zeal early in the seventeenth century; and some curious evidence will also be found in the correspondence of Duplessis Mornay. See, for instance, a letter he wrote to Diodati, in 1609: 'A beaucoup aujourd'hui il fault commencer par là, qu'il y a une religion, premier que de leur dire quelle.' *Duplessis, Mém. et Corresp.* vol. x. p. 415. This middle, or secular party, received the name of 'Politiques,' and began to be powerful in 1592 or 1593. Benoist

of the danger, wished the government to check the progress of inquiry;⁵⁴ and the pope himself, in a formal remonstrance with Henry, urged him to remedy the evil, by prosecuting the heretics, from whom he thought all the mischief had originally proceeded.⁵⁵ But this the king steadily refused. He saw the immense advantages that would arise, if he could weaken the ecclesiastical power by balancing the two sects against each other;⁵⁶ and therefore, though he was a Catholic, his policy rather

(*Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. i. p. 113), under the year 1593, contemptuously says: 'Il s'éleva une foule de conciliateurs de religion;' see also pp. 201, 273. In 1590, and in 1594, the 'Politiques' are noticed by De Thou (*Hist. Univ.* vol. xi. p. 171, vol. xii. p. 134); and on the increase, in 1593, of 'le tiers parti politique et négociateur,' see *Capefigue, Hist. de la Réforme*, vol. vi. p. 235. See also, respecting 'les politiques,' a letter from the Spanish ambassador to his own court, in 1615, in *Capefigue's Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 93; and for the rise in Paris, in 1592, of a 'politisch und kirchlich gemässigte Gesinnung,' see *Ranke, die Päpste*, vol. ii. p. 243.

⁵⁴ The Sorbonne went so far as to condemn Charron's great work, but could not succeed in having it prohibited. Compare *Duvernet, Hist. de la Sorbonne*, vol. ii. p. 139, with *Bayle*, article Charron, note F.

⁵⁵ In the appendix to *Ranke (Die Römischen Päpste)*, vol. iii. pp. 141, 142), there will be found the instructions which were given to the nuncio, in 1603, when he was sent to the French court; and which should be compared with a letter, written in 1604, in *Sully, Œconomies Royales*, vol. v. p. 122, edit. 1820.

⁵⁶ 'Sein Sinn war im Allgemeinen, ohne Zweifel, das Gleichgewicht zwischen ihnen zu erhalten.' *Ranke, die Päpste*, vol. ii. pp. 430, 431. 'Henri IV, l'expression de l'indifférentisme religieux, se posa comme une transaction entre ces deux systèmes.' *Capefigue, Hist. de la Réforme*, vol. vi. p. 358. 'Henry IV. endeavoured to adjust the balance evenly,' *Smedley's Hist. of the Reformed Religion in France*, vol. iii. p. 19. See also *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. i. p. 136. Hence, of course, neither party was quite satisfied. *Mably's Observations*, vol. iii. p. 220; *Mezeray, Histoire de France*, vol. iii. p. 959.

leaned in favour of the Protestants, as being the weaker party.⁵⁷ He granted sums of money towards the support of their ministers and the repair of their churches;⁵⁸ he banished the Jesuits, who were their most dangerous enemies;⁵⁹ and he always had with him two representatives of the reformed church, whose business it was to inform him of any infraction of those edicts which he had issued in favour of their religion.⁶⁰

Thus it was, that in France, as well as in England, toleration was preceded by scepticism; and thus it was, that out of this

⁵⁷ Compare *Capectigue, Hist. de la Réforme*, vol. viii. p. 61, with *Bazin, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. i. pp. 32, 33. See also, on his inclination towards the Protestants, *Mém. de Fontenay Mareuil*, vol. i. p. 91. Fontenay, p. 94, mentions, as a singular instance, that 'il se vist de son temps des huguenots avoir des abbayes.'

⁵⁸ *Sully, Œconomies Royales*, vol. iv. p. 134, vol. vi. p. 233; *Duplessis Mornay, Mém. et Corresp.* vol. xi. p. 242; *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. ii. pp. 68, 205. These grants were annual, and were apportioned by the Protestants themselves. See their own account, in *Quick's Synodicon in Gallia*, vol. i. pp. 198, 222, 246, 247, 249, 275–277.

⁵⁹ Henry IV. banished the Jesuits in 1594; but they were allowed, later in his reign, to make fresh settlements in France. *Flassan, Hist. de la Diplomatie*, vol. vi. p. 485; *Bazin, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. i. p. 106; *Monteil, Divers Etats*, vol. v. p. 192 note; *De Thou, Hist. Univ.* vol. xiv. p. 298. Compare the notices of them in *Sully, Œconomies*, vol. ii. p. 234, vol. iv. pp. 200, 235, 245. But there can be little doubt that they owed their recall to the dread entertained of their intrigues (*Grégoire, Hist. des Confesseurs*, p. 316); and Henry evidently disliked as well as feared them. See two letters from him in *Duplessis, Mém. et Corresp.* vol. vi. pp. 129, 151. It would appear, from the *Mém. de Richelieu*, vol. v. p. 350, Paris, 1823, that the king never restored to them their former authority in regard to education.

⁶⁰ *Bazin, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. i. pp. 142, 143; *Le Vassor*, vol. i. p. 156; *Sismondi*, vol. xxii. p. 116; *Duplessis Mornay*, vol. i. p. 389; *Sully, Œconomies*, vol. vii. pp. 105, 432, 442.

scepticism there arose the humane and enlightened measures of Henry IV. The great prince, by whom these things were effected, unhappily fell a victim to that fanatical spirit which he had done much to curb;⁶¹ but the circumstances which occurred after his death, showed how great an impetus had been given to the age.

On the murder of Henry IV., in 1610, the government fell into the hands of the queen, who administered it during the minority of her son, Louis XIII. And it is a remarkable evidence of the direction which the mind was now taking, that she, though a weak and bigoted woman,⁶² refrained from those persecutions which, only one generation before, had been considered a necessary proof of religious sincerity. That, indeed, must have been a movement of no common energy, which could force toleration, early in the seventeenth century, upon a princess of the house of Medici, an ignorant and superstitious Catholic, who had been educated in the midst of her priests, and had been accustomed to look for their applause as the highest object of earthly ambition.

Yet this was what actually occurred. The queen continued the ministers of Henry IV., and announced, that in every

⁶¹ When Ravaillac was examined, he said, 'qu'il y avait été excité par l'intérêt de la religion, et par une impulsion irrésistible.' *Bazin, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. i. p. 38. This work contains the fullest account I have met with of Ravaillac; of whom there is, moreover, a description in *Les Historiettes de Tallemant des Réaux*, vol. i. p. 85, Paris, 1840, a very curious book.

⁶² Le Vassor (*Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. i. p. 279) calls her 'superstitieuse au dernier point;' and, in vol. v. p. 481, 'femme crédule et superstitieuse.' See also vol. iii. p. 250, vol. vi. p. 628; and *Grégoire, Hist. des Confesseurs*, p. 65.

thing she would follow his example.⁶³ Her first public act was, a declaration, that the Edict of Nantes should be inviolably preserved; for, she says, ‘experience has taught our predecessors, that violence, so far from inducing men to return to the Catholic church, prevents them from doing so.’⁶⁴ Indeed, so anxious was she upon this point, that when Louis, in 1614, attained his nominal majority, the first act of his government was another confirmation of the Edict of Nantes.⁶⁵ And, in 1615, she caused the king, who still remained under her tutelage,⁶⁶

⁶³ ‘Elle annonça qu'elle vouloit suivre en tout l'exemple du feu roi... Le ministère de Henri IV, que la reine continuoit.’ *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xxii. pp. 206, 210; and see two letters from her, in *Duplessis Mornay, Mém. et Corresp.* vol. xi. p. 282, vol. xii. p. 428. Sully had feared that the death of Henry IV. would cause a change of policy: ‘que l'on s'alloit jeter dans des desseins tous contraires aux règles, ordres et maximes du feu roy.’ *Œconomies Royales*, vol. viii. p. 401.

⁶⁴ See the declaration in *Bazin, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. i. pp. 74, 75; and notices of it in *Mém. de Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 58; *Capéfigue's Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 27; *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. ii. p. 7; *Le Vassor, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. i. p. 58. But none of these writers, nor Sismondi (vol. xxii. p. 221), appear to be aware that the issuing of this declaration was determined on, in council, as early as the 17th of May; that is, only three days after the death of Henry IV. This is mentioned by Pontchartrain, who was then one of the ministers. See *Mém. de Pontchartrain*, edit. Petitot, 1822, vol. i. p. 409; a book little known, but well worthy of being read.

⁶⁵ *Bazin, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. i. p. 262; *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. ii. p. 140; *Mém. de Fontenay Mareuil*, vol. i. p. 257; *Le Vassor*, vol. i. p. 604.

⁶⁶ ‘Laissant néanmoins l'administration du royaume à la reine sa mère.’ *Mém. de Bassompierre*, vol. ii. p. 52. Compare *Sully, Œconomies*, vol. ix. p. 177. She possessed complete authority over the king till 1617. See *Mémoires de Montglat*, vol. i. p. 24: ‘avoit été tenu fort bas par la reine sa mère.’ See also *Le Vassor, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. ii. pp. 640, 677, 716, 764.

to issue a declaration, by which all preceding measures in favour of the Protestants were publicly confirmed.⁶⁷ In the same spirit, she, in 1611, wished to raise to the presidency of parliament the celebrated De Thou; and it was only by making a formal announcement of his heresy, that the pope succeeded in frustrating what he considered an impious design.⁶⁸

The turn which things were now taking, caused no little alarm to the friends of the hierarchy. The most zealous churchmen loudly censured the policy of the queen; and a great historian has observed that when, during the reign of Louis XIII., such alarm was caused in Europe by the active encroachments of the ecclesiastical power, France was the first country that ventured to oppose them.⁶⁹ The nuncio openly complained to the queen of her conduct in favouring heretics; and he anxiously desired that those Protestant works should be suppressed, by which the consciences of true believers were greatly scandalized.⁷⁰ But these, and similar representations, were no longer listened to with the respect they would formerly have received; and the affairs

⁶⁷ *Bazin, Hist. de Louis XIII.*, vol. i. pp. 381, 382.

⁶⁸ In 1611, 'le pape le rejeta formellement comme hérétique.' *Bazin*, vol. i. p. 174. This is glossed over by Pontchartrain (*Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 450); but the statement of M. Bazin is confirmed in the preface to *De Thou, Histoire Universelle*, vol. i. p. xvi.

⁶⁹ 'Der erste Einhalt den die kirchliche Restauration erfuhr, geschah in Frankreich,' *Ranke, die Römischen Päpste*, vol. iii. p. 160.

⁷⁰ This desire was expressed several times, but in vain: 'Gern hätten die Nuntien Werke wie von Thou und Richer verboten, aber es war ihnen nicht möglich,' *Ranke, die Päpste*, vol. iii. p. 181, Anhang. Compare *Mém. de Richelieu*, vol. ii. p. 68; *Mém. de Pontchartrain*, vol. i. p. 428.

of the country continued to be administered with those purely temporal views, on which the measures of Henry IV. had been avowedly based.⁷¹

Such was now the policy of the government of France; a government which, not many years before, had considered it the great duty of a sovereign to punish heretics and extirpate heresy. That this continued improvement was merely the result of the general intellectual development, is evident, not only from its success, but also from the character of the queen-regent and the king. No one who has read the contemporary memoirs, can deny that Mary de Medici and Louis XIII. were as superstitious as any of their predecessors; and it is, therefore, evident, that this disregard of theological prejudices was due, not to their own personal merits, but to the advancing knowledge of the country, and to the pressure of an age which, in the rapidity of its progress, hurried along those who believed themselves to be its rulers.

But these considerations, weighty as they are, will only slightly diminish the merit of that remarkable man, who now appeared on the stage of public affairs. During the last eighteen years of the reign of Louis XIII., France was entirely governed by Richelieu,⁷²

⁷¹ This decline of the ecclesiastical power is noticed by many writers of the time; but it is sufficient to refer to the very curious remonstrance of the French clergy, in 1605, in *De Thou, Hist. Univ.* vol. xiv. pp. 446, 447.

⁷² As M. Monteil says (*Hist. des Français des divers Etats*, vol. vii. p. 114), 'Richelieu tint le sceptre; Louis XIII. porta la couronne.' And Campion (*Mémoires*, p. 37) calls him 'plutôt le maître que le ministre;' and adds, pp. 218, 219, that he 'avoit gouverné dix-huit ans la France avec un pouvoir absolu et une gloire sans pareille.' Compare

one of that extremely small class of statesmen to whom it is given to impress their own character on the destiny of their country. This great ruler has, in his knowledge of the political art, probably never been surpassed, except by that prodigy of genius who, in our time, troubled the fortunes of Europe. But, in one important view, Richelieu was superior to Napoleon. The life of Napoleon was a constant effort to oppress the liberties of mankind; and his unrivalled capacity exhausted its resources in struggling against the tendencies of a great age. Richelieu, too, was a despot; but his despotism took a nobler turn. He displayed, what Napoleon never possessed, a just appreciation of the spirit of his own time. In one great point, indeed, he failed. His attempts to destroy the power of the French nobility were altogether futile;⁷³ for, owing to a long course of events, the authority of that insolent class was so deeply rooted in the popular mind, that the labours of another century were required to efface its ancient influence. But, though Richelieu could not diminish the social and moral weight of the French nobles, he curtailed their political privileges; and he chastised their crimes

Mém. du Cardinal de Retz, vol. i p. 63.

⁷³The common opinion, put forth in *Alison's Hist. of Europe*, vol. i. pp. 101–104, and in many other books, is that Richelieu did destroy their influence; but this error arises from confusing political influence with social influence. What is termed the political power of a class, is merely the symptom and manifestation of its real power; and it is no use to attack the first, unless you can also weaken the second. The real power of the nobles was social, and that neither Richelieu nor Louis XIV. could impair; and it remained intact until the middle of the eighteenth century, when the intellect of France rebelled against it, overthrew it, and finally effected the French Revolution.

with a severity which, for a time at least, repressed their former license.⁷⁴ So little, however, can even the ablest statesman effect, unless he is seconded by the general temper of the age in which he lives, that these checks, rude as they were, produced no permanent result. After his death, the French nobles, as we shall presently see, quickly rallied; and, in the wars of the Fronde, debased that great struggle into a mere contest of rival families. Nor was it until the close of the eighteenth century, that France was finally relieved from the overweening influence of that powerful class, whose selfishness had long retarded the progress of civilization, by retaining the people in a thralldom, from the remote effects of which they have not yet fully recovered.

Although in this respect Richelieu failed in achieving his designs, he in other matters met with signal success. This was owing to the fact, that his large and comprehensive views harmonized with that sceptical tendency, of which I have just given some account. For this remarkable man, though he was a bishop and a cardinal, never for a moment allowed the claims of his profession to make him forego the superior claims of his country. He knew, what is too often forgotten, that the governor of a people should measure affairs solely by a political standard, and should pay no regard to the pretensions of any

⁷⁴ Richelieu appears to have formed the design of humbling the nobles, at least as early as 1624. See a characteristic passage in his *Mémoires*, vol. ii. p. 340. In *Swinburne's Courts of Europe*, vol. ii. pp. 63–65, there is a curious traditional anecdote, which, though probably false, shows, at all events, the fear and hatred with which the French nobles regarded the memory of Richelieu more than a century after his death.

sect, or the propagation of any opinions, except in reference to the present and practical welfare of men. The consequence was, that, during his administration, there was seen the marvellous spectacle of supreme authority wielded by a priest, who took no pains to increase the power of the spiritual classes. Indeed, so far from this, he often treated them with what was then considered unexampled rigour. The royal confessors, on account of the importance of their functions, had always been regarded with a certain veneration; they were supposed to be men of unspotted piety; they had hitherto possessed immense influence, and even the most powerful statesmen had thought it advisable to show them the deference due to their exalted position.⁷⁵ Richelieu, however, was too familiar with the arts of his profession, to feel much respect for these keepers of the consciences of kings. Caussin, the confessor of Louis XIII., had, it seems, followed the example of his predecessors, and endeavoured to instill his own views of policy into the mind of the royal penitent.⁷⁶ But

⁷⁵ On their influence, see *Grégoire, Histoire des Confesseurs*; and compare the remarks of Mr. Grote, a great writer, whose mind is always ready with historical analogies. *Grote's Hist. of Greece*, vol. vi. p. 393, 2nd edit. 1851. Many of the French kings had a strong natural affection for monks; but the most singular instance I have found of this sort of love is mentioned by no less a man than De Thou, respecting Henry III. De Thou (*Hist. Univ.* vol. x. pp. 666, 667) says of that prince: 'Soit tempérament, soit éducation, la présence d'un moine faisait toujours plaisir à Henri; et je lui ai moi-même souvent entendu dire, que leur vue produisoit le même effet sur son âme, que le chatouillement le plus délicat sur le corps.'

⁷⁶ One of his suggestions was, 'sur les dangers que couroit le catholicisme en Allemagne, par ses liaisons avec les puissances protestantes.' *Grégoire, Histoire des*

Richelieu, so soon as he heard of this, dismissed him from office, and sent him into exile; for, he contemptuously says, ‘the little father Caussin’ should not interfere in matters of government, since he is one of those ‘who have always been brought up in the innocence of a religious life.’⁷⁷ Caussin was succeeded by the celebrated Sirmond; but Richelieu would not allow the new confessor to begin his duties, until he had solemnly promised never to interfere in state affairs.⁷⁸

On another occasion of much more importance, Richelieu displayed a similar spirit. The French clergy were then possessed of enormous wealth; and, as they enjoyed the privilege of taxing themselves, they were careful not to make what they considered

Confesseurs, p. 342. The fullest account of Caussin is in *Le Vassor, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. ix. pp. 287–299; to which, however, Grégoire never refers. As I shall have frequent occasion to quote *Le Vassor*, I may observe, that he is far more accurate than is generally supposed, and that he has been very unfairly treated by the majority of French writers, among whom he is unpopular, on account of his constant attacks on Louis XIV. Sismondi (*Hist. des Français*, vol. xxii. pp. 188, 189) speaks highly of his *Hist. of Louis XIII*; and so far as my own reading extends, I can confirm his favourable opinion.

⁷⁷ ‘Le petit père Caussin.’ *Mém. de Richelieu*, vol. x. p. 206; and at p. 217, he is classed among the ‘personnes qui avoient toujours été nourries dans l’innocence d’une vie religieuse;’ see also p. 215, on his ‘simplicité et ignorance.’ Respecting Richelieu’s treatment of Caussin, see *Mém. de Montglat*, vol. i. pp. 173–175; *Lettres de Patin*, vol. i. p. 49; *Des Réaux, Historiettes*, vol. ii. p. 182.

⁷⁸ *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xxiii. p. 332; *Tallemant des Réaux, Historiettes*, vol. iii. p. 78 note. *Le Vassor (Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. x. part ii. p. 761) says, that Sirmond ‘se soutint à la cour sous le ministère de Richelieu, parce qu’il ne se mêloit point des affaires d’état.’ According to the same writer (vol. viii. p. 156), Richelieu thought at one time of depriving the Jesuits of their post of confessor to the king.

unnecessary contributions towards defraying the expenses of the state. They had cheerfully advanced money to carry on war against the Protestants, because they believed it to be their duty to assist in the extirpation of heresy.⁷⁹ But they saw no reason why their revenues should be wasted in effecting mere temporal benefits; they considered themselves as the guardians of funds set apart for spiritual purposes, and they thought it impious that wealth consecrated by the piety of their ancestors should fall into the profane hands of secular statesmen. Richelieu, who looked on these scruples as the artifices of interested men, had taken a very different view of the relation which the clergy bore to the country.⁸⁰ So far from thinking that the interests of the church were superior to those of the state, he laid it down as

⁷⁹ *Lavallée, Hist. des Français*, vol. iii. p. 87; *Le Vassor, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. iv. p. 208; *Bazin, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. ii. p. 144; *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. ii. pp. 337, 338. Benoist says: 'Le clergé de France, ignorant et corrompu, croyoit tout son devoir compris dans l'extirpation des hérétiques; et même il offroit de grandes sommes, à condition qu'on les employât à cette guerre.'

⁸⁰ In which he is fully borne out by the high authority of Vattel, whose words I shall quote, for the sake of those politicians who still cleave to the superannuated theory of the sacredness of church-property: 'Loin que l'exemption appartienne aux biens d'église parce qu'ils sont consacrés à Dieu, c'est au contraire par cette raison même, qu'ils doivent être pris les premiers pour le salut de l'état; car il n'y a rien de plus agréable au Père commun des hommes, que de garantir une nation de sa ruine. Dieu n'ayant besoin de rien, lui consacrer des biens, c'est les destiner à des usages qui lui soient agréables. De plus, les biens de l'église, de l'aveu du clergé lui-même, sont en grande partie destinés aux pauvres. Quand l'état est dans le besoin, il est sans doute le premier pauvre, et le plus digne de secours.' *Vattel, le Droit des Gens*, vol. i. pp. 176, 177.

a maxim of policy, that 'the reputation of the state was the first consideration.'⁸¹ With such fearlessness did he carry out this principle, that having convoked at Nantes a great assembly of the clergy, he compelled them to aid the government by an extraordinary supply of 6,000,000 francs; and finding that some of the highest dignitaries had expressed their discontent at so unusual a step, he laid hands on them also, and to the amazement of the church, sent into exile not only four of the bishops, but likewise the two archbishops of Toulouse and of Sens.⁸²

If these things had been done fifty years earlier, they would most assuredly have proved fatal to the minister who dared to attempt them. But Richelieu, in these and similar measures, was aided by the spirit of an age which was beginning to despise its ancient masters. For this general tendency was now becoming apparent, not only in literature and in politics, but even in the proceedings of the ordinary tribunals. The nuncio indignantly complained of the hostility displayed against ecclesiastics by the French judges; and he said that, among other shameful things, some clergymen had been hung, without being first

⁸¹ 'Que la réputation de l'état est préférable à toutes choses.' *Mém. de Richelieu*, vol. ii. p. 482. This was in 1625, and by way of refuting the legate.

⁸² *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xxiii. pp. 477, 478; *Bazin, Hist. de Louis XIII.*, vol. iv. pp. 325, 326. The Cardinal de Retz, who knew Richelieu personally, says: 'M. le cardinal de Richelieu avoit donné une atteinte cruelle à la dignité et à la liberté du clergé dans l'assemblée de Mante, et il avoit exilé, avec des circonstances atroces, six de ses prélats les plus considérables.' *Mém. de Retz*, vol. i. p. 50.

deprived of their spiritual character.⁸³ On other occasions, the increasing contempt showed itself in a way well suited to the coarseness of the prevailing manners. Sourdis, the archbishop of Bourdeaux, was twice ignominiously beaten; once by the Duke d'Epernon, and afterwards by the Maréchal de Vitry.⁸⁴ Nor did Richelieu, who usually treated the nobles with such severity, seem anxious to punish this gross outrage. Indeed, the archbishop not only received no sympathy, but, a few years later, was peremptorily ordered by Richelieu to retire to his own diocese; such, however, was his alarm at the state of affairs, that

⁸³ 'Die Nuntien finden kein Ende der Beschwerden die sie machen zu müssen glauben, vorzüglich über die Beschränkungen welche die geistliche Jurisdiction erfahre... Zuweilen werde ein Geistlicher hingerichtet ohne erst degradirt zu seyn.' *Ranke, die Päpste*, vol. iii. p. 157: a summary, in 1641, of the complaints of the then nuncio, and of those of his predecessors. *Le Vassor (Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. v. pp. 51 seq.) has given some curious details respecting the animosity between the clergy and the secular tribunals of France in 1624.

⁸⁴ *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xxiii. p. 301; *Mém. de Bassompierre*, vol. iii. pp. 302, 353. Bazin, who notices this disgraceful affair, simply says (*Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. iii. p. 453): 'Le maréchal de Vitry, suivant l'exemple qui lui en avoit donné le duc d'Epernon, s'emporta jusqu'à le frapper de son bâton.' In regard to Epernon, the best account is in *Mém. de Richelieu*, where it is stated (vol. viii. p. 194) that the duke, just before flogging the archbishop, 'disoit au peuple, "Rangez-vous, vous verrez comme j'étrilleraï votre archevêque."' This was stated by a witness, who heard the duke utter the words. Compare, for further information, *Le Vassor, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. x. part ii. p. 97, with *Tallemant des Réaux, Historiettes*, vol. iii. p. 116. Des Réaux, who, in his own way, was somewhat of a philosopher, contentedly says: 'Cet archevêque se pouvoit vanter d'être le prélat du monde qui avoit été le plus battu.' His brother was Cardinal Sourdis; a man of some little reputation in his own time, and concerning whom a curious anecdote is related in *Mém. de Conrart*, pp. 231–234.

he fled to Carpentras, and put himself under the protection of the pope.⁸⁵ This happened in 1641 and nine years earlier, the church had incurred a still greater scandal. For in 1632, serious disturbances having arisen in Languedoc, Richelieu did not fear to meet the difficulty by depriving some of the bishops, and seizing the temporalities of the others.⁸⁶

The indignation of the clergy may be easily imagined. Such repeated injuries, even if they had proceeded from a layman, would have been hard to endure; but they were rendered doubly bitter by being the work of one of themselves – one who had been nurtured in the profession against which he turned. This it was which aggravated the offence, because it seemed to be adding treachery to insult. It was not a war from without, but it was a treason from within. It was a bishop who humbled the episcopacy, and a cardinal who affronted the church.⁸⁷ Such, however, was the general temper of men, that the clergy did not venture to strike an open blow; but, by means of their partisans,

⁸⁵ *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xxiii. p. 470. Le Vassor (*Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. x. part ii. p. 149) says: 'Il s'enfuit donc honteusement à Carpentras sous la protection du pape.'

⁸⁶ 'Les évêques furent punis par la saisie de leur temporel; Alby, Nîmes, Uzès, furent privées de leurs prélats.' *Capecigues's Richelieu*, Paris, 1844, vol. ii. p. 24. The Protestants were greatly delighted at the punishment of the bishops of Alby and Nîmes, which 'les ministres regardoient comme une vengeance divine.' *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. ii. pp. 528, 529.

⁸⁷ In a short account of Richelieu, which was published immediately after his death, the writer indignantly says, that 'being a cardinal, he afflicted the church.' *Somers Tracts*. vol. v. p. 540. Compare *Bazin, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. iv. p. 322.

they scattered the most odious libels against the great minister. They said that he was unchaste, that he was guilty of open debauchery, and that he held incestuous commerce with his own niece.⁸⁸ They declared that he had no religion; that he was only a Catholic in name; that he was the pontiff of the Huguenots, that he was the patriarch of atheists;⁸⁹ and what was worse than all, they even accused him of wishing to establish a schism in the French church.⁹⁰ Happily the time was now passing away in which the national mind could be moved by such artifices as these. Still the charges are worth recording, because they illustrate the tendency of public affairs, and the bitterness with which the spiritual classes saw the reins of power falling from their hands. Indeed, all this was so manifest, that in the last civil war raised against Richelieu, only two years before his death, the insurgents stated in their proclamation, that one of their objects was to revive the respect with which the clergy and nobles had formerly been treated.⁹¹

The more we study the career of Richelieu, the more prominent does this antagonism become. Every thing proves

⁸⁸ This scandalous charge in regard to his niece was a favourite one with the clergy; and among many other instances, the accusation was brought by the Cardinal de Valençay in the grossest manner. See *Tallemant des Réaux, Historiettes*, vol. iii. p. 201.

⁸⁹ 'De là ces petits écrits qui le dénonçaient comme le "pontife des huguenots" ou "le patriarche des athées."' *Capefigue's Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 312.

⁹⁰ Compare *Des Réaux, Historiettes*, vol. ii. p. 233, with *Le Vassor, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. viii. part ii. pp. 177, 178, vol. ix. p. 277.

⁹¹ See the manifesto in *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xxiii. pp. 452, 453.

that he was conscious of a great struggle going on between the old ecclesiastical scheme of government and the new secular scheme; and that he was determined to put down the old plan, and uphold the new one. For, not only in his domestic administration, but also in his foreign policy, do we find the same unprecedented disregard of theological interests. The House of Austria, particularly its Spanish branch, had long been respected by all pious men as the faithful ally of the church; it was looked upon as the scourge of heresy; and its proceedings against the heretics had won for it a great name in ecclesiastical history.⁹² When, therefore, the French government, in the reign of Charles IX., made a deliberate attempt to destroy the Protestants, France naturally established an intimate connexion with Spain as well as with Rome;⁹³ and these three great powers were firmly united, not by a community of temporal interests, but by the force of a religious compact. This theological confederacy was afterwards broken up by the personal character of Henry IV.,⁹⁴ and by the

⁹² Late in the sixteenth century, 'fils aîné de l'Eglise' was the recognized and well-merited title of the kings of Spain. *De Thou, Hist. Univ.* vol. xi. p. 280. Compare *Duplessis Mornay, Mém. et Correspond.* vol. xi. p. 21. And on the opinions which the Catholics, early in the seventeenth century, generally held respecting Spain, see *Mém. de Fontenay, Mareuil*, vol. i. p. 189; *Mém. de Bassompierre*, vol. i. p. 424.

⁹³ As to the connexion between this foreign policy and the massacre of Saint Bartholomew, see *Capefigue, Hist. de la Réforme*, vol. iii. pp. 253, 268, 269.

⁹⁴ On the policy, and still more on the feelings, of Henry IV. towards the House of Austria, see *Sully, Œconomies Royales*, vol. ii. p. 291, vol. iii. pp. 162, 166, vol. iv. pp. 289, 290, 321, 343, 344, 364, vol. v. p. 123, vol. vi. p. 293, vol. vii. p. 303, vol. viii. pp. 195, 202, 348.

growing indifference of the age; but during the minority of Louis XIII., the queen-regent had in some degree renewed it, and had attempted to revive the superstitious prejudices upon which it was based.⁹⁵ In all her feelings, she was a zealous Catholic; she was warmly attached to Spain; and she succeeded in marrying her son, the young king, to a Spanish princess, and her daughter to a Spanish prince.⁹⁶

It might have been expected that when Richelieu, a great dignitary of the Romish church, was placed at the head of affairs, he would have reëstablished a connexion so eagerly desired by the profession to which he belonged.⁹⁷ But his conduct was not regulated by such views as these. His object was, not to favour the opinions of a sect, but to promote the interests of a nation. His treaties, his diplomacy, and the schemes of his foreign alliances,

⁹⁵ *Capectigue's Richelieu*, vol. i. pp. 26, 369; *Mém. de Montglat*, vol. i. pp. 16, 17; *Le Vassor, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. i. p. 268, vol. vi. p. 349; *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xxii. p. 227. Her husband, Henry IV., said that she had 'the soul of a Spaniard.' *Capectigue, Hist. de la Réforme*, vol. viii. p. 150.

⁹⁶ This was, in her opinion, a master-stroke of policy: 'Entêtée du double mariage avec l'Espagne qu'elle avoit ménagé avec tant d'application, et qu'elle regardoit comme le plus ferme appui de son autorité.' *Le Vassor, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. i. pp. 453, 454.

⁹⁷ So late as 1656, the French clergy wished 'to hasten a peace with Spain, and to curb the heretics in France,' *Letter from Pell to Thurloe*, written in 1656, and printed in *Vaughan's Protectorate of Cromwell*, vol. i. p. 436, 8vo, 1839. During the minority of Louis XIII. we hear of 'les zéléz catholiques, et ceux qui désiroient, à quelque prix que ce fut, l'union des deux roys, et des deux couronnes de France et d'Espagne, comme le seul moyen propre, selon leur advis, pour l'extirpation des hérésies dans la chrestienté.' *Sully, Econ. Royales*, vol. ix. p. 181: compare vol. vii. p. 248, on 'les zéléz catholiques espagnolisez de France.'

were all directed, not against the enemies of the church, but against the enemies of France. By erecting this new standard of action, Richelieu took a great step towards secularizing the whole system of European politics. For he thus made the theoretical interests of men subordinate to their practical interests. Before his time, the rulers of France, in order to punish their Protestant subjects, had not hesitated to demand the aid of the Catholic troops of Spain; and in so doing, they merely acted upon the old opinion, that it was the chief duty of a government to suppress heresy. This pernicious doctrine was first openly repudiated by Richelieu. As early as 1617, and before he had established his power, he, in an instruction to one of the foreign ministers which is still extant, laid it down as a principle, that, in matters of state, no Catholic ought to prefer a Spaniard to a French Protestant.⁹⁸ To us, indeed, in the progress of society, such preference of the claims of our country to those of our creed, has become a matter of course; but in those days it was a startling novelty.⁹⁹ Richelieu, however, did not fear to push the paradox even to its remotest consequences. The Catholic church justly considered

⁹⁸ See *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xxii. pp. 387–389, where the importance of this document is noticed, and it is said that Richelieu had drawn it up ‘avec beaucoup de soin.’ The language of it is very peremptory: ‘Que nul catholique n'est si aveugle d'estimer en matière d'état un Espagnol meilleur qu'un Français huguenot.’

⁹⁹ Even in the reign of Henry IV. the French Protestants were not considered to be Frenchmen: ‘The intolerant dogmas of Roman Catholicism did not recognize them as Frenchmen. They were looked upon as foreigners, or rather as enemies; and were treated as such.’ *Felice's Hist. of the Protestants of France*, p. 216.

that its interests were bound up with those of the House of Austria;¹⁰⁰ but Richelieu, directly he was called to the council, determined to humble that house in both its branches.¹⁰¹ To effect this, he openly supported the bitterest enemies of his own religion. He aided the Lutherans against the Emperor of Germany; he aided the Calvinists against the king of Spain. During the eighteen years he was supreme, he steadily pursued the same undeviating policy.¹⁰² When Philip attempted to repress the Dutch Protestants, Richelieu made common cause with them; at first, advancing them large sums of money, and afterwards inducing the French king to sign a treaty of intimate alliance with those who, in the opinion of the church, he ought rather to

¹⁰⁰ Sismondi says, under the year 1610, 'Toute l'église catholique croyoit son sort lié à celui de la maison d'Autriche,' *Hist. des Français*, vol. xxii. p. 180.

¹⁰¹ 'Sa vue dominante fut l'abaissement de la maison d'Autriche.' *Flassan, Hist. de la Diplomatie Française*, vol. iii. p. 81. And, on the early formation of this scheme, see *Mém. de la Rochefoucauld*, vol. i. p. 350. De Retz says, that before Richelieu, no one had even thought of such a step: 'Celui d'attaquer la formidable maison d'Autriche n'avoit été imaginé de personne.' *Mém. de Retz*, vol. i. p. 45. This is rather too strongly expressed; but the whole paragraph is curious, as written by a man who possessed great ability, which De Retz undoubtedly did, and who, though hating Richelieu, could not refrain from bearing testimony to his immense services.

¹⁰² 'Obwohl Cardinal der römischen Kirche, trug Richelieu kein Bedenken, mit den Protestanten selbst unverhohlen in Bund zu treten,' *Ranke, die Päpste*, vol. ii. p. 510. Compare, in *Mém. de Fontenay Mareuil*, vol. ii. pp. 28, 29, the reproach which the nuncio Spada addressed to Richelieu for treating with the Protestants, 'de la paix qui se traitoit avec les huguenots.' See also *Le Vassor, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. v. pp. 236, 354–356, 567; and a good passage in *Lavallée, Hist. des Français*, vol. iii. p. 90, – an able little work, and perhaps the best small history ever published of a great country.

have chastized as rebellious heretics.¹⁰³ In the same way, when that great war broke out, in which the emperor attempted to subjugate to the true faith the consciences of German Protestants, Richelieu stood forward as their protector; he endeavoured from the beginning to save their leader the Palatine;¹⁰⁴ and, failing in that, he concluded in their favour an alliance with Gustavus Adolphus,¹⁰⁵ the ablest military commander the Reformers had then produced. Nor did he stop there. After the death of Gustavus, he, seeing that the Protestants were thus deprived of their great leader, made still more vigorous efforts in their favour.¹⁰⁶ He intrigued for them in foreign courts; he opened

¹⁰³ De Retz mentions a curious illustration of the feelings of the ecclesiastical party respecting this treaty. He says, that the Bishop of Beauvais, who, the year after the death of Richelieu, was for a moment at the head of affairs, began his administration by giving to the Dutch their choice, either to abandon their religion, or else forfeit their alliance with France: 'Et il demanda dès le premier jour aux Hollandois qu'ils se convertissent à la religion catholique, s'ils vouloient demeurer dans l'alliance de France.' *Mém. du Cardinal de Retz*, vol. i. p. 39. This, I suppose, is the original authority for the statement in the *Biog. Univ.* vol. xiv. p. 440; though, as is too often the case in that otherwise valuable work, the writer has omitted to indicate the source of his information.

¹⁰⁴ In 1626, he attempted to form a league 'en faveur du Palatin,' *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xxii. p. 576. Sismondi seems not quite certain as to the sincerity of his proposal; but as to this there can, I think, be little doubt; for it appears from his own memoirs, that even in 1624 he had in view the recovery of the Palatinate. *Mém. de Richelieu*, vol. ii. p. 405; and again in 1625, p. 468.

¹⁰⁵ *Sismondi*, vol. xxiii. p. 173; *Capectigue's Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 415; *Le Vassor, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. vi. pp. 12, 600; and at p. 489: 'Le roi de Suède qui comptoit uniquement sur le cardinal.'

¹⁰⁶ Compare *Mém. de Montglat*, vol. i. pp. 74, 75, vol. ii. pp. 92, 93, with *Mém.*

negotiations in their behalf; and eventually he organized for their protection a public confederacy, in which all ecclesiastical considerations were set at defiance. This league, which formed an important precedent in the international polity of Europe, was not only contracted by Richelieu with the two most powerful enemies of his own church, but it was, from its tenor, what Sismondi emphatically calls a 'Protestant confederation' – a Protestant confederation, he says, between France, England, and Holland.¹⁰⁷

These things alone would have made the administration of Richelieu a great epoch in the history of European civilization. For his government affords the first example of an eminent Catholic statesman systematically disregarding ecclesiastical interests, and showing that disregard in the whole scheme of his foreign, as well as of his domestic, policy. Some instances, indeed, approaching to this, may be found, at an earlier period, among the petty rulers of Italian states; but, even there, such attempts have never been successful; they had never been continued for any length of time, nor had they been carried

de Fontenay Mareuil, vol. ii. p. 198; and *Howell's Letters*, p. 247. The different views which occurred to his fertile mind in consequence of the death of Gustavus, are strikingly summed up in *Mém. de Richelieu*, vol. vii. pp. 272–277. On his subsequent pecuniary advances, see vol. ix. p. 395.

¹⁰⁷ In 1633, 'les ambassadeurs de France, d'Angleterre et de Hollande mirent à profit le repos de l'hiver pour resserrer la confédération protestante,' *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xxiii. p. 221. Compare, in *Whitelocke's Swedish Embassy*, vol. i. p. 275, the remark made twenty years later by Christina, daughter of Gustavus, on the union with 'papists.'

out on a scale large enough to raise them to the dignity of international precedents. The peculiar glory of Richelieu is, that his foreign policy was, not occasionally, but invariably, governed by temporal considerations; nor do I believe that, during the long tenure of his power, there is to be found the least proof of his regard for those theological interests, the promotion of which had long been looked upon as a matter of paramount importance. By thus steadily subordinating the church to the state; by enforcing the principle of this subordination, on a large scale, with great ability, and with unvarying success, he laid the foundation of that purely secular polity, the consolidation of which has, since his death, been the aim of all the best European diplomatists. The result was a most salutary change, which had been for some time preparing, but which, under him, was first completed. For, by the introduction of this system, an end was put to religious wars; and the chances of peace were increased, by thus removing one of the causes to which the interruption of peace had often been owing.¹⁰⁸ At the same time, there was

¹⁰⁸ This change may be illustrated by comparing the work of Grotius with that of Vattel. These two eminent men are still respected as the most authoritative expounders of international law; but there is this important difference between them, that Vattel wrote more than a century after Grotius, and when the secular principles enforced by Richelieu had penetrated the minds even of common politicians. Therefore, Vattel says (*Le Droit des Gens*, vol. i. pp. 379, 380): ‘On demande s’il est permis de faire alliance avec une nation qui ne professe pas la même religion? Si les traités faits avec les ennemis de la foi sont valides? Grotius a traité la question assez au long. Cette discussion pouvait être nécessaire dans un temps où la fureur des partis obscurcissait encore des principes qu’elle avait long-temps fait oublier, osons croire qu’elle serait

prepared the way for that final separation of theology from politics, which it will be the business of future generations fully to achieve. How great a step had been taken in this direction, appears from the facility with which the operations of Richelieu were continued by men every way his inferiors. Less than two years after his death, there was assembled the Congress of Westphalia;¹⁰⁹ the members of which concluded that celebrated peace, which is remarkable, as being the first comprehensive attempt to adjust the conflicting interests of the leading European countries.¹¹⁰ In this important treaty, ecclesiastical interests were

superflue dans notre siècle. La loi naturelle seule régit les traités des nations; la différence de religion y est absolument étrangère.’ See also p. 318, and vol. ii. p. 151. On the other hand, Grotius opposes alliances between nations of different religion, and says, that nothing can justify them except ‘une extrême nécessité... Car il faut chercher premièrement le règne céleste, c’est à dire penser avant toutes choses à la propagation de l’évangile.’ And he further recommends that princes should follow the advice given on this subject by Foulques, Archbishop of Rheims! *Grotius, le Droit de la Guerre et de la Paix*, livre ii. chap xv. sec. xi. vol. i. pp. 485, 486, edit. Barbeyrac, Amsterdam, 1724, 4to; a passage the more instructive, because Grotius was a man of great genius and great humanity. On religious wars, as naturally recognized in barbarous times, see the curious and important work, *Institutes of Timour*, pp. 141, 333, 335.

¹⁰⁹ ‘Le Congrès de Westphalie s’ouvrit le 10 avril 1643.’ *Lavallée, Hist. des Français*, vol. iii. p. 156. Its two great divisions at Munster and Osnabruck were formed in March 1644. *Flassan, Hist. de la Diplomatie*, vol. iii. p. 110. Richelieu died in December, 1642. *Biog. Univ.* vol. xxxviii. p. 28.

¹¹⁰ ‘Les règnes de Charles-Quint et de Henri IV font époque pour certaines parties du droit international; mais le point de départ le plus saillant, c’est la paix de Westphalie.’ *Eschbach, Introduc. à l’Etude du Droit*, Paris, 1846, p. 92. Compare the remarks on Mably, in *Biog. Univ.* vol. xxvi. p. 7, and *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xxiv. p. 179: ‘base au droit public de l’Europe.’

altogether disregarded;¹¹¹ and the contracting parties, instead of, as heretofore, depriving each other of their possessions, took the bolder course of indemnifying themselves at the expense of the church, and did not hesitate to seize her revenues, and secularize several of her bishoprics.¹¹² From this grievous insult, which became a precedent in the public law of Europe, the spiritual power has never recovered; and it is remarked by a very competent authority that, since that period, diplomatists have, in their official acts, neglected religious interests, and have preferred the advocacy of matters relating to the commerce and colonies of their respective countries.¹¹³ The truth of this observation is confirmed by the interesting fact, that the Thirty Years' War, to which this same treaty put an end, is the last great

¹¹¹ Compare the indignation of the pope at this treaty (*Vattel, le Droit des Gens*, vol. ii. p. 28), with *Ranke's Päpste*, vol. ii. p. 576: 'Das religiöse Element ist zurückgetreten; die politischen Rücksichten beherrschen die Welt:' a summary of the general state of affairs.

¹¹² 'La France obtint par ce traité, en indemnité, la souveraineté des trois évêchés, Metz, Toul et Verdun, ainsi que celle d'Alsace. La satisfaction ou indemnité des autres parties intéressées fut convenue, en grande partie, aux dépens de l'église, et moyennant la sécularisation de plusieurs évêchés et bénéfices ecclésiastiques.' *Koch, Tableau des Révolutions*, vol. i. p. 328.

¹¹³ Dr. Vaughan (*Protectorate of Cromwell*, vol. i. p. civ.) says: 'It is a leading fact, also, in the history of modern Europe, that, from the peace of Westphalia, in 1648, religion, as the great object of negotiation, began everywhere to give place to questions relating to colonies and commerce.' Charles Butler observed, that this treaty 'considerably lessened the influence of religion on politics.' *Butler's Reminiscences*, vol. i. p. 181.

religious war which has ever been waged;¹¹⁴ no civilized people, during two centuries, having thought it worth while to peril their own safety in order to disturb the belief of their neighbours. This, indeed, is but a part of that vast secular movement, by which superstition has been weakened, and the civilization of Europe secured. Without, however, discussing that subject, I will now endeavour to show how the policy of Richelieu, in regard to the French Protestant church, corresponded with his policy in regard to the French Catholic church; so, that, in both departments, this great statesman, aided by that progress of knowledge for which his age was remarkable, was able to struggle with prejudices from which men, slowly and with infinite difficulty, were attempting to emerge.

The treatment of the French Protestants by Richelieu is, undoubtedly, one of the most honourable parts of his system; and in it, as in other liberal measures, he was assisted by the course of preceding events. His administration, taken in connexion with that of Henry IV. and the queen-regent, presents the noble spectacle of a toleration far more complete than any which had then been seen in Catholic Europe. While in other Christian countries, men were being incessantly persecuted,

¹¹⁴ The fact of the Thirty Years' War being a religious contest, formed the basis of one of the charges which the church party brought against Richelieu: and an author, who wrote in 1634, 'montróit bien au long que l'alliance du roy de France avec les protestantes étoit contraire aux intéréts de la religion catholique; parce que la guerre des Provinces Unies, et celle d'Allemagne étoient des guerres de religion.' *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. ii. p. 536.

simply because they held opinions different from those professed by the established clergy, France refused to follow the general example, and protected those heretics whom the church was eager to punish. Indeed, not only were they protected, but, when they possessed abilities, they were openly rewarded. In addition to their appointments to civil offices, many of them were advanced to high military posts; and Europe beheld, with astonishment, the armies of the king of France led by heretical generals. Rohan, Lesdiguières, Chatillon, La Force, Bernard de Weimar, were among the most celebrated of the military leaders employed by Louis XIII.; and all of them were Protestants, as also were some younger, but distinguished officers, such as Gassion, Rantzau, Schomberg, and Turenne. For now, nothing was beyond the reach of men who, half a century earlier, would, on account of their heresies, have been persecuted to the death. Shortly before the accession of Louis XIII., Lesdiguières, the ablest general among the French Protestants, was made marshal of France.¹¹⁵ Fourteen years later, the same high dignity was conferred upon two other Protestants, Chatillon and La Force; the former of whom is said to have been the most influential of

¹¹⁵ According to a contemporary, he received this appointment without having asked for it: 'sans être à la cour ni l'avoir demandé.' *Mém. de Fontenay, Mareuil*, vol. i. p. 70. In 1622, even the lieutenants of Lesdiguières were Protestants: 'ses lieutenants, qui estant tous huguenots.' *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 538. These memoirs are very valuable in regard to political and military matters; their author having played a conspicuous part in the transactions which he describes.

the schismatics.¹¹⁶ Both these appointments were in 1622;¹¹⁷ and, in 1634, still greater scandal was caused by the elevation of Sully, who, notwithstanding his notorious heresy, also received the staff of marshal of France.¹¹⁸ This was the work of Richelieu, and it gave serious offence to the friends of the church; but the great statesman paid so little attention to their clamour, that, after the civil war was concluded, he took another step equally obnoxious. The Duke de Rohan was the most active of all the enemies of the established church, and was looked up to by the Protestants as the main support of their party. He had taken up arms in their favour, and, declining to abandon his religion, had, by the fate of war, been driven from France. But Richelieu, who was acquainted with his ability, cared little about his opinions. He, therefore, recalled him from exile, employed him in a negotiation with Switzerland, and sent him on foreign service, as commander of one of the armies of the king of France.¹¹⁹

Such were the tendencies which characterized this new state of things. It is hardly necessary to observe how beneficial this

¹¹⁶ 'Il n'y avoit personne dans le parti huguenot si considérable que lui.' *Tallemant des Réaux, Historiettes*, vol. v. p. 204.

¹¹⁷ *Biog. Univ.* vol. xv. p. 247; *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. ii. p. 400.

¹¹⁸ Additions to Sully, *Œconomies Royales*, vol. viii. p. 496; *Smedley's Hist. of the Reformed Religion in France*, vol. iii. p. 204.

¹¹⁹ *Capefigue's Richelieu*, vol. ii. p. 57; *Mém. de Rohan*, vol. i. pp. 66, 69; *Mém. de Bassompierre*, vol. iii. pp. 324, 348; *Mém. de Montglat*, vol. i. p. 86; *Le Vassor, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. vii. p. 157, vol. viii. p. 284. This great rise in the fortunes of Rohan took place at different times between 1632 and 1635.

great change must have been; since by it men were encouraged to look to their country as the first consideration, and, discarding their old disputes, Catholic soldiers were taught to obey heretical generals, and follow their standards to victory. In addition to this, the mere social amalgamation, arising from the professors of different creeds mixing in the same camp, and fighting under the same banner, must have still further aided to disarm the mind, partly by merging theological feuds in a common, and yet a temporal, object, and partly by showing to each sect, that their religious opponents were not entirely bereft of human virtue; that they still retained some of the qualities of men; and that it was even possible to combine the errors of heresy with all the capabilities of a good and competent citizen.¹²⁰

But, while the hateful animosities by which France had long been distracted, were, under the policy of Richelieu, gradually subsiding, it is singular to observe that, though the prejudices of the Catholics obviously diminished, those of the Protestants seemed, for a time, to retain all their activity. It is, indeed, a striking proof of the perversity and pertinacity of such feelings, that it was precisely in the country, and at the period, when the Protestants were best treated, that they displayed most turbulence. And in this, as in all such cases, the cause principally

¹²⁰ Late in the sixteenth century, Duplessis Mornay had to state what was then considered by the majority of men an incredible paradox, 'que ce n'estoit pas chose incompatible d'estre bon huguenot et bon François tout ensemble.' *Duplessis, Mém. et Correspond.* vol. i. p. 146. Compare p. 213, vol. ii. pp. 45, 46, 77, 677, vol. vii. p. 294, vol. xi. pp. 31, 68; interesting passages for the history of opinions in France.

at work was the influence of that class to which circumstances, I will now explain, had secured a temporary ascendancy.

For, the diminution of the theological spirit had effected in the Protestants a remarkable but a very natural result. The increasing toleration of the French government had laid open to their leaders prizes which before they could never have obtained. As long as all offices were refused to the Protestant nobles, it was natural that they should cling with the greater zeal to their own party, by whom alone their virtues were acknowledged. But, when the principle was once recognised, that the state would reward men for their abilities, without regard to their religion, there was introduced into every sect a new element of discord. The leaders of the Reformers could not fail to feel some gratitude, or, at all events, some interest for the government which employed them; and the influence of temporal considerations being thus strengthened, the influence of religious ties must have been weakened. It is impossible that opposite feelings should be paramount, at the same moment, in the same mind. The further men extend their view, the less they care for each of the details of which the view is composed. Patriotism is a corrective of superstition; and the more we feel for our country, the less we feel for our sect. Thus it is, that in the progress of civilization, the scope of the intellect is widened; its horizon is enlarged; its sympathies are multiplied; and, as the range of its excursions is increased, the tenacity of its grasp is slackened, until, at length, it begins to perceive that the infinite variety of circumstances

necessarily causes an infinite variety of opinions; that a creed, which is good and natural for one man, may be bad and unnatural for another; and that, so far from interfering with the march of religious convictions, we should be content to look into ourselves, search our own hearts, purge our own souls, soften the evil of our own passions, and extirpate that insolent and intolerant spirit, which is at once the cause and the effect of all theological controversy.

It was in this direction, that a prodigious step was taken by the French in the first half of the seventeenth century. Unfortunately, however, the advantages which arose were accompanied by serious drawbacks. From the introduction of temporal considerations among the Protestant leaders, there occurred two results of considerable importance. The first result was, that many of the Protestants changed their religion. Before the Edict of Nantes, they had been constantly persecuted, and had, as constantly, increased.¹²¹ But, under the tolerant policy of Henry IV. and Louis XIII., they continued to diminish.¹²²

¹²¹ See *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. i. pp. 10, 14, 18; *De Thou, Hist. Univ.* vol. iii. pp. 181, 242, 357, 358, 543, 558, vol. iv. p. 155; *Relat. des Ambassadeurs Vénitiens*, vol. i. pp. 412, 536, vol. ii. pp. 66, 74; *Ranke's Civil Wars in France*, vol. i. pp. 279, 280, vol. ii. p. 94.

¹²² Compare *Hallam's Const. Hist.* vol. i. p. 173, with *Ranke, die Römischen Päpste*, vol. ii. pp. 477–479. In spite of the increase of population, the Protestants diminished absolutely, as well as relatively, to the Catholics. In 1598 they had 760 churches; in 1619 only 700. *Smedley's Hist. of the Reformed Religion in France*, vol. iii. pp. 46, 145. De Thou, in the preface to his *History* (vol. i. p. 320), observes, that the Protestants had increased during the wars carried on against them, but 'diminuoient en nombre

Indeed, this was the natural consequence of the growth of that secular spirit which, in every country, has assuaged religious animosities. For, by the action of that spirit, the influence of social and political views began to outweigh those theological views to which the minds of men had long been confined. As these temporal ties increased in strength, there was, of course, generated among the rival factions an increased tendency to assimilate; while, as the Catholics were not only much more numerous, but in every respect, more influential, than their opponents, they reaped the benefit of this movement, and gradually drew over to their side many of their former enemies. That this absorption of the smaller sect into the larger, is due to the cause I have mentioned, is rendered still more evident by the interesting fact, that the change began among the heads of the party; and that it was not the inferior Protestants who first abandoned their leaders, but it was rather the leaders who deserted their followers. This was because the leaders, being more educated than the great body of the people, were more susceptible to the sceptical movement, and therefore set the example of an indifference to disputes which still engrossed the popular mind. As soon as this indifference had reached a certain point, the attractions offered by the conciliating policy of Louis XIII. became irresistible; and the Protestant nobles, in particular, being most exposed to political temptations, began to alienate themselves from their own party, in order to form an alliance

with a court which showed itself ready to reward their merits.

It is, of course, impossible to fix the exact period at which this important change took place.¹²³ But we may say with certainty, that very early in the reign of Louis XIII. many of the Protestant nobles cared nothing for their religion, while the remainder of them ceased to feel that interest in it which they had formerly expressed. Indeed, some of the most eminent of them openly abandoned their creed, and joined that very church which they had been taught to abhor as the man of sin, and the whore of Babylon. The Duke de Lesdiguières, the greatest of all the Protestant generals,¹²⁴ became a Catholic, and, as a reward for his conversion,¹²⁵ was made constable of France.¹²⁵ The Duke de la

¹²³ M. Ranke has noticed how the French Protestant nobles fell off from their party; but he does not seem aware of the remote causes of what he deems a sudden apostasy: 'In dem nämlichen Momente trat nun auch die grosse Wendung der Dinge in Frankreich ein. Fragen wir, woher im Jahr 1621 die Verluste des Protestantismus hauptsächlich kamen, so war es die Entzweiung derselben, der Abfall des Adels.' *Ranke, die Päpste*, vol. ii. p. 476. Compare a curious passage in *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. ii. p. 33, from which it appears that in 1611 the French Protestants were breaking into three parties, one of which consisted of 'les seigneurs d'éminente qualité.'

¹²⁴ 'Le plus illustre guerrier du parti protestant.' *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xxii. p. 505. In the contemporary despatches of the Spanish ambassador, he is called 'l'un des huguenots les plus marquans, homme d'un grand poids, et d'un grand crédit.' *Capefigue's Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 60. His principal influence was in Dauphiné. *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. i. p. 236.

¹²⁵ *Biog. Univ.* vol. xxiv. p. 293; and a dry remark on his 'conversion' in *Mém. de Richelieu*, vol. ii. p. 215, which may be compared with *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. xviii. p. 132, and *Bazin, Hist. de Louis XIII.*, vol. ii. pp. 195–197. Rohan (*Mém.* vol. i. p. 228) plainly says, 'le duc de Lesdiguières, ayant hardé sa religion pour la charge de

Tremouille adopted the same course;¹²⁶ as also did the Duke de la Meilleraye,¹²⁷ the Duke de Bouillon,¹²⁸ and a few years later the Marquis de Montausier.¹²⁹ These illustrious nobles were among the most powerful of the members of the Reformed communion; but they quitted it without compunction, sacrificing their old associations in favour of the opinions professed by the state. Among the other men of high rank, who still remained nominally connected with the French Protestants, we find a similar spirit. We find them lukewarm respecting matters, for which, if they had been born fifty years earlier, they would have laid down their lives. The Maréchal de Bouillon, who professed himself to be a Protestant, was unwilling to change his religion; but he so comported himself as to show that he considered its interests as subordinate to political considerations.¹³⁰ A similar remark

connétable de France.' See also p. 91, and *Mém. de Montglat*, vol. i. p. 37.

¹²⁶ *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xxiii. p. 67; *Le Vassor, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. v. pp. 809, 810, 865.

¹²⁷ *Tallemant des Réaux, Historiettes*, vol. iii. p. 43. La Meilleraye was also a duke; and what is far more in his favour, he was a friend of Descartes. *Biog. Univ.* vol. xxviii. pp. 152, 153.

¹²⁸ Sismondi (*Hist. des Français*, vol. xxiii. p. 27) says, 'il abjura en 1637;' but according to Benoist (*Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. ii. p. 550) it was in 1635.

¹²⁹ *Tallemant des Réaux, Historiettes*, vol. iii. p. 245. Des Réaux, who saw these changes constantly happening, simply observes, 'notre marquis, voyant que sa religion étoit un obstacle à son dessein, en change.'

¹³⁰ 'Mettoit la politique avant la religion.' *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xxii. p. 264. This was Henry Bouillon, whom some writers have confused with Frederick Bouillon. Both of them were dukes; but Henry, who was the father, and who did not actually change his religion, was the marshal. The following notices of him will more

has been made by the French historians concerning the Duke de Sully and the Marquis de Chatillon, both of whom, though they were members of the Reformed church, displayed a marked indifference to those theological interests which had formerly been objects of supreme importance.¹³¹ The result was, that when, in 1621, the Protestants began their civil war against the government, it was found that of all their great leaders, two only, Rohan and his brother Soubise, were prepared to risk their lives in support of their religion.¹³²

Thus it was, that the first great consequence of the tolerating policy of the French government was to deprive the Protestants

than confirm the remark made by Sismondi; *Mém. de Bassompierre*, vol. i. p. 455; *Smedley's Reformed Religion in France*, vol. iii. p. 99; *Capecigüe's Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 107; *Le Vassor, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. ii. pp. 420, 467, 664, vol. iv. p. 519; *Mém. de Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 104, vol. ii. p. 259; *Mém. de Duplessis Mornay*, vol. xi. p. 450, vol. xii. pp. 79, 182, 263, 287, 345, 361, 412, 505.

¹³¹ *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. i. pp. 121, 298, vol. ii. pp. 5, 180, 267, 341; *Capecigüe's Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 267; *Felice's Hist. of the Protestants of France*, p. 206. Sully advised Henry IV., on mere political considerations, to become a Catholic; and there were strong, but I believe unfounded rumours, that he himself intended taking the same course. See *Sully, Œconomies Royales*, vol. ii. p. 81, vol. vii. pp. 362, 363.

¹³² 'There were, among all the leaders, but the Duke de Rohan and his brother the Duke de Soubise, who showed themselves disposed to throw their whole fortunes into the new wars of religion.' *Felice's Hist. of the Protestants of France*, p. 241. For this, M. Felice, as usual, quotes no authority; but Rohan himself says: 'C'est ce qui s'est passé en cette seconde guerre (1626), où Rohan et Soubise ont eu pour contraires tous les grands de la religion de France.' *Mém. de Rohan*, vol. i. p. 278. Rohan claims great merit for his religious sincerity; though, from a passage in *Mém. de Fontenay Mareuil*, vol. i. p. 418, and another in *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. ii. p. 173, one may be allowed to doubt if he were so single-minded as is commonly supposed.

of the support of their former leaders, and, in several instances, even to turn their sympathies on the side of the Catholic church. But the other consequence, to which I have alluded, was one of far greater moment. The growing indifference of the higher classes of Protestants threw the management of their party into the hands of the clergy. The post, which was deserted by the secular leaders, was naturally seized by the spiritual leaders. And as, in every sect, the clergy, as a body, have always been remarkable for their intolerance of opinions different to their own, it followed, that this change infused into the now mutilated ranks of the Protestants an acrimony not inferior to that of the worst times of the sixteenth century.¹³³ Hence it was, that by a singular, but perfectly natural combination, the Protestants, who professed to take their stand on the right of private judgment, became, early in the seventeenth century, more intolerant than the Catholics, who based their religion on the dictates of an infallible church.

¹³³ Sismondi notices this remarkable change; though he places it a few years earlier than the contemporary writers do: 'Depuis que les grands seigneurs s'étoient éloignés des églises, c'étoient les ministres qui étoient devenus les chefs, les représentans et les démagogues des huguenots; et ils apportoit dans leurs délibérations cette âpreté et cette inflexibilité théologiques qui semblent caractériser les prêtres de toutes les religions, et qui donnent à leurs haines une amertume plus offensante.' *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xxii. p. 87. Compare p. 478. In 1621, 'Rohan lui-même voyoit continuellement ses opérations contrariées par le conseil-général des églises.' *Lavallée, Hist. des Français*, vol. iii. p. 88. In the same year, M. Capefigue (*Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 271) says, 'Le parti modéré cessa d'avoir action sur le prêche; la direction des forces huguenotes, étoit passée dans les mains des ardents, conduits par les ministres.'

This is one of the many instances which show how superficial is the opinion of those speculative writers, who believe that the Protestant religion is necessarily more liberal than the Catholic. If those who adopt this view had taken the pains to study the history of Europe in its original sources, they would have learned, that the liberality of every sect depends, not at all on its avowed tenets, but on the circumstances in which it is placed, and on the amount of authority possessed by its priesthood. The Protestant religion is, for the most part, more tolerant than the Catholic, simply because the events which have given rise to Protestantism have at the same time increased the play of the intellect, and therefore lessened the power of the clergy. But whoever has read the works of the great Calvinist divines, and above all, whoever has studied their history, must know, that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the desire of persecuting their opponents burnt as hotly among them, as it did among any of the Catholics even in the worst days of the papal dominion. This is a mere matter of fact, of which any one may satisfy himself, by consulting the original documents of those times. And even now, there is more superstition, more bigotry, and less of the charity of real religion, among the lower order of Scotch Protestants, than there is among the lower order of French Catholics. Yet for one intolerant passage in Protestant theology, it would be easy to point out twenty in Catholic theology. The truth, however, is, that the actions of men are governed, not by dogmas, and text-books, and rubrics, but by the opinions and habits of

their contemporaries, by the general spirit of their age, and by the character of those classes who are in the ascendant. This seems to be the origin of that difference between religious theory and religious practice, of which theologians greatly complain as a stumbling-block and an evil. For, religious theories being preserved in books, in a doctrinal and dogmatic form, remain a perpetual witness, and, therefore cannot be changed without incurring the obvious charge of inconsistency, or of heresy. But the practical part of every religion, its moral, political, and social workings, embrace such an immense variety of interests, and have to do with such complicated and shifting agencies, that it is hopeless to fix them by formularies: they, even in the most rigid systems, are left, in a great measure, to private discretion; and, being almost entirely unwritten, they lack those precautions by which the permanence of dogmas is effectually secured.¹³⁴ Hence

¹³⁴ The church of Rome has always seen this, and on that account has been, and still is, very pliant in regard to morals, and very inflexible in regard to dogmas; a striking proof of the great sagacity with which her affairs are administered. In *Blanco White's Evidence against Catholicism*, p. 48, and in *Parr's Works*, vol. vii. pp. 454, 455, there is an unfavourable and, indeed, an unjust notice of this peculiarity, which, though strongly marked in the Romish church, is by no means confined to it, but is found in every religious sect which is regularly organized. Locke, in his *Letters on Toleration*, observes, that the clergy are naturally more eager against error than against vice (*Works*, vol. v. pp. 6, 7, 241); and their preference of dogmas to moral truths is also mentioned by M. C. Comte, *Traité de Législat.* vol. i. p. 245; and is alluded to by Kant in his comparison of 'ein moralischer Katechismus' with a 'Religionskatechismus.' *Die Metaphysik der Sitten (Ethische Methodenlehre)*, in *Kant's Werke*, vol. v. p. 321. Compare *Temple's Observations upon the United Provinces*, in *Works of Sir W. Temple*, vol. i. p. 154, with the strict adhesion to formularies noticed in *Ward's Ideal Church*, p. pp.

it is, that while the religious doctrines professed by a people in their national creed are no criterion of their civilization, their religious practice is, on the other hand, so pliant and so capable of adaptation to social wants, that it forms one of the best standards by which the spirit of any age can be measured.

It is on account of these things, that we ought not to be surprised that, during many years, the French Protestants, who affected to appeal to the right of private judgment, were more intolerant of the exercise of that judgment by their adversaries than were the Catholics; although the Catholics, by recognising an infallible church, ought, in consistency, to be superstitious, and may be said to inherit intolerance as their natural birthright.¹³⁵ Thus, while the Catholics were theoretically more bigoted than the Protestants, the Protestants became practically more bigoted than the Catholics. The Protestants continued to insist upon that right of private judgment in religion, which the Catholics continued to deny. Yet, such was the force of circumstances, that each sect, in its practice, contradicted its own dogma, and acted as if it had embraced the dogma of its opponents. The cause of this change was very simple. Among

358; and analogous cases in *Mill's Hist. of India*, vol. i. pp. 399, 400, and in *Wilkinson's Ancient Egyptians*, vol. iii. p. 87; also *Combe's Notes on the United States*, vol. iii. pp. 256, 257.

¹³⁵ Blanco White (*Evidence against Catholicism*, p. vi.) harshly says, 'sincere Roman Catholics cannot conscientiously be tolerant.' But he is certainly mistaken; for the question is one, not of sincerity, but of consistency. A sincere Roman Catholic may be, and often is, conscientiously tolerant; a consistent Roman Catholic, never.

the French, the theological spirit, as we have already seen, was decaying; and the decline of the influence of the clergy was, as invariably happens, accompanied by an increase of toleration. But, among the French Protestants, this partial diminution of the theological spirit had produced different consequences; because it had brought about a change of leaders, which threw the command into the hands of the clergy, and, by increasing their power, provoked a reaction, and revived those very feelings to the decay of which the reaction owed its origin. This seems to explain how it is, that a religion, which is not protected by the government, usually displays greater energy and greater vitality than one which is so protected. In the progress of society, the theological spirit first declines among the most educated classes; and then it is that the government can step in, as it does in England, and, controlling the clergy, make the church a creature of the state; thus weakening the ecclesiastical element by tempering it with secular considerations. But, when the state refuses to do this, the reins of power, as they fall from the hands of the upper classes, are seized by the clergy, and there arises a state of things of which the French Protestants in the seventeenth century, and the Irish Catholics in our own time, form the best illustration. In such cases, it will always happen, that the religion which is tolerated by the government, though not fully recognised by it, will the longest retain its vitality; because its priesthood, neglected by the state, must cling closer

to the people, in whom alone is the source of their power.¹³⁶ On the other hand, in a religion which is favoured and richly endowed by the state, the union between the priesthood and inferior laity will be less intimate; the clergy will look to the government as well as to the people; and the interference of political views, of considerations of temporal expediency, and, if it may be added without irreverence, the hopes of promotion will secularize the ecclesiastical spirit,¹³⁷ and, according to the process I have already traced, will thus hasten the march of toleration.

These generalizations, which account for a great part of the present superstition of the Irish Catholics, will also account for the former superstition of the French Protestants. In both cases, the government disdaining the supervision of an heretical religion, allowed supreme authority to fall into the hands of the

¹³⁶ We also see this very clearly in England, where the dissenting clergy have much more influence among their hearers than the clergy of the Establishment have among theirs. This has often been noticed by impartial observers, and we are now possessed of statistical proof that 'the great body of Protestant dissenters are more assiduous' in attending religious worship than churchmen are. See a valuable essay by Mr. Mann *On the Statistical Position of Religious Bodies in England and Wales*, in *Journal of Statist. Soc.* vol. xviii. p. 152.

¹³⁷ Respecting the working of this in England, there are some shrewd remarks made by Le Blanc in his *Lettres d'un François*, vol. i. pp. 267, 268; which may be compared with *Lord Holland's Mem. of the Whig Party*, vol. ii. p. 253, where it is suggested, that in the case of complete emancipation of the Catholics, 'eligibility to worldly honours and profits would somewhat abate the fever of religious zeal.' On this, there are observations worth attending to in *Lord Cloncurry's Recollections*, Dublin, 1849, pp. 342, 343.

priesthood, who stimulated the bigotry of men, and encouraged them in a hatred of their opponents. What the results of this are in Ireland, is best known to those of our statesmen, who, with unusual candour, have declared Ireland to be their greatest difficulty. What the results were in France, we will now endeavour to ascertain.

The conciliating spirit of the French government having drawn over to its side some of the most eminent of the French Protestants, and having disarmed the hostility of others, the leadership of the party fell, as we have already seen, into the hands of those inferior men, who displayed in their new position the intolerance characteristic of their order. Without pretending to write a history of the odious feuds that now arose, I will lay before the reader some evidence of their increasing bitterness; and I will point out a few of the steps by which the angry feelings of religious controversy became so inflamed, that at length they kindled a civil war, which nothing but the improved temper of the Catholics prevented from being as sanguinary as were the horrible struggles of the sixteenth century. For, when the French Protestants became governed by men whose professional habits made them consider heresy to be the greatest of crimes, there naturally sprung up a missionary and proselytizing spirit, which induced them to interfere with the religion of the Catholics, and, under the old pretence of turning them from the error of their ways, revived those animosities which the progress of knowledge tended to appease. And as, under such guidance, these feelings

quickly increased, the Protestants soon learned to despise that great Edict of Nantes, by which their liberties were secured; and they embarked in a dangerous contest, in which their object was, not to protect their own religion, but to weaken the religion of that very party to whom they owed a toleration, which had been reluctantly conceded by the prejudices of the age.

It was stipulated, in the Edict of Nantes, that the Protestants should enjoy the full exercise of their religion; and this right they continued to possess until the reign of Louis XIV. To this there were added several other privileges, such as no Catholic Government, except that of France, would then have granted to its heretical subjects. But these things did not satisfy the desires of the Protestant clergy. They were not content to exercise their own religion, unless they could also trouble the religion of others. Their first step was, to call upon the government to limit the performance of those rites which the French Catholics had long revered as emblems of the national faith. For this purpose, directly after the death of Henry IV. they held a great assembly at Saumur, in which they formally demanded that no Catholic processions should be allowed in any town, place, or castle occupied by the Protestants.¹³⁸ As the government did not seem inclined to countenance this monstrous pretension, these intolerant sectaries took the law into their own hands. They not only attacked the Catholic processions wherever they

¹³⁸ 'Les processions catholiques seraient interdites dans toutes les places, villes et châteaux occupés par ceux de la religion.' *Capectfigue's Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 39.

met them, but they subjected the priests to personal insults, and even endeavoured to prevent them from administering the sacrament to the sick. If a Catholic clergyman was engaged in burying the dead, the Protestants were sure to be present, interrupting the funeral, turning the ceremonies into ridicule, and attempting, by their clamour, to deaden the voice of the minister, so that the service performed in the church should not be heard.¹³⁹ Nor did they always confine themselves even to such demonstrations as these. For, certain towns having been, perhaps imprudently, placed under their control, they exercised their authority in them with the most wanton insolence. At La Rochelle, which for importance was the second city in the kingdom, they would not permit the Catholics to have even a single church in which to celebrate what for centuries had been the sole religion of France, and was still the religion of an enormous majority of Frenchmen.¹⁴⁰ This, however, only formed

¹³⁹ Of these facts we have the most unequivocal proof; for they were not only stated by the Catholics in 1623, but they are recorded, without being denied, by the Protestant historian Benoist: 'On y accusoit les Réformez d'injurier les prêtres, quand ils les voyoient passer; d'empêcher les processions des Catholiques; l'administration des sacremens aux malades; l'enterrement des morts avec les cérémonies accoutumées; ... que les Réformez s'étoient emparez des cloches en quelques lieux, et en d'autres se serroient de celles des Catholiques pour avertir de l'heure du prêche; qu'ils affectoient de faire du bruit autour des églises pendant le service; qu'ils tournoient en dérision les cérémonies de l'église romaine.' *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. ii. pp. 433, 434; see also pp. 149, 150.

¹⁴⁰ 'On pouvait dire que La Rochelle était la capitale, le saint temple du calvinisme; car on ne voyait là aucune église, aucune cérémonie papiste.' *Capecigues's Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 342.

part of a system, by which the Protestant clergy hoped to trample on the rights of their fellow-subjects. In 1619, they ordered in their general assembly at Loudun, that in none of the Protestant towns should there be a sermon preached by a Jesuit, or indeed by any ecclesiastical person commissioned by a bishop.¹⁴¹ In another assembly, they forbade any Protestant even to be present at a baptism, or at a marriage, or at a funeral, if the ceremony was performed by a Catholic priest.¹⁴² And, as if to cut off all hope of reconciliation, they not only vehemently opposed those intermarriages between the two parties, by which, in every Christian country, religious animosities have been softened, but they publicly declared, that they would withhold the sacrament from any parents whose children were married into a Catholic family.¹⁴³ Not, however, to accumulate unnecessary evidence, there is one other circumstance worth relating, as a proof of the spirit with which these and similar regulations were enforced. When Louis XIII., in 1620, visited Pau, he was not only treated with indignity, as being an heretical prince, but he found that the Protestants had not left him a single church, not one place, in which the king of France, in his own territory, could perform those devotions which he believed necessary for his future

¹⁴¹ *Mém. de Richelieu*, vol. ii. p. 100. For other and similar evidence, see *Duplessis Mornay*, *Mémoires*, vol. xi. p. 244; *Sully*, *Œconomies Royales*, vol. vii. p. 164; *Benoist*, *Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. ii. pp. 70, 233, 279.

¹⁴² *Quick's Synodicon in Gallia*, vol. ii. p. 196.

¹⁴³ For a striking instance of the actual enforcement of this intolerant regulation, see *Quick's Synodicon in Gallia*, vol. ii. p. 344.

salvation.¹⁴⁴

This was the way in which the French Protestants, influenced by their new leaders, treated the first Catholic government which abstained from persecuting them; the first which not only allowed them the free exercise of their religion, but even advanced many of them to offices of trust and of honour.¹⁴⁵ All this, however, was only of a piece with the rest of their conduct. They, who in numbers and in intellect formed a miserable minority of the French nation, claimed a power which the majority had abandoned, and refused to concede to others the toleration they themselves enjoyed. Several persons, who had joined their party, now quitted it, and returned to the Catholic church; but for exercising this undoubted right, they were insulted by the Protestant clergy in the grossest manner, with every term of opprobrium and abuse.¹⁴⁶ For those who resisted their authority, no treatment was considered too severe. In 1612, Ferrier, a man of some reputation in his own day, having disobeyed their injunctions, was ordered to appear before one of their synods. The gist of his offence was, that he had spoken contemptuously of ecclesiastical assemblies; and to this

¹⁴⁴ *Bazin, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. ii. p. 124; *Mém. de Richelieu*, vol. ii. pp. 109, 110; *Felice's Hist. of the Protestants of France*, p. 238.

¹⁴⁵ In 1625, Howell writes that the Protestants had put up an inscription on the gates of Montauban, 'Roy sans foy, ville sans peur.' *Howell's Letters*, p. 178.

¹⁴⁶ Sometimes they were called dogs returning to the vomit of popery; sometimes they were swine wallowing in the mire of idolatry. *Quick's Synodicon in Gallia*, vol. i. pp. 385, 398.

there were, of course, added those accusations against his moral conduct, with which theologians often attempt to blacken the character of their opponents.¹⁴⁷ Readers of ecclesiastical history are too familiar with such charges to attach any importance to them; but as, in this case, the accused was tried by men who were at once his prosecutors, his enemies, and his judges, the result was easy to anticipate. In 1613 Ferrier was excommunicated, and the excommunication was publicly proclaimed in the church of Nîmes. In this sentence, which is still extant, he is declared by the clergy to be ‘a scandalous man, a person incorrigible, impenitent and ungovernable.’ We, therefore, they add, ‘in the name and power of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the conduct of the Holy Ghost, and with authority from the church, have cast, and do now cast and throw him out of the society of the faithful, that he may be delivered up unto Satan.’¹⁴⁸

That he may be delivered up unto Satan! This was the penalty which a handful of clergymen, in a corner of France, thought they could inflict on a man who dared to despise their authority. In our time such an anathema would only excite derision;¹⁴⁹ but, early in

¹⁴⁷ It is observable, that on the first occasion (*Quick's Synodicon*, vol. i. p. 362) nothing is said of Ferrier's immorality; and on the next occasion (p. 449) the synod complains, among other things, that ‘he hath most licentiously inveighed against, and satirically lampooned, the ecclesiastical assemblies.’

¹⁴⁸ See this frightful and impious document, in *Quick's Synodicon*, vol. i. pp. 448, 450.

¹⁴⁹ The notion of theologians respecting excommunication may be seen in Mr. Palmer's entertaining book, *Treatise on the Church*, vol. i. pp. 64, 67, vol. ii. pp. 299,

the seventeenth century, the open promulgation of it was enough to ruin any private person against whom it might be directed. And they whose studies have enabled them to take the measure of the ecclesiastical spirit will easily believe that, in that age, the threat did not remain a dead letter. The people, inflamed by their clergy, rose against Ferrier, attacked his family, destroyed his property, sacked and gutted his houses, and demanded with loud cries, that the 'traitor Judas' should be given up to them. The unhappy man, with the greatest difficulty, effected his escape; but though he saved his life by flying in the dead of the night, he was obliged to abandon for ever his native town, as he dared not return to a place where he had provoked so active and so implacable a party.¹⁵⁰

Into other matters, and even into those connected with the ordinary functions of government, the Protestants carried the

300; but the opinions of this engaging writer should be contrasted with the indignant language of Vattel, *Le Droit des Gens*, vol. i. pp. 177, 178. In England, the terrors of excommunication fell into contempt towards the end of the seventeenth century. See *Life of Archbishop Sharpe*, edited by Newcome, vol. i. p. 216: compare p. 363; and see the mournful remarks of Dr. Mosheim, in his *Eccles. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 79; and *Sir Philip Warwick's Memoirs*, pp. 175, 176.

¹⁵⁰ On the treatment of Ferrier, which excited great attention as indicating the extreme lengths to which the Protestants were prepared to go, see *Mém. de Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 177; *Mém. de Pontchartrain*, vol. ii. pp. 5, 6, 12, 29, 32; *Mém. de Duplessis Mornay*, vol. xii. pp. 317, 333, 341, 350, 389, 399, 430; *Felice's Hist. of the Protestants of France*, p. 235; *Biog. Univ.* vol. xiv. p. 440; *Tallemant des Réaux, Historiettes*, vol. v. pp. 48-54. Mr. Smedley, who refers to none of these authorities, except two passages in Duplessis, has given a garbled account of this riot. See his *History of the Reformed Religion in France*, vol. iii. pp. 119, 120.

same spirit. Although they formed so small a section of the people, they attempted to control the administration of the crown, and, by the use of threats, turn all its acts to their own favour. They would not allow the state to determine what ecclesiastical councils it should recognize; they would not even permit the king to choose his own wife. In 1615, without the least pretence of complaint, they assembled in large numbers at Grenoble and at Nîmes.¹⁵¹ The deputies of Grenoble insisted that government should refuse to acknowledge the Council of Trent;¹⁵² and both assemblies ordered that the Protestants should prevent the marriage of Louis XIII. with a Spanish princess.¹⁵³ They laid similar claims to interfere with the disposal of civil and military offices. Shortly after the death of Henry IV., they, in an assembly at Saumur, insisted that Sully should be restored to some posts from which, in their opinion, he had been unjustly removed.¹⁵⁴ In 1619, another of their assemblies at London declared, that as one of the Protestant councillors of the Parliament of Paris had become a Catholic, he must be

¹⁵¹ *Capefigue's Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 123.

¹⁵² *Capefigue*, vol. i. p. 123; *Bazin, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. i. p. 364; *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. ii. p. 183; *Mém. de Rohan*, vol. i. p. 130.

¹⁵³ *Capefigue's Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 124; *Mém. de Pontchartrain*, vol. ii. p. 100; *Le Vassor, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. ii. pp. 333, 334. The consequence was, that the king was obliged to send a powerful escort to protect his bride against his Protestant subjects. *Mém. de Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 274.

¹⁵⁴ *Capefigue's Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 38; *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. ii. pp. 28, 29, 63.

dismissed; and they demanded that, for the same reason, the government of Lectoure should be taken from Fontrailles, he also having adopted the not infrequent example of abandoning his sect in order to adopt a creed sanctioned by the state.¹⁵⁵

By way of aiding all this, and with the view of exasperating still further religious animosities, the principal Protestant clergy put forth a series of works, which, for bitterness of feeling, have hardly ever been equalled, and which it would certainly be impossible to surpass. The intense hatred with which they regarded their Catholic countrymen can only be fully estimated by those who have looked into the pamphlets written by the French Protestants during the first half of the seventeenth century, or who have read the laboured and formal treatises of such men as Chamier, Drelincourt, Moulin, Thomson, and Vignier. Without, however, pausing on these, it will perhaps be thought sufficient if, for the sake of brevity, I follow the mere outline of political events. Great numbers of the Protestants had joined in the rebellion which, in 1615, was raised by Condé;¹⁵⁶ and, although they were then easily defeated, they seemed bent on trying the issue of a fresh struggle. In Béarn,

¹⁵⁵ *Mém. de Fontenay Mareuil*, vol. i. p. 450; *Mém. de Bassompierre*, vol. ii. p. 161. See a similar instance, in the case of Berger, in *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. ii. p. 136, whom the Protestants sought to deprive because 'il avoit quitté leur religion.'

¹⁵⁶ *Bazin, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. i. p. 381. Sismondi (*Hist. des Français*, vol. xxii. p. 349) says that they had no good reason for this; and it is certain that their privileges, so far from being diminished since the Edict of Nantes, had been confirmed and extended.

where they were unusually numerous,¹⁵⁷ they, even during the reign of Henry IV., had refused to tolerate the Catholic religion; 'their fanatical clergy,' says the historian of France, 'declaring that it would be a crime to permit the idolatry of the mass.'¹⁵⁸ This charitable maxim they for many years actively enforced, seizing the property of the Catholic clergy, and employing it in support of their own churches;¹⁵⁹ so that, while in one part of the dominions of the king of France the Protestants were allowed to exercise their religion, they, in another part of his dominions, prevented the Catholics from exercising theirs. It was hardly to be expected that any government would suffer such an anomaly as this; and, in 1618, it was ordered that the Protestants should restore the plunder, and reinstate the Catholics in their former possessions. But the reformed clergy, alarmed at so sacrilegious a proposal, appointed a public fast, and inspiring the people to resistance, forced the royal commissioner to fly from Pau, where he had arrived in the hope of effecting a peaceful adjustment of

¹⁵⁷ M. Felice (*Hist. of the Protestants of France*, p. 237) says of Lower Navarre and Béarn, in 1617: 'Three-fourths of the population, some say nine-tenths, belonged to the reformed communion.' This is perhaps overestimated; but we know, from De Thou, that they formed a majority in Béarn in 1566: 'Les Protestans y fussent en plus grand nombre que les Catholiques.' *De Thou, Hist. Univ.* vol. v. p. 187.

¹⁵⁸ 'Les ministres fanatiques déclaroient qu'ils ne pouvaient sans crime souffrir dans ce pays régénéré l'idolâtrie de la messe.' *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xxii. p. 415.

¹⁵⁹ *Notice sur les Mémoires de Rohan*, vol. i. p. 26. Compare the account given by Pontchartrain, who was one of the ministers of Louis XIII. *Mém. de Pontchartrain*, vol. ii. pp. 248, 264; and see *Mém. de Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 443.

the claims of the rival parties.¹⁶⁰

The rebellion thus raised by the zeal of the Protestants, was soon put down; but, according to the confession of Rohan, one of the ablest of their leaders, it was the beginning of all their misfortunes.¹⁶¹ The sword had now been drawn; and the only question to be decided was, whether France should be governed according to the principles of toleration recently established, or according to the maxims of a despotic sect, which, while professing to advocate the right of private judgment, was acting in a way that rendered all private judgment impossible.

Scarcely was the war in Béarn brought to an end, when the Protestants determined on making a great effort in the west of France.¹⁶² The seat of this new struggle was Rochelle, which was one of the strongest fortresses in Europe, and was entirely in the hands of the Protestants,¹⁶³ who had grown

¹⁶⁰ *Bazin, Hist. de France sous Louis XIII*, vol. ii. pp. 62–64. The pith of the question was, that ‘l’édit de Nantes ayant donné pouvoir, tant aux catholiques qu’aux huguenots, de rentrer partout dans leurs biens, les ecclésiastiques de Béarn demandèrent aussytôt les leurs.’ *Mém. de Fontenay Mareuil*, vol. i. p. 392.

¹⁶¹ ‘L’affaire de Béarn, source de tous nos maux.’ *Mém. de Rohan*, vol. i. p. 156; see also p. 183. And the Protestant Le Vassor says (*Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. iii. p. 634): ‘L’affaire du Béarn et l’assemblée qui se convoqua ensuite à la Rochelle, sont la source véritable des malheurs des églises réformées de France sous le règne dont j’écris l’histoire.’

¹⁶² On the connexion between the proceedings of Béarn and those of Rochelle, compare *Mém. de Montglat*, vol. i. p. 33, with *Mém. de Richelieu*, vol. ii. p. 113, and *Mém. de Rohan*, vol. i. p. 446.

¹⁶³ Their first church was established in 1556 (*Ranke’s Civil Wars in France*, vol. i. p. 360); but, by the reign of Charles IX. the majority of the inhabitants were Protestants.

wealthy, partly by their own industry and partly by following the occupation of public pirates.¹⁶⁴ In this city, which they believed to be impregnable,¹⁶⁵ they, in December, 1620, held a Great Assembly, to which their spiritual chiefs flocked from all parts of France. It was soon evident that their party was now governed by men who were bent on the most violent measures. Their great secular leaders were, as we have already seen, gradually falling off; and, by this time, there only remained two of much ability, Rohan and Mornay, both of whom saw the inexpediency of their proceedings, and desired that the assembly should peaceably separate.¹⁶⁶ But the authority of the clergy

See *De Thou, Hist. Univ.* vol. iv. p. 263, vol. v. p. 379, ad. ann. 1562 and 1567.

¹⁶⁴ Or, as M. Capefigue courteously puts it, 'les Rochelois ne respectaient pas toujours les pavillons amis.' *Capefigue's Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 332. A delicate circumlocution, unknown to Mezeray who says (*Hist. de France*, vol. iii. p. 426) in 1587: 'et les Rochelois, qui par le moyen du commerce et de la *piraterie*,' &c.

¹⁶⁵ 'Ceste place, que les huguenots tenoient quasy pour imprenable.' *Mém. de Fontenay Mareuil*, vol. i. p. 512. 'Cette orgueilleuse cité, qui se croyoit imprenable.' *Mém. de Montglat*, vol. i. p. 45. Howell, who visited Rochelle in 1620 and 1622, was greatly struck by its strength. *Howell's Letters*, pp. 46, 47, 108. At p. 204, he calls it, in his barbarous style, 'the chiefest propugnacle of the Protestants there.' For a description of the defences of Rochelle, see *De Thou, Hist. Univ.* vol. vi. pp. 615–617; and some details worth consulting in *Mezeray, Hist. de France*, vol. ii. pp. 977–980.

¹⁶⁶ *Bazin, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. ii. p. 139; *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xxii. pp. 480, 481. Rohan himself says (*Mém.* vol. i. p. 446): 'je m'efforçai de la séparer.' In a remarkable letter, which Mornay wrote ten years before this, he shows his apprehensions of the evil that would result from the increasing violence of his party; and he advises, 'que nostre zèle soit tempéré de prudence.' *Mém. et Correspond.* vol. xi. p. 122; and as to the divisions this caused among the Protestants, see pp. 154, 510, vol. xii. pp. 82, 255; and *Sully, Œconomies Royales*, vol. ix. pp. 350, 435.

was irresistible; and, by their prayers and exhortations, they easily gained over the ordinary citizens, who were then a gross and uneducated body.¹⁶⁷ Under their influence, the Assembly adopted a course which rendered civil war inevitable. Their first act was an edict, by which they at once confiscated all the property belonging to Catholic churches.¹⁶⁸ They then caused a great seal to be struck; under the authority of which they ordered that the people should be armed, and taxes collected from them for the purpose of defending their religion.¹⁶⁹ Finally, they drew up the regulations, and organized the establishment of what they called the Reformed Churches of France and of Béarn; and, with a view to facilitate the exercise of their spiritual jurisdiction, they parcelled out France into eight circles, to each of which there was allotted a separate general, who, however, was to be

¹⁶⁷ 'Les seigneurs du parti, et surtout le sage Duplessis Mornay, firent ce qu'ils purent pour engager les réformés à ne pas provoquer l'autorité royale pour des causes qui ne pouvoient justifier une guerre civile; mais le pouvoir dans le parti avoit passé presque absolument aux bourgeois des villes et aux ministres qui se livroient aveuglement à leur fanatisme, et à leur orgueil, et qui étoient d'autant plus applaudis qu'ils montroient plus de violence.' *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xxii. p. 478.

¹⁶⁸ 'On confisqua les biens des églises catholiques.' *Lavallée des Français*, vol. iii. p. 85: and see *Capectigue's Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 258.

¹⁶⁹ 'Ils donnent des commissions d'armer et de faire des impositions sur le peuple, et ce sous leur grand sceau, qui étoit une Religion appuyée sur une croix, ayant en la main un livre de l'évangile, foulant aux pieds un vieux squelette, qu'ils disoient être l'église romaine.' *Mém. de Richelieu*, vol. ii. p. 120. M. Capectigue (*Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 259) says that this seal still exists; but it is not even alluded to by a late writer (*Felice, Hist. of the Protestants of France*, p. 240), who systematically suppresses every fact unfavourable to his own party.

accompanied by a clergyman, since the administration, in all its parts, was held responsible to that ecclesiastical assembly which called it into existence.¹⁷⁰

Such were the forms and pomp of authority assumed by the spiritual leaders of the French Protestants; men by nature destined to obscurity, and whose abilities were so despicable, that, notwithstanding their temporary importance, they have left no name in history. These insignificant priests, who, at the best, were only fit to mount the pulpit of a country village, now arrogated to themselves the right of ordering the affairs of France, imposing taxes upon Frenchmen, confiscating property, raising troops, levying war; and all this for the sake of propagating a creed, which was scouted by the country at large as a foul and mischievous heresy.

In the face of these inordinate pretensions, it was evident that the French government had no choice, except to abdicate its functions, or else take arms in its own defence.¹⁷¹ Whatever may be the popular notion respecting the necessary intolerance of the Catholics, it is an indisputable fact, that, early in the seventeenth century, they displayed in France a spirit of forbearance, and a Christian charity, to which the Protestants could make

¹⁷⁰ *Le Vassor, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. iv. p. 157; *Bazin, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. ii. p. 145; *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. ii. pp. 353–355; *Capectigue's Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 258.

¹⁷¹ Even Mosheim, who, as a Protestant, was naturally prejudiced in favour of the Huguenots, says, that they had established 'imperium in imperio;' and he ascribes to the violence of their rulers the war of 1621. *Mosheim's Eccles. Hist.* vol. ii. pp. 237, 238.

no pretence. During the twenty-two years which elapsed between the Edict of Nantes and the Assembly of Rochelle, the government, notwithstanding repeated provocations, never attacked the Protestants;¹⁷² nor did they make any attempt to destroy the privileges of a sect, which they were bound to consider heretical, and the extirpation of which had been deemed by their fathers to be one of the first duties of a Christian statesman.

The war that now broke out lasted seven years, and was uninterrupted, except by the short peace, first of Montpellier, and afterwards of Rochelle; neither of which, however, was very strictly preserved. But the difference in the views and intentions of the two parties corresponded to the difference between the classes which governed them. The Protestants, being influenced mainly by the clergy, made their object religious domination. The Catholics being led by statesmen, aimed at temporal advantages. Thus it was, that circumstances had in France so completely obliterated the original tendency of these two great sects, that, by a singular metamorphosis, the secular principle was now represented by the Catholics, and the theological principle by the Protestants. The authority of the clergy, and therefore the interests of superstition, were upheld by that very party which owed its origin to the diminution of both; they were, on the other hand, attacked by a party whose success had hitherto

¹⁷² Compare *Mém. de Fontenay Mareuil*, vol. ii. p. 88, with *Flassan, Hist. de la Diplomatie Française*, vol. ii. p. 351.

depended on the increase of both. If the Catholics triumphed, the ecclesiastical power would be weakened; if the Protestants triumphed, it would be strengthened. Of this fact, so far as the Protestants are concerned, I have just given ample proof, collected from their proceedings, and from the language of their own synods. And that the opposite, or secular principle, predominated among the Catholics, is evident, not only from their undeviating policy in the reigns of Henry IV. and Louis XIII., but also from another circumstance worthy of note. For, their motives were so obvious, and gave such scandal to the church, that the pope, as the great protector of religion, thought himself bound to reprehend that disregard of theological interests which they displayed, and which he considered to be a crying and unpardonable offence. In 1622, only one year after the struggle between the Protestants and Catholics had begun, he strongly remonstrated with the French government upon the notorious indecency of which they were guilty, in carrying on war against heretics, not for the purpose of suppressing the heresy, but merely with a view of procuring for the state those temporal advantages which, in the opinion of all pious men, ought to be regarded as of subordinate importance.¹⁷³

¹⁷³ See the paper of instructions from Pope Gregory XV. in the appendix to *Ranke, die Röm. Päpste*, vol. iii. pp. 173, 174: 'Die Hauptsache aber ist was er dem Könige von Frankreich vorstellen soll: 1, dass er ja nicht den Verdacht auf sich laden werde als verfolge er die Protestanten bloss aus Staatsinteresse.' Bazin (*Hist. de Louis XIII.*, vol. ii. p. 320) says, that Richelieu attacked the Huguenots 'sans aucune idée de persécution religieuse.' See, to the same effect, *Capectigue's Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 274; and the candid

If, at this juncture, the Protestants had carried the day, the loss to France would have been immense, perhaps irreparable. For no one, who is acquainted with the temper and character of the French Calvinists, can doubt, that if they had obtained possession of the government, they would have revived those religious persecutions which, so far as their power extended, they had already attempted to enforce. Not only in their writings, but even in the edicts of their assemblies, we find ample proof of that meddling and intolerant spirit which, in every age, has characterized ecclesiastical legislation. Indeed, such a spirit is the legitimate consequence of the fundamental assumption from which theological lawgivers usually start. The clergy are taught to consider that their paramount duty is to preserve the purity of the faith, and guard it against the invasions of heresy. Whenever, therefore, they rise to power, it almost invariably happens, that they carry into politics the habits they have contracted in their profession; and having long been accustomed to consider religious error as criminal, they now naturally attempt to make it penal. And as all the European countries have, in the period of their ignorance, been once ruled by the clergy, just so do we find in the law-books of every land those traces of their power which the progress of knowledge is gradually effacing. We find the professors of the dominant creed enacting laws against the professors of other creeds: laws sometimes to burn them, sometimes to exile them, sometimes to take away their

civil rights, sometimes only to take away their political rights. These are the different gradations through which persecution passes; and by observing which, we may measure, in any country, the energy of the ecclesiastical spirit. At the same time, the theory by which such measures are supported generally gives rise to other measures of a somewhat different, though of an analogous character. For, by extending the authority of law to opinions as well as to acts, the basis of legislation becomes dangerously enlarged; the individuality and independence of each man are invaded; and encouragement is given to the enactment of intrusive and vexatious regulations, which are supposed to perform for morals the service that the other class of laws performs for religion. Under pretence of favouring the practice of virtue, and maintaining the purity of society, men are troubled in their most ordinary pursuits, in the commonest occurrences of life, in their amusements, nay, even in the very dress they may be inclined to wear. That this is what has actually been done, must be known to whoever has looked into the writings of the fathers, into the canons of Christian councils, into the different systems of ecclesiastical law, or into the sermons of the earlier clergy. Indeed, all this is so natural, that regulations, conceived in the same spirit, were drawn up for the government of Geneva by the Calvinist clergy, and for the government of England by Archbishop Cranmer and his coadjutors; while a tendency, precisely identical, may be observed in the legislation of the Puritans, and to give a still

later instance, in that of the Methodists. It is, therefore, not surprising that, in France, the Protestant clergy, having great power among their own party, should enforce a similar discipline. Thus, to mention only a few examples, they forbade any one to go to a theatre, or even to witness the performance of private theatricals.¹⁷⁴ They looked upon dancing as an ungodly amusement, and, therefore, they not only strictly prohibited it, but they ordered that all dancing-masters should be admonished by the spiritual power, and desired to abandon so unchristian a profession. If, however, the admonition failed in effecting its purpose, the dancing-masters, thus remaining obdurate, were to be excommunicated.¹⁷⁵ With the same pious care did the clergy superintend other matters equally important. In one of their synods, they ordered that all persons should abstain from wearing gay apparel, and should arrange their hair with becoming modesty.¹⁷⁶ In another synod, they forbade women to paint; and they declared that if, after this injunction, any woman persisted in painting, she should not be allowed to receive the sacrament.¹⁷⁷ To their own clergy, as the instructors and shepherds of the flock, there was paid an attention still more scrupulous. The ministers of the Word were permitted to teach Hebrew, because Hebrew is a sacred dialect, uncontaminated by profane writers. But the

¹⁷⁴ *Quick's Synodicon in Gallia*, vol. i. p. 62.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.* vol. i. pp. lvii. 17, 131, vol. ii. p. 174.

¹⁷⁶ 'And both sexes are required to keep modesty in their hair,' &c. *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 119.

¹⁷⁷ *Quick's Synodicon*, vol. i. p. 165.

Greek language, which contains all the philosophy and nearly all the wisdom of antiquity, was to be discouraged, its study laid aside, its professorship suppressed.¹⁷⁸ And, in order that the mind might not be distracted from spiritual things, the study of chemistry was likewise forbidden; such a mere earthly pursuit being incompatible with the habits of the sacred profession.¹⁷⁹ Lest, however, in spite of these precautions, knowledge should still creep in among the Protestants, other measures were taken to prevent even its earliest approach. The clergy, entirely forgetting that right of private judgment upon which their sect was founded, became so anxious to protect the unwary from error, that they forbade any person to print or publish a work without the sanction of the church; in other words, without the sanction of the clergy themselves.¹⁸⁰ When, by these means, they had destroyed the possibility of free inquiry, and, so far as they were able, had put a stop to the acquisition of all real knowledge, they proceeded to guard against another circumstance to which their measures had given rise. For, several of the Protestants,

¹⁷⁸ The synod of Alez, in 1620, says, 'A minister may at the same time be professor in divinity and of the Hebrew tongue. But it is not seemly for him to profess the Greek also, because the most of his employment will be taken up in the exposition of Pagan and profane authors, unless he be discharged from the ministry.' *Quick's Synodicon*, vol. ii. p. 57. Three years later, the synod of Charenton suppressed altogether the Greek professorships, 'as being superfluous and of small profit.' *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 115.

¹⁷⁹ The synod of St. Maixant, in 1609, orders that 'colloquies and synods shall have a watchful eye over those ministers who study chemistry, and grievously reprove and censure them.' *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 314.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.* vol. i. pp. 140, 194, vol. ii. p. 110.

seeing that under such a system, it was impossible to educate their families with advantage, sent their children to some of those celebrated Catholic colleges, where alone a sound education could then be obtained. But the clergy, so soon as they heard of this practice, put an end to it, by excommunicating the offending parents;¹⁸¹ and to this there was added an order forbidding them to admit into their own private houses any tutor who professed the Catholic religion.¹⁸² Such was the way in which the French Protestants were watched over and protected by their spiritual masters. Even the minutest matters were not beneath the notice of these great legislators. They ordered that no person should go to a ball or masquerade;¹⁸³ nor ought any Christian to look at the tricks of conjurors, or at the famous game of goblets, or at the puppet-show; neither was he to be present at morris-dances; for all such amusements should be suppressed by the magistrates, because they excite curiosity, cause expense, waste time.¹⁸⁴ Another thing to be attended to, is the names that are bestowed in baptism. A child may have two christian names, though one is preferable.¹⁸⁵ Great care, however, is to be observed in their

¹⁸¹ *Quick's Synodicon*, vol. i. pp. lv. 235, 419, vol. ii. pp. 201, 509, 515. Compare *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. ii. p. 473.

¹⁸² *Quick's Synodicon*, vol. ii. p. 81.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 174.

¹⁸⁴ 'All Christian magistrates are advised not in the least to suffer them, because it feeds foolish curiosity, puts upon unnecessary expenses, and wastes time,' *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 194.

¹⁸⁵ This was a very knotty question for the theologians; but it was at length decided

selection. They ought to be taken from the Bible, but they ought not to be Baptist or Angel; neither should any infant receive a name which has been formerly used by the Pagans.¹⁸⁶ When the children are grown up, there are other regulations to which they must be subject. The clergy declared that the faithful must by no means let their hair grow long, lest by so doing they indulge in the luxury of ‘lascivious curls.’¹⁸⁷ They are to make their garments in such a manner as to avoid ‘the new-fangled fashions of the world:’ they are to have no tassels to their dress: their gloves must be without silk and ribbons: they are to abstain from fardingales: they are to beware of wide sleeves.¹⁸⁸

Those readers who have not studied the history of ecclesiastical legislation, will perhaps be surprised to find, that men of gravity, men who had reached the years of discretion, and were assembled together in solemn council, should evince such a prying and puerile spirit; that they should display such miserable and childish imbecility. But, whoever will take a wider survey of human affairs, will be inclined to blame, not so much

in the affirmative by the synod of Saumur: ‘On the 13th article of the same chapter, the deputies of Poicton demanded, whether two names might be given a child at baptism? To which it was replied: The thing was indifferent; however, parents were advised to observe herein Christian simplicity.’ *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 178.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.* vol. i. pp. xlvi. 25.

¹⁸⁷ I quote the language of the synod of Castres, in 1626. *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 174.

¹⁸⁸ *Quick's Synodicon*, vol. i. p. 165, vol. ii. pp. 7, 174, 574, 583. In the same way, the Spanish clergy, early in the present century, attempted to regulate the dress of women. See *Doblado's Letters from Spain*, pp. 202–205: a good illustration of the identity of the ecclesiastical spirit, whether it be Catholic or Protestant.

the legislators, as the system of which the legislators formed a part. For as to the men themselves, they merely acted after their kind. They only followed the traditions in which they were bred. By virtue of their profession, they had been accustomed to hold certain views, and, when they rose to power, it was natural that they should carry those views into effect; thus transplanting into the law-book the maxims they had already preached in the pulpit. Whenever, therefore, we read of meddling, inquisitive, and vexatious regulations imposed by ecclesiastical authority, we should remember, that they are but the legitimate result of the ecclesiastical spirit; and that the way to remedy such grievances, or to prevent their occurrence, is not by vainly labouring to change the tendencies of that class from whence they proceed, but rather by confining the class within its proper limits, by jealously guarding against its earliest encroachments, by taking every opportunity of lessening its influence, and finally, when the progress of society will justify so great a step, by depriving it of that political and legislative power which, though gradually falling from its hands, it is, even in the most civilized countries, still allowed in some degree to retain.

But, setting aside these general considerations, it will, at all events, be admitted, that I have collected sufficient evidence to indicate what would have happened to France, if the Protestants had obtained the upper hand. After the facts which I have brought forward, no one can possibly doubt, that if such a misfortune had occurred, the liberal, and, considering the age, the enlightened

policy of Henry IV. and Louis XIII. would have been destroyed, in order to make way for that gloomy and austere system, which, in every age and in every country, has been found to be the natural fruit of ecclesiastical power. To put, therefore, the question in its proper form, instead of saying that there was a war between hostile creeds, we should rather say that there was a war between rival classes. It was a contest, not so much between the Catholic religion and the Protestant religion, as between Catholic laymen and Protestant clergy. It was a struggle between temporal interests and theological interests, – between the spirit of the present and the spirit of the past. And the point now at issue was, whether France should be governed by the civil power or by the spiritual power, – whether she should be ruled according to the large views of secular statesmen, or according to the narrow notions of a factious and intolerant priesthood.

The Protestants having the great advantage of being the aggressive party, and being, moreover, inflamed by a religious zeal unknown to their opponents, might, under ordinary circumstances, have succeeded in their hazardous attempt; or, at all events, they might have protracted the struggle for an indefinite period. But, fortunately for France, in 1624, only three years after the war began, Richelieu assumed the direction of the government. He had for some years been the secret adviser of the queen-mother, into whose mind he had always inculcated the necessity of complete toleration.¹⁸⁹ When placed

¹⁸⁹ On his influence over her in and after 1616, see *Le Vassor, Hist. de Louis XIII.*

at the head of affairs, he pursued the same policy, and attempted in every way to conciliate the Protestants. The clergy of his own party were constantly urging him to exterminate the heretics, whose presence they thought polluted France.¹⁹⁰ But Richelieu, having only secular objects, refused to embitter the contest by turning it into a religious war. He was determined to chastise the rebellion, but he would not punish the heresy. Even while the war was raging, he would not revoke those edicts of toleration by which the full liberty of religious worship was granted to the Protestants. And when they, in 1626, showed signs of compunction, or at all events of fear, he publicly confirmed the Edict of Nantes,¹⁹¹ and he granted them peace; although, as he says, he knew that by doing so he should fall under the suspicion of those ‘who so greatly affected the name of zealous Catholics.’¹⁹² A few months afterwards, war again broke out; and

vol. ii. p. 508; *Mém. de Pontchartrain*, vol. ii. p. 240; *Mém. de Montglat*, vol. i. p. 23; and compare, in *Mém. de Richelieu*, vol. ii. pp. 198–200, the curious arguments which he put in her mouth respecting the impolicy of making war on the Protestants.

¹⁹⁰ In 1625, the Archbishop of Lyons wrote to Richelieu, urging him ‘assiéger la Rochelle, et châtier ou, pour mieux dire, exterminer les huguenots, toute autre affaire cessante.’ *Bazin, Hist. de Louis XIII.*, vol. ii. p. 276. See also, on the anxiety of the clergy in the reign of Louis XIII. to destroy the Protestants, *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. ii. pp. 155, 166, 232, 245, 338, 378, 379, 427; *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xxii. p. 485.

¹⁹¹ He confirmed it in March 1626; *Flassan, Hist. de la Diplomatie Française*, vol. ii. p. 399; and also in the preceding January. See *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. ii. appendix, pp. 77, 81.

¹⁹² ‘Ceux qui affectent autant le nom de zélés catholiques.’ *Mém. de Richelieu*, vol. iii. p. 16; and at p. 2, he, in the same year (1626), says, that he was opposed by those

then it was that Richelieu determined on that celebrated siege of Rochelle, which, if brought to a successful issue, was sure to be a decisive blow against the French Protestants. That he was moved to this hazardous undertaking solely by secular considerations is evident, not only from the general spirit of his preceding policy, but also from his subsequent conduct. With the details of this famous siege history is not concerned, as such matters have no value except to military readers. It is enough to say that, in 1628, Rochelle was taken; and the Protestants, who had been induced by their clergy¹⁹³ to continue to resist long after relief was hopeless, and who, in consequence, had suffered the most dreadful hardships, were obliged to surrender at discretion.¹⁹⁴ The privileges of the town were revoked, and its magistrates removed; but the great minister by whom these things were effected, still abstained from that religious persecution to which he was urged.¹⁹⁵ He granted to the Protestants the toleration

who had 'un trop ardent et précipité désir de ruiner les huguenots.'

¹⁹³ *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xxiii. p. 66.

¹⁹⁴ On the sufferings of the inhabitants, see extract from the Dupuis Mss., in *Capefigue's Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 351. Fontenay Mareuil, who was an eye-witness, says, that the besieged, in some instances, ate their own children; and that the burial-grounds were guarded, to prevent the corpses from being dug up and turned into food. *Mém. de Fontenay Mareuil*, vol. ii. p. 119.

¹⁹⁵ And in which he would most assuredly have been supported by Louis XIII.; of whom an intelligent writer says 'Il étoit plein de piété et de zèle pour le service de Dieu et pour la grandeur de l'église; et sa plus sensible joie, en prenant La Rochelle et les autres places qu'il prit, fut de penser qu'il chasseroit de son royaume les hérétiques, et qu'il le purgeroit par cette voie des différentes religions qui gâtent et infectent l'église

which he had offered at an earlier period, and he formally conceded the free exercise of their public worship.¹⁹⁶ But, such was their infatuation, that because he likewise restored the exercise of the Catholic religion, and thus gave to the conquerors the same liberty that he had granted to the conquered, the Protestants murmured at the indulgence; they could not bear the idea that their eyes should be offended by the performance of Popish rites.¹⁹⁷ And their indignation waxed so high, that in the next year they, in another part of France, again rose in arms. As, however, they were now stripped of their principal resources, they were easily defeated; and, their existence as a political faction being destroyed, they were, in reference to their religion, treated by Richelieu in the same manner as before.¹⁹⁸ To the Protestants generally, he confirmed the privilege of preaching and of performing the other ceremonies of their creed.¹⁹⁹ To

de Dieu.' *Mém. de Motteville*, vol. i. p. 425, edit. Petitot, 1824.

¹⁹⁶ *Bazin, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. ii. p. 423; *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xxiii. p. 77; *Capefigue's Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 357; *Mém. de Fontenay Mareuil*, vol. ii. p. 122.

¹⁹⁷ 'Les huguenots murmuraient de voir le rétablissement de l'église romaine au sein de leur ville.' *Capefigue's Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 359.

¹⁹⁸ 'Dès qu'il ne s'agit plus d'un parti politique, il concéda, comme à la Rochelle, la liberté de conscience et la faculté de prêcher.' *Capefigue's Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 381. Compare *Smedley's Hist. of the Reformed Religion in France*, vol. iii. p. 201, with *Mémoires de Richelieu*, vol. iv. p. 484.

¹⁹⁹ The Edict of Nismes, in 1629, an important document, will be found in *Quick's Synodicon*, vol. i. pp. xcvi.–ciii., and in *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. ii. appendix, pp. 92–98; and a commentary on it in *Bazin, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. iii. pp. 36–38. M. Bazin, unfortunately for the reputation of this otherwise valuable work, never quotes his authorities.

their leader, Rohan, he granted an amnesty, and, a few years afterwards, employed him in important public services. After this, the hopes of the party were destroyed; they never again rose in arms, nor do we find any mention of them until a much later period, when they were barbarously persecuted by Louis XIV.²⁰⁰ But from all such intolerance Richelieu sedulously abstained; and having now cleared the land from rebellion, he embarked in that vast scheme of foreign policy, of which I have already given some account, and in which he clearly showed that his proceedings against the Protestants had not been caused by hatred of their religious tenets. For, the same party which he attacked at home, he supported abroad. He put down the French Protestants, because they were a turbulent faction that troubled the state, and wished to suppress the exercise of all opinions unfavourable to themselves. But so far from carrying on a crusade against their religion, he, as I have already observed, encouraged it in other countries; and, though a bishop of the Catholic church, he did not hesitate, by treaties, by money, and by force of arms, to support the Protestants against the House of Austria, maintain the Lutherans against the Emperor of Germany, and uphold the Calvinists against the King of Spain.

I have thus endeavoured to draw a slight, though, I trust, a clear outline, of the events which took place in France during

²⁰⁰ In 1633, their own historian says: 'les Réformez ne faisoient plus de party.' *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. ii. p. 532. Compare Sir Thomas Hanmer's account of France in 1648, in *Bunbury's Correspond. of Hanmer*, p. 309, Lond. 1838.

the reign of Louis XIII., and particularly during that part of it which included the administration of Richelieu. But such occurrences, important as they are, only formed a single phase of that larger development which was now displaying itself in nearly every branch of the national intellect. They were the mere political expression of that bold and sceptical spirit which cried havoc to the prejudices and superstitions of men. For, the government of Richelieu was successful, as well as progressive; and no government can unite these two qualities, unless its measures harmonize with the feelings and temper of the age. Such an administration, though it facilitates progress, is not the cause of it, but is rather its measure and symptom. The cause of the progress lies far deeper, and is governed by the general tendency of the time. And as the different tendencies observable in successive generations depend on the difference in their knowledge, it is evident, that we can only understand the working of the tendencies, by taking a wide view of the amount and character of the knowledge. To comprehend, therefore, the real nature of the great advance made during the reign of Louis XIII., it becomes necessary that I should lay before the reader some evidence respecting those higher and more important facts, which historians are apt to neglect, but without which the study of the past is an idle and trivial pursuit, and history itself a barren field, which, bearing no fruit, is unworthy of the labour that is wasted on the cultivation of so ungrateful a soil.

It is, indeed, a very observable fact, that while Richelieu, with

such extraordinary boldness, was secularizing the whole system of French politics, and by his disregard of ancient interests, was setting at naught the most ancient traditions, a course precisely similar was being pursued, in a still higher department, by a man greater than he; by one, who, if I may express my own opinion, is the most profound among the many eminent thinkers France has produced. I speak of René Descartes, of whom the least that can be said is, that he effected a revolution more decisive than has ever been brought about by any other single mind. With his mere physical discoveries we are not now concerned, because in this Introduction I do not pretend to trace the progress of science, except in those epochs which indicate a new turn in the habits of national thought. But I may remind the reader, that he was the first who successfully applied algebra to geometry;²⁰¹ that he pointed out the important law of the sines,²⁰² that in

²⁰¹ Thomas (*Eloge*, in *Œuvres de Descartes*, vol. i. p. 32) says, 'cet instrument, c'est Descartes qui l'a créé; c'est l'application de l'algèbre à la géométrie.' And this, in the highest sense, is strictly true; for although Vieta and two or three others in the sixteenth century had anticipated this step, we owe entirely to Descartes the magnificent discovery of the possibility of applying algebra to the geometry of curves, he being undoubtedly the first who expressed them by algebraic equations. See *Montucla, Hist. des Mathémat.* vol. i. pp. 704, 705, vol. ii. p. 120, vol. iii. p. 64.

²⁰² The statements of Huygens and of Isaac Vossius to the effect that Descartes had seen the papers of Snell before publishing his discovery, are unsupported by any direct evidence; at least none of the historians of science, so far as I am aware, have brought forward any. So strong, however, is the disposition of mankind at large to depreciate great men, and so general is the desire to convict them of plagiarism, that this charge, improbable in itself, and only resting on the testimony of two envious rivals, has been not only revived by modern writers, but has been, even in our own time, spoken of

an age in which optical instruments were extremely imperfect, he discovered the changes to which light is subjected in the eye by the crystalline lens;²⁰³ that he directed attention to the

as a well-established and notorious fact! The flimsy basis of this accusation is clearly exposed by M. Bordas Demoulin, in his valuable work *Le Cartésianisme*, Paris, 1843, vol. ii. pp. 9–12; while, on the other side of the question, I refer with regret to *Sir D. Brewster on the Progress of Optics, Second Report of British Association*, pp. 309, 310; and to *Whewell's Hist. of the Inductive Sciences*, vol. ii. pp. 379, 502, 503.

²⁰³ See the interesting remarks of Sprengel (*Hist. de la Médecine*, vol. iv. pp. 271, 272), and (*Œuvres de Descartes*, vol. iv. pp. 371 seq. What makes this the more observable is this: that the study of the crystalline lens was neglected long after the death of Descartes, and no attempt made for more than a hundred years to complete his views by ascertaining its intimate structure. Indeed, it is said (*Thomson's Animal Chemistry*, p. 512) that the crystalline lens and the two humours were first analyzed in 1802. Compare *Simon's Animal Chemistry*, vol. ii. pp. 419–421; *Henle, Traité d'Anatomie*, vol. i. p. 357; *Lepelletier, Physiologie Médicale*, vol. iii. p. 160; *Mayo's Human Physiol.*, p. 279; *Blainville, Physiol. comparée*, vol. iii. pp. 325–328; none of whom refer to any analysis earlier than the nineteenth century. I notice this partly as a contribution to the history of our knowledge, and partly as proving how slow men have been in following Descartes, and in completing his views; for, as M. Blanville justly observes, the chemical laws of the lens must be understood, before we can exhaustively generalize the optical laws of its refraction; so that, in fact, the researches of Berzelius on the eye are complementary to those of Descartes. The theory of the limitation of the crystalline lens according to the descending scale of the animal kingdom, and the connexion between its development and a general increase of sensuous perception, seem to have been little studied; but Dr. Grant (*Comparative Anatomy*, p. 252) thinks that the lens exists in some of the rotifera; while in regard to its origin, I find a curious statement in *Müller's Physiology*, vol. i. p. 450, that after its removal in mammals, it has been reproduced by its matrix, the capsule. (If this can be relied on, it will tell against the suggestion of Schwann, who supposes, in his *Microscopical Researches*, 1847, pp. 87, 88, that its mode of life is vegetable, and that it is not 'a secretion of its capsule'). As to its probable existence in the hydrozoa, see *Rymer Jones's Animal Kingdom*, 1855, p. 96, 'regarded either as a crystalline lens, or an otolith;' and as to

consequences resulting from the weight of the atmosphere;²⁰⁴ and that he, moreover, detected the causes of the rainbow,²⁰⁵ that singular phenomenon, with which, in the eyes of the vulgar, some theological superstitions are still connected.²⁰⁶ At the same time, and as if to combine the most varied forms of excellence, he is not only allowed to be the first geometrician of the age,²⁰⁷ but by the

its embryonic development, see *Burdach, Traité de Physiologie*, vol. iii. pp. 435–438.

²⁰⁴ Torricelli first weighed the air in 1643. *Brande's Chemistry*, vol. i. p. 360; *Leslie's Natural Philosophy*, p. 419: but there is a letter from Descartes, written as early as 1631, 'où il explique le phénomène de la suspension du mercure dans un tuyau fermé par en haut, en l'attribuant au poids de la colonne d'air élevée jusqu'au delà des nues.' *Bordas Demoulin, le Cartésianisme*, vol. i. p. 311. And Montucla (*Hist. des Mathémat.* vol. ii. p. 205) says of Descartes, 'nous avons des preuves que ce philosophe reconnut avant Torricelli la pesanteur de l'air.' Descartes himself says, that he suggested the subsequent experiment of Pascal. *Œuvres de Descartes*, vol. x. pp. 344, 351.

²⁰⁵ Dr. Whewell, who has treated Descartes with marked injustice, does nevertheless allow that he is 'the genuine author of the explanation of the rainbow.' *Hist. of the Induc. Sciences*, vol. ii. pp. 380, 384. See also *Boyle's Works*, vol. iii. p. 189; *Thomson's Hist. of the Royal Society*, p. 364; *Hallam's Lit. of Europe*, vol. iii. p. 205; *Œuvres de Descartes*, vol. i. pp. 47, 48, vol. v. pp. 265–284. On the theory of the rainbow as known in the present century, see *Kaemtz, Course of Meteorology*, pp. 440–445; and *Forbes on Meteorology*, pp. 125–130, in *Report of British Association for 1840*. Compare *Leslie's Natural Philosophy*, p. 531; *Pouillet, Elémens de Physique*, vol. ii. p. 788.

²⁰⁶ The Hebrew notion of the rainbow is well known; and for the ideas of other nations on this subject, see *Prichard's Physical History of Mankind*, vol. v. pp. 154, 176; *Kame's Sketches of the History of Man*, vol. iv. p. 252, Edinb. 1788; and *Burdache's Physiologie*, vol. v. pp. 546, 547, Paris, 1839.

²⁰⁷ Thomas calls him 'le plus grand géomètre de son siècle.' *Œuvres de Descartes*, vol. i. p. 89. Sir W. Hamilton (*Discussions on Philosophy*, p. 271) says, 'the greatest mathematician of the age;' and Montucla can find no one but Plato to compare with him: 'On ne sauroit donner une idée plus juste de ce qu'a été l'époque de Descartes dans la géométrie ancienne... De même enfin que Platon prépara par sa découverte celles

clearness and admirable precision of his style, he became one of the founders of French prose.²⁰⁸ And although he was constantly engaged in those lofty inquiries into the nature of the human mind, which can never be studied without wonder, I had almost said can never be read without awe, he combined with them a long course of laborious experiment upon the animal frame, which raised him to the highest rank among the anatomists of his time.²⁰⁹ The great discovery made by Harvey of the circulation of the blood, was neglected by most of his contemporaries;²¹⁰ but it

des Archimède, des Apollonius, &c., on peut dire que Descartes a jetté les fondemens de celles qui illustrent aujourd'hui les Newton, les Leibnitz, &c.' *Montucla, Hist. des Mathémat.* vol. ii. p. 112.

²⁰⁸ 'Descartes joint encore à ses autres titres, celui d'avoir été un des créateurs de notre langue.' *Biog. Univ.* vol. xi. p. 154. Sir James Mackintosh (*Dissert. on Ethical Philos.* p. 186) has also noticed the influence of Descartes in forming the style of French writers; and I think that M. Cousin has somewhere made a similar remark.

²⁰⁹ Thomas says, 'Descartes eut aussi la gloire d'être un des premiers anatomistes de son siècle.' *Œuvres de Descartes*, vol. i. p. 55; see also p. 101. In 1639, Descartes writes to Mersenne (*Œuvres*, vol. viii. p. 100) that he had been engaged 'depuis onze ans' in studying comparative anatomy by dissection. Compare p. 174, and vol. i. pp. 175–184.

²¹⁰ Dr. Whewell (*Hist. of the Inductive Sciences*, vol. iii. p. 440) says: 'It was for the most part readily accepted by his countrymen; but that abroad it had to encounter considerable opposition.' For this no authority is quoted; and yet one would be glad to know who told Dr. Whewell that the discovery was readily accepted. So far from meeting in England with ready acceptance, it was during many years most universally denied. Aubrey was assured by Harvey that, in consequence of his book on the Circulation of the Blood, he lost much of his practice, was believed to be crackbrained, and was opposed by 'all the physicians.' *Aubrey's Letters and Lives*, vol. ii. p. 383. Dr. Willis (*Life of Harvey*, p. xli., in *Harvey's Works*, edit. Sydenham Society, 1847) says 'Harvey's views were at first rejected almost universally.' Dr. Elliotson (*Human Physiology*, p. 194) says, 'His immediate reward was general ridicule and abuse, and

was at once recognized by Descartes, who made it the basis of the physiological part of his work on Man.²¹¹ He likewise adopted the discovery of the lacteals by Aselli,²¹² which, like every great truth yet laid before the world, was, at its first appearance, not only disbelieved, but covered with ridicule.²¹³

These things might have been sufficient to rescue even the physical labours of Descartes from the attacks constantly made on them by men who either have not studied his works, or else, having studied them, are unable to understand their merit. But the glory of Descartes, and the influence he exercised over his age, do not depend even on such claims as these. Putting them aside, he is the author of what is emphatically called Modern

a great diminution of his practice.' Broussais (*Examen des Doctrines Médicales*, vol. i. p. vii.) says, 'Harvey passa pour fou quand il annonça la découverte de la circulation.' Finally, Sir William Temple, who belongs to the generation subsequent to Harvey, and who, indeed, was not born until some years after the discovery was made, mentions it in his works in such a manner as to show that even then it was not universally received by educated men. See two curious passages, which have escaped the notice of the historians of physiology, in *Works of Sir W. Temple*, vol. iii. pp. 293, 469, 8vo., 1814.

²¹¹ 'Taken by Descartes as the basis of his physiology, in his work on Man.' *Whewell's Hist. of the Induc. Sciences*, vol. iii. p. 441. 'Réné Descartes se déclara un des premiers en faveur de la doctrine de la circulation.' *Renourd, Hist. de la Médecine*, vol. ii. p. 163. See also *Bordas Demoulin, le Cartésianisme*, vol. ii. p. 324; and *Œuvres de Descartes*, vol. i. pp. 68, 179, vol. iv. pp. 42, 449, vol. ix. pp. 159, 332. Compare *Willis's Life of Harvey*, p. xlv., in *Harvey's Works*.

²¹² 'Les veines blanches, dites lactées, qu'Asellius a découvertes depuis peu dans le mésentère.' *De la Formation du Fœtus*, sec. 49, in *Œuvres de Descartes*, vol. iv. p. 483.

²¹³ Even Harvey denied it to the last. *Sprengel, Hist. de la Méd.* vol. iv. pp. 203, 204. Compare *Harvey's Works*, edit. Sydenham Soc. pp. 605, 614.

Philosophy.²¹⁴ He is the originator of that great system and method of metaphysics, which, notwithstanding its errors, has the undoubted merit of having given a wonderful impulse to the European mind, and communicated to it an activity which has been made available for other purposes of a different character. Besides this, and superior to it, there is another obligation which we are under to the memory of Descartes. He deserves the gratitude of posterity, not so much on account of what he built up, as on account of what he pulled down. His life was one great and successful warfare against the prejudices and traditions of men. He was great as a creator, but he was far greater as a destroyer. In this respect he was the true successor of Luther, to whose labours his own were the fitting supplement. He completed what the great German reformer had left undone.²¹⁵ He bore to the old systems of philosophy precisely the same

²¹⁴ M. Cousin (*Hist. de la Philos.* II. série, vol. i. p. 39) says of Descartes, 'Son premier ouvrage écrit en français est de 1637. C'est donc de 1637 que date la philosophie moderne.' See the same work, I. série, vol. iii. p. 77; and compare *Stewart's Philos. of the Mind*, vol. i. pp. 14, 529, with *Eloge de Parent*, in *Œuvres de Fontenelle*, Paris, 1766, vol. v. p. 444, and vol. vi. p. 318: 'Cartésien, ou, si l'on veut, philosophe moderne.'

²¹⁵ 'Descartes avait établi dans le domaine de la pensée l'indépendance absolue de la raison; il avait déclaré à la scholastique et à la théologie que l'esprit de l'homme ne pouvait plus relever que de l'évidence qu'il aurait obtenue par lui-même. Ce que Luther avait commencé dans la religion, le génie français si actif et si prompt l'importait dans la philosophie, et l'on peut dire à la double gloire de l'Allemagne et de la France que Descartes est le fils aîné de Luther.' *Lerminier, Philos. du Droit*, vol. ii. p. 141. See also, on the philosophy of Descartes as a product of the Reformation. *Ward's Ideal of a Christian Church*, p. 498.

relation that Luther bore to the old systems of religion. He was the great reformer and liberator of the European intellect. To prefer, therefore, even the most successful discoverers of physical laws to this great innovator and disturber of tradition, is just as if we should prefer knowledge to freedom, and believe that science is better than liberty. We must, indeed, always be grateful to those eminent thinkers, to whose labours we are indebted for that vast body of physical truths which we now possess. But, let us reserve the full measure of our homage for those far greater men, who have not hesitated to attack and destroy the most inveterate prejudices: men who, by removing the pressure of tradition, have purified the very source and fountain of our knowledge, and secured its future progress, by casting off obstacles in the presence of which progress was impossible.²¹⁶

It will not be expected, perhaps it will hardly be desired, that I should enter into a complete detail of the philosophy of Descartes: a philosophy which, in England at least, is rarely studied, and therefore, is often attacked. But it will be necessary to give such an account of it as will show its analogy with the anti-theological policy of Richelieu, and will thus enable us to see the full extent of that vast movement which took place in France before the accession of Louis XIV. By this means, we shall be able to understand how the daring innovations of the great

²¹⁶ For, as Turgot finely says, 'ce n'est pas l'erreur qui s'oppose aux progrès de la vérité. Ce sont la mollesse, l'entêtement, l'esprit de routine, tout ce qui porte à l'inaction,' *Pensées* in *Œuvres de Turgot*, vol. ii. p. 343.

minister were so successful, since they were accompanied and reinforced by corresponding innovations in the national intellect; thus affording an additional instance of the way in which the political history of every country is to be explained by the history of its intellectual progress.

In 1637, when Richelieu was at the height of his power, Descartes published that great work which he had long been meditating, and which was the first open announcement of the new tendencies of the French mind. To this work he gave the name of a 'Method;' and, assuredly, the method is the most alien to what is commonly called theology that can possibly be conceived. Indeed, so far from being theological, it is essentially and exclusively psychological. The theological method rests on ancient records, on tradition, on the voice of antiquity. The method of Descartes rests solely on the consciousness each man has of the operations of his own mind, and lest anyone should mistake the meaning of this, he, in subsequent works, developed it at great length, and with unrivalled clearness. For his main object was to popularize the views which he put forward. Therefore, says Descartes, 'I write in French rather than in Latin, because I trust that they who only employ their simple and native reason will estimate my opinions more fairly than they who only believe in ancient books.'²¹⁷ So strongly does he insist upon this,

²¹⁷ 'Et si j'écris en français, qui est la langue de mon pays, plutôt qu'en latin, qui est celle de mes précepteurs, c'est à cause que j'espère que ceux qui ne se servent que de leur raison naturelle toute pure, jugeront mieux de mes opinions que ceux qui ne croient qu'aux livres anciens.' *Discours de la Méthode*, in *Œuvres de Descartes*, vol. i.

that, almost at the beginning of his first work, he cautions his readers against the common error of looking to antiquity for knowledge; and he reminds them that ‘when men are too curious to know the practices of past ages, they generally remain very ignorant of their own.’²¹⁸

Indeed, so far from following the old plan of searching for truths in the records of the past, the great essential of this new philosophy is to wean ourselves from all such associations, and, beginning the acquisition of knowledge by the work of destruction, first pull down, in order that afterwards we may build up.²¹⁹ When I, says Descartes, set forth in the pursuit of truth, I found that the best way was to reject every thing I had hitherto received, and pluck out all my old opinions, in order that I might lay the foundation of them afresh: believing that, by this means, I should more easily accomplish the great scheme of life, than by building on an old basis, and supporting myself by principles which I had learned in my youth, without examining if they were really true.²²⁰ ‘I, therefore, will occupy myself freely and earnestly in effecting a general destruction of all my old opinions.’²²¹ For,

pp. 210, 211.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 127.

²¹⁹ ‘Er fing also vom Zweifel an, und ging durch denselben zur Gewissheit über.’ *Tennemann, Gesch. der Philos.* vol. x. p. 218. Compare *Second Discours en Sorbonne*, in *Œuvres de Turgot*, vol. ii. p. 89.

²²⁰ *Disc. de la Méthode*, in *Œuvres de Descartes*, vol. i. p. 136.

²²¹ ‘Je m'appliquerai sérieusement et avec liberté à détruire généralement toutes mes anciennes opinions.’ *Méditations* in *Œuvres de Descartes*, vol. i. p. 236.

if we would know all the truths that can be known, we must, in the first place, free ourselves from our prejudices, and make a point of rejecting those things which we have received, until we have subjected them to a new examination.²²² We, therefore, must derive our opinions, not from tradition, but from ourselves. We must not pass judgment upon any subject which we do not clearly and distinctly understand; for, even if such a judgment is correct, it can only be so by accident, not having solid ground on which to support itself.²²³ But, so far are we from this state of indifference, that our memory is full of prejudices:²²⁴ we pay attention to words rather than to things;²²⁵ and being thus slaves to form, there are too many of us 'who believe themselves religious, when, in fact, they are bigoted and superstitious; who think themselves perfect because they go much to church, because they often repeat prayers, because they wear short hair, because they fast, because they give alms. These are the men who imagine themselves such friends of God, that nothing they do displeases Him; men who, under pretence of zeal, gratify their passions by committing the greatest crimes, such as betraying towns, killing princes, exterminating nations: and all this they do to those who

²²² *Principes de la Philosophie*, part i. sec. 75, in *Œuvres de Descartes*, vol. iii. pp. 117, 118; and compare vol. ii. p. 417, where he gives a striking illustration of this view.

²²³ *Méditations*, in *Œuvres de Descartes*, vol. i. pp. 303, 304.

²²⁴ 'Nous avons rempli notre mémoire de beaucoup de préjugés.' *Principes de la Philos.* part i. sec. 47, in *Œuvres*, vol. iii. p. 91.

²²⁵ *Œuvres*, vol. iii. p. 117.

will not change their opinions.’²²⁶

These were the words of wisdom which this great teacher addressed to his countrymen only a few years after they had brought to a close the last religious war that has ever been waged in France. The similarity of those views to those which, about the same time, were put forth by Chillingworth, must strike every reader, but ought not to excite surprise; for they were but the natural products of a state of society in which the right of private judgment, and the independence of the human reason, were first solidly established. If we examine this matter a little closer, we shall find still further proof of the analogy between France and England. So identical are the steps of the progress, that the relation which Montaigne bears to Descartes is just the same as that which Hooker bears to Chillingworth; the same in reference to the difference of time, and also in reference to the difference of opinions. The mind of Hooker was essentially sceptical; but his genius was so restrained by the prejudices of his age, that, unable to discern the supreme authority of private judgment, he hampered it by appeals to councils and to the general voice

²²⁶ ‘Ce qu'on peut particulièrement remarquer en ceux qui, croyant être dévots, sont seulement bigots et superstitieux, c'est à dire qui, sous ombre qu'ils vont souvent à l'église, qu'ils récitent force prières, qu'ils portent les cheveux courts, qu'ils jeûnent, qu'ils donnent l'aumône, pensent être entièrement parfaits, et s'imaginent qu'ils sont si grands amis de Dieu, qu'ils ne sauroient rien faire qui lui déplaît, et que tout ce que leur dicte leur passion est un bon zèle, bien qu'elle leur dicte quelquefois les plus grands crimes qui puissent être commis par des hommes, comme de trahir des villes, de tuer des princes, d'exterminer des peuples entiers, pour cela seul qu'ils ne suivent pas leurs opinions.’ *Les Passions de l'Ame*, in *Œuvres de Descartes*, vol. iv. pp. 194, 195.

of ecclesiastical antiquity: impediments which Chillingworth, thirty years later, effectually removed. In precisely the same way, Montaigne, like Hooker, was sceptical; but, like him, he lived at a period when the spirit of doubt was yet young, and when the mind still trembled before the authority of the Church. It is, therefore, no wonder that even Montaigne, who did so much for his age, should have hesitated respecting the capacity of men to work out for themselves great truths; and that, pausing in the course that lay before him, his scepticism should often have assumed the form of a distrust of the human faculties.²²⁷ Such shortcomings, and such imperfections, are merely an evidence of the slow growth of society, and of the impossibility for even the greatest thinkers to outstrip their contemporaries beyond a certain point. But, with the advance of knowledge, this deficiency was at length supplied; and, as the generation after Hooker brought forth Chillingworth, just so did the generation after Montaigne bring forth Descartes. Both Chillingworth and Descartes were eminently sceptical; but their scepticism was directed, not against the human intellect, but against those appeals to authority and tradition without which it had hitherto been supposed that the intellect could not safely proceed. That this was the case with Chillingworth, we have already seen. That it was likewise the case with Descartes, is, if possible, still more apparent; for that

²²⁷ As is particularly evident in his long chapter, headed 'Apologie de Raimond Sebond.' *Essais de Montaigne*, livre ii. chap. xii. Paris, 1843, pp. 270–382, and see Tennemann, *Gesch. der Philos.* vol. ix. p. 455.

profound thinker believed, not only that the mind, by its own efforts, could root out its most ancient opinions, but that it could, without fresh aid, build up a new and solid system in place of the one which it had thrown down.²²⁸

It is this extraordinary confidence in the power of the human intellect, which eminently characterizes Descartes, and has given to his philosophy that peculiar sublimity which distinguishes it from all other systems. So far from thinking that a knowledge of the external world is essential to the discovery of truth, he laid it down as a fundamental principle, that we must begin by ignoring such knowledge;²²⁹ that the first step is to separate ourselves from

²²⁸ He very clearly separates himself from men like Montaigne: 'Non que j'imitasse pour cela les sceptiques, qui ne doutent que pour douter, et affectent d'être toujours irrésolus; car, au contraire, tout mon dessein ne tendoit qu'à m'assurer, et à rejeter la terre mouvante et le sable pour trouver le roc ou l'argile.' *Discours de la Méthode*, in *Œuvres de Descartes*, vol. i. pp. 153, 154.

²²⁹ According to the view of Descartes, it was to be ignored, not denied. There is no instance to be found in his works of a denial of the existence of the external world; nor does the passage quoted from him by Mr. Jobert (*New System of Philos.* vol. ii. pp. 161, 162, Lond. 1849) at all justify the interpretation of that ingenious writer, who confuses certainty in the ordinary sense of the word with certainty in the Cartesian sense. A similar error is made by those who suppose that his 'Je pense, donc je suis,' is an enthymeme; and having taken this for granted, they turn on the great philosopher, and accuse him of begging the question! Such critics overlook the difference between a logical process and a psychological one; and therefore they do not see that this famous sentence was the description of a mental fact, and not the statement of a mutilated syllogism. The student of the philosophy of Descartes must always distinguish between these two processes, and remember that each process has an order of proof peculiar to itself; or at all events he must remember that such was the opinion of Descartes. Compare, on the Cartesian enthymeme, *Cousin, Hist. de la Philos.* I. série, vol. iv. pp.

the delusions of nature, and reject the evidence presented to our senses.²³⁰ For, says Descartes, nothing is certain but thought; nor are there any truths except those which necessarily follow from the operation of our own consciousness. We have no knowledge of our soul except as a thinking substance:²³¹ and it were easier for us to believe that the soul should cease to exist, than that it should cease to think.²³² And, as to man himself, what is he but the incarnation of thought? For that which constitutes the man, is not his bones, nor his flesh, nor his blood. These are the accidents, the incumbrances, the impediments of his nature. But the man himself is the thought. The invisible me, the ultimate fact of existence, the mystery of life, is this: 'I am a thing that thinks.' This, therefore, is the beginning and the basis of our knowledge. The thought of each man is the last element to which analysis can carry us; it is the supreme judge of every doubt; it is the starting-

512, 513, with a note in *Kritik der reinen Vernunft, Kant's Werke*, vol. ii. pp. 323, 324.

²³⁰ *Méditations*, in *Œuvres de Descartes*, vol. i. pp. 220, 226; and again in the *Objections et Réponses*, *Œuvres*, vol. ii. pp. 245, 246.

²³¹ 'Au lieu que, lorsque nous tâchons à connoître plus distinctement notre nature, nous pouvons voir que notre âme, en tant qu'elle est une substance distincte du corps, ne nous est connue que par cela seul qu'elle pense.' *Œuvres de Descartes*, vol. iv. p. 432. Compare vol. iii. p. 96, *Principes de la Philosophie*, part i. sec. 53.

²³² 'En sorte qu'il me seroit bien plus aisé de croire que l'âme cesseroit d'être quand on dit qu'elle cesse de penser, que non pas de concevoir qu'elle soit sans pensée.' *Œuvres de Descartes*, vol. viii. p. 574. That 'the soul always thinks,' is a conclusion also arrived at by Berkeley by a different process. See his subtle argument, *Principles of Human Knowledge*, part i. sec. 98, in *Berkeley's Works*, vol. i. p. 123; and for a curious application of this to the theory of dreaming, see *Burdach, Physiologie comme Science d'Observation*, vol. v. pp. 205, 230.

point for all wisdom.²³³

Taking our stand on this ground, we rise, says Descartes, to the perception of the existence of the Deity. For, our belief in His existence is an irrefragable proof that He exists. Otherwise, whence does the belief arise? Since nothing can come out of nothing, and since no effect can be without a cause, it follows that the idea we have of God must have an origin; and this origin, whatever name we give it, is no other than God.²³⁴ Thus, the ultimate proof of His existence is our idea of it. Instead, therefore, of saying that we know ourselves because we believe in God, we should rather say that we believe in God because we know ourselves.²³⁵ This is the order and precedence of things. The thought of each man is sufficient to prove His existence, and it is the only proof we can ever possess. Such, therefore, is the dignity and supremacy of the human intellect, that even this, the highest of all matters, flows from it, as from its sole source.²³⁶

²³³ *Œuvres de Descartes*, vol. i. pp. 251, 252, 279, 293, vol. ii. pp. 252, 283.

²³⁴ *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 419; and at p. 420: 'Or de tout cela on conclut très-manifestement que Dieu existe.' See also pp. 159–162, 280, 290, 291. But the simplest statement is in a letter to Mersenne (vol. viii. p. 529): 'J'ai tiré la preuve de l'existence de Dieu de l'idée que je trouve en moi d'un être souverainement parfait.'

²³⁵ 'Ainsi, quoique, de ce que je suis, je conclus avec certitude que Dieu est, je ne puis réciproquement affirmer, de ce que Dieu est, que j'existe.' *Règles pour la Direction de l'Esprit*, in *Œuvres*, vol. xi. p. 274. See also *Principes de la Philosophie*, part i. sec. 7, vol. iii. p. 66.

²³⁶ On this famous argument, which it is said was also broached by Anselm, see *King's Life of Locke*, vol. ii. p. 133; the *Benedictine Hist. Lit. de la France*, vol. ix. pp. 417, 418; *Mosheim's Eccles. Hist.* vol. i. p. 239; and *Cudworth's Intellect. Syst.* vol.

Hence, our religion should not be acquired by the teaching of others, but should be worked out by ourselves: it is not to be borrowed from antiquity, but it is to be discovered by each man's mind; it is not traditional, but personal. It is because this great truth has been neglected, that impiety has arisen. If each man were to content himself with that idea of God which is suggested by his own mind, he would attain to a true knowledge of the Divine Nature. But when, instead of confining himself to this, he mixes up with it the notions of others, his ideas become perplexed; they contradict themselves; and the composition being thus confused, he often ends by denying the existence, not, indeed, of God, but of such a God as that in whom he has been taught to believe.²³⁷

The mischief which these principles must have done to the old theology is very obvious.²³⁸ Not only were they fatal, in the minds

iii. p. 383.

²³⁷ 'Et certes jamais les hommes ne pourroient s'éloigner de la vraie connoissance de cette nature divine, s'ils vouloient seulement porter leur attention sur l'idée qu'ils ont de l'être souverainement parfait. Mais ceux qui mêlent quelques autres idées avec celle-là composent par ce moyen un dieu chimérique, en la nature duquel il y a des choses qui se contrarient; et, après l'avoir ainsi composé, ce n'est pas merveille s'ils nient qu'un tel dieu, qui leur est représenté par une fausse idée, existe.' *Œuvres de Descartes*, vol. i. pp. 423, 424.

²³⁸ This is delicately but clearly indicated in an able letter from Arnaud, printed in *Œuvres de Descartes*, vol. ii. pp. 1–36: see in particular pp. 31, 34. And Duclos bluntly says: 'Si, depuis la révolution que Descartes a commencée, les théologiens se sont éloignés des philosophes, c'est que ceux-ci ont paru ne pas respecter infiniment les théologiens. Une philosophie qui prenoit pour base le doute et l'examen devoit les effaroucher.' *Duclos, Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 109.

of those who received them, to many of the common dogmas – such, for instance, as that of transubstantiation,²³⁹ – but they were likewise directly opposed to other opinions, equally indefensible, and far more dangerous. For Descartes, by founding a philosophy which rejected all authority except that of the human reason,²⁴⁰ was, of course, led to abandon the study of final causes,²⁴¹ – an old and natural superstition, by which, as we shall hereafter see, the German philosophers were long impeded, and which still hangs, though somewhat loosely, about the minds of men.²⁴² At the same

²³⁹ On the relation of the Cartesian philosophy to the doctrine of transubstantiation, compare *Palmer's Treatise on the Church*, vol. ii. pp. 169, 170, with *Hallam's Lit. of Europe*, vol. ii. p. 453; and the remark ascribed to Hobbes, in *Aubrey's Letters and Lives*, vol. ii. p. 626. But Hobbes, if he really made this observation, had no right to expect Descartes to become a martyr.

²⁴⁰ 'Le caractère de la philosophie du moyen âge est la soumission à une autorité autre que la raison. La philosophie moderne ne reconnaît que l'autorité de la raison. C'est le cartésianisme qui a opéré cette révolution décisive.' *Cousin, Hist. de la Philos.* II. série, vol. i. pp. 258, 259.

²⁴¹ 'Nous rejetterons entièrement de notre philosophie la recherche des causes finales.' *Principes de la Philos.*, part i. sec. 28, in *Œuvres de Descartes*, vol. iii. p. 81. See also part iii. sec. 3, p. 182; and his reply to Gassendi, in *Œuvres*, vol. ii. pp. 280, 281. Compare *Cousin, Hist. de la Philosophie*, II. série, vol. ii. p. 71, with *Sprengel, Hist. de la Médecine*, vol. v. p. 203.

²⁴² Dr. Whewell, for instance, says, that we must reject final causes in the inorganic sciences, but must recognize them in the organic ones; which, in other words, simply means, that we know less of the organic world than of the inorganic, and that because we know less, we are to believe more; for here, as everywhere else, the smaller the science the greater the superstition. *Whewell's Philos. of the Inductive Sciences*, 8vo., 1847, vol. i. pp. 620, 627, 628; and his *Hist. of the Induc. Sciences*, vol. iii. pp. 430, 431. If the question were to be decided by authority, it would be enough to appeal to Bacon and Descartes, the two greatest writers on the philosophy of method in the seventeenth

time, by superseding the geometry of the ancients, he aided in weakening that inordinate respect with which antiquity was then regarded. In another matter, still more important, he displayed the same spirit, and met with the same success. With such energy did he attack the influence, or rather the tyranny of Aristotle, that although the opinions of that philosopher were intimately interwoven with the Christian theology,²⁴³ his authority was entirely overthrown by Descartes; and with it there perished those scholastic prejudices, for which Aristotle, indeed, was not responsible, but which, under the shelter of his mighty name, had, during several centuries, perplexed the understandings of men, and retarded the progress of their knowledge.²⁴⁴

century; and to Auguste Comte, who is admitted by the few persons who have mastered his *Philosophie Positive*, to be the greatest in our own time. These profound and comprehensive thinkers have all rejected the study of final causes, which, as they have clearly seen, is a theological invasion of scientific rights. On the injury which this study has wrought, and on the check it has given to the advance of our knowledge, see *Robin et Verdeil, Chimie Anat.* Paris, 1853, vol. i. pp. 489, 493, 494, vol. ii. p. 555; *Renouard, Hist. de la Médecine*, vol. i. pp. 232, 237; *Sprengel, Hist. de la Médecine*, vol. ii. p. 220; *Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, Hist. des Anomalies de l'Organisation*, vol. iii. pp. 435, 436; *Herder, Ideen zur Gesch. der Menschheit*, vol. iii. p. 270; *Lawrence's Lectures on Man*, p. 36; and *Burdach, Traité de Physiologie*, vol. i. p. 190.

²⁴³ 'Auf das innigste verbunden mit der Theologie, nicht allein in den katholischen, sondern selbst auch in den protestantischen Ländern.' *Tennemann, Gesch. der Philos.* vol. ix. p. 516. Descartes, in a letter to Mersenne (*Œuvres*, vol. vi. p. 73), writes, in 1629, 'La théologie, laquelle on a tellement assujettie à Aristote, qu'il est impossible d'expliquer une autre philosophie qu'il ne semble d'abord qu'elle soit contre la foi.' Compare vol. vii. p. 344, vol. viii. pp. 281, 497.

²⁴⁴ Dr. Brown (*Philosophy of the Mind*, Edinburgh, 1838, p. 172) calls Descartes 'that illustrious rebel, who, in overthrowing the authority of Aristotle,' &c. See also

These were the principal services rendered to civilization by one of the greatest men Europe has ever produced. The analogy between him and Richelieu is very striking, and is as complete as their relative positions would allow. The same disregard of ancient notions, the same contempt for theological interests, the same indifference to tradition, the same determination to prefer the present to the past: in a word, the same essentially modern spirit, is seen alike in the writings of Descartes, and in the actions of Richelieu. What the first was to philosophy, that was the other to politics. But, while acknowledging the merits of these eminent men, it behoves us to remember that their success was the result, not only of their own abilities, but likewise of the general temper of their time. The nature of their labours depended on themselves; the way in which their labours were received, depended on their contemporaries. Had they lived in a more superstitious age, their views would have been disregarded, or, if noticed, would have been execrated as impious novelties. In the fifteenth, or early in the sixteenth century, the genius of Descartes and of Richelieu would have lacked the materials necessary to their work; their comprehensive minds would, in that state of society, have found no play; they

Duvernety, Hist. de la Sorbonne, vol. ii. p. 192; *Cuvier, Hist. des Sciences*, part ii. p. 532; and *Locke's Works*, vol. iii. p. 48. This, I need hardly say, refers to the habit of appealing to Aristotle, as if he were infallible, and is very different from that respect which is naturally felt for a man who was probably the greatest of all the ancient thinkers. The difference between the Aristotelian and Cartesian systems is touched on rather hastily in *Cudworth's Intellect. Syst.* vol. i. pp. 170, 171.

would have awakened no sympathies; their bread would have been cast upon those waters which return it not again. And it would have been well for them if, in such a case, indifference were the only penalty with which they would be visited. It would have been well if they had not paid the forfeit incurred by many of those illustrious thinkers who have vainly attempted to stem the torrent of human credulity. It would have been well if the church had not risen in her wrath – if Richelieu had not been executed as a traitor, and Descartes burned as a heretic.

Indeed, the mere fact that two such men, occupying so conspicuous a place before the public eye, and enforcing views so obnoxious to the interests of superstition, should have lived without serious danger, and then have died peaceably in their beds – the mere fact that this should have happened, is a decisive proof of the progress which, during fifty years, had been made by the French nation. With such rapidity were the prejudices of that great people dying away, that opinions utterly subversive of theological traditions, and fatal to the whole scheme of ecclesiastical power, were with impunity advocated by Descartes, and put in practice by Richelieu. It was now clearly seen, that the two foremost men of their time could, with little or no risk, openly propagate ideas which, half a century before, it would have been accounted dangerous even for the most obscure man to whisper in the privacy of his own chamber.

Nor are the causes of this impunity difficult to understand. They are to be found in the diffusion of that sceptical spirit, by

which, in France as well as in England, toleration was preceded. For, without entering into details which would be too long for the limits of this Introduction, it is enough to say, that French literature generally was, at this period, distinguished by a freedom and a boldness of inquiry, of which, England alone excepted, no example had then been seen in Europe. The generation which had listened to the teachings of Montaigne and of Charron, was now succeeded by another generation, the disciples, indeed, of those eminent men, but disciples who far outstripped their masters. The result was, that, during the thirty or forty years which preceded the power of Louis XIV.,²⁴⁵ there was not to be found a single Frenchman of note who did not share in the general feeling – not one who did not attack some ancient dogma, or sap the foundation of some old opinion. This fearless temper was the characteristic of the ablest writers of that time;²⁴⁶ but what is still more observable is, that the movement spread with such rapidity as to include in its action even those parts of society which are invariably the last to be affected by it. That spirit of doubt, which is the necessary precursor of all inquiry,

²⁴⁵ That is in 1661, when Louis XIV. first assumed the government.

²⁴⁶ M. Barante (*Tableau de la Littérature Française*, pp. 26, 27) notices ‘cette indépendance dans les idées, ce jugement audacieux de toutes choses, qu'on remarque dans Corneille, dans Mézéray, dans Balzac, dans Saint-Réal, dans Lamothe-Levayer.’ To these may be added Naudé, Patin, and probably Gassendi. Compare *Hallam's Literat. of Europe*, vol. ii. pp. 364, 365, with *Mackintosh's Ethical Philos.* p. 116, and *Lettres de Patin*, vol. i. p. 297, vol. ii. pp. 33, 186, 191, 242, 342, 498, 508, vol. iii. p. 87.

and therefore of all solid improvement, owes its origin to the most thinking and intellectual parts of society, and is naturally opposed by the other parts: opposed by the nobles, because it is dangerous to their interests; opposed by the uneducated, because it attacks their prejudices. This is one of the reasons why neither the highest nor the lowest ranks are fit to conduct the government of a civilized country; since both of them, notwithstanding individual exceptions, are, in the aggregate, averse to those reforms which the exigencies of an advancing nation constantly require. But, in France, before the middle of the seventeenth century, even these classes began to participate in the great progress; so that, not only among thoughtful men, but likewise among the ignorant and the frivolous, there was seen that inquisitive and incredulous disposition, which, whatever may be said against it, has at least this peculiarity, that, in its absence, there is no instance to be found of the establishment of those principles of toleration and of liberty, which have only been recognized with infinite difficulty, and after many a hard-fought battle against prejudices whose inveterate tenacity might almost cause them to be deemed a part of the original constitution of the human mind.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁷ The increase of incredulity was so remarkable, as to give rise to a ridiculous assertion, 'qu'il y avoit plus de 50,000 athées dans Paris vers l'an 1623.' *Baillet, Jugemens des Savans*, Paris, 1722, 4to. vol. i. p. 185. Baillet has no difficulty in rejecting this preposterous statement (which is also noticed in *Coleridge's Literary Remains*, vol. i. p. 305; where, however, there is apparently a confusion between two different periods); but the spread of scepticism among the upper ranks and courtiers,

It is no wonder if, under these circumstances, the speculations of Descartes and the actions of Richelieu should have met with great success. The system of Descartes exercised immense influence, and soon pervaded nearly every branch of knowledge.²⁴⁸ The policy of Richelieu was so firmly established, that it was continued without the slightest difficulty by his immediate successor: nor was any attempt made to reverse it until that forcible and artificial reaction which, under Louis XIV., was fatal, for a time, to every sort of civil and religious liberty. The history of that reaction, and the way in which, by a counter-reaction, the French Revolution was prepared, will be related in the subsequent chapters of this volume; at present we will resume the thread of those events which took place in France before Louis XIV. assumed the government.

during the reign of Louis XIII. and the minority of Louis XIV., is attested by a great variety of evidence. See *Mém. de Madame de Motteville*, vol. iii. p. 52; *Mém. de Retz*, vol. i. p. 266; *Conrart, Mém.* p. 235 note; *Des Réaux, Historiettes*, vol. vii. p. 143; *Mém. de Brienne*, vol. ii. p. 107 note.

²⁴⁸ Volumes might be written on the influence of Descartes, which was seen, not only in subjects immediately connected with his philosophy, but even in those apparently remote from it. Compare *Broussais, Examen des Doctrines Médicales*, vol. ii. pp. 55 seq.; *Lettres de Patin*, vol. iii. p. 153; *Sprengel, Hist. de la Médecine*, vol. iv. p. 238; *Cuvier, Hist. des Sciences*, part ii. pp. 327, 332, 352, 363; *Stäudlin, Geschichte der theologischen Wissenschaften*, vol. i. p. 263; *Tennemann, Gesch. der Philos.* vol. x. pp. 285 seq.; *Huetius de Rebus ad eum pertinentibus*, pp. 35, 295, 296, 385–389; *Mosheim's Eccles. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 258; *Dacier, Rapport Historique*, p. 334; *Leslie's Nat. Philos.* p. 121; *Eloges*, in *Œuvres de Fontenelle*, Paris, 1766, vol. v. pp. 94, 106, 137, 197, 234, 392, vol. vi. pp. 157, 318, 449; *Thomson's Hist. of Chemistry*, vol. i. p. 195; *Quérard, France Lit.* vol. iii. p. 273.

A few months after the death of Richelieu, Louis XIII. also died, and the crown was inherited by Louis XIV., who was then a child, and who for many years had no influence in public affairs. During his minority, the government was administered, avowedly by his mother, but in reality by Mazarin, a man who, though in every point inferior to Richelieu, had imbibed something of his spirit, and who, so far as he was able, adopted the policy of that great statesman, to whom he owed his promotion.²⁴⁹ He, influenced partly by the example of his predecessor, partly by his own character, and partly by the spirit of his age, showed no desire to persecute the Protestants, or to disturb them in any of the rights they then exercised.²⁵⁰ His first act was to confirm the Edict of Nantes;²⁵¹ and, towards the close of his life, he even allowed the Protestants again to hold those synods which their own violence had been the means of interrupting.²⁵² Between the death of Richelieu and

²⁴⁹ On the connexion between Richelieu and Mazarin, see *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xxiii. pp. 400, 530; and a curious, though perhaps apocryphal anecdote in *Tallemant des Réaux, Historiettes*, vol. ii. pp. 231, 232. In 1636 there was noticed 'l'étroite union' between Richelieu and Mazarin. *Le Vassor, Hist. de Louis XIII.*, vol. viii. part ii. p. 187.

²⁵⁰ 'Mazarin n'avoit ni fanatisme ni esprit persécuteur,' *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xxiv. p. 531. That he did not persecute the Protestants is grudgingly confessed in *Felice's Hist. of the Protestants of France*, p. 292. See also *Smedley's Reformed Religion in France*, vol. iii. p. 222.

²⁵¹ He confirmed it in July, 1643. See *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. iii. appendix, p. 3; and *Quick's Synodicon in Gallia*, vol. i. p. ciii.

²⁵² In 1659, there was assembled the Synod of Loudon, the moderator of which said,

the accession to power of Louis XIV., there elapsed a period of nearly twenty years, during which Mazarin, with the exception of a few intervals, was at the head of the state; and in the whole of that time, I have found no instance of any Frenchman being punished for his religion. Indeed, the new government, so far from protecting the church by repressing heresy, displayed that indifference to ecclesiastical interests which was now becoming a settled maxim of French policy. Richelieu, as we have already seen, had taken the bold step of placing Protestants at the head of the royal armies; and this he had done upon the simple principle, that one of the first duties of a statesman is to employ for the benefit of the country the ablest men he can find, without regard to their theological opinions, with which, as he well knew, no government has any concern. But Louis XIII., whose personal feelings were always opposed to the enlightened measures of his great minister, was offended by this magnanimous disregard of ancient prejudices; his piety was shocked at the idea of Catholic soldiers being commanded by heretics; and, as we are assured by a well-informed contemporary, he determined to put an end to this scandal to the church, and, for the future, allow no Protestant to receive the staff of marshal of France.²⁵³ Whether the king, if he had lived, would have carried his point,

'It is now fifteen years since we had a national synod.' *Quick's Synodicon in Gallia*, vol. ii. p. 517.

²⁵³ Brienne records the determination of the king, 'que cette dignité ne seroit plus accordée à des Protestans.' *Sismondi, Histoire des Français*, vol. xxiv. p. 65.

is doubtful;²⁵⁴ but what is certain is, that, only four months after his death, this appointment of marshal was bestowed upon Turenne, the most able of all the Protestant generals.²⁵⁵ And in the very next year, Gassion, another Protestant, was raised to the same dignity; thus affording the strange spectacle of the highest military power in a great Catholic country wielded by two men against whose religion the church was never weary of directing her anathemas.²⁵⁶ In a similar spirit, Mazarin, on mere grounds of political expediency, concluded an intimate alliance with Cromwell; an usurper who, in the opinion of the theologians, was doomed to perdition, since he was soiled by the triple crime of rebellion, of heresy, and of regicide.²⁵⁷ Finally,

²⁵⁴ He was so uneasy about the sin he had committed, that before his death he intreated the Protestant marshals to change their creed: 'Il ne voulut pas mourir sans avoir exhorté de sa propre bouche les maréchaux de la Force et de Chatillon à se faire Catholiques.' *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. ii. p. 612. The same circumstance is mentioned by Le Vassor, *Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. x. part ii. p. 785.

²⁵⁵ Louis XIII. died in May 1643; and Turenne was made marshal in the September following. *Lavallée, Hist. des Français*, vol. iii. pp. 148, 151.

²⁵⁶ Sismondi (*Hist. des Français*, vol. xxiv. p. 65) makes the appointment of Gassion in 1644; according to Montglat (*Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 437) it was at the end of 1643. There are some singular anecdotes of Gassion in *Les Historiettes de Tallemant des Réaux*, vol. v. pp. 167–180; and an account of his death in *Mém. de Motteville*, vol. ii. p. 290, from which it appears that he remained a Protestant to the last.

²⁵⁷ The Pope especially was offended by this alliance (*Ranke, die Päpste*, vol. iii. p. 158, compared with *Vaughan's Cromwell*, vol. i. p. 343, vol. ii. p. 124); and, judging from the language of Clarendon, the orthodox party in England was irritated by it. *Clarendon's Hist. of the Rebellion*, pp. 699, 700. Contemporary notices of this union between the cardinal and the regicide, will be found in *Mém. de Retz*, vol. i. p. 349; *Mém. de Montglat*, vol. ii. p. 478, vol. iii. p. 23; *Lettres de Patin*, vol. ii. pp. 183, 302,

one of the last acts of this pupil of Richelieu's²⁵⁸ was to sign the celebrated treaty of the Pyrenees, by which ecclesiastical interests were seriously weakened, and great injury inflicted on him who was still considered to be the head of the church.²⁵⁹

But, the circumstance for which the administration of Mazarin is most remarkable, is the breaking out of that great civil war called the Fronde, in which the people attempted to carry into politics the insubordinate spirit which had already displayed itself in literature and in religion. Here we cannot fail to note the similarity between this struggle and that which, at the same time, was taking place in England. It would, indeed, be far from accurate to say that the two events were the counterpart of each other; but there can be no doubt that the analogy between them is very striking. In both countries, the civil war was the first popular expression of what had hitherto been rather a speculative, and, so to say, a literary scepticism. In both countries, incredulity was followed by rebellion, and the abasement of the clergy preceded

426; *Marchand, Dict. Historique*, vol. ii. p. 56; *Mem. of Sir Philip Warwick*, p. 377; *Harris's Lives of the Stuarts*, vol. iii. p. 393.

²⁵⁸ De Retz (*Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 59), who knew Richelieu, calls Mazarin 'son disciple.' And at p. 65 he adds, 'comme il marchoit sur les pas du cardinal de Richelieu, qui avoit achevé de détruire toutes les anciennes maximes de l'état.' Compare *Mém. de Motteville*, vol. ii. p. 18; and *Mém. de la Rochefoucauld*, vol. i. p. 444.

²⁵⁹ On the open affront to the Pope by this treaty, see *Ranke, die Päpste*, vol. iii. p. 159: 'An dem pyrenäischen Frieden nahm er auch nicht einmal mehr einen scheinbaren Antheil: man vermied es seine Abgeordneten zuzulassen: kaum wurde seiner noch darin gedacht.' The consequences and the meaning of all this are well noticed by M. Ranke.

the humiliation of the crown; for Richelieu was to the French church what Elizabeth had been to the English church. In both countries there now first arose that great product of civilization, a free press, which showed its liberty by pouring forth those fearless and innumerable works which mark the activity of the age.²⁶⁰ In both countries, the struggle was between retrogression and progress; between those who clung to tradition, and those who longed for innovation; while, in both, the contest assumed the external form of a war between king and parliament, the king being the organ of the past, the parliament the representative

²⁶⁰ 'La presse jouissait d'une entière liberté pendant les troubles de la Fronde, et le public prenait un tel intérêt aux débats politiques, que les pamphlets se débitaient quelquefois au nombre de huit et dix mille exemplaires.' *Sainte-Aulaire, Hist. de la Fronde*, vol. i. p. 299. Tallemant des Réaux, who wrote immediately after the Fronde, says (*Historiettes*, vol. iv. p. 74), 'Durant la Fronde, qu'on imprimoit tout.' And Omer Talon, with the indignation natural to a magistrate, mentions, that in 1649, 'toutes sortes de libelles et de diffamations se publioient hautement par la ville sans permission du magistrat.' *Mém. d'Omer Talon*, vol. ii. p. 466. For further evidence of the great importance of the press in France in the middle of the seventeenth century, see *Mém. de Lenet*, vol. i. p. 162; *Mém. de Motteville*, vol. iii. pp. 288, 289; *Lettres de Patin*, vol. i. p. 432, vol. ii. p. 517; *Monteil, Hist. des divers Etats*, vol. vii. p. 175. In England, the Long Parliament succeeded to the licensing authority of the Star-chamber (*Blackstone's Commentaries*, vol. iv. p. 152); but it is evident from the literature of that time, that for a considerable period the power was in reality in abeyance. Both parties attacked each other freely through the press; and it is said that between the breaking out of the civil war and the restoration, there were published from 30,000 to 50,000 pamphlets. *Morgan's Phœnix Britannicus*, 1731, 4to. pp. iii. 557; *Carlyle's Cromwell*, vol. i. p. 4; *Southey's Commonplace Book*, third series, p. 449. See also on this great movement of the press, *Bates's Account of the Late Troubles*, part i. p. 78; *Bulstrode's Memoirs*, p. 4; *Howell's Letters*, p. 354; *Hunt's Hist. of Newspapers*, vol. i. p. 45; *Clarendon's Hist. of the Rebellion*, p. 81; *Nichols's Lit. Anec.* vol. iv. pp. 86, 102.

of the present. And, not to mention inferior similarities, there was one other point of vast importance in which these two great events coincide. This is, that both of them were eminently secular, and arose from the desire, not of propagating religious opinions, but of securing civil liberty. The temporal character of the English rebellion I have already noticed, and, indeed, it must be obvious to whoever has studied the evidence in its original sources. In France, not only do we find the same result, but we can even mark the stages of the progress. In the middle of the sixteenth century, and immediately after the death of Henry III., the French civil wars were caused by religious disputes, and were carried on with the fervour of a crusade. Early in the seventeenth century, hostilities again broke out; but though the efforts of the government were directed against the Protestants, this was not because they were heretics, but because they were rebels: the object being, not to punish an opinion, but to control a faction. This was the first great stage in the history of toleration; and it was accomplished, as we have already seen, during the reign of Louis XIII. That generation passing away, there arose, in the next age, the wars of the Fronde; and in this, which may be called the second stage of the French intellect, the alteration was still more remarkable. For, in the mean time, the principles of the great sceptical thinkers, from Montaigne to Descartes, had produced their natural fruit, and, becoming diffused among the educated classes, had influenced, as they always will do, not only those by whom they were received, but also those by whom they were

rejected. Indeed, a mere knowledge of the fact, that the most eminent men have thrown doubt on the popular opinions of an age, can never fail, in some degree, to disturb the convictions even of those by whom the doubts are ridiculed.²⁶¹ In such cases, none are entirely safe: the firmest belief is apt to become slightly unsettled; those who outwardly preserve the appearance of orthodoxy, often unconsciously waver; they cannot entirely resist the influence of superior minds, nor can they always avoid an unwelcome suspicion, that when ability is on one side, and ignorance on the other, it is barely possible that the ability may be right, and the ignorance may be wrong.

Thus it fell out in France. In that country, as in every other, when theological convictions diminished, theological animosities subsided. Formerly religion had been the cause of war, and had also been the pretext under which it was conducted. Then there came a time when it ceased to be the cause: but so slow is the progress of society, that it was still found necessary to set it up as the pretext.²⁶² Finally, there came the great days of the Fronde,

²⁶¹ Dugald Stewart (*Philos. of the Mind*, vol. i. p. 357) says, ‘Nothing can be more just than the observation of Fontenelle, that “the number of those who believe in a system already established in the world, does not, in the least, add to its credibility; but that the number of those who doubt of it, has a tendency to diminish it.”’ Compare with this *Newman on Development*, Lond. 1845, p. 31; and the remark of Hylas in *Berkeley's Works*, edit. 1843, vol. i. pp. 151, 152, first dialogue.

²⁶² Compare *Capefigue's Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 293, with a remarkable passage in *Mém. de Rohan*, vol. i. p. 317; where Rohan contrasts the religious wars he was engaged in during the administration of Richelieu, with those very different wars which had been waged in France a little earlier.

in which it was neither cause nor pretext,²⁶³ and in which there was seen, for the first time in France, an arduous struggle by human beings avowedly for human purposes: a war waged by men who sought, not to enforce their opinions, but to increase their liberty. And, as if to make this change still more striking, the most eminent leader of the insurgents was the Cardinal de Retz; a man of vast ability, but whose contempt for his profession was notorious,²⁶⁴ and of whom a great historian has said, 'he is the first bishop in France who carried on a civil war without making religion the pretence.'²⁶⁵

²⁶³ 'L'esprit religieux ne s'était mêlé en aucune manière aux querelles de la Fronde.' *Capefigue*, vol. ii. p. 434. Lenet, who had great influence with what was called the party of the princes, says that he always avoided any attempt 'à faire aboutir notre parti à une guerre de religion.' *Mém. de Lenet*, vol. i. p. 619. Even the people said that it was unimportant whether or not a man died a Protestant; but that if he were a partizan of Mazarin he was sure to be damned: 'Ils disoient qu'étant mazarin, il falloit qu'il fût damné.' *Lenet*, vol. i. p. 434.

²⁶⁴ Indeed he does not conceal this even in his memoirs. He says (*Mém.* vol. i. p. 3), he had 'l'âme peut-être la moins ecclésiastique qui fût dans l'univers.' At p. 13, 'le chagrin que ma profession ne laissoit pas de nourrir toujours dans le fonds de mon âme.' At p. 21, 'je haïssois ma profession plus que jamais.' At p. 48, 'le clergé, qui donne toujours l'exemple de la servitude, la prêchoit aux autres sous le titre d'obéissance.' See also the remark of his great friend Joly (*Mém. de Joly*, p. 209, edit. Petitot, 1825); and the account given by Tallemant des Réaux, who knew De Retz well, and had travelled with him, *Historiettes*, vol. vii. pp. 18-30. The same tendency is illustrated, though in a much smaller degree, by a conversation which Charles II., when in exile, held with De Retz, and which is preserved in *Clarendon's Hist. of the Rebellion*, p. 806, and is worth consulting merely as an instance of the purely secular view that De Retz always took of political affairs.

²⁶⁵ 'Cet homme singulier est le premier évêque en France qui ait fait une guerre

We have thus seen that, during the seventy years which succeeded the accession of Henry IV., the French intellect developed itself in a manner remarkably similar to that which took place in England. We have seen that, in both countries, the mind, according to the natural conditions of its growth, first doubted what it had long believed, and then tolerated what it had long hated. That this was by no means an accidental or capricious combination, is evident, not only from general arguments, and from the analogy of the two countries, but also from another circumstance of great interest. This is, that the order of events, and as it were their relative proportions, were the same, not only in reference to the increase of toleration, but also in reference to the increase of literature and science. In both countries, the progress of knowledge bore the same ratio to the decline of ecclesiastical influence, although they manifested that ratio at different periods. We had begun to throw off our superstitions somewhat earlier than the French were able to do; and thus, being the first in the field, we anticipated that great people in producing a secular literature. Whoever will take the pains to compare the growth of the French and English minds, will see that, in all the most important departments, we were the first, I do not say in merit, but in the order of time. In prose, in poetry, and in every branch of intellectual excellence, it will be found, on comparison, that we were before the French nearly a whole

civile sans avoir la religion pour prétexte.' *Siècle de Louis XIV*, in *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. xix. p. 261.

generation; and that, chronologically, the same proportion was preserved as that between Bacon and Descartes, Hooker and Pascal,²⁶⁶ Shakespeare and Corneille, Massinger and Racine, Ben Jonson and Molière, Harvey and Pecquet. These eminent men were all justly celebrated in their respective countries; and it would perhaps be invidious to institute a comparison between them. But what we have here to observe is, that among those who cultivated the same department, the greatest Englishman, in every instance, preceded the greatest Frenchman by many years. The difference, running as it does, through all the leading topics, is far too regular to be considered accidental. And as few Englishmen of the present day will be so presumptuous as to suppose that we possess any native and inherent superiority over the French, it is evident that there must be some marked peculiarity in which the two countries differed, and which has produced this difference, not in their knowledge, but in the time at which their knowledge appeared. Nor does the discovery of this peculiarity require much penetration. For, notwithstanding that the French were more tardy than the English, still, when the development had fairly begun, the antecedents of its success were among both people precisely the same. It is, therefore, clear, according to the commonest principles of inductive reasoning, that the lateness of the development must be owing to the

²⁶⁶ Hooker and Pascal may properly be classed together, as the two most sublime theological writers either country has produced; for Bossuet is as inferior to Pascal as Jeremy Taylor is inferior to Hooker.

lateness of the antecedent. It is clear that the French knew less because they believed more.²⁶⁷ It is clear that their progress was checked by the prevalence of those feelings which are fatal to all knowledge, because, looking on antiquity as the sole receptacle of wisdom, they degrade the present in order that they may exaggerate the past: feelings which destroy the prospects of man, stifle his hopes, damp his curiosity, chill his energies, impair his judgment, and, under pretence of humbling the pride of his reason, seek to throw him back into that more than midnight darkness from which his reason alone has enabled him to emerge.

The analogy thus existing between France and England, is, indeed, very striking, and, so far as we have yet considered it, seems complete in all its parts. To sum up the similarities in a few words, it may be said, that both countries followed the same order of development in their scepticism, in their knowledge, in their literature, and in their toleration. In both countries, there broke out a civil war at the same time, for the same object, and, in many respects, under the same circumstances. In both, the insurgents, at first triumphant, were afterwards defeated; and the rebellion being put down, the governments of the two nations were fully restored almost at the same moment: in 1660 by

²⁶⁷ One of the most remarkable men they have ever possessed notices this connexion, which he expresses conversely, but with equal truth: 'moins on sait, moins on doute; moins on a découvert, moins on voit ce qui reste à découvrir... Quand les hommes sont ignorans, il est aisé de tout savoir.' *Discours en Sorbonne*, in *Œuvres de Turgot*, vol. ii. pp. 65, 70.

Charles II.; in 1661, by Louis XIV.²⁶⁸ But there the similarity stopped. At this point there began a marked divergence between the two countries;²⁶⁹ which continued to increase for more than a century, until it ended in England by the consolidation of the national prosperity, in France by a revolution more sanguinary, more complete, and more destructive, than any the world has ever seen. This difference between the fortunes of such great and civilized nations is so remarkable, that a knowledge of its causes becomes essential to a right understanding of European history, and will be found to throw considerable light on other events not immediately connected with it. Besides this, such an inquiry, independently of its scientific interest, will have a high practical value. It will show, what men seem only recently to have begun to understand, that, in politics, no certain principles having yet been discovered, the first conditions of success are compromise, barter, expediency, and concession. It will show the utter helplessness even of the ablest rulers, when they try to meet new emergencies by old maxims. It will show the intimate connexion between knowledge and liberty;

²⁶⁸ Mazarin, until his death in 1661, exercised complete authority over Louis. See *Siècle de Louis XIV*, in *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. xix. pp. 318, 319; and *Lavallée, Hist. des Français*, vol. iii. p. 195; so that, as Montglat says (*Mém.* vol. iii. p. 111), ‘On doit appeler ce temps-là le commencement du règne de Louis XIV.’ The pompous manner in which, directly after the death of Mazarin, the king assumed the government, is related by Brienne, who was present. *Mém. de Brienne*, vol. ii. pp. 154–158.

²⁶⁹ By this I mean, that the divergence now first became clear to every observer; but the origin of the divergence dates from a much earlier period, as we shall see in the next chapter.

between an increasing civilization and an advancing democracy. It will show that, for a progressive nation, there is required a progressive polity; that within certain limits, innovation is the sole ground of security; that no institution can withstand the flux and movements of society, unless it not only repairs its structure, but also widens its entrance; and that, even in a material point of view, no country can long remain either prosperous or safe, in which the people are not gradually extending their power, enlarging their privileges, and, so to say, incorporating themselves with the functions of the state.

The tranquillity of England, and her freedom from civil war, are to be ascribed to the recognition of these great truths;²⁷⁰ while the neglect of them has entailed upon other countries the most woful calamities. On this account, therefore, if on no other, it becomes interesting to ascertain how it was that the two nations we have been comparing should, in regard to these truths, have adopted views diametrically opposite, although, in other matters, their opinions, as we have already seen, were very similar. Or, to state the question in other words, we have to inquire how it was that the French, after pursuing precisely the same course as the English, in their knowledge, in their scepticism, and in their toleration, should have stopped short in their politics; how it was

²⁷⁰ That is to say, their practical recognition; theoretically, they are still denied by innumerable politicians, who, nevertheless, assist in carrying them into effect, fondly hoping that each innovation will be the last, and enticing men into reform under the pretext that by each change they are returning to the spirit of the ancient British constitution.

that their minds, which had effected such great things, should, nevertheless, have been so unprepared for liberty, that, in spite of the heroic efforts of the Fronde, they not only fell under the despotism of Louis XIV., but never cared to resist it; and, at length, becoming slaves in their souls as well as in their bodies, they grew proud of a condition which the meanest Englishman would have spurned as an intolerable bondage.

The cause of this difference is to be sought in the existence of that spirit of protection which is so dangerous and yet so plausible, that it forms the most serious obstacle with which advancing civilization has to contend. This, which may truly be called an evil spirit, has always been far stronger in France than in England. Indeed, among the French, it continues, even to the present day, to produce the most mischievous results. It is, as I shall hereafter point out, intimately connected with that love of centralization which appears in the machinery of their government, and in the spirit of their literature. It is this which induces them to retain restrictions by which their trade has long been troubled, and to preserve monopolies which, in our country, a freer system has effectually destroyed. It is this which causes them to interfere with the natural relation between producers and consumers; to force into existence manufactures which otherwise would never arise, and which, for that very reason, are not required; to disturb the ordinary march of industry, and, under pretence of protecting their native labourers, diminish the produce of labour by diverting it from those profitable channels

into which its own instincts always compel it to flow.

When the protective principle is carried into trade, these are its inevitable results. When it is carried into politics, there is formed what is called a paternal government, in which supreme power is vested in the sovereign, or in a few privileged classes. When it is carried into theology, it produces a powerful church, and a numerous clergy, who are supposed to be the necessary guardians of religion, and every opposition to whom is resented as an insult to the public morals. These are the marks by which protection may be recognized; and from a very early period they have displayed themselves in France much more clearly than in England. Without pretending to discover their precise origin, I will, in the next chapter, endeavour to trace them back to a time sufficiently remote to explain some of the discrepancies which, in this respect existed between the two countries.

Note to p. 93. Descartes died in Sweden on a visit to Christina; so that, strictly speaking, there is an error in the text. But this does not affect the argument; because the works of Descartes, being eagerly read in France, and not being prohibited, we must suppose that his person would have been safe, had he remained in his own country. To burn a heretic is a more decisive step than to suppress a book; and as the French clergy were not strong enough to effect the latter, it is hardly likely that they could have accomplished the former.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF THE PROTECTIVE SPIRIT, AND COMPARISON OF IT IN FRANCE AND ENGLAND

When, towards the end of the fifth century, the Roman empire was broken up, there followed, as is well known, a long period of ignorance and of crime, in which even the ablest minds were immersed in the grossest superstitions. During these, which are rightly called the Dark Ages, the clergy were supreme: they ruled the consciences of the most despotic sovereigns, and they were respected as men of vast learning, because they alone were able to read and write; because they were the sole depositaries of those idle conceits of which European science then consisted; and because they preserved the legends of the saints and the lives of the fathers, from which, as it was believed, the teachings of divine wisdom might easily be gathered.

Such was the degradation of the European intellect for about five hundred years, during which the credulity of men reached a height unparalleled in the annals of ignorance. But at length the human reason, that divine spark which even the most corrupt society is unable to extinguish, began to display its power, and disperse the mists by which it was surrounded. Various

circumstances, which it would be tedious here to discuss, caused this dispersion to take place at different times in different countries. However, speaking generally, we may say that it occurred in the tenth and eleventh centuries, and that by the twelfth century there was no nation now called civilized, upon whom the light had not begun to dawn.

It is from this point that the first great divergence between the European nations took its rise. Before this time their superstition was so great and universal, that it would avail little to measure the degree of their relative darkness. Indeed, so low had they fallen, that, during the earlier period, the authority of the clergy was in many respects an advantage, as forming a barrier between the people and their rulers, and as supplying the sole instance of a class that even made an approach to intellectual pursuits. But when the great movement took place, when the human reason began to rebel, the position of the clergy was suddenly changed. They had been friendly to reasoning as long as the reasoning was on their side.²⁷¹ While they were the only guardians of knowledge, they were eager to promote its interests. Now, however, it was falling from their hands: it was becoming possessed by laymen: it was growing dangerous: it must be reduced to its proper dimensions. Then it was that there first became general the inquisitions, the imprisonments, the torturings, the burnings, and all the other contrivances by which

²⁷¹ 'Toute influence qu'on accordait à la science ne pouvait, dans les premiers temps, qu'être favorable au clergé.' Meyer, *Institut. Judic.* vol. i. p. 498.

the church vainly endeavoured to stem the tide that had turned against her.²⁷² From that moment there has been an unceasing struggle between these two great parties, – the advocates of inquiry, and the advocates of belief: a struggle which, however it may be disguised, and under whatever forms it may appear, is at bottom always the same, and represents the opposite interests of reason and faith, of scepticism and credulity, of progress and reaction, of those who hope for the future, and of those who cling to the past.

This, then, is the great starting point of modern civilization. From the moment that reason began, however faintly, to assert its supremacy, the improvement of every people has depended upon their obedience to its dictates, and upon the success with which

²⁷² Early in the eleventh century the clergy first began systematically to repress independent inquiries by punishing men who attempted to think for themselves. Compare *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. iv. pp. 145, 146; *Neander's Hist. of the Church*, vol. vi. pp. 365, 366; *Prescott's Hist. of Ferdinand and Isabella*, vol. i. p. 261 note. Before this, such a policy, as Sismondi justly observes, was not required: 'Pendant plusieurs siècles, l'église n'avoit été troublée par aucune hérésie; l'ignorance étoit trop complète la soumission trop servile, la foi trop aveugle, pour que les questions qui avoient si long-temps exercé la subtilité des Grecs fussent seulement comprises par les Latins.' As knowledge advanced, the opposition between inquiry and belief became more marked: the church redoubled her efforts, and at the end of the twelfth century the popes first formally called on the secular power to punish heretics; and the earliest constitution addressed 'inquisitoribus hæreticæ pravitatis' is one by Alexander IV. *Meyer, Inst. Jud.* vol. ii. pp. 554, 556. See also on this movement, *Llorente, Hist. de l'Inquisition*, vol. i. p. 125, vol. iv. p. 284. In 1222 a synod assembled at Oxford caused an apostate to be burned; and this, says Lingard (*Hist. of England*, vol. ii. p. 148), 'is, I believe, the first instance of capital punishment in England on the ground of religion.' Compare *Wright's Biog. Brit. Lit.* vol. ii. p. 444.

they have reduced to its standard the whole of their actions. To understand, therefore, the original divergence of France and England, we must seek it in the circumstances that took place when this, which may be called the great rebellion of the intellect, was first clearly seen.

If now, with a view to such inquiry, we examine the history of Europe, we shall find that just at this period there sprung up the feudal system: a vast scheme of polity, which, clumsy and imperfect as it was, supplied many of the wants of the rude people among whom it arose.²⁷³ The connexion between it and the decline of the ecclesiastical spirit is very obvious. For the feudal system was the first great secular plan that had been seen in Europe since the formation of the civil law: it was the first comprehensive attempt which had been made, during more than four hundred years, to organize society according to temporal, not according to spiritual circumstances, the basis of the whole arrangement being merely the possession of land, and

²⁷³ Sir F. Palgrave (*English Commonwealth*, vol. ii. p. ccvi.) says, 'it is generally admitted, by the best authorities, that from about the eleventh century benefices acquired the name of fiefs or feuds;' and Robertson (*State of Europe*, note viii. in *Works*, p. 393) supposes that the word *feudum* does not occur before 1008. But according to M. Guizot (*Civilisation en France*, vol. iii. p. 238), 'il apparaît, pour la première fois, dans une charte de Charles le Gros en 884.' This is a question more curious than important; since whatever the origin of the word may be, it is certain that the thing did not, and could not, exist before the tenth century at the earliest: inasmuch as the extreme disorganisation of society rendered so coercive an institution impossible. M. Guizot, in another work (*Essais sur l'Hist. de France*, p. 239), rightly says, 'Au Xe siècle seulement, les rapports et les pouvoirs sociaux acquièrent quelque fixité.' See also his *Civilisation en Europe*, p. 90.

the performance of certain military and pecuniary services.²⁷⁴

This was, no doubt, a great step in European civilization, because it set the first example of a large public polity in which the spiritual classes as such had no recognized place;²⁷⁵ and hence there followed that struggle between feudality and the church, which has been observed by several writers, but the origin of which has been strangely overlooked. What, however, we have now to notice is, that by the establishment of the feudal system, the spirit of protection, far from being destroyed, was probably not even weakened, but only assumed a new form. Instead of being spiritual, it became temporal. Instead of men looking up to the church, they looked up to the nobles. For, as a necessary

²⁷⁴ 'La terre est tout dans ce système... Le système féodal est comme une religion de la terre.' *Origines du Droit*, in *Œuvres de Michelet*, vol. ii. p. 302. 'Le caractère de la féodalité, c'était la prédominance de la *réalité* sur la *personnalité*, de la terre sur l'homme.' *Eschbach, Etude du Droit*, p. 256.

²⁷⁵ According to the social and political arrangements from the fourth to the tenth century, the clergy were so eminently a class apart, that they were freed from 'burdens of the state,' and were not obliged to engage in military services unless they thought proper to do so. See *Neander's Hist. of the Church*, vol. iii. p. 195, vol. v. pp. 133, 140; and *Petrie's Ecclesiast. Archit.* p. 382. But under the feudal system this immunity was lost; and in regard to performing services no separation of classes was admitted. 'After the feudal polity became established, we do not find that there was any dispensation for ecclesiastical fiefs.' *Hallam's Supplemental Notes*, p. 120; and for further proof of the loss of the old privileges, compare *Grose's Military Antiquities*, vol. i. pp. 5, 64; *Meyer, Instit. Judic.* vol. i. p. 257; *Turner's Hist. of England*, vol. iv. p. 462; and *Mably's Observations*, vol. i. pp. 434, 435: so that, as this writer says, p. 215, 'Chaque seigneur laïc avait gagné personnellement à la révolution qui forma le gouvernement féodal; mais les évêques et les abbés, en devenant souverains dans leurs terres, perdirent au contraire beaucoup de leur pouvoir et de leur dignité.'

consequence of this vast movement, or rather as a part of it, the great possessors of land were now being organized into an hereditary aristocracy.²⁷⁶ In the tenth century, we find the first surnames:²⁷⁷ by the eleventh century most of the great offices had become hereditary in the leading families:²⁷⁸ and in the twelfth century armorial bearings were invented, as well as other heraldic devices, which long nourished the conceit of the nobles, and were valued by their descendants as marks of that superiority of birth to which, during many ages, all other superiority was considered subordinate.²⁷⁹

Such was the beginning of the European aristocracy, in the sense in which that word is commonly used. With the

²⁷⁶ The great change of turning life-possession of land into hereditary possessions, began late in the ninth century, being initiated in France by a capitulary of Charles the Bald, in 877. See *Allen on the Prerogative*, p. 210; *Spence's Origin of the Laws of Europe*, pp. 282, 301; *Meyer, Instit. Judiciaires*, vol. i. p. 206.

²⁷⁷ That surnames first arose in the tenth century is stated by the most competent authorities. See *Sismondi, Hist. de Français*, vol. iii. pp. 452-455; *Hallam's Middle Ages*, vol. i. p. 138; *Monteil, Hist. des divers Etats*, vol. iii. p. 268; *Petrie's Ecclesiast. Archit.* pp. 277, 342. Koch (*Tableau des Révolutions*, vol. i. p. 138) erroneously says, 'c'est pareillement aux croisades que l'Europe doit l'usage des surnoms de famille;' a double mistake, both as to the date and the cause, since the introduction of surnames being part of a large social movement, can under no circumstances be ascribed to a single event.

²⁷⁸ On this process from the end of the ninth to the twelfth century, compare *Hallam's Supplemental Notes*, pp. 97, 98; *Dalrymple's Hist. of Feudal Property*, p. 21; *Klimrath, Hist. du Droit*, vol. i. p. 74.

²⁷⁹ As to the origin of armorial bearings, which cannot be traced higher than the twelfth century, see *Hallam's Middle Ages*, vol. i. pp. 138, 139; *Ledwich, Antiquities of Ireland*, pp. 231, 232; *Origines du Droit*, in *Œuvres de Michelet*, vol. ii. p. 382.

consolidation of its power, feudality was made, in reference to the organization of society, the successor of the church;²⁸⁰ and the nobles, becoming hereditary, gradually displaced in government, and in the general functions of authority, the clergy, among whom the opposite principle of celibacy was now firmly established.²⁸¹ It is, therefore, evident, that an inquiry into the origin of the modern protective spirit does, in a great measure, resolve itself into an inquiry into the origin of the aristocratic power; since that power was the exponent, and, as it were, the cover under which the spirit displayed itself. This, as we shall hereafter see, is likewise connected with the great religious rebellion of the sixteenth century; the success of which mainly depended on the weakness of the protective principle that opposed it. But, reserving this for future consideration, I will now endeavour to trace a few of the circumstances which gave the aristocracy more power in France than in England, and thus

²⁸⁰ For, as Lerminia says (*Philos. du Droit*, vol. i. p. 17), 'la loi féodale n'est autre chose que la terre élevée à la souveraineté.' On the decline of the church in consequence of the increased feudal and secular spirit, see *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. iii. p. 440, vol. iv. p. 88. In our own country, one fact may be mentioned illustrative of the earliest encroachments of laymen: namely, that, before the twelfth century, we find no instance in England of the great seal being entrusted 'to the keeping of a layman.' *Campbell's Chancellors*, vol. i. p. 61.

²⁸¹ Celibacy, on account of its supposed ascetic tendency, was advocated and in some countries was enforced, at an early period; but the first general and decisive movement in its favour was in the middle of the eleventh century, before which time it was a speculative doctrine, constantly disobeyed. See *Neander's Hist. of the Church*, vol. vi. pp. 52, 61, 62, 72, 93, 94 note, vol. vii. pp. 127–131; *Mosheim's Eccles. Hist.* vol. i. pp. 248, 249; *Eccleston's English Antiq.* p. 95.

accustomed the French to a closer and more constant obedience, and infused into them a more reverential spirit than that which was usual in our country.

Soon after the middle of the eleventh century, and therefore while the aristocracy was in the process of formation, England was conquered by the Duke of Normandy, who naturally introduced the polity existing in his own country.²⁸² But, in his hands, it underwent a modification suitable to the new circumstances in which he was placed. He, being in a foreign country, the general of a successful army composed partly of mercenaries,²⁸³ was able to dispense with some of those feudal usages which were customary in France. The great Norman lords, thrown as strangers into the midst of a hostile population, were glad to accept estates from the crown on almost any terms that would guarantee their own security. Of this, William naturally availed himself. For, by granting baronies on conditions favourable to the crown, he prevented the barons²⁸⁴

²⁸² Where it was particularly flourishing: 'la féodalité fut organisée en Normandie plus fortement et plus systématiquement que partout ailleurs en France.' *Klimrath, Travaux sur l'Hist. du Droit*, vol. i. p. 130. The 'coutume de Normandie' was, at a much later period, only to be found in the old 'grand coutumier.' *Klimrath*, vol. ii. p. 160. On the peculiar tenacity with which the Normans clung to it, see *Lettres d'Aguesseau*, vol. ii. pp. 225, 226: 'accoutumés à respecter leur coutume comme l'évangile.'

²⁸³ *Mills' Hist. of Chivalry*, vol. i. p. 387; *Turner's Hist. of England*, vol. ii. p. 390, vol. iv. p. 76. Mercenary troops were also employed by his immediate successors. *Grose's Military Antiq.* vol. i. p. 55.

²⁸⁴ On the different meanings attached to the word 'baron,' compare *Klimrath, Hist. du Droit*, vol. ii. p. 40, with *Meyer, Instit. Judiciaires*, vol. i. p. 105. But M. Guizot

from possessing that power which they exercised in France, and which, but for this, they would have exercised in England. The result was, that the most powerful of our nobles became amenable to the law, or, at all events, to the authority of the king.²⁸⁵ Indeed, to such an extent was this carried, that William, shortly before his death, obliged all the landowners to render their fealty to him; thus entirely neglecting that peculiarity of feudalism, according to which each vassal was separately dependent on his own lord.²⁸⁶

But in France, the course of affairs was very different. In that country the great nobles held their lands, not so much by grant, as by prescription.²⁸⁷ A character of antiquity was thus thrown over their rights; which, when added to the weakness of the crown, enabled them to exercise on their own estates, all the functions

says, what seems most likely, 'il est probable que ce nom fut commun originaiement à tous les vassaux immédiats de la couronne, liés au roi *per servitium militare*, par le service de chevalier.' *Essais*, p. 265.

²⁸⁵ *Meyer, Instit. Judic.* vol. i. p. 242; *Turner's Hist. of England*, vol. iii. p. 220. The same policy of reducing the nobles was followed up by Henry II., who destroyed the baronial castles. *Turner*, vol. iv. p. 223. Compare *Lingard*, vol. i. pp. 315, 371.

²⁸⁶ 'Deinde cœpit homagia hominum totius Angliæ, et juramentum fidelitatis cujuscumque essent feodi vel tenementi.' *Matthæi Westmonast. Flores Historiarum*, vol. ii. p. 9.

²⁸⁷ See some good remarks on this difference between the French and English nobles, in *Hallam's Middle Ages*, vol. ii. pp. 99, 100. Mably (*Observations*, vol. i. p. 60) says: 'en effet, on négligea, sur la fin de la première race, de conserver les titres primordiaux de ses possessions.' As to the old customary French law of prescription, see *Giraud, Précis de l'Ancien Droit*, pp. 79, 80.

of independent sovereigns.²⁸⁸ Even when they received their first great check, under Philip Augustus,²⁸⁹ they, in his reign, and indeed long after, wielded a power quite unknown in England. Thus, to give only two instances: the right of coining money, which has always been regarded as an attribute of sovereignty, was never allowed in England, even to the greatest nobles.²⁹⁰ But in France it was exercised by many persons independently of the crown, and was not abrogated until the sixteenth century.²⁹¹ A similar remark holds good of what was called the right of private war; by virtue of which the nobles were allowed to attack each other, and disturb the peace of the country with the prosecution of their private feuds. In England the aristocracy were never strong enough to have this admitted as a right,²⁹² though they too often exercised it as a practice. But in France it became a part of the established law; it was incorporated into the text-books of feudalism, and it is distinctly recognized by Louis IX. and Philip

²⁸⁸ *Mably, Observations sur l'Hist. de France*, vol. i. pp. 70, 162, 178.

²⁸⁹ On the policy of Philip Augustus in regard to the nobles, see *Mably, Observations*, vol. i. p. 246; *Lerminier, Philos. du Droit*, vol. i. p. 265; *Boulainvilliers, Hist. de l'Ancien Gouvernement*, vol. iii. pp. 147–150; *Guizot, Civilisation en France*, vol. iv. pp. 134, 135; *Courson, Hist. des Peuples Brétons*, Paris, 1846, vol. ii. p. 350.

²⁹⁰ 'No subjects ever enjoyed the right of coining silver in England without the royal stamp and superintendence; a remarkable proof of the restraint in which the feudal aristocracy was always held in this country.' *Hallam's Middle Ages*, vol. i. p. 154.

²⁹¹ *Brougham's Polit. Philos.* 1849, vol. i. p. 446. In addition to the evidence there given on the right of coinage, see *Mably's Observations*, vol. i. p. 424, vol. ii. pp. 296, 297; and *Turner's Normandy*, vol. ii. p. 261.

²⁹² *Hallam's Supplemental Notes*, pp. 304, 305.

the Fair, – two kings of considerable energy, who did every thing in their power to curtail the enormous authority of the nobles.²⁹³

Out of this difference between the aristocratic power of France and England, there followed many consequences of great importance. In our country the nobles, being too feeble to contend with the crown, were compelled, in self-defence, to ally themselves with the people.²⁹⁴ About a hundred years after the Conquest, the Normans and Saxons amalgamated; and both parties united against the king in order to uphold their common rights.²⁹⁵ The Magna Charta, which John was forced to yield

²⁹³ ‘Saint-Louis consacra le droit de guerre... Philippe le Bel, qui voulut l’abolir, finit par le rétablir.’ *Montlosier, Monarchie Française*, vol. i. pp. 127, 202: see also pp. 434, 435, and vol. ii. pp. 435, 436. Mably (*Observations*, vol. ii. p. 338) mentions ‘lettres-patentes de Philippe-de-Valois du 8 février 1330, pour permettre dans le duché d’Aquitaine les guerres privées,’ &c.; and he adds, ‘le 9 avril 1353 le roi Jean renouvelle l’ordonnance de S. Louis, nommée la quarantaine du roi, touchant les guerres privées.’

²⁹⁴ Sir Francis Palgrave (in his *Rise and Progress of the English Commonwealth*, vol. i. pp. 51–55) has attempted to estimate the results produced by the Norman Conquest; but he omits to notice this, which was the most important consequence of all.

²⁹⁵ On this political union between Norman barons and Saxon citizens, of which the first clear indication is at the end of the twelfth century, compare *Campbell’s Chancellors*, vol. i. p. 113, with *Brougham’s Polit. Philos.* vol. i. p. 339, vol. iii. p. 222. In regard to the general question of the amalgamation of races, we have three distinct kinds of evidence: 1st. Towards the end of the twelfth century, a new language began to be formed by blending Norman with Saxon; and English literature, properly so called, dates from the commencement of the thirteenth century. Compare *Madden’s Preface to Layamon*, 1847, vol. i. pp. xx. xxi., with *Turner’s Hist. of England*, vol. viii. pp. 214, 217, 436, 437. 2nd. We have the specific statement of a writer in the reign of Henry II., that ‘sic permixtæ sunt nationes ut vix discerni possit hodie, de liberis loquor, quis Anglicus, quis Normannus sit genere.’ *Note in Hallam’s Middle Ages*, vol. ii. p. 106. 3rd.

contained concessions to the aristocracy; but its most important stipulations were those in favour of 'all classes of freemen.'²⁹⁶ Within half a century, fresh contests broke out; the barons were again associated with the people, and again there followed the same results, – the extension of popular privileges being each time the condition and the consequence of this singular alliance. In the same way, when the Earl of Leicester raised a rebellion against Henry III., he found his own party too weak to make head against the crown. He, therefore, applied to the people:²⁹⁷ and it is to him that our House of Commons owes its origin; since he, in 1264, set the first example of issuing writs to cities and boroughs; thus calling upon citizens and burgesses to take their place in what had hitherto been a parliament composed entirely of priests and nobles.²⁹⁸

Before the thirteenth century had passed away, the difference of dress, which in that state of society would survive many other differences, was no longer observed, and the distinctive peculiarities of Norman and Saxon attire had disappeared. See *Strutt's View of the Dress and Habits of the People of England*, vol. ii. p. 67, edit. Planché, 1842, 4to.

²⁹⁶ 'An equal distribution of civil rights to all classes of freemen forms the peculiar beauty of the charter.' *Hallam's Middle Ages*, vol. ii. p. 108. This is very finely noticed in one of Lord Chatham's great speeches. *Parl. Hist.* vol. xvi. p. 662.

²⁹⁷ Compare *Meyer, Instit. Judic.* vol. ii. p. 39, with *Lingard's England*, vol. ii. p. 127, and *Somers Tracts*, vol. vi. p. 92.

²⁹⁸ 'He is to be honoured as the founder of a representative system of government in this country.' *Campbell's Chief-Justices*, vol. i. p. 61. Some writers (see, for instance, *Dalrymple's Hist. of Feudal Property*, p. 332) suppose that burgesses were summoned before the reign of Henry III.: but this assertion is not only unsupported by evidence, but is in itself improbable; because at an early period the citizens, though rapidly increasing in power, were hardly important enough to warrant such a step being taken.

The English aristocracy being thus forced, by their own weakness, to rely on the people,²⁹⁹ it naturally followed, that the people imbibed that tone of independence, and that lofty bearing, of which our civil and political institutions are the consequence, rather than the cause. It is to this, and not to any fanciful peculiarity of race, that we owe the sturdy and enterprising spirit for which the inhabitants of this island have long been remarkable. It is this which has enabled us to baffle all the arts of oppression, and to maintain for centuries liberties which no other nation has ever possessed. And it is this which has fostered and upheld those great municipal privileges, which,

The best authorities are now agreed to refer the origin of the House of Commons to the period mentioned in the text. See *Hallam's Supplement, Notes*, pp. 335–339; *Spence's Origin of the Laws of Europe*, p. 512; *Campbell's Chancellors*, vol. i. p. 155; *Lingard's England*, vol. ii. p. 138; *Guizot's Essais*, p. 319. The notion of tracing this to the wittenagemot is as absurd as finding the origin of juries in the system of compurgators; both of which were favourite errors in the seventeenth, and even in the eighteenth century. In regard to the wittenagemot, this idea still lingers among antiquaries: but, in regard to compurgators, even they have abandoned their old ground, and it is now well understood that trial by jury did not exist till long after the Conquest. Compare *Palgrave's English Commonwealth*, part i. pp. 243 seq., with *Meyer, Instit. Judic.* vol. ii. pp. 152–173. There are few things in our history so irrational as the admiration expressed by a certain class of writers for the institutions of our barbarous Anglo-Saxon ancestors.

²⁹⁹ Montlosier, with the fine spirit of a French noble, taunts the English aristocracy with this: 'En France la noblesse, attaquée sans cesse, s'est défendue sans cesse. Elle a subi l'oppression; elle ne l'a point acceptée. En Angleterre, elle a couru dès la première commotion, se réfugier dans les rangs des bourgeois, et sous leur protection. Elle a abdiqué ainsi son existence.' *Montlosier, Monarchie Française*, vol. iii. p. 162. Compare an instructive passage in *De Staël, Consid. sur la Révolution*, vol. i. p. 421.

whatever be their faults, have, at least, the invaluable merit of accustoming free men to the exercise of power, giving to citizens the management of their own city, and perpetuating the idea of independence, by preserving it in a living type, and by enlisting in its support the interests and affections of individual men.

But the habits of self-government which, under these circumstances, were cultivated in England, were, under opposite circumstances, neglected in France. The great French lords being too powerful to need the people, were unwilling to seek their alliance.³⁰⁰ The result was, that, amid a great variety of forms and names, society was, in reality, only divided into two classes – the upper and the lower, the protectors and the protected. And, looking at the ferocity of the prevailing manners, it is not too much to say, that in France, under the feudal system, every man was either a tyrant or a slave. Indeed, in most instances, the two characters were combined in the same person. For, the practice of subinfeudation, which in our country was actively checked, became in France almost universal.³⁰¹ By this, the great lords having granted lands on condition of fealty and other services to certain persons, these last subgranted them; that is, made them over on similar conditions to other persons, who had likewise the power of bestowing them on a fourth party, and so on in an

³⁰⁰ See some good remarks in *Mably, Observations sur l'Hist. de France*, vol. iii. pp. 114, 115.

³⁰¹ *Hallam's Middle Ages*, vol. i. p. 111.

endless series;³⁰² thus forming a long chain of dependence, and, as it were, organizing submission into a system.³⁰³ In England, on the other hand, such arrangements were so unsuited to the general state of affairs, that it is doubtful if they were ever carried on to any extent; and, at all events, it is certain that, in the reign of Edward I., they were finally stopped by the statute known to lawyers as *Quia emptores*.³⁰⁴

Thus early was there a great social divergence between France and England. The consequences of this were still more obvious when, in the fourteenth century, the feudal system rapidly decayed in both countries. For in England, the principle of protection being feeble, men were in some degree accustomed to self-government; and they were able to hold fast by those great institutions which would have been ill adapted to the more obedient habits of the French people. Our municipal privileges, the rights of our yeomanry, and the security of our copyholders, were, from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, the three most important guarantees for the liberties of England.³⁰⁵ In

³⁰² 'Originally there was no limit to subinfeudation.' *Brougham's Polit. Philos.* vol. i. p. 279.

³⁰³ A living French historian boasts that, in his own country, 'toute la société féodale formait ainsi une échelle de clientèle et de patronage.' *Cassagnac, Révolution Française*, vol. i. p. 459.

³⁰⁴ This is 18 Edw. I. c. 1; respecting which, see *Blackstone's Comment.* vol. ii. p. 91, vol. iv. p. 425; *Reeve's Hist. of English Law*, vol. ii. p. 223; *Dalrymple's Hist. of Feudal Property*, pp. 102, 243, 340.

³⁰⁵ The history of the decay of that once most important class, the English yeomanry, is an interesting subject, and one for which I have collected considerable materials; at

France such guarantees were impossible. The real division being between those who were noble, and those who were not noble, no room was left for the establishment of intervening classes; but all were compelled to fall into one of these two great ranks.³⁰⁶ The French have never had any thing answering to our yeomanry; nor were copyholders recognized by their laws. And, although they attempted to introduce into their country municipal institutions,

present, I will only say, that its decline was first distinctly perceptible in the latter half of the seventeenth century, and was consummated by the rapidly-increasing power of the commercial and manufacturing classes early in the eighteenth century. After losing their influence, their numbers naturally diminished, and they made way for other bodies of men, whose habits of mind were less prejudiced, and therefore better suited to that new state which society assumed in the last age. I mention this, because some writers regret the almost total destruction of the yeoman freeholders; overlooking the fact, that they are disappearing, not in consequence of any violent revolution or stretch of arbitrary power, but simply by the general march of affairs; society doing away with what it no longer requires. Compare *Kay's Social Condition of the People*, vol. i. pp. 43, 602, with a letter from Wordsworth in *Bunbury's Correspond. of Hanmer*, p. 440; a note in *Mill's Polit. Econ.* vol. i. pp. 311, 312; another in *Nichols's Lit. Anec.* vol. v. p. 323; and *Sinclair's Correspond.* vol. i. p. 229.

³⁰⁶ This is stated as an admitted fact by French writers living in different periods and holding different opinions; but all agreed as to there being only two divisions: 'comme en France on est toujours ou noble, ou roturier, et qu'il n'y a pas de milieu.' *Mém. de Rivarol*, p. 7. 'La grande distinction des nobles et des roturiers.' *Giraud, Précis de l'Ancien Droit*, p. 10. Indeed, according to the Coutumes, the nobles and roturiers attained their majority at different ages. *Klimrath, Hist. du Droit*, vol. ii. p. 249 (erroneously stated in *Story's Conflict of Laws*, pp. 56, 79, 114). See further respecting this capital distinction, *Mém. de Duplessis Mornay*, vol. ii. p. 230 ('agréable à la noblesse et au peuple'); *Œuvres de Turgot*, vol. viii. pp. 222, 232, 237; *Bunbury's Correspond. of Hanmer*, p. 256; *Mably, Observations*, vol. iii. p. 263; and *Mercier sur Rousseau*, vol. i. p. 38: 'On étoit roturier, vilain, homme de néant, canaille, dès qu'on ne s'appelloit plus marquis, baron, comte, chevalier, etc.'

all such efforts were futile; for, while they copied the forms of liberty, they lacked that bold and sturdy spirit by which alone liberty can be secured. They had, indeed, its image and superscription; but they wanted the sacred fire that warms the image into life. Every thing else they possessed. The show and appliances of freedom were there. Charters were granted to their towns, and privileges conceded to their magistrates. All, however, was useless. For it is not by the wax and parchment of lawyers that the independence of men can be preserved. Such things are the mere externals; they set off liberty to advantage; they are as its dress and paraphernalia, its holiday-suit in times of peace and quiet. But, when the evil days set in, when the invasions of despotism have begun, liberty will be retained, not by those who can show the oldest deeds and the largest charters, but by those who have been most inured to habits of independence, most accustomed to think and act for themselves, and most regardless of that insidious protection which the upper classes have always been so ready to bestow, that, in many countries, they have now left nothing worth the trouble to protect.

And so it was in France. The towns, with few exceptions, fell at the first shock; and the citizens lost those municipal privileges which, not being grafted on the national character, it was found impossible to preserve. In the same way, in our country, power naturally, and by the mere force of the democratic movement, fell into the hands of the House of Commons; whose authority has ever since, notwithstanding occasional checks, continued

to increase at the expense of the more aristocratic parts of the legislature. The only institution answering to this in France was the States-General; which, however, had so little influence, that, in the opinion of native historians, it was hardly to be called an institution at all.³⁰⁷ Indeed, the French were, by this time, so accustomed to the idea of protection, and to the subordination which that idea involves, that they were little inclined to uphold an establishment which, in their constitution, was the sole representative of the popular element. The result was, that, by the fourteenth century, the liberties of Englishmen were secured,³⁰⁸ and, since then, their only concern has been to increase what they have already obtained. But in that same century, in France, the protective spirit assumed a new form; the power of the aristocracy was, in a great measure, succeeded by the power of the crown; and there began that tendency to centralization which, having been pushed still further, first under Louis XIV., and afterwards under Napoleon, has become the

³⁰⁷ 'Les états-généraux sont portés dans la liste de nos institutions. Je ne sais cependant s'il est permis de donner ce nom à des rassemblemens aussi irréguliers.' *Montlosier, Monarchie Française*, vol. i. p. 266. 'En France, les états-généraux, au moment même de leur plus grand éclat, c'est à dire dans le cours du xive siècle, n'ont guère été que des accidents, un pouvoir national et souvent invoqué, mais non un établissement constitutionnel.' *Guizot, Essais*, p. 253. See also *Mably, Observations*, vol. iii. p. 147; and *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xiv. p. 642.

³⁰⁸ This is frankly admitted by one of the most candid and enlightened of all the foreign writers on our history, *Guizot, Essais*, p. 297: 'En 1307, les droits qui devaient enfanter en Angleterre un gouvernement libre étaient définitivement reconnus.'

bane of the French people.³⁰⁹ For by it the feudal ideas of superiority and submission have long survived that barbarous age to which alone they were suited. Indeed, by their transmigration, they seemed to have gained fresh strength. In France, every thing is referred to one common centre, in which all civil functions are absorbed. All improvements of any importance, all schemes for bettering even the material condition of the people must receive the sanction of government; the local authorities not being considered equal to such arduous tasks. In order that inferior magistrates may not abuse their power, no power is conferred upon them. The exercise of independent jurisdiction is almost unknown. Every thing that is done must be done at head quarters.³¹⁰ The government is believed to see every

³⁰⁹ See an account of the policy of Philip the Fair, in *Mably, Observations*, vol. ii. pp. 25–44; in *Boulainvilliers, Ancien Gouvernement*, vol. i. pp. 292, 314, vol. ii. pp. 37, 38; and in *Guizot, Civilisation en France*, vol. iv. pp. 170–192. M. Guizot says, perhaps too strongly, that his reign was ‘la métamorphose de la royauté en despotisme.’ On the connexion of this with the centralizing movement, see *Tocqueville's Démocratie*, vol. i. p. 307: ‘Le goût de la centralisation et la manie réglementaire remontent, en France à l’époque où les légistes sont entrés dans le gouvernement; ce qui nous reporte au temps de Philippe le Bel.’ Tennemann also notices, that in his reign the ‘Rechtstheorie’ began to exercise influence; but this learned writer takes a purely metaphysical view, and has therefore misunderstood the more general social tendency. *Gesch. der Philos.* vol. viii. p. 823.

³¹⁰ As several writers on law notice this system with a lenient eye *Origines du Droit Français*, in *Œuvres de Michelet*, vol. ii. p. 321; and *Eschbach, Etude du Droit*, p. 129: ‘le système énergique de la centralisation’, it may be well to state how it actually works. Mr. Bulwer, writing twenty years ago, says: ‘Not only cannot a commune determine its own expenses without the consent of the minister or one of his deputed functionaries, it cannot even erect a building, the cost of which shall have been

thing, know every thing, and provide for every thing. To enforce this monstrous monopoly there has been contrived a machinery well worthy of the design. The entire country is covered by an immense array of officials,³¹¹ who, in the regularity of their hierarchy, and in the order of their descending series, form an admirable emblem of that feudal principle, which ceasing to be territorial, has now become personal. In fact, the whole business of the state is conducted on the supposition that no man either knows his own interest, or is fit to take care of himself. So paternal are the feelings of government, so eager for the welfare of its subjects, that it has drawn within its jurisdiction the most rare, as well as the most ordinary, actions of life. In order that the French may not make imprudent wills, it has limited the right

sanctioned, without the plan being adopted by a board of public works attached to the central authority, and having the supervision and direction of every public building throughout the Kingdom.' *Bulwer's Monarchy of the Middle Classes*, 1836, vol. ii. p. 262. M. Tocqueville, writing in the present year (1856), says, 'Sous l'ancien régime, comme de nos jours, il n'y avait ville, bourg, village, ni si petit hameau en France, hôpital, fabrique, couvent ni collège, qui pût avoir une volonté indépendante dans ses affaires particulières, ni administrer à sa volonté ses propres biens. Alors, comme aujourd'hui, l'administration tenait donc tous les Français en tutelle, et si l'insolence du mot ne s'était pas encore produite, on avait du moins déjà la chose.' *Tocqueville, l'Ancien Régime*, 1856, pp. 79, 80.

³¹¹ The number of civil functionaries in France, who are paid by the government to trouble the people, passes all belief, being estimated, at different periods during the present century, at from 138,000 to upwards of 800,000. *Tocqueville, de la Démocratie*, vol. i. p. 220; *Alison's Europe*, vol. xiv. pp. 127, 140; *Kay's Condition of the People*, vol. i. p. 272; *Laing's Notes*, 2d series, p. 185. Mr. Laing, writing in 1850, says: 'In France, at the expulsion of Louis Philippe, the civil functionaries were stated to amount to 807,030 individuals.'

of bequest; and, for fear that they should bequeath their property wrongly, it prevents them from bequeathing the greater part of it at all. In order that society may be protected by its police, it has directed that no one shall travel without a passport. And when men are actually travelling, they are met at every turn by the same interfering spirit, which, under pretence of protecting their persons, shackles their liberty. Into another matter, far more serious, the French have carried the same principle. Such is their anxiety to protect society against criminals, that, when an offender is placed at the bar of one of their courts, there is exhibited a spectacle which is no idle boast to say we, in England, could not tolerate for a single hour. There is seen a great public magistrate, by whom the prisoner is about to be tried, examining him in order to ascertain his supposed guilt, re-examining him, cross-examining him, performing the duties, not of a judge, but of a prosecutor, and bringing to bear against the unhappy man all the authority of his judicial position, all his professional subtlety, all his experience, all the dexterity of his practised understanding. This is, perhaps, the most alarming of the many instances in which the tendencies of the French intellect are shown; because it supplies a machinery ready for the purposes of absolute power; because it brings the administration of justice into disrepute, by associating with it an idea of unfairness; and because it injures that calm and equable temper, which it is impossible fully to maintain under a system that makes a magistrate an advocate, and turns the judge into a partizan. But

this, mischievous as it is, only forms part of a far larger scheme. For, to the method by which criminals are discovered, there is added an analogous method, by which crime is prevented. With this view, the people, even in their ordinary amusements, are watched and carefully superintended. Lest they should harm each other by some sudden indiscretion, precautions are taken similar to those with which a father might surround his children. In their fairs, at their theatres, their concerts, and their other places of public resort, there are always present soldiers, who are sent to see that no mischief is done, that there is no unnecessary crowding, that no one uses harsh language, that no one quarrels with his neighbour. Nor does the vigilance of the government stop there. Even the education of children is brought under the control of the state, instead of being regulated by the judgment of masters or parents.³¹² And the whole plan is executed with such energy, that, as the French while men are never let alone, just so while children they are never left alone.³¹³ At the same time, it being reasonably supposed that the adults thus kept in pupilage

³¹² 'The government in France possesses control over all the education of the country, with the exception of the colleges for the education of the clergy, which are termed seminaries, and their subordinate institutions.' *Report on the State of Superior Education in France in 1843*, in *Journal of Statist. Soc.* vol. vi. p. 304. On the steps taken during the power of Napoleon, see *Alison's Europe*, vol. viii. p. 203: 'Nearly the whole education of the empire was brought effectually under the direction and appointment of government.'

³¹³ Much attention is paid to the *surveillance* of pupils; it being a fundamental principle of French education, that children should never be left alone. *Report on General Education in France in 1842*, in *Journal of Statist. Soc.* vol. v. p. 20.

cannot be proper judges of their own food, the government has provided for this also. Its prying eye follows the butcher to the shambles, and the baker to the oven. By its paternal hand, meat is examined lest it should be bad, and bread is weighed lest it should be light. In short, without multiplying instances, with which most readers must be familiar, it is enough to say that in France, as in every country where the protective principle is active, the government has established a monopoly of the worst kind; a monopoly which comes home to the business and bosoms of men, follows them in their daily avocations, troubles them with its petty, meddling spirit, and, what is worse than all, diminishes their responsibility to themselves; thus depriving them of what is the only real education that most minds receive, – the constant necessity of providing for future contingencies, and the habit of grappling with the difficulties of life.

The consequence of all this has been, that the French, though a great and splendid people, – a people full of mettle, high-spirited, abounding in knowledge, and perhaps less oppressed by superstition than any other in Europe, – have always been found unfit to exercise political power. Even when they have possessed it, they have never been able to combine permanence with liberty. One of these two elements has always been wanting. They have had free governments, which have not been stable. They have had stable governments, which have not been free. Owing to their fearless temper, they have rebelled, and no doubt

will continue to rebel, against so evil a condition.³¹⁴ But it does not need the tongue of a prophet to tell that, for at least some generations, all such efforts must be unsuccessful. For men can never be free, unless they are educated to freedom. And this is not the education which is to be found in schools, or gained from books; but it is that which consists in self-discipline, in self-reliance, and in self-government. These, in England, are matters of hereditary descent – traditional habits, which we imbibe in our youth, and which regulate us in the conduct of life. The old associations of the French all point in another direction. At the slightest difficulty, they call on the government for support. What with us is competition, with them is monopoly. That which we effect by private companies, they effect by public boards. They cannot cut a canal, or lay down a railroad, without appealing to the government for aid. With them, the people look to the rulers; with us, the rulers look to the people. With them, the executive is the centre from which society radiates;³¹⁵ with

³¹⁴ A distinguished French author says: 'La France souffre du mal du siècle; elle en est plus malade qu'aucun autre pays; ce mal c'est la haine de l'autorité.' *Custine, Russie*, vol. ii. p. 136. Compare, *Rey, Science Sociale*, vol. ii. p. 86 note.

³¹⁵ It is to the activity of this protective and centralizing spirit that we must ascribe, what a very great authority noticed thirty years ago, as 'le défaut de spontanéité, qui caractérise les institutions de la France moderne.' *Meyer, Instit. Judic.* vol. iv. p. 536. It is also this which, in literature and in science, makes them favour the establishment of academies; and it is probably to the same principle that their jurists owe their love of codification. All these are manifestations of an unwillingness to rely on the general march of affairs, and show an undue contempt for the unaided conclusions of private men.

us, society is the instigator, and the executive the organ. The difference in the result has corresponded with the difference in the process. We have been made fit for political power, by the long exercise of civil rights; they, neglecting the exercise, think they can at once begin with the power. We have always shown a determination to uphold our liberties, and, when the times are fitting, to increase them; and this we have done with a decency and a gravity natural to men to whom such subjects have long been familiar. But the French, always treated as children, are, in political matters, children still. And as they have handled the most weighty concerns in that gay and volatile spirit which adorns their lighter literature, it is no wonder that they have failed in matters where the first condition of success is, that men should have been long accustomed to rely upon their own energies, and that before they try their skill in a political struggle, their resources should have been sharpened by that preliminary discipline, which a contest with the difficulties of civil life can never fail to impart.

These are among the considerations by which we must be guided, in estimating the probable destinies of the great countries of Europe. But what we are now rather concerned with is, to notice how the opposite tendencies of France and England long continued to be displayed in the condition and treatment of their aristocracy; and how from this there naturally followed some striking differences between the war conducted by the Fronde, and that waged by the Long Parliament.

When, in the fourteenth century, the authority of the French kings began rapidly to increase, the political influence of the nobility was, of course, correspondingly diminished. What, however, proves the extent to which their power had taken root, is the undoubted fact, that, notwithstanding this to them unfavourable circumstance, the people were never able to emancipate themselves from their control.³¹⁶ The relation the nobles bore to the throne became entirely changed; that which they bore to the people remained almost the same. In England, slavery, or villenage, as it is mildly termed, quickly diminished, and was extinct by the end of the sixteenth century.³¹⁷ In France,

³¹⁶ Mably (*Observations*, vol. iii. pp. 154, 155, 352–362) has collected some striking evidence of the tyranny of the French nobles in the sixteenth century; and as to the wanton cruelty with which they exercised their power in the seventeenth century, see *Des Réaux, Historiettes*, vol. vii. p. 155, vol. viii. p. 79, vol. ix. pp. 40, 61, 62, vol. x. pp. 255–257. In the eighteenth century, matters were somewhat better; but still the subordination was excessive, and the people were poor, ill-treated, and miserable. Compare *Œuvres de Turgot*, vol. iv. p. 139; *Letter from the Earl of Cork*, dated Lyons, 1754, in *Burton's Diary*, vol. iv. p. 80; the statement of Fox, in *Parl. Hist.* vol. xxxi. p. 406; *Jefferson's Correspond.* vol. ii. p. 45; and *Smith's Tour on the Continent*, edit. 1793, vol. iii. pp. 201, 202.

³¹⁷ Mr. Eccleston (*English Antiq.* p. 138) says, that in 1450 'villenage had almost passed away;' and according to Mr. Thornton (*Over-Population*, p. 182), 'Sir Thomas Smith, who wrote about the year 1550, declares that he had never met with any personal or domestic slaves; and that the villains, or predial slaves, still to be found, were so few, as to be scarcely worth mentioning.' Mr. Hallam can find no 'unequivocal testimony to the existence of villenage' later than 1574. *Middle Ages*, vol. ii. p. 312; see, to the same effect, *Barrington on the Statutes*, pp. 308, 309. If, however, my memory does not deceive me, I have met with evidence of it in the reign of James I., but I cannot recall the passage.

it lingered on two hundred years later, and was only destroyed in that great Revolution by which the possessors of ill-gotten power were called to so sharp an account.³¹⁸ Thus, too, until the last seventy years, the nobles were in France exempt from those onerous taxes which oppressed the people. The *taille* and *corvée* were heavy and grievous exactions, but they fell solely on men of ignoble birth,³¹⁹ for the French aristocracy, being a high and chivalrous race, would have deemed it an insult to their illustrious descent, if they had been taxed to the same amount

³¹⁸ M. Cassagnac (*Causes de la Révolution*, vol. iii. p. 11) says: 'Chose surprenante, il y avait encore, au 4 août 1789, un million cinq cent mille serfs de corps;' and M. Giraud (*Précis de l'Ancien Droit*, Paris, 1852, p. 3), 'jusqu'à la révolution une division fondamentale partageait les personnes en personnes libres et personnes sujettes à condition servile.' A few years before the Revolution, this shameful distinction was abolished by Louis XVI. in his own domains. Compare *Eschbach, Etude du Droit*, pp. 271, 272, with *Du Mesnil, Mém. sur le Prince le Brun*, p. 94. I notice this particularly, because M. Monteil, a learned and generally accurate writer, supposes that the abolition took place earlier than it really did. *Hist. des divers Etats*, vol. vi. p. 101.

³¹⁹ *Cassagnac, de la Révolution*, vol. i. pp. 122, 173; *Giraud, Ancien Droit*, p. 11; *Soulavie, Mém. de Louis XVI*, vol. vi. p. 156; *Mém. au Roi sur les Municipalités*, in *Œuvres de Turgot*, vol. vii. p. 423; *Mém. de Genlis*, vol. i. p. 200. Further information respecting the amount and nature of these vexatious impositions will be found in *De Thou, Hist. Univ.* vol. xiii. p. 24, vol. xiv. p. 118; *Saint-Aulaire, Hist. de la Fronde*, vol. i. p. 125; *Tocqueville, Ancien Régime*, pp. 135, 191, 420, 440; *Sully, Œconomies Royales*, vol. ii. p. 412, vol. iii. p. 226, vol. iv. p. 199, vol. v. pp. 339, 410, vol. vi. p. 94; *Relat. des Ambassad. Vénit.* vol. i. p. 96; *Mably, Observations*, vol. iii. pp. 355, 356; *Boulainvilliers, Ancien Gouvernement*, vol. iii. p. 109; *Le Vassor, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. ii. p. 29; *Mém. d'Omer Talon*, vol. ii. pp. 103, 369; *Mém. de Montglat*, vol. i. p. 82; *Tocqueville, Règne de Louis XV*, vol. i. pp. 87, 332; *Œuvres de Turgot*, vol. i. p. 372, vol. iv. pp. 58, 59, 74, 75, 242, 278, vol. v. pp. 226, 242, vol. vi. p. 144, vol. viii. pp. 152, 280.

as those whom they despised as their inferiors.³²⁰ Indeed, every thing tended to nurture this general contempt. Every thing was contrived to humble one class, and exalt the other. For the nobles there were reserved the best appointments in the church, and also the most important military posts.³²¹ The privilege of entering the army as officers was confined to them;³²² and they alone possessed a prescriptive right to belong to the cavalry.³²³ At the same time, and to avoid the least chance of confusion, an equal vigilance was displayed in the most trifling matters, and care was taken to prevent any similarity, even in the amusements of the two classes. To such a pitch was this brought, that, in many parts

³²⁰ So deeply rooted were these feelings, that, even in 1789, the very year the Revolution broke out, it was deemed a great concession that the nobles 'will consent, indeed, to equal taxation.' See a letter from Jefferson to Jay, dated Paris, May 9th, 1789, in *Jefferson's Corresp.* vol. ii. pp. 462, 463. Compare *Mercier sur Rousseau*, vol. i. p. 136.

³²¹ 'Les nobles, qui avaient le privilège exclusif des grandes dignités et des gros bénéfices.' *Mém. de Rivarol*, p. 97: see also *Mém. de Bouillé*, vol. i. p. 56; *Lemontey, Etablissement Monarchique*, p. 337; *Daniel, Hist. de la Milice Française*, vol. ii. p. 556; *Campan, Mém. sur Marie-Antoinette*, vol. i. pp. 238, 239.

³²² 'L'ancien régime n'avait admis que des nobles pour officiers.' *Mém. de Roland*, vol. i. p. 398. Ségur mentions that, early in the reign of Louis XVI., 'les nobles seuls avaient le droit d'entrer au service comme sous-lieutenans.' *Mém. de Ségur*, vol. i. p. 65. Compare pp. 117, 265–271, with *Mém. de Genlis*, vol. iii. p. 74, and *De Staël, Consid. sur la Rév.* vol. i. p. 123.

³²³ Thus, De Thou says of Henry III., 'il remet sous l'ancien pied la cavalerie ordinaire, qui n'étoit composée que de la noblesse.' *Hist. Univ.* vol. ix. pp. 202, 203; and see vol. x. pp. 504, 505, vol. xiii. p. 22; and an imperfect statement of the same fact in *Boullier, Hist. des divers Corps de la Maison Militaire des Rois de France*, Paris, 1818, p. 58, a superficial work on an uninteresting subject.

of France, the right of having an aviary or a dovecote depended entirely on a man's rank; and no Frenchman, whatever his wealth might be, could keep pigeons, unless he were a noble; it being considered that these recreations were too elevated for persons of plebeian origin.³²⁴

Circumstances like these are valuable, as evidence of the state of society to which they belong; and their importance will become peculiarly obvious, when we compare them with the opposite condition of England.

For in England, neither these nor any similar distinctions have ever been known. The spirit of which our yeomanry, copyholders, and free burgesses were the representatives, proved far too strong for those protective and monopolizing principles of which the aristocracy are the guardians in politics, and the clergy in religion. And it is to the successful opposition made by these feelings of individual independence that we owe our two greatest national acts – our Reformation in the sixteenth, and our Rebellion in the seventeenth century. Before, however, tracing the steps taken in these matters, there is one other point of view to which I wish to call attention, as a further illustration of the early and radical difference between France and England.

In the eleventh century there arose the celebrated institution

³²⁴ M. Tocqueville (*L'Ancien Régime*, p. 448) mentions, among other regulations still in force late in the eighteenth century, that 'en Dauphiné, en Bretagne, en Normandie, il est prohibé à tout roturier d'avoir des colombiers, fuies et volière; il n'y a que les nobles qui puissent avoir des pigeons.'

of chivalry,³²⁵ which was to manners what feudalism was to politics. This connexion is clear, not only from the testimony of contemporaries, but also from two general considerations. In the first place, chivalry was so highly aristocratic, that no one could even receive knighthood unless he were of noble birth;³²⁶ and the preliminary education which was held to be necessary was carried on either in schools appointed by the nobles, or else in their own baronial castles.³²⁷ In the second place, it was essentially a protective, and not at all a reforming institution. It was contrived with a view to remedy certain oppressions as they successively arose; opposed in this respect to the reforming spirit, which, being remedial rather than palliative, strikes at the root of an evil by humbling the class from which the evil proceeds, passing over individual cases in order to direct its attention to general causes. But chivalry, so far from doing this,

³²⁵ 'Dès la fin du onzième siècle, à l'époque même où commencèrent les croisades, on trouve la chevalerie établie.' Koch, *Tab. des Révolutions*, vol. i. p. 143; see also *Sainte-Palaye, Mém. sur la Chevalerie*, vol. i. pp. 42, 68. M. Guizot (*Civilis. en France*, vol. iii. pp. 349–354) has attempted to trace it back to an earlier period; but he appears to have failed, though of course its germs may be easily found. According to some writers it originated in northern Europe; according to others in Arabia! *Mallet's Northern Antiquities*, p. 202; *Journal of Asiat. Soc.* vol. ii. p. 11.

³²⁶ 'L'ordre de chevalerie n'étoit accordé qu'aux hommes d'un sang noble.' *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. iv. p. 204. Compare *Daniel, Hist. de la Milice*, vol. i. p. 97, and *Mills' Hist. of Chivalry*, vol. i. p. 20.

³²⁷ 'In some places there were schools appointed by the nobles of the country, but most frequently their own castles served.' *Mills' Hist. of Chivalry*, vol. i. p. 31; and see *Sainte-Palaye, Mém. sur l'Anc. Chevalerie*, vol. i. pp. 30, 56, 57, on this education.

was in fact a fusion of the aristocratic and the ecclesiastical forms of the protective spirit.³²⁸ For, by introducing among the nobles the principle of knighthood, which, being personal, could never be bequeathed, it presented a point at which the ecclesiastical doctrine of celibacy could coalesce with the aristocratic doctrine of hereditary descent.³²⁹ Out of this coalition sprung results of great moment. It is to this that Europe owes those orders, half aristocratic half religious,³³⁰ the Knights Templars, the Knights of St. James, the Knights of St. John, the Knights of St. Michael: establishments which inflicted the greatest evils on society; and whose members, combining analogous vices, enlivened the superstition of monks with the debauchery of

³²⁸ This combination of knighthood and religious rites is often ascribed to the crusades; but there is good evidence that it took place a little earlier, and must be referred to the latter half of the eleventh century. Compare *Mills' Hist. of Chivalry*, vol. i. pp. 10, 11; *Daniel, Hist. de la Milice*, vol. i. pp. 101, 102, 108; *Boulainvilliers, Ancien Gouv.* vol. i. p. 326. Sainte-Palaye (*Mém. sur la Chevalerie*, vol. i. pp. 119–123), who has collected some illustrations of the relation between chivalry and the church, says, p. 119, 'enfin la chevalerie étoit regardée comme une ordination, un sacerdoce.' The superior clergy possessed the right of conferring knighthood, and William Rufus was actually knighted by Archbishop Lanfranc: 'Archiepiscopus Lanfrancus, eo quòd eum nutrierat, et militem fecerat.' *Will. Malmes.* lib. iv., in *Scriptores post Bedam*, p. 67. Compare *Fosbroke's British Monachism*, 1843, p. 101, on knighting by abbots.

³²⁹ The influence of this on the nobles is rather exaggerated by Mr. Mills; who, on the other hand, has not noticed how the unhereditary element was favourable to the ecclesiastical spirit. *Mills' Hist. of Chivalry*, vol. i. pp. 15, 389, vol. ii. p. 169; a work interesting as an assemblage of facts, but almost useless as a philosophic estimate.

³³⁰ 'In their origin all the military orders, and most of the religious ones, were entirely aristocratic.' *Mills' Hist. of Chivalry*, vol. i. p. 336.

soldiers. As a natural consequence, an immense number of noble knights were solemnly pledged to 'defend the church;' an ominous expression, the meaning of which is too well known to the readers of ecclesiastical history.³³¹ Thus it was that chivalry, uniting the hostile principles of celibacy and noble birth, became the incarnation of the spirit of the two classes to which those principles belonged. Whatever benefit, therefore, this institution may have conferred upon manners,³³² there can be no doubt that it actively contributed to keep men in a state of pupilage, and stopped the march of society by prolonging the term of its

³³¹ *Mills' Hist. of Chivalry*, vol. i. pp. 148, 338. About the year 1127, St. Bernard wrote a discourse in favour of the Knights Templars, in which 'he extols this order as a combination of monasticism and knighthood... He describes the design of it as being to give the military order and knighthood a serious Christian direction, and to convert war into something that God might approve.' *Neander's Hist. of the Church*, vol. vii. p. 358. To this may be added, that, early in the thirteenth century, a chivalric association was formed, and afterwards merged in the Dominican order, called the Militia of Christ: 'un nouvel ordre de chevalerie destiné à poursuivre les hérétiques, sur le modèle de celui des Templiers, et sous le nom de Milice de Christ.' *Llorente Hist. de l'Inquisition*, vol. i. pp. 52, 133, 203.

³³² Several writers ascribe to chivalry the merit of softening manners, and of increasing the influence of women. *Sainte-Palaye, Mém. sur la Chevalerie*, vol. i. pp. 220–223, 282, 284, vol. iii. pp. vi. vii. 159–161; *Helvétius de l'Esprit*, vol. ii. pp. 50, 51; *Schlegel's Lectures*, vol. i. p. 209. That there was such a tendency is, I think, indisputable; but it has been greatly exaggerated; and an author of considerable reading on these subjects says, 'The rigid treatment shown to prisoners of war in ancient times strongly marks the ferocity and uncultivated manners of our ancestors, and that even to ladies of high rank; notwithstanding the homage said to have been paid to the fair sex in those days of chivalry.' *Grose's Military Antiquities*, vol. ii. p. 114. Compare *Manning on the Law of Nations*, 1839, pp. 145, 146.

infancy.³³³

On this account, it is evident that, whether we look at the immediate or at the remote tendency of chivalry, its strength and duration become a measure of the predominance of the protective spirit. If, with this view, we compare France and England, we shall find fresh proof of the early divergence of those countries. Tournaments, the first open expression of chivalry, are of French origin.³³⁴ The greatest and, indeed, the only two great describers of chivalry are Joinville and Froissart, both of whom were Frenchmen. Bayard, that famous chevalier, who is always considered as the last representative of chivalry, was a Frenchman, and was killed when fighting for Francis I. Nor was it until nearly forty years after his death that tournaments were finally abolished in France, the last one having been held in 1560.³³⁵

³³³ Mr. Hallam (*Middle Ages*, vol. ii. p. 464) says, 'A third reproach may be made to the character of knighthood, that it widened the separation between the different classes of society, and confirmed that aristocratical spirit of high birth, by which the large mass of mankind were kept in unjust degradation.'

³³⁴ *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. iv. pp. 370, 371, 377; *Turner's Hist. of England*, vol. iv. p. 478; *Foncemagne, De l'Origine des Armoiries*, in *Mém. de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, vol. xx. p. 580. Koch also says (*Tableau des Révolutions*, vol. i. p. 139), 'c'est de la France que l'usage des tournois se répandit chez les autres nations de l'Europe.' They were first introduced into England in the reign of Stephen. *Lingard's England*, vol. ii. p. 27.

³³⁵ Mr. Hallam (*Middle Ages*, vol. ii. p. 470) says they were 'entirely discontinued in France' in consequence of the death of Henry II.; but according to *Mills' Hist. of Chivalry*, vol. ii. p. 226, they lasted the next year; when another fatal accident occurred, and 'tournaments ceased for ever.' Compare *Sainte-Palaye sur la Chevalerie*, vol. ii.

But in England, the protective spirit being much less active than in France, we should expect to find that chivalry, as its offspring, had less influence. And such was really the case. The honours that were paid to knights, and the social distinctions by which they were separated from the other classes, were never so great in our country as in France.³³⁶ As men became more free, the little respect they had for such matters still further diminished. In the thirteenth century, and indeed in the very reign in which burgesses were first returned to parliament, the leading symbol of chivalry fell into such disrepute, that a law was passed obliging certain persons to accept that rank of knighthood which in other nations was one of the highest objects of ambition.³³⁷ In the fourteenth century, this was followed

pp. 39, 40.

³³⁶ Mr. Hallam (*Middle Ages*, vol. ii. p. 467) observes, that the knight, as compared with other classes, 'was addressed by titles of more respect. *There was not, however, so much distinction in England as in France.*' The great honour paid to knights in France is noticed by Daniel (*Milice Française*, vol. i. pp. 128, 129) and Herder (*Ideen zur Geschichte*, vol. iv. pp. 226, 267) says, that in France chivalry flourished more than in any other country. The same remark is made by Sismondi (*Hist. des Français*, vol. iv. p. 198).

³³⁷ The *Statutum de Militibus*, in 1307, was perhaps the first recognition of this. Compare *Blackstone's Comment.* vol. ii. p. 69; *Barrington on the Statutes*, pp. 192, 193. But we have positive evidence that compulsory knighthood existed in the reign of Henry III.; or at least that those who refused it were obliged to pay a fine. See *Hallam's Const. Hist.* vol. i. p. 421, and *Lyttleton's Hist. of Henry II.* vol. ii. pp. 238, 239, 2nd edit. 4to. 1767. Lord Lyttleton, evidently puzzled, says, 'Indeed it seems a deviation from the original principle of this institution. For one cannot but think it a very great inconsistency, that a dignity, which was deemed an accession of honour to kings themselves, should be forced upon any.'

by another blow, which deprived knighthood of its exclusively military character; the custom having grown up in the reign of Edward III. of conferring it on the judges in the courts of law, thus turning a warlike title into a civil honour.³³⁸ Finally, before the end of the fifteenth century, the spirit of chivalry, in France still at its height, was in our country extinct, and this mischievous institution had become a subject for ridicule even among the people themselves.³³⁹ To these circumstances we may add two others, which seem worthy of observation. The first is, that the French, notwithstanding their many admirable qualities, have always been more remarkable for personal vanity than the English;³⁴⁰ a peculiarity partly referable to those chivalric

³³⁸ In *Mills' Hist. of Chivalry*, vol. ii. p. 154, it is said, that 'the judges of the courts of law' were first knighted in the reign of Edward III.

³³⁹ Mr. Mills (*Hist. of Chivalry*, vol. ii. pp. 99, 100) has printed a curious extract from a lamentation over the destruction of chivalry, written in the reign of Edward IV.; but he has overlooked a still more singular instance. This is a popular ballad, written in the middle of the fifteenth century, and called the Turnament of Tottenham, in which the follies of chivalry are admirably ridiculed. See *Warton's Hist. of English Poetry*, edit. 1840, vol. iii. pp. 98–101; and *Percy's Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, edit. 1845, pp. 92–95. According to Turner (*Hist. of England*, vol. vi. p. 363), 'the ancient books of chivalry were laid aside' about the reign of Henry VI.

³⁴⁰ This is not a mere popular opinion, but rests upon a large amount of evidence, supplied by competent and impartial observers. Addison, who was a lenient as well as an able judge, and who had lived much among the French, calls them 'the vainest nation in the world.' *Letter to Bishop Hough*, in *Aikin's Life of Addison*, vol. i. p. 90. Napoleon says, 'vanity is the ruling principle of the French.' *Alison's Hist. of Europe*, vol. vi. p. 25. Dumont (*Souvenirs sur Mirabeau*, p. 111) declares, that 'le trait le plus dominant dans le caractère français, c'est l'amour propre;' and Ségur (*Souvenirs*, vol. i. pp. 73, 74), 'car en France l'amour propre, ou, si on le veut, la vanité, est de toutes les

traditions which even their occasional republics have been unable to destroy, and which makes them attach undue importance to external distinctions, by which I mean, not only dress and manners, but also medals, ribbons, stars, crosses, and the like, which we, a prouder people, have never held in such high estimation. The other circumstance is, that duelling has from the beginning been more popular in France than in England; and as this is a custom which we owe to chivalry, the difference in this respect between the two countries supplies another link in that long chain of evidence by which we must estimate their national tendencies.³⁴¹

passions la plus irritable.' It is moreover stated, that phrenological observations prove that the French are vainer than the English. *Combe's Elements of Phrenology*, 6th edit. Edinb. 1845, p. 90; and a partial recognition of the same fact in *Broussais, Cours de Phrénologie*, p. 297. For other instances of writers who have noticed the vanity of the French, see *Tocqueville, l'Ancien Régime*, p. 148; *Barante, Lit. Franç. au XVIIIe. Siècle*, p. 80; *Mém. de Brissot*, vol. i. p. 272; *Mézéray, Hist. de France*, vol. ii. p. 933; *Lemontey, Etablissement Monarchique*, p. 418; *Voltaire, Lettres inédites*, vol. ii. p. 282; *Tocqueville, Règne de Louis XV*, vol. ii. p. 358; *De Staël sur la Révolution*, vol. i. p. 260, vol. ii. p. 258.

³⁴¹ The relation between chivalry and duelling has been noticed by several writers; and in France, where the chivalric spirit was not completely destroyed until the Revolution, we find occasional traces of this connexion even in the reign of Louis XVI. See, for instance, in *Mém. de Lafayette*, vol. i. p. 86, a curious letter in regard to chivalry and duelling in 1778. In England there is, I believe, no evidence of even a single private duel being fought earlier than the sixteenth century, and there were not many till the latter half of Elizabeth's reign; but in France the custom arose early in the fifteenth century, and in the sixteenth it became usual for the seconds to fight as well as the principals. Compare *Montlosier, Monarc. Franç.* vol. ii. p. 436, with *Monteil, Hist. des divers Etats*, vol. vi. p. 48. From that time the love of the French for duelling became quite a passion until the end of the eighteenth century, when the Revolution, or rather

The old associations, of which these facts are but the external expression, now continued to act with increasing vigour. In France, the protective spirit, carried into religion, was strong enough to resist the Reformation, and preserve to the clergy the forms, at least, of their ancient supremacy. In England, the pride of men, and their habits of self-reliance, enabled them to mature into a system what is called the right of private judgment, by which some of the most cherished traditions were eradicated; and this, as we have already seen, being quickly succeeded, first by scepticism, and then by toleration, prepared the way for that subordination of the church to the state, for which we are pre-eminent, and without a rival, among the nations of Europe. The very same tendency, acting in politics, displayed

the circumstances which led to the Revolution, caused its comparative cessation. Some idea may be formed of the enormous extent of this practice formerly in France, by comparing the following passages, which I have the more pleasure in bringing together, as no one has written even a tolerable history of duelling, notwithstanding the great part it once played in European society. *De Thou, Hist. Univ.* vol. ix. pp. 592, 593, vol. xv. p. 57; *Daniel, Milice Française*, vol. ii. p. 582; *Sully, Œconomies*, vol. i. p. 301, vol. iii. p. 406, vol. vi. p. 122, vol. viii. p. 41, vol. ix. p. 408; *Carew's State of France under Henry IV.*, in *Birch's Historical Negotiations*, p. 467; *Ben Jonson's Works*, edit. Gifford, vol. vi. p. 69; *Dulaure, Hist. de Paris* (1825 3rd edit.), vol. iv. p. 567, vol. v. pp. 300, 301; *Le Clerc, Bibliothèque Univ.* vol. xx. p. 242; *Lettres de Patin*, vol. iii. p. 536; *Capecigüe, Hist. de la Réforme*, vol. viii. p. 98; *Capecigüe's Richelieu*, vol. i. p. 63; *Des Réaux, Historiettes*, vol. x. p. 13; *Mém. de Genlis*, vol. ii. p. 191, vol. vii. p. 215, vol. ix. p. 351; *Mem. of the Baroness d'Oberkirch*, vol. i. p. 71, edit. Lond. 1852; *Lettres inédites d'Aguesseau*, vol. i. p. 211; *Lettres de Duffeffand à Walpole*, vol. iii. p. 249, vol. iv. pp. 27, 28, 152; *Boullier, Maison Militaire des Rois de France*, pp. 87, 88; *Biog. Univ.* vol. v. pp. 402, 403, vol. xxiii. p. 411, vol. xliv. pp. 127, 401, vol. xlviii. p. 522, vol. xlix. p. 130.

analogous results. Our ancestors found no difficulty in humbling the nobles, and reducing them to comparative insignificance. The wars of the Roses, by breaking up the leading families into two hostile factions, aided this movement;³⁴² and, after the reign of Edward IV., there is no instance of any Englishman, even of the highest rank, venturing to carry on those private wars, by which, in other countries, the great lords still disturbed the peace of society.³⁴³ When the civil contests subsided, the same spirit displayed itself in the policy of Henry VII. and Henry VIII. For, those princes, despots as they were, mainly oppressed the highest classes; and even Henry VIII., notwithstanding his barbarous cruelties, was loved by the people, to whom his reign was, on the whole, decidedly beneficial. Then there came the Reformation; which, being an uprising of the human mind, was essentially a rebellious movement, and thus increasing the insubordination of men, sowed, in the sixteenth century, the seeds of those great political revolutions which, in the seventeenth century, broke out in nearly every part of Europe. The connexion between these two revolutionary epochs is a subject full of interest; but, for the purpose of the present chapter, it will be sufficient to notice such events, during the latter half of the sixteenth century, as explain

³⁴² On the effect of the wars of the Roses upon the nobles, compare *Hallam's Const. Hist.* vol. i. p. 10; *Lingard's Hist. of England*, vol. iii. p. 340; *Eccleston's English Antiq.* pp. 224, 320: and on their immense pecuniary, or rather territorial, losses, *Sinclair's Hist. of the Revenue*, vol. i. p. 155.

³⁴³ 'The last instance of a pitched battle between two powerful noblemen in England occurs in the reign of Edward IV.' *Allen on the Prerogative*, p. 123.

the sympathy between the ecclesiastical and aristocratic classes, and prove how the same circumstances that were fatal to the one, also prepared the way for the downfall of the other.

When Elizabeth ascended the throne of England, a large majority of the nobility were opposed to the Protestant religion. This we know from the most decisive evidence; and, even if we had no such evidence, a general acquaintance with human nature would induce us to suspect that such was the case. For, the aristocracy, by the very conditions of their existence, must, as a body, always be averse to innovation. And this, not only because by a change they have much to lose and little to gain, but because some of their most pleasurable emotions are connected with the past rather than with the present. In the collision of actual life, their vanity is sometimes offended by the assumptions of inferior men; it is frequently wounded by the successful competition of able men. These are mortifications to which, in the progress of society, their liability is constantly increasing. But the moment they turn to the past, they see in those good old times which are now gone by, many sources of consolation. There they find a period in which their glory is without a rival. When they look at their pedigrees, their quarterings, their escutcheons; when they think of the purity of their blood, and the antiquity of their ancestors – they experience a comfort which ought amply to atone for any present inconvenience. The tendency of this is very obvious, and has shown itself in the history of every aristocracy the world has yet seen. Men who have worked themselves to

so extravagant a pitch as to believe that it is an honour to have had one ancestor who came over with the Normans, and another ancestor who was present at the first invasion of Ireland – men who have reached this ecstasy of the fancy are not disposed to stop there, but, by a process with which most minds are familiar, they generalize their view; and, even on matters not immediately connected with their fame, they acquire a habit of associating grandeur with antiquity, and of measuring value by age; thus transferring to the past an admiration which otherwise they might reserve for the present.

The connexion between these feelings and those which animate the clergy is very evident. What the nobles are to politics, that are the priests to religion. Both classes, constantly appealing to the voice of antiquity, rely much on tradition, and make great account of upholding established customs. Both take for granted that what is old is better than what is new; and that in former times there were means of discovering truths respecting government and theology which we, in these degenerate ages, no longer possess. And it may be added, that the similarity of their functions follows from the similarity of their principles. Both are eminently protective, stationary, or, as they are sometimes called, conservative. It is believed that the aristocracy guard the state against revolution, and that the clergy keep the church from error. The first are the enemies of reformers; the others are the scourge of heretics.

It does not enter into the province of this Introduction to

examine how far these principles are reasonable, or to inquire into the propriety of notions which suppose that, on certain subjects of immense importance, men are to remain stationary, while on all other subjects they are constantly advancing. But what I now rather wish to point out, is the manner in which, in the reign of Elizabeth, the two great conservative and protective classes were weakened by that vast movement, the Reformation, which, though completed in the sixteenth century, had been prepared by a long chain of intellectual antecedents.

Whatever the prejudices of some may suggest, it will be admitted, by all unbiassed judges, that the Protestant Reformation was neither more nor less than an open rebellion. Indeed, the mere mention of private judgment, on which it was avowedly based, is enough to substantiate this fact. To establish the right of private judgment, was to appeal from the church to individuals; it was to increase the play of each man's intellect; it was to test the opinions of the priesthood by the opinions of laymen; it was, in fact, a rising of the scholars against their teachers, of the ruled against their rulers. And although the reformed clergy, as soon as they had organised themselves into a hierarchy, did undoubtedly abandon the great principle with which they started, and attempt to impose articles and canons of their own contrivance, still, this ought not to blind us to the merits of the Reformation itself. The tyranny of the Church of England, during the reign of Elizabeth, and still more during the reigns of her two successors, was but the natural consequence of

that corruption which power always begets in those who wield it, and does not lessen the importance of the movement by which the power was originally obtained. For men could not forget that, tried by the old theological theory, the church of England was a schismatic establishment, and could only defend itself from the charge of heresy by appealing to that private judgment, to the exercise of which it owed its existence, but of the rights of which its own proceedings were a constant infraction. It was evident that if, in religious matters, private judgment were supreme, it became a high spiritual crime to issue any articles, or to take any measure, by which that judgment could be tied up; while, on the other hand, if the right of private judgment were not supreme, the church of England was guilty of apostacy, inasmuch as its founders did, by virtue of the interpretation which their own private judgment made of the Bible, abandon tenets which they had hitherto held, stigmatize those tenets as idolatrous, and openly renounce their allegiance to what had for centuries been venerated as the catholic and apostolic church.

This was a simple alternative; which might, indeed, be kept out of sight, but could not be refined away, and most assuredly has never been forgotten. The memory of the great truth it conveys was preserved by the writings and teachings of the Puritans, and by those habits of thought natural to an inquisitive age. And when the fulness of time had come, it did not fail to bear its fruit. It continued slowly to fructify; and before the middle of the seventeenth century, its seed had quickened into

a life, the energy of which nothing could withstand. That same right of private judgment which the early Reformers had loudly proclaimed, was now pushed to an extent fatal to those who opposed it. This it was which, carried into politics, overturned the government, and, carried into religion, upset the church.³⁴⁴ For, rebellion and heresy are but different forms of the same disregard of tradition, the same bold and independent spirit. Both are of the nature of a protest made by modern ideas against old associations. They are as a struggle between the feelings of the present and the memory of the past. Without the exercise of private judgment, such a contest could never take place; the mere conception of it could not enter the minds of men, nor would they even dream of controlling, by their individual energy, those abuses to which all great societies are liable. It is, therefore, in the highest degree natural that the exercise of this judgment should be opposed by those two powerful classes who, from their position, their interests, and the habits of their mind, are more prone than any other to cherish antiquity, cleave to superannuated customs, and uphold institutions which, to use their favourite language, have been consecrated by the wisdom

³⁴⁴ Clarendon (*Hist. of the Rebellion*, p. 80), in a very angry spirit, but with perfect truth, notices (under the year 1640) the connexion between ‘a proud and venomous dislike against the discipline of the church of England, and so by degrees (as the progress is very natural) an equal irreverence to the government of the state too.’ The Spanish government, perhaps more than any other in Europe, has understood this relation; and even so late as 1789, an edict of Charles IV. declared, ‘qu’il y a crime d’hérésie dans tout ce qui tend, ou contribue, à propager les idées révolutionnaires.’ Llorente, *Hist. de l’Inquisition*, vol. ii. p. 130.

of their fathers.

From this point of view we are able to see with great clearness the intimate connexion which, at the accession of Elizabeth, existed between the English nobles and the Catholic clergy. Notwithstanding many exceptions, an immense majority of both classes opposed the Reformation, because it was based on that right of private judgment of which they, as the protectors of old opinions, were the natural antagonists. All this can excite no surprise; it was in the order of things, and strictly accordant with the spirit of those two great sections of society. Fortunately, however, for our country, the throne was now occupied by a sovereign who was equal to the emergency, and who, instead of yielding to the two classes, availed herself of the temper of the age to humble them. The manner in which this was effected by Elizabeth, in respect, first to the Catholic clergy, and afterwards to the Protestant clergy,³⁴⁵ forms one of the most interesting parts of our history; and in an account of the reign of the great queen, I hope to examine it at considerable length. At present, it will be sufficient to glance at her policy towards the nobles – that other class with which the priesthood, by their interests, opinions, and associations, have always much in common.

Elizabeth, at her accession to the throne, finding that the ancient families adhered to the ancient religion, naturally called

³⁴⁵ The general character of her policy towards the Protestant English bishops is summed up very fairly by Collier; though he, as a professional writer, is naturally displeased with her disregard for the heads of the church. *Collier's Eccles. Hist. of Great Britain*, vol. vii. pp. 257, 258, edit. Barham, 1840.

to her councils advisers who were more likely to uphold the novelties on which the age was bent. She selected men who, being little burdened by past associations, were more inclined to favour present interests. The two Bacons, the two Cecils, Knollys, Sadler, Smith, Throgmorton, Walsingham, were the most eminent statesmen and diplomatists in her reign; but all of them were commoners; only one did she raise to the peerage; and they were certainly nowise remarkable, either for the rank of their immediate connexions, or for the celebrity of their remote ancestors. They, however, were recommended to Elizabeth by their great abilities, and by their determination to uphold a religion which the ancient aristocracy naturally opposed. And it is observable that, among the accusations which the Catholics brought against the queen, they taunted her, not only with forsaking the old religion, but also with neglecting the old nobility.³⁴⁶

³⁴⁶ One of the charges which, in 1588, Sixtus V. publicly brought against Elizabeth, was, that 'she hath rejected and excluded the ancient nobility, and promoted to honour obscure people.' *Butler's Mem. of the Catholics*, vol. ii. p. 4. Persons also reproaches her with her low-born ministers, and says that she was influenced 'by five persons in particular – all of them sprung from the earth – Bacon, Cecil, Dudley, Hatton, and Walsingham.' *Butler*, vol. ii. p. 31. Cardinal Allen taunted her with 'disgracing the ancient nobility, erecting base and unworthy persons to all the civil and ecclesiastical dignities.' *Dodd's Church History*, edit. Tierney, 1840, vol. iii. appendix no. xii. p. xlvi. The same influential writer, in his *Admonition*, said that she had injured England, 'by great contempt and abasing of the ancient nobility, repelling them from due government, offices, and places of honour.' *Allen's Admonition to the Nobility and People of England and Ireland*, 1588 (reprinted London, 1842), p. xv. Compare the account of the Bull of 1588, in *De Thou, Hist. Univ.* vol. x. p. 175: 'On accusoit

Nor does it require much acquaintance with the history of the time to see the justice of this charge. Whatever explanation we may choose to give of the fact, it cannot be denied that, during the reign of Elizabeth, there was an open and constant opposition between the nobles and the executive government. The rebellion of 1569 was essentially an aristocratic movement; it was a rising of the great families of the north against what they considered the upstart and plebeian administration of the queen.³⁴⁷ The bitterest enemy of Elizabeth was certainly Mary of Scotland; and the interests of Mary were publicly defended

Elisabeth d'avoir au préjudice de la noblesse angloise élevé aux dignités, tant civiles qu'ecclesiastiques, des hommes nouveaux, sans naissance, et indignes de les posséder.'

³⁴⁷ To the philosophic historian this rebellion, though not sufficiently appreciated by ordinary writers, is a very important study, because it is the last attempt ever made by the great English families to establish their authority by force of arms. Mr. Wright says, that probably all those who took a leading part in it 'were allied by blood or intermarriage with the two families of the Percies and Neviles.' *Wright's Elizabeth*, 1838, vol. i. p. xxxiv.; a valuable work. See also, in *Parl. Hist.* vol. i. p. 730, a list of some of those who, in 1571, were attainted on account of this rebellion, and who are said to be 'all of the best families in the north of England.' But the most complete evidence we have respecting this struggle, consists of the collection of original documents published in 1840 by Sir C. Sharpe, under the title of *Memorials of the Rebellion of 1569*. They show very clearly the real nature of the outbreak. On 17th November 1569, Sir George Bowes writes, that the complaint of the insurgents was that 'there was certaine counsellors copen' (*i. e.* crept) 'in aboute the prince, which had excluded the nobility from the prince,' &c., *Memorials*, p. 42; and the editor's note says that this is one of the charges made in all the proclamations by the earls. Perhaps the most curious proof of how notorious the policy of Elizabeth had become, is contained in a friendly letter from Sussex to Cecil, dated 5th January 1569 (*Memorials*, p. 137), one paragraph of which begins, 'Of late years few young noblemen have been employed in service.'

by the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl of Northumberland, the Earl of Westmoreland, and the Earl of Arundel; while there is reason to believe that her cause was secretly favoured by the Marquis of Northampton, the Earl of Pembroke, the Earl of Derby, the Earl of Cumberland, the Earl of Shrewsbury, and the Earl of Sussex.³⁴⁸

The existence of this antagonism of interests could not escape the sagacity of the English government. Cecil, who was the most powerful of the ministers of Elizabeth, and who was at the head of affairs for forty years, made it part of his business to study the genealogies and material resources of the great families; and this he did, not out of idle curiosity, but in order to increase his control over them, or, as a great historian says, to let them know 'that his eye was upon them.'³⁴⁹ The queen herself, though too fond of power, was by no means of a cruel disposition; but she seemed to delight in humbling the nobles. On them her hand fell heavily; and there is hardly to be found a single instance of her pardoning their offences, while she punished several of them for acts which would now be considered no offences at all. She was always unwilling to admit them to authority; and it is unquestionably true that, taking them as a class, they were, during her long and prosperous reign,

³⁴⁸ *Hallam*, i. p. 130; *Lingard*, v. pp. 97, 102; *Turner*, xii. pp. 245, 247.

³⁴⁹ *Hallam's Const. Hist.* vol. i. p. 241; an interesting passage. *Turner (Hist. of England*, vol. xii. p. 237) says, that Cecil 'knew the tendency of the great lords to combine against the crown, that they might reinstate the peerage in the power from which the house of Tudor had depressed it.'

treated with unusual disrespect. Indeed, so clearly marked was her policy, that when the ducal order became extinct, she refused to renew it; and a whole generation passed away to whom the name of duke was a mere matter of history, a point to be mooted by antiquaries, but with which the business of practical life had no concern.³⁵⁰ Whatever may be her other faults, she was on this subject always consistent. Although she evinced the greatest anxiety to surround the throne with men of ability, she cared little for those conventional distinctions by which the minds of ordinary sovereigns are greatly moved. She made no account of dignity of rank; she did not even care for purity of blood. She valued men neither for the splendour of their ancestry, nor for the length of their pedigrees, nor for the grandeur of their titles. Such questions she left for her degenerate successors, to the size of whose understandings they were admirably fitted. Our great queen regulated her conduct by another standard. Her large and powerful intellect, cultivated to its highest point by reflection and study, taught her the true measure of affairs, and enabled her to see, that to make a government flourish, its councillors must be men of ability and of virtue; but that if these two conditions are fulfilled, the nobles may be left to repose in the enjoyment of

³⁵⁰ In 1572 the order of dukes became extinct; and was not revived till fifty years afterwards, when James I. made the miserable Villiers, duke of Buckingham. *Blackstone's Commentaries*, vol. i. p. 397. This evidently attracted attention; for Ben Jonson, in one of his comedies in 1616, mentions 'the received heresy that England bears no dukes.' *Jonson's Works*, edit. Gifford, 1816, vol. v. p. 47, where Gifford, not being aware of the extinction in 1572, has made an unsatisfactory note.

their leisure, unoppressed by those cares of the state for which, with a few brilliant exceptions, they are naturally disqualified by the number of their prejudices and by the frivolity of their pursuits.

After the death of Elizabeth, an attempt was made, first by James, and then by Charles, to revive the power of the two great protective classes, the nobles and the clergy. But so admirably had the policy of Elizabeth been supported by the general temper of the age, that it was found impossible for the Stuarts to execute their mischievous plans. The exercise of private judgment, both in religion and in politics, had become so habitual, that these princes were unable to subjugate it to their will. And as Charles I., with inconceivable blindness, and with an obstinacy even greater than that of his father, persisted in adopting in their worst forms the superannuated theories of protection, and attempted to enforce a scheme of government which men from their increasing independence were determined to reject, there inevitably arose that memorable collision which is well termed The Great Rebellion of England.³⁵¹ The analogy between this and the Protestant Reformation, I have already noticed; but what we have now to consider, and what, in the next chapter, I will endeavour to trace, is the nature of the difference between our Rebellion, and those contemporary wars of the

³⁵¹ Clarendon (*Hist. of the Rebellion*, p. 216) truly calls it 'the most prodigious and the boldest rebellion, that any age or country ever brought forth.' See also some striking remarks in *Warwick's Memoirs*, p. 207.

Fronde, to which it was in some respects very similar.

CHAPTER III

THE ENERGY OF THE PROTECTIVE SPIRIT IN FRANCE EXPLAINS THE FAILURE OF THE FRONDE. COMPARISON BETWEEN THE FRONDE AND THE CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH REBELLION

The object of the last chapter was to enquire into the origin of the protective spirit. From the evidence there collected, it appears that this spirit was first organized into a distinct secular form at the close of the dark ages; but that, owing to circumstances which then arose, it was, from the beginning, much less powerful in England than in France. It has likewise appeared that, in our country, it continued to lose ground; while in France, it early in the fourteenth century assumed a new shape, and gave rise to a centralizing movement, manifested not only in the civil and political institutions, but also in the social and literary habits of the French nation. Thus far we seem to have cleared the way for a proper understanding of the history of the two countries; and I

now purpose to follow this up a little further, and point out how this difference explains the discrepancy between the civil wars of England, and those which at the same time broke out in France.

Among the obvious circumstances connected with the Great English Rebellion, the most remarkable is, that it was a war of classes as well as of factions. From the beginning of the contest, the yeomanry and traders adhered to the parliament;³⁵² the nobles and the clergy rallied round the throne.³⁵³ And the name given to the two parties, of Roundheads³⁵⁴ and Cavaliers,³⁵⁵ proves that the true nature of this opposition was generally known. It proves

³⁵² 'From the beginning it may be said that the yeomanry and trading classes of towns were generally hostile to the king's side, even in those counties which were in his military occupation; except in a few, such as Cornwall, Worcester, Salop, and most of Wales, where the prevailing sentiment was chiefly royalist.' *Hallam's Const. Hist.* vol. i. p. 578. See also *Lingard's Hist. of England*, vol. vi. p. 304; and *Alison's Hist. of Europe*, vol. i. p. 49.

³⁵³ On this division of classes, which, notwithstanding a few exceptions, is undoubtedly true as a general fact, compare *Memoirs of Sir P. Warwick*, p. 217; *Carlyle's Cromwell*, vol. iii. p. 347; *Clarendon's Hist. of the Rebellion*, pp. 294, 297, 345, 346, 401, 476; *May's Hist. of the Long Parliament*, book i. pp. 22, 64, book ii. p. 63, book iii. p. 78; *Hutchinson's Memoirs*, p. 100; *Ludlow's Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 104, vol. iii. p. 258; *Bulstrode's Memoirs*, p. 86.

³⁵⁴ Lord Clarendon says, in his grand style, 'the rabble contemned and despised under the name of roundheads.' *Hist. of the Rebellion*, p. 136. This was in 1641, when the title appears to have been first bestowed. See *Fairfax Corresp.* vol. ii. pp. 185, 320.

³⁵⁵ Just before the battle of Edgehill, in 1642, Charles said to his troops, 'You are called cavaliers in a reproachful signification.' See the king's speech, in *Somers Tracts*, vol. iv. p. 478. Directly after the battle, he accused his opponents of 'rendering all persons of honour odious to the common people, under the style of cavaliers.' *May's Hist. of the Long Parliament*, book iii. p. 25.

that men were aware that a question was at issue, upon which England was divided, not so much by the particular interests of individuals, as by the general interests of the classes to which those individuals belonged.

But in the history of the French rebellion, there is no trace of so large a division. The objects of the war were in both countries precisely the same: the machinery by which those objects were attained was very different. The Fronde was like our Rebellion, insomuch that it was a struggle of the parliament against the crown; an attempt to secure liberty, and raise up a barrier against the despotism of government.³⁵⁶ So far, and so long, as we merely take a view of political objects, the parallel is complete. But the social and intellectual antecedents of the French being very different from those of the English, it necessarily followed that the shape which the rebellion took should likewise be different, even though the motives were the same. If we examine this

³⁵⁶ M. Saint-Aulaire (*Hist. de la Fronde*, vol. i. p. v.) says, that the object of the Frondeurs was, 'limiter l'autorité royale, consacrer les principes de la liberté civile et en confier la garde aux compagnies souveraines;' and at p. vi. he calls the declaration of 1648, 'une véritable charte constitutionnelle.' See also, at vol. i. p. 128, the concluding paragraph of the speech of Omer Talon. Joly, who was much displeased at this tendency, complains that in 1648, 'le peuple tomboit imperceptiblement dans le sentiment dangereux, qu'il est naturel et permis de se défendre et de s'armer contre la violence des supérieurs.' *Mém. de Joly*, p. 15. Of the immediate objects proposed by the Fronde, one was to diminish the taille, and another was to obtain a law that no one should be kept in prison more than twenty-four hours, 'sans être remis entre les mains du parlement pour lui faire son procès s'il se trouvoit criminel ou l'élargir s'il étoit innocent.' *Mém. de Montglat*, vol. ii. p. 135; *Mém. de Motteville*, vol. ii. p. 398; *Mém. de Retz*, vol. i. p. 265; *Mém. d'Omer Talon*, vol. ii. pp. 224, 225, 240, 328.

divergence a little nearer, we shall find that it is connected with the circumstance I have already noticed – namely, that in England a war for liberty was accompanied by a war of classes, while in France there was no war of classes at all. From this it resulted, that in France the rebellion, being merely political, and not, as with us, also social, took less hold of the public mind: it was unaccompanied by those feelings of insubordination, in the absence of which freedom has always been impossible; and, striking no root into the national character, it could not save the country from that servile state into which, a few years later, it, under the government of Louis XIV. rapidly fell.

That our Great Rebellion was, in its external form, a war of classes, is one of those palpable facts which lie on the surface of history. At first, the parliament³⁵⁷ did indeed attempt to draw over to their side some of the nobles; and in this they for a time succeeded. But as the struggle advanced, the futility of this policy became evident. In the natural order of the great movement, the nobles grew more loyal;³⁵⁸ the parliament grew more democratic.³⁵⁹ And when it was clearly

³⁵⁷ I use the word ‘parliament’ in the sense given to it by writers of that time, and not in the legal sense.

³⁵⁸ In May 1642, there remained at Westminster forty-two peers, *Hallam's Const. Hist.* vol. i. p. 559; but they gradually abandoned the popular cause; and, according to *Parl. Hist.* vol. iii. p. 1282, so dwindled, that eventually ‘seldom more than five or six’ were present.

³⁵⁹ These increasing democratic tendencies are most clearly indicated in Walker's curious work, *The History of Independency*. See among other passages, book i. p. 59.

seen that both parties were determined either to conquer or to die, this antagonism of classes was too clearly marked to be misunderstood; the perception which each had of its own interests being sharpened by the magnitude of the stake for which they contended.

For, without burdening this Introduction with what may be read in our common histories, it will be sufficient to remind the reader of a few of the conspicuous events of that time. Just before the war began, the Earl of Essex was appointed general of the parliamentary forces, with the Earl of Bedford as his lieutenant. A commission to raise troops was likewise given to the Earl of Manchester,³⁶⁰ the only man of high rank against whom Charles had displayed open enmity.³⁶¹ Notwithstanding these marks of

And Clarendon, under the year 1644, says (*Hist. of the Rebellion*, p. 514): ‘That violent party, which had at first cozened the rest into the war, and afterwards obstructed all the approaches towards peace, found now that they had finished as much of their work as the tools which they had wrought with could be applied to, and what remained to be done must be despatched by new workmen.’ What these new workmen were, he afterwards explains, p. 641, to be ‘the most inferior people preferred to all places of trust and profit.’ Book xi. under the year 1648. Compare some good remarks by Mr. Bell, in *Fairfax Correspond.* vol. iii. pp. 115, 116.

³⁶⁰ This was after the appointments of Essex and Bedford, and was in 1643. *Ludlow's Mem.* vol. i. p. 58; *Carlyle's Cromwell*, vol. i. p. 189.

³⁶¹ ‘When the king attempted to arrest the five members, Manchester, at that time Lord Kymbolton, was the only peer whom he impeached. This circumstance endeared Kymbolton to the party; his own safety bound him more closely to its interests.’ *Lingard's England*, vol. vi. p. 337. Compare *Clarendon*, p. 375; *Ludlow*, vol. i. p. 20. It is also said that Lord Essex joined the popular party from personal pique against the king. *Fairfax Corresp.* vol. iii. p. 37.

confidence, the nobles, in whom parliament was at first disposed to trust, could not avoid showing the old leaven of their order.³⁶² The Earl of Essex so conducted himself, as to inspire the popular party with the greatest apprehensions of his treachery;³⁶³ and when the defence of London was intrusted to Waller, he so obstinately refused to enter the name of that able officer in the commission, that the Commons were obliged to insert it by virtue of their own authority, and in spite of their own general.³⁶⁴ The Earl of Bedford, though he had received a military command, did not hesitate to abandon those who conferred it. This apostate noble fled from Westminster to Oxford: but finding that the king, who never forgave his enemies, did not receive him with the

³⁶² Mr. Carlyle has made some very characteristic, but very just, observations on the 'high Essexes and Manchesters of limited notions and large estates.' *Carlyle's Cromwell*, vol. i. p. 215.

³⁶³ *Ludlow's Memoirs*, vol. iii. p. 110; *Hutchinson's Memoirs*, pp. 230, 231; *Harris's Lives of the Stuarts*, vol. iii. p. 106; *Bulstrode's Memoirs*, pp. 112, 113, 119; *Clarendon's Rebellion*, pp. 486, 514; or, as Lord North puts it, 'for General Essex began now to appear to the private cabalists somewhat wresty.' *North's Narrative of Passages relating to the Long Parliament*, published in 1670, in *Somers Tracts*, vol. vi. p. 578. At p. 584, the same elegant writer says of Essex, 'being the first person and last of the nobility employed by the parliament in military affairs, which soon brought him to the period of his life. And may he be an example to all future ages, to deter all persons of like dignity from being instrumental in setting up a democratical power, whose interest it is to keep down all persons of his condition.' The 'Letter of Admonition' addressed to him by parliament in 1644, is printed in *Parl. Hist.* vol. iii. p. 274.

³⁶⁴ *Lingard's Hist. of England*, vol. vi. p. 318. See also, on the hostility between Essex and Waller, *Walker's Hist. of Independency*, part i. pp. 28, 29; and *Parl. Hist.* vol. iii. p. 177. Sir Philip Warwick (*Memoirs*, p. 254) contemptuously calls Waller 'favourite-general of the city of London.'

favour he expected, he returned to London; where, though he was allowed to remain in safety, it could not be supposed that he should again experience the confidence of parliament.³⁶⁵

Such examples as these were not likely to lessen the distrust which both parties felt for each other. It soon became evident that a war of classes was unavoidable, and that the rebellion of the parliament against the king must be reinforced by a rebellion of the people against the nobles.³⁶⁶ To this the popular party, whatever may have been their first intention, now willingly agreed. In 1645 they enacted a law, by which not only the Earl of Essex and the Earl of Manchester lost their command, but all members of either house were made incapable of military service.³⁶⁷ And, only a week after the execution of the king, they

³⁶⁵ Compare *Hallam's Const. Hist.* vol. i. pp. 569, 570, with *Bulstrode's Memoirs*, p. 96, and Lord Bedford's letter, in *Parl. Hist.* vol. iii. pp. 189, 190. This shuffling letter confirms the unfavourable account of the writer, which is given in *Clarendon's Rebellion*, p. 422.

³⁶⁶ Dr. Bates, who had been physician to Cromwell, intimates that this was foreseen from the beginning. He says, that the popular party offered command to some of the nobles, 'not that they had any respect for the lords, whom shortly they intended to turn out and to level with the commoners, but that they might poison them with their own venom, and rise to greater authority by drawing more over to their side.' *Bates's Account of the late Troubles in England*, part i. p. 76. Lord North too supposes, that almost immediately after the war began, it was determined to dissolve the House of Lords. See *Somers Tracts*, vol. vi. p. 582. Beyond this, I am not aware of any direct early evidence; except that, in 1644, Cromwell is alleged to have stated that 'there would never be a good time in England till we had done with lords.' *Carlyle's Cromwell*, vol. i. p. 217; and, what is evidently the same circumstance, in *Holles's Memoirs*, p. 18.

³⁶⁷ This was the 'Self-denying Ordinance,' which was introduced in December, 1644;

formally took away the legislative power of the peers; putting at the same time on record their memorable opinion, that the House of Lords is 'useless, dangerous, and ought to be abolished.'³⁶⁸

But we may find proofs still more convincing of the true character of the English rebellion, if we consider who those were by whom it was accomplished. This will show us the democratic nature of a movement which lawyers and antiquaries have vainly attempted to shelter under the form of constitutional precedent. Our great rebellion was the work, not of men who looked behind, but of men who looked before. To attempt to trace it to personal and temporary causes; to ascribe this unparalleled outbreak to a dispute respecting ship-money, or to a quarrel about the privileges of parliament, can only suit the habits of those historians who see no further than the preamble of a statute, or the decision of a judge. Such writers forget that the trial of Hampden, and the impeachment of the five members, could have produced no effect on the country, unless the people had already been prepared, and unless the spirit of inquiry and insubordination had so increased the discontents of men, as to put them in a state, where, the train being laid, the slightest spark sufficed to kindle a conflagration.

but, owing to the resistance of the peers, was not carried until the subsequent April. *Parl. Hist.* vol. iii. pp. 326–337, 340–343, 354, 355. See also *Mem. of Lord Holles*, p. 30; *Mem. of Sir P. Warwick*, p. 283.

³⁶⁸ On this great Epoch in the history of England, see *Parl. Hist.* vol. iii. p. 1284; *Hallam's Const. Hist.* vol. i. p. 643; *Campbell's Chief-Justices*, vol. i. p. 424; *Ludlow's Mem.* vol. i. p. 246; *Warwick's Mem.* pp. 182, 336, 352.

The truth is, that the rebellion was an outbreak of the democratic spirit. It was the political form of a movement, of which the Reformation was the religious form. As the Reformation was aided, not by men in high ecclesiastical offices, not by great cardinals or wealthy bishops, but by men filling the lowest and most subordinate posts, just so was the English rebellion a movement from below, an uprising from the foundations, or as some will have it, the dregs of society. The few persons of high rank who adhered to the popular cause were quickly discarded, and the ease and rapidity with which they fell off was a clear indication of the turn that things were taking. Directly the army was freed from its noble leaders, and supplied with officers drawn from the lower classes, the fortune of war changed, the royalists were every where defeated, and the king made prisoner by his own subjects. Between his capture and execution, the two most important political events were his abduction by Joyce, and the forcible expulsion from the House of Commons of those members who were thought likely to interfere in his favour. Both these decisive steps were taken, and indeed only could have been taken, by men of great personal influence, and of a bold and resolute spirit. Joyce, who carried off the king, and who was highly respected in the army, had, however, been recently a common working tailor;³⁶⁹ while

³⁶⁹ 'Cornet Joyce, who was one of the agitators in the army, a tailor, a fellow who had two or three years before served in a very inferior employment in Mr. Hollis's house.' *Clarendon's Rebellion*, p. 612. 'A shrewd tailor-man.' *D'Israeli's Commentaries on the Reign of Charles I.*, 1851, vol. ii. p. 466.

Colonel Pride, whose name is preserved in history as having purged the House of Commons of the malignants, was about on a level with Joyce, since his original occupation was that of a drayman.³⁷⁰ The tailor and the drayman were, in that age, strong enough to direct the course of public affairs, and to win for themselves a conspicuous position in the state. After the execution of Charles, the same tendency was displayed, the old monarchy being destroyed, that small but active party known as the fifth-monarchy men increased in importance, and for a time exercised considerable influence. Their three principal and most distinguished members were Venner, Tuffnel, and Okey. Venner, who was the leader, was a wine-cooper;³⁷¹ Tuffnel, who was second in command, was a carpenter;³⁷² and Okey, though he became a colonel, had filled the menial office of stoker in an Islington brewery.³⁷³

³⁷⁰ Ludlow (*Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 139); Noble (*Memoirs of the House of Cromwell*, vol. ii. p. 470); and Winstanley (*Loyal Martyrology*, edit. 1665, p. 108), mention that Pride had been a drayman. It is said that Cromwell, in ridicule of the old distinctions, conferred knighthood on him 'with a faggot.' *Orme's Life of Owen*, p. 164; *Harris's Lives of the Stuarts*, vol. iii. p. 478.

³⁷¹ 'The fifth-monarchy, headed mainly by one Venner, a wine-cooper.' *Carlyle's Cromwell*, vol. iii. p. 282. 'Venner, a wine-cooper.' *Lister's Life and Corresp. of Clarendon*, vol. ii. p. 62.

³⁷² 'The second to Venner was one Tuffnel a carpenter living in Gray's Inn Lane.' *Winstanley's Martyrology*, p. 163.

³⁷³ 'He was stoaker in a brewhouse at Islington, and next a most poor chandler near Lion-Key, in Thames Street.' *Parl. Hist.* vol. iii. p. 1605. See also *Winstanley's Martyrology*, p. 122.

Nor are these to be regarded as exceptional cases. In that period, promotion depended solely on merit; and if a man had ability he was sure to rise, no matter what his birth or former avocations might have been. Cromwell himself was a brewer;³⁷⁴ and Colonel Jones, his brother-in-law, had been servant to a private gentleman.³⁷⁵ Deane was the servant of a tradesman; but he became an admiral, and was made one of the commissioners of the navy.³⁷⁶ Colonel Goffe had been apprentice to a drysalter;³⁷⁷ Major-general Whalley had been apprentice to a draper.³⁷⁸ Skippon, a common soldier who had received

³⁷⁴ Some of the clumsy eulogists of Cromwell wish to suppress the fact of his being a brewer; but that he really practised that useful trade is attested by a variety of evidence, and is distinctly stated by his own physician, Dr. Bates. *Bates's Troubles in England*, vol. ii. p. 238. See also *Walker's History of Independency*, part i. p. 32, part ii. p. 25, part iii. p. 37; *Noble's House of Cromwell*, vol. i. pp. 328–331. Other passages, which I cannot now call to mind, will occur to those who have studied the literature of the time.

³⁷⁵ 'John Jones, at first a serving-man, then a colonel of the Long Parliament, ... married the Protector's sister.' *Parl. Hist.* vol. iii. p. 1600. 'A serving-man; ... in process of time married one of Cromwell's sisters.' *Winstanley's Martyrology*, p. 125.

³⁷⁶ 'Richard Deane, Esq., is said to have been a servant to one Button, a toyman in Ipswich, and to have himself been the son of a person in the same employment; ... was appointed one of the commissioners of the navy with Popham and Blake, and in April (1649) he became an admiral and general at sea.' *Noble's Lives of the Regicides*, vol. i. pp. 172, 173. *Winstanley (Martyrol.* p. 121) also says that Deane was 'servant in Ipswich.'

³⁷⁷ 'Apprentice to one Vaughan a dry-salter.' *Noble's House of Cromwell*, vol. ii. p. 507; and see his *Regicides*, vol. i. p. 255.

³⁷⁸ 'Bound apprentice to a woollen-draper.' *Winstanley's Martyr.* p. 108. He afterwards set up in the same trade for himself; but with little success, for Dr. Bates (*Troubles in England*, vol. ii. p. 222) calls him 'a broken clothier.'

no education,³⁷⁹ was appointed commander of the London militia; he was raised to the office of sergeant-major-general of the army; he was declared commander-in-chief in Ireland; and he became one of the fourteen members of Cromwell's council.³⁸⁰ Two of the lieutenants of the Tower were Berkstead and Tichborne. Berkstead was a pedlar, or at all events a hawker of small wares;³⁸¹ and Tichborne, who was a linendraper, not only received the lieutenancy of the Tower, but became a colonel, and a member of the committee of state in 1655, and of the council of state in 1659.³⁸² Other trades were equally successful; the highest prizes being open to all men, provided they displayed the requisite capacity. Colonel Harvey was a silk-mercantile;³⁸³ so was Colonel Rowe;³⁸⁴ so also was Colonel Venn.³⁸⁵ Salway had

³⁷⁹ 'Altogether illiterate.' *Clarendon's Rebellion*, p. 152. Two extraordinary speeches by him are preserved in *Burton's Diary*, vol. i. pp. 24, 25, 48–50.

³⁸⁰ *Holles's Mem.* p. 82; *Ludlow's Mem.* vol. ii. p. 39; and a letter from Fairfax in *Cary's Memorials of the Civil War*, 1842, vol. i. p. 413.

³⁸¹ 'Berkstead, who heretofore sold needles, bodkins, and thimbles, and would have run on an errand any where for a little money; but who now by Cromwell was preferred to the honourable charge of lieutenant of the Tower of London.' *Bates's Account of the Troubles*, part ii. p. 222.

³⁸² *Noble's Regicides*, vol. ii. pp. 272, 273. Lord Holles (*Memoirs*, p. 174) also mentions that he was 'a linen-drapeer.'

³⁸³ 'Edward Harvy, late a poor silk-man, now colonel, and hath got the Bishop of London's house and manor of Fulham.' *Walker's Independency*, part i. p. 170. 'One Harvey, a decayed silk-man,' *Clarendon's Rebellion*, p. 418.

³⁸⁴ Owen Rowe, 'put to the trade of a silk-mercantile, ... went into the parliament army, and became a colonel.' *Noble's Regicides*, vol. ii. p. 150.

³⁸⁵ 'A silkman in London; ... went into the army, and rose to the rank of colonel.'

been apprentice to a grocer, but, being an able man, he rose to the rank of major in the army; he received the king's remembrancer's office; and in 1659 he was appointed by parliament a member of the council of state.³⁸⁶ Around that council-board were also gathered Bond the draper,³⁸⁷ and Cawley the brewer;³⁸⁸ while by their side we find John Berners, who is said to have been a private servant,³⁸⁹ and Cornelius Holland, who is known to have been a servant, and who was, indeed, formerly a link-boy.³⁹⁰ Among others who were now favoured and promoted to offices of trust, were Packe the woollen-draper,³⁹¹ Pury the weaver,³⁹² and Pemble the tailor.³⁹³ The parliament which was summoned

Noble's Regicides, vol. ii. p. 283. 'A broken silk-man in Cheapside.' *Winstanley's Martyrol*. p. 130.

³⁸⁶ *Walker's Independency*, part i. p. 143; *Parl. Hist.* vol. iii. p. 1608; *Ludlow's Mem.* vol. ii. pp. 241, 259; *Noble's Regicides*, vol. ii. pp. 158, 162.

³⁸⁷ He was 'a woollen-draper at Dorchester,' and was 'one of the council of state in 1649 and 1651.' *Noble's Regicides*, vol. i. p. 99: see also *Parl. Hist.* vol. iii. p. 1594.

³⁸⁸ 'A brewer in Chichester; ... in 1650–1 he was appointed one of the council of state.' *Noble's Regicides*, vol. i. p. 136. 'William Cawley, a brewer of Chichester.' *Winstanley's Martyrol*. p. 138.

³⁸⁹ John Berners, 'supposed to have been originally a serving-man,' was 'one of the council of state in 1659,' *Noble's Regicides*, vol. i. p. 90.

³⁹⁰ 'Holland the link-boy,' *Walker's Independency*, part iii. p. 37. 'He was originally nothing more than a servant to Sir Henry Vane; ... upon the establishment of the Commonwealth, he was made one of the council of state in 1649, and again in 1650.' *Noble's Regicides*, vol. i. pp. 357, 358.

³⁹¹ *Noble's Mem. of Cromwell*, vol. ii. p. 502.

³⁹² *Walker's Hist. of Independency*, part i. p. 167.

³⁹³ *Ellis's Original Letters illustrative of English History*, third series, vol. iv. p. 219,

in 1653 is still remembered as Barebone's parliament, being so called after one of its most active members, whose name was Barebone, and who was a leather-seller in Fleet Street.³⁹⁴ Thus too, Downing, though a poor charity-boy,³⁹⁵ became teller of the exchequer, and representative of England at the Hague.³⁹⁶ To these we may add, that Colonel Horton had been a gentleman's servant;³⁹⁷ Colonel Berry had been a woodmonger;³⁹⁸ Colonel Cooper a haberdasher;³⁹⁹ Major Rolfe a shoemaker;⁴⁰⁰ Colonel Fox a tinker;⁴⁰¹ and Colonel Hewson a cobbler.⁴⁰²

Lond. 1846.

³⁹⁴ *Parl. Hist.* vol. iii. p. 1407; *Rose's Biog. Dict.* vol. iii. p. 172; *Clarendon's Rebellion*, p. 794.

³⁹⁵ 'A poor child bred upon charity.' *Harris's Stuarts*, vol. v. p. 281. 'A man of an obscure birth, and more obscure education.' *Clarendon's Life of Himself*, p. 1116.

³⁹⁶ See *Vaughan's Cromwell*, vol. i. pp. 227, 228, vol. ii. pp. 299, 302, 433; *Lister's Life and Corresp. of Clarendon*, vol. ii. p. 231, vol. iii. p. 134. The common opinion is, that he was the son of a clergyman at Hackney; but if so, he was probably illegitimate, considering the way he was brought up. However, his Hackney origin is very doubtful, and no one appears to know who his father was. See *Notes and Queries*, vol. iii. pp. 69, 213.

³⁹⁷ *Noble's Regicides*, vol. i. p. 362. Cromwell had a great regard for this remarkable man, who not only distinguished himself as a soldier, but, judging from a letter of his recently published, appears to have repaired the deficiencies of his early education. See *Fairfax Correspond.* vol. iv. pp. 22–25, 108. There never has been a period in the history of England in which so many men of natural ability were employed in the public service as during the Commonwealth.

³⁹⁸ *Noble's House of Cromwell*, vol. ii. p. 507.

³⁹⁹ *Noble's Cromwell*, vol. ii. p. 518; *Bates's Troubles*, vol. ii. p. 222.

⁴⁰⁰ *Bates's Late Troubles*, vol. i. p. 87; *Ludlow's Mem.* vol. i. p. 220.

⁴⁰¹ *Walker's Hist. of Independency*, part ii. p. 87.

Such were the leaders of the English rebellion, or to speak more properly, such were the instruments by which the rebellion was consummated.⁴⁰³ If we now turn to France, we shall clearly see the difference between the feelings and temper of the two nations. In that country, the old protective spirit still retained its activity; and the people, being kept in a state of pupilage, had not acquired those habits of self-command and self-reliance, by which alone great things can be effected. They had been so long accustomed to look with timid reverence to the upper classes, that, even when they rose in arms, they could not throw off the ideas of submission which were quickly discarded by our ancestors. The influence of the higher ranks was, in

⁴⁰² Ludlow who was well acquainted with Colonel Hewson, says that he 'had been a shoemaker.' *Ludlow's Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 139. But this is the amiable partiality of a friend; and there is no doubt that the gallant colonel was neither more nor less than a cobbler. See *Walker's Independency*, part ii. p. 39; *Winstanley's Martyrol.* p. 123; *Bates's Late Troubles*, vol. ii. p. 222; *Noble's Cromwell*, vol. ii. pp. 251, 345, 470.

⁴⁰³ Walker, who relates what he himself witnessed, says, that, about 1649, the army was commanded by 'colonels and superior officers, who lord it in their gilt coaches, rich apparel, costly feastings; though some of them led dray-horses, wore leather-pelts, and were never able to name their own fathers or mothers.' *Hist. of Independ.* part ii. p. 244. The *Mercurius Rusticus*, 1647, says, 'Chelmsford was governed by a tinker, two cobblers, two tailors, two pedlars.' *Southey's Commonplace Book*, third series, 1850, p. 430. And, at p. 434, another work, in 1647, makes a similar statement in regard to Cambridge; while Lord Holles assures us, that 'most of the colonels and officers (were) mean tradesmen, brewers, taylors, goldsmiths, shoe-makers, and the like.' *Holles's Memoirs*, p. 149. When Whitelocke was in Sweden in 1653, the prætor of one of the towns abused the parliament, saying, 'that they killed their king, and were a company of taylors and cobblers.' *Whitelocke's Swedish Embassy*, vol. i. p. 205. See also note in *Carwithen's Hist. of the Church of England*, vol. ii. p. 156.

England, constantly diminishing; in France, it was scarcely impaired. Hence it happened that, although the English and French rebellions were contemporary, and, in their origin, aimed at precisely the same objects, they were distinguished by one most important difference. This was, that the English rebels were headed by popular leaders; the French rebels by noble leaders. The bold and sturdy habits which had long been cultivated in England, enabled the middle and lower classes to supply their own chiefs out of their own ranks. In France such chiefs were not to be found; simply because, owing to the protective spirit, such habits had not been cultivated. While, therefore, in our island, the functions of civil government, and of war, were conducted with conspicuous ability, and complete success, by butchers, by bakers, by brewers, by cobblers, and by tinkers, the struggle which, at the same moment, was going on in France, presented an appearance totally different. In that country, the rebellion was headed by men of a far higher standing; men, indeed, of the longest and most illustrious lineage. There, to be sure, was a display of unexampled splendour; a galaxy of rank, a noble assemblage of aristocratic insurgents and titled demagogues. There was the Prince de Condé, the Prince de Conti, the Prince de Marsillac, the Duke de Bouillon, the Duke de Beaufort, the Duke de Longueville, the Duke de Chevreuse, the Duke de Nemours, the Duke de Luynes, the Duke de Brissac, the Duke d'Elbœuf, the Duke de Candale, the Duke de la Tremouille, the Marquis de la Boulaye, the Marquis de Laigues, the Marquis de

Noirmoutier, the Marquis de Vitry, the Marquis de Fosseuse, the Marquis de Sillery, the Marquis d'Estissac, the Marquis d'Hocquincourt, the Count de Rantzau, the Count de Montresor.

These were the leaders of the Fronde;⁴⁰⁴ and the mere announcement of their names indicate the difference between the French and English rebellions. And, in consequence of this difference, there followed some results, which are well worth the attention of those writers who, in their ignorance of the progress of human affairs, seek to uphold that aristocratic power, which, fortunately for the interests of mankind, has long been waning; and which, during the last seventy years has, in the most civilized countries, received such severe and repeated shocks, that its ultimate fate is hardly a matter respecting which much doubt can now be entertained.

The English rebellion was headed by men, whose tastes, habits, and associations, being altogether popular, formed a bond of sympathy between them and the people, and preserved the union of the whole party. In France the sympathy was very weak, and therefore, the union was very precarious. What sort of sympathy could there be between the mechanic and the peasant, toiling for their daily bread, and the rich and dissolute noble, whose life was passed in those idle and frivolous pursuits which debased his mind, and made his order a byword and a reproach

⁴⁰⁴ Even De Retz, who vainly attempted to organise a popular party, found that it was impossible to take any step without the nobles; and, notwithstanding his democratic tendencies, he, in 1648, thought it advisable 'tâcher d'engager dans les intérêts publics les personnes de qualité.' *Mém. de Joly*, p. 31.

among the nations? To talk of sympathy existing between the two classes is a manifest absurdity, and most assuredly would have been deemed an insult by those high-born men, who treated their inferiors with habitual and insolent contempt. It is true, that, from causes which have been already stated, the people did, unhappily for themselves, look up to those above them with the greatest veneration;⁴⁰⁵ but every page of French history proves how unworthily this feeling was reciprocated, and in how complete a thralldom the lower classes were kept. While, therefore, the French, from their long-established habits of dependence, were become incapable of conducting their own rebellion, and, on that account, were obliged to place themselves under the command of their nobles, this very necessity confirmed the servility which caused it; and thus stunting the growth of freedom, prevented the nation from effecting, by their civil wars, those great things which we, in England, were able to bring about by ours.

Indeed, it is only necessary to read the French literature of the seventeenth century, to see the incompatibility of the two classes, and the utter hopelessness of fusing into one party the popular

⁴⁰⁵ Mably (*Observations sur l'Hist. de France*, vol. i. p. 357) frankly says, 'L'exemple d'un grand a toujours été plus contagieux chez les Français que partout ailleurs.' See also vol. ii. p. 267: 'Jamais l'exemple des grands n'a été aussi contagieux ailleurs qu'en France; on dirait qu'ils ont le malheureux privilège de tout justifier.' Rivarol, though his opinions on other points were entirely opposed to those of Mably, says, that, in France, 'la noblesse est aux yeux du peuple une espèce de religion, dont les gentilshommes sont les prêtres.' *Mém. de Rivarol*, p. 94. Happily, the French Revolution, or rather the circumstances which caused the French Revolution, have utterly destroyed this ignominious homage.

and aristocratic spirit. While the object of the people was to free themselves from the yoke, the object of the nobles was merely to find new sources of excitement,⁴⁰⁶ and minister to that personal vanity for which, as a body, they have always been notorious. As this is a department of history that has been little studied, it will be interesting to collect a few instances, which will illustrate the temper of the French aristocracy, and will show what sort of honours, and what manner of distinctions, those were which this powerful class was most anxious to obtain.

That the objects chiefly coveted were of a very trifling description, will be anticipated by whoever has studied the effect which, in an immense majority of minds, hereditary distinctions produce upon personal character. How pernicious such distinctions are, may be clearly seen in the history of all the European aristocracies; and in the notorious fact, that none of them have preserved even a mediocrity of talent, except in countries where they are frequently invigorated by the infusion of plebeian blood, and their order strengthened by the accession of those masculine energies which are natural to men who make their own position, but cannot be looked for in men whose

⁴⁰⁶ The Duke de la Rochefoucauld candidly admits that, in 1649, the nobles raised a civil war, 'avec d'autant plus de haleur que c'était une nouveauté.' *Mém. de Rochefoucauld*, vol. i. p. 406. Thus too Lemontey (*Etablissement de Louis XIV*, p. 368): 'La vieille noblesse, qui ne savait que combattre, faisait la guerre par goût, par besoin, par vanité, par ennui.' Compare, in *Mém. d'Omer Talon*, vol. ii. pp. 467, 468, a summary of the reasons which, in 1649, induced the nobles to go to war; and on the way in which their frivolity debased the Fronde, see *Lavallée, Hist. des Français*, vol. iii. pp. 169, 170.

position is made for them. For, when the notion is once firmly implanted in the mind, that the source of honour is from without, rather than from within, it must invariably happen that the possession of external distinction will be preferred to the sense of internal power. In such cases, the majesty of the human intellect, and the dignity of human knowledge, are considered subordinate to those mock and spurious gradations by which weak men measure the degrees of their own littleness. Hence it is, that the real precedence of things becomes altogether reversed; that which is trifling is valued more than that which is great; and the mind is enervated by conforming to a false standard of merit, which its own prejudices have raised. On this account, they are evidently in the wrong who reproach the nobles with their pride, as if it were a characteristic of their order. The truth is, that if pride were once established among them, their extinction would rapidly follow. To talk of the pride of hereditary rank, is a contradiction in terms. Pride depends on the consciousness of self-applause; vanity is fed by the applause of others. Pride is a reserved and lofty passion, which disdains those external distinctions that vanity eagerly grasps. The proud man sees in his own mind, the source of his own dignity; which, as he well knows, can be neither increased or diminished by any acts except those which proceed solely from himself. The vain man, restless, insatiable, and always craving after the admiration of his contemporaries, must naturally make great account of those external marks, those visible tokens, which,

whether they be decorations or titles, strike directly on the senses, and thus captivate the vulgar, to whose understandings they are immediately obvious. This, therefore, being the great distinction, that pride looks within, while vanity looks without, it is clear that when a man values himself for a rank which he inherited by chance, without exertion, and without merit, it is a proof, not of pride, but of vanity, and of vanity of the most despicable kind. It is a proof that such a man has no sense of real dignity, no idea of what that is in which alone all greatness consists. What marvel if, to minds of this sort, the most insignificant trifles should swell into matters of the highest importance? What marvel if such empty understandings should be busied with ribbons, and stars, and crosses; if this noble should yearn after the Garter, and that noble pine for the Golden Fleece; if one man should long to carry a wand in the precincts of the court, and another man to fill an office in the royal household; while the ambition of a third is to make his daughter a maid-of-honour, or to raise his wife to be mistress of the robes?

We, seeing these things, ought not to be surprised that the French nobles, in the seventeenth century, displayed, in their intrigues and disputes, a frivolity, which, though redeemed by occasional exceptions, is the natural characteristic of every hereditary aristocracy. A few examples of this will suffice to give the reader some idea of the tastes and temper of that powerful class which, during several centuries, retarded the progress of French civilization.

Of all the questions on which the French nobles were divided, the most important was that touching the right of sitting in the royal presence. This was considered to be a matter of such gravity, that, in comparison with it, a mere struggle for liberty faded into insignificance. And what made it still more exciting to the minds of the nobles was, the extreme difficulty with which this great social problem was beset. According to the ancient etiquette of the French court, if a man were a duke, his wife might sit in the presence of the queen; but if his rank were inferior, even if he were a marquis, no such liberty could be allowed.⁴⁰⁷ So far, the rule was very simple, and, to the duchesses themselves, highly agreeable. But the marquises, the counts, and the other illustrious nobles, were uneasy at this invidious distinction, and exerted all their energies to procure for their own wives the same honour. This the dukes strenuously resisted; but, owing to circumstances which unfortunately are not fully understood, an innovation was made in the reign of Louis XIII., and the privilege of sitting in the same room with the queen was conceded to the female members of the Bouillon

⁴⁰⁷ Hence the duchesses were called 'femmes assises;' those of lower rank 'non assises.' *Mém. de Fontenay Mareuil*, vol. i. p. 111. The Count de Ségur tells us that 'les duchesses jouissaient de la prérogative d'être assises sur un tabouret chez la reine.' *Mém. de Ségur*, vol. i. p. 79. The importance attached to this is amusingly illustrated in *Mém. de Saint-Simon*, vol. iii. pp. 215–218, Paris, 1842; which should be compared with *De Tocqueville, Règne de Louis XV*, vol. ii. p. 116, and *Mém. de Genlis*, vol. x. p. 383.

family.⁴⁰⁸ In consequence of this evil precedent, the question became seriously complicated, since other members of the aristocracy considered that the purity of their descent gave them claims nowise inferior to those of the house of Bouillon, whose antiquity, they said, had been grossly exaggerated. The contest which ensued, had the effect of breaking up the nobles into two hostile parties, one of which sought to preserve that exclusive privilege in which the other wished to participate. To reconcile these rival pretensions, various expedients were suggested; but all were in vain, and the court, during the administration of Mazarin, being pressed by the fear of a rebellion, showed symptoms of giving way, and of yielding to the inferior nobles the point they so ardently desired. In 1648 and 1649, the queen-regent, acting under the advice of her council, formally conceded the right of sitting in the royal presence to the three most distinguished members of the lower aristocracy, namely, the Countess de Fleix,

⁴⁰⁸ 'Survint incontinent une autre difficulté à la cour sur le sujet des tabourets, que doivent avoir les dames dans la chambre de la reine; car encore que cela ne s'accorde régulièrement qu'aux duchesses, néanmoins le feu roi Louis XIII l'avoit accordé aux filles de la maison de Bouillon,' &c. *Mém. d'Omer Talon*, vol. iii. p. 5. See also, on this encroachment on the rights of the duchesses under Louis XIII., the case of Séguier, in *Duclos, Mémoires Secrets*, vol. i. pp. 360, 361. The consequences of the innovation were very serious; and Tallemant des Réaux (*Historiettes*, vol. iii. pp. 223, 224) mentions a distinguished lady, of whom he says, 'Pour satisfaire son ambition, il lui falloit un tabouret: elle cabale pour épouser le vieux Bouillon La Marck veuf pour la seconde fois.' In this she failed; but, determined not to be baffled, 'elle ne se rebute point, et voulant à toute force avoir un tabouret, elle épouse le fils aîné du duc de Villars: c'est un ridicule de corps et d'esprit, car il est bossu et quasi imbécile, et gueux par-dessus cela.' This melancholy event happened in 1649.

Madame de Pons, and the Princess de Marsillac.⁴⁰⁹ Scarcely had this decision been promulgated, when the princes of the blood and the peers of the realm were thrown into the greatest agitation.⁴¹⁰ They immediately summoned to the capital those members of their own order who were interested in repelling this daring aggression, and, forming themselves into an assembly, they at once adopted measures to vindicate their ancient rights.⁴¹¹ On the other hand, the inferior nobles, flushed by their recent success, insisted that the concession just made should be raised into a precedent; and that, as the honour of being seated in the presence of majesty had been conceded to the house of Foix, in the person of the Countess de Fleix, it should likewise be granted to all those who could prove that their ancestry was equally illustrious.⁴¹² The greatest confusion now arose; and both

⁴⁰⁹ As to the Countess de Fleix and Madame de Pons, see *Mém. de Motteville*, vol. iii. pp. 116, 369. According to the same high authority (vol. iii. p. 367), the inferiority of the Princess de Marsillac consisted in the painful fact, that her husband was merely the son of a duke, and the duke himself was still alive 'il n'étoit que gentilhomme, et son père le duc de la Rochefoucauld n'étoit pas mort.'

⁴¹⁰ The long account of these proceedings in *Mém. de Motteville*, vol. iii. pp. 367–393, shows the importance attached to them by contemporary opinion.

⁴¹¹ In October 1649, 'la noblesse s'assembla à Paris sur le fait des tabourets,' *Mém. de Lenet*, vol. i. p. 184.

⁴¹² 'Tous ceux donc qui par leurs aïeux avoient dans leurs maisons de la grandeur, par des alliances des femmes descendues de ceux qui étoient autrefois maîtres et souverains des provinces de France, demandèrent la même prérogative que celle qui venoit d'être accordée au sang de Foix.' *Mém. de Motteville*, vol. iii. p. 117. Another contemporary says: 'Cette prétention émut toutes les maisons de la cour sur cette différence et inégalité.' *Mém. d'Omer Talon*, vol. iii. p. 6; and vol. ii. p. 437: 'le marquis

sides urgently insisting on their own claims, there was, for many months, imminent danger lest the question should be decided by an appeal to the sword.⁴¹³ But as the higher nobles, though less numerous than their opponents, were more powerful, the dispute was finally settled in their favour. The queen sent to their assembly a formal message, which was conveyed by four of the marshals of France, and in which she promised to revoke those privileges, the concession of which had given such offence to the most illustrious members of the French aristocracy. At the same time, the marshals not only pledged themselves as responsible for the promise of the queen, but undertook to sign an agreement that they would personally superintend its execution.⁴¹⁴ The nobles, however, who felt that they had been aggrieved in their most tender point, were not yet satisfied, and, to appease them, it was necessary that the atonement should be as public as the injury. It was found necessary, before they would peaceably disperse, that government should issue a document, signed by the queen-regent, and by the four secretaries of state,⁴¹⁵ in which the favours granted to the unprivileged nobility were withdrawn, and the much-cherished honour of sitting in the royal

de Noirmoutier et celui de Vitry demandoient le tabouret pour leurs femmes.’

⁴¹³ Indeed, at one moment, it was determined that a counter-demonstration should be made on the part of the inferior nobles; a proceeding which, if adopted, must have caused civil war: ‘Nous résolûmes une contre-assemblée de noblesse pour soutenir le tabouret de la maison de Rohan.’ *De Retz, Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 284.

⁴¹⁴ *Mém. de Motteville*, vol. iii. p. 389.

⁴¹⁵ ‘Signé d’elle et des quatre secrétaires d’état.’ *Ibid.* vol. iii. p. 391.

presence was taken away from the Princess de Marsillac, from Madame de Pons, and from the Countess de Fleix.⁴¹⁶

These were the subjects which occupied the minds and wasted the energies, of the French nobles, while their country was distracted by civil war, and while questions were at issue of the greatest importance – questions concerning the liberty of the nation, and the reconstruction of the government.⁴¹⁷ It is hardly necessary to point out how unfit such men must have been to head the people in their arduous struggle, and how immense was the difference between them and the leaders of the great English Rebellion. The causes of the failure of the Fronde are, indeed, obvious, when we consider that its chiefs were drawn from that very class respecting whose tastes and feelings some evidence has just been given.⁴¹⁸ How that evidence

⁴¹⁶ The best accounts of this great struggle will be found in the *Memoirs of Madame de Motteville*, and in those of Omer Talon; two writers of very different minds, but both of them deeply impressed with the magnitude of the contest.

⁴¹⁷ Saint-Aulaire (*Hist. de la Fronde*, vol. i. p. 317) says, that in this same year (1649), 'l'esprit de discussion fermentait dans toutes les têtes, et chacun à cette époque soumettait les actes de l'autorité à un examen raisonné.' Thus, too, in *Mém. de Montglat*, under 1649, 'on ne parlait publiquement dans Paris que de république et de liberté,'**RSQUvol. ii. p. 186. In 1648, 'effusa est contemptio super principes.' *Mém. d'Omer Talon*, vol. ii. p. 271.]

⁴¹⁸ That the failure of the Fronde is not to be ascribed to the inconstancy of the people, is admitted by De Retz, by far the ablest observer of his time: 'Vous vous étonnerez peut-être de ce que je dis plus sûr, à cause de l'instabilité du peuple: mais il faut avouer que celui de Paris se fixe plus aisément qu'aucun autre; et M. de Villeroi, qui a été le plus habile homme de son siècle, et qui en a parfaitement connu le naturel dans tout le cours de la ligue, où il le gouverna sous M. du Maine, a été de ce sentiment.

might be almost indefinitely extended, is well known to readers of the French memoirs of the seventeenth century – a class of works which, being mostly written either by the nobles or their adherents, supplies the best materials from which an opinion may be formed. In looking into these authorities, where such matters are related with a becoming sense of their importance, we find the greatest difficulties and disputes arising as to who was to have an arm-chair at court;⁴¹⁹ who was to be invited to the royal dinners, and who was to be excluded from them;⁴²⁰ who was to be kissed by the queen, and who was not to be kissed by her;⁴²¹ who should have the first seat in church;⁴²² what the

Ce que j'en éprouvois moi-même me le persuadoit.' *Mém. de Retz*, vol. i. p. 348; a remarkable passage, and forming a striking contrast to the declamation of those ignorant writers who are always reproaching the people with their fickleness.

⁴¹⁹ This knotty point was decided in favour of the Duke of York, to whom, in 1649, 'la reine fit de grands honneurs, et lui donna une chaise à bras.' *Mém. de Motteville*, vol. iii. p. 275. In the chamber of the king, the matter seems to have been differently arranged; for Omer Talon (*Mém.* vol. ii. p. 332) tells us that 'le duc d'Orléans n'avoit point de fauteuil, mais un simple siège pliant, à cause que nous étions dans la chambre du roi.' In the subsequent year, the scene not being in the king's room, the same writer describes 'M. le duc d'Orléans assis dans un fauteuil.' *Ibid.* vol. iii. p. 95. Compare *Le Vassor, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. viii. p. 310. Voltaire (*Dict. Philos.* art. *Cérémonies*) says: 'Le fauteuil à bras, la chaise à dos, le tabouret, la main droite et la main gauche, ont été pendant plusieurs siècles d'importants objets de politique, et d'illustres sujets de querelles.' *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. xxxvii. p. 486. The etiquette of the 'fauteuil' and 'chaise' is explained in *Mém. de Genlis*, vol. x. p. 287.

⁴²⁰ See *Mém. de Motteville*, vol. iii. pp. 309, 310.

⁴²¹ See a list of those it was proper for the queen to kiss, in *Mém. de Motteville*, vol. iii. p. 318.

⁴²² *Mém. de Omer Talon*, vol. i. pp. 217–219. The Prince de Condé hotly asserted,

proper proportion was between the rank of different persons, and the length of the cloth on which they were allowed to stand;⁴²³ what was the dignity a noble must have attained, in order to justify his entering the Louvre in a coach;⁴²⁴ who was to have precedence at coronations;⁴²⁵ whether all dukes were equal, or whether, as some thought, the Duke de Bouillon, having once possessed the sovereignty of Sedan, was superior to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, who had never possessed any sovereignty at all;⁴²⁶ whether the Duke de Beaufort ought or ought not to enter the council-chamber before the Duke de Nemours, and whether, being there, he ought to sit above him.⁴²⁷ These were

that at a *Te Deum* 'il ne pouvait être assis en autre place que dans la première chaire.' This was in 1642.

⁴²³ For a quarrel respecting the 'drap de pied,' see *Mém. de Motteville*, vol. ii. p. 249.

⁴²⁴ A very serious dispute was caused by the claim of the Prince de Marsillac, for 'permission d'entrer dans le Louvre en carrosse.' *Mém. de Motteville*, vol. iii. pp. 367–389.

⁴²⁵ *Mém. de Pontchartrain*, vol. i. pp. 422, 423, at the coronation of Louis XIII. Other instances of difficulties caused by questions of precedence, will be found in *Mém. d'Omer Talon*, vol. iii. pp. 23, 24, 437; and even in the grave work of Sully, *Économies Royales*, vol. vii. p. 126, vol. viii. p. 395; which should be compared with *De Thou, Hist. Univ.* vol. ix. pp. 86, 87.

⁴²⁶ *Mém. de Lenet*, vol. i. pp. 378, 379. Lenet, who was a great admirer of the nobles, relates all this without the faintest perception of its absurdity. I ought not to omit a terrible dispute, in 1652, respecting the recognition of the claims of the Duke de Rohan (*Mém. de Conrart*, pp. 151, 152); nor another dispute, in the reign of Henry IV., as to whether a duke ought to sign his name before a marshal, or whether a marshal should sign first. *De Thou, Hist. Univ.* vol. xi. p. 11.

⁴²⁷ This difficulty, in 1652, caused a violent quarrel between the two dukes, and ended in a duel in which the Duke de Nemours was killed, as is mentioned by most

the great questions of the day: while, as if to exhaust every form of absurdity, the most serious misunderstandings arose as to who should have the honour of giving the king his napkin as he ate his meals⁴²⁸ and who was to enjoy the inestimable privilege of helping on the queen with her shift.⁴²⁹

It may, perhaps, be thought that I owe some apology to the reader for obtruding upon his notice these miserable disputes respecting matters which, however despicable they now appear, were once valued by men not wholly devoid of understanding. But, it should be remembered that their occurrence, and above all, the importance formerly attached to them, is part of the history of the French mind; and they are therefore to be

of the contemporary writers. See *Mém. de Montglat*, vol. ii. p. 357; *Mém. de la Rochefoucauld*, vol. ii. p. 172; *Mém. de Conrart*, pp. 172–175; *Mém. de Retz*, vol. ii. p. 203; *Mém. d'Omer Talon*, vol. iii. p. 437.

⁴²⁸ Pontchartrain, one of the ministers of state, writes, under the year 1620: 'En ce même temps s'étoit mû un très-grand différend entre M. le prince de Condé et M. le comte de Soissons, sur le sujet de la serviette que chacun d'eux prétendoit devoir présenter au roi quand ils se rencontreroient tous deux près sa majesté.' *Mém. de Pontchartrain*, vol. ii. p. 295. Le Vassor, who gives a fuller account (*Règne de Louis XIII*, vol. iii. pp. 536, 537), says, 'Chacun des deux princes du sang, fort échauffez à qui feroit une fonction de maître d'hôtel, tiroit la serviette de son côté, et la contestation augmentoit d'une manière dont les suites pouvoient devenir fâcheuses.' But the king interposing, 'ils furent donc obligez de céder: mais ce ne fut pas sans se dire l'un à l'autre des paroles hautes et menaçantes.'

⁴²⁹ According to some authorities, a man ought to be a duke before his wife could be allowed to meddle with the queen's shift; according to other authorities, the lady-in-waiting, whoever she might be, had the right, unless a princess happened to be present. On these alternatives, and on the difficulties caused by them, compare *Mém. de Saint-Simon*, 1842, vol. vii. p. 125, with *Mém. de Motteville*, vol. ii. pp. 28, 276, 277.

estimated, not according to their intrinsic dignity, but according to the information they supply respecting a state of things which has now passed away. Events of this sort, though neglected by ordinary historians, are among the staff and staple of history. Not only do they assist in bringing before our minds the age to which they refer, but in a philosophic point of view they are highly important. They are part of the materials from which we may generalize the laws of that great protective spirit, which in different periods assumes different shapes; but which, whatever its form may be, always owes its power to the feeling of veneration as opposed to the feeling of independence. How natural this power is, in certain stages of society, becomes evident if we examine the basis on which veneration is itself supported. The origin of veneration is wonder and fear. These two passions, either alone or combined, are the ordinary source of veneration; and the way in which they arise is obvious. We wonder because we are ignorant, and we fear because we are weak. It is therefore natural, that in former times, when men were more ignorant and more weak than they now are, they should likewise have been more given to veneration, more inclined to those habits of reverence, which if carried into religion, cause superstition, and if carried into politics, cause despotism. In the ordinary march of society, those evils are remedied by that progress of knowledge, which at once lessens our ignorance and increases our resources: in other words, which diminishes our proneness to wonder and to fear, and thus weakening our feelings

of veneration, strengthens, in the same proportion, our feelings of independence. But in France, this natural tendency was, as we have already seen, counteracted by an opposite tendency; so that while, on the one hand, the protective spirit was enfeebled by the advance of knowledge, it was, on the other hand, invigorated by those social and political circumstances which I have attempted to trace; and by virtue of which, each class exercising great power over the one below it, the subordination and subserviency of the whole were completely maintained. Hence the mind became accustomed to look upwards, and to rely, not on its own resources, but on the resources of others. Hence that pliant and submissive disposition, for which the French, until the eighteenth century, were always remarkable. Hence, too, that inordinate respect for the opinions of others, on which vanity, as one of their national characteristics, is founded.⁴³⁰ For, the feelings of vanity and of veneration have evidently this in common, that they induce each man to measure his actions by a standard external to himself; while the opposite feelings of pride and of independence would make him prefer that internal standard which his own mind alone can supply. The result of all this was, that when, in the middle of the seventeenth century, the intellectual movement stimulated the French to rebellion, its effect was neutralized by that social tendency which, even in the midst of the struggle, kept alive the habits of their old subservience. Thus it was that, while

⁴³⁰ Also connected with the institution of chivalry, both being cognate symptoms of the same spirit.

the war went on, there still remained a constant inclination on the part of the people to look up to the nobles, on the part of the nobles to look up to the crown. Both classes relied upon what they saw immediately above them. The people believed that without the nobles there was no safety; the nobles believed that without the crown there was no honour. In the case of the nobles, this opinion can hardly be blamed; for as their distinctions proceed from the crown, they have a direct interest in upholding the ancient notion that the sovereign is the fountain of honour. They have a direct interest in that preposterous doctrine, according to which, the true source of honour being overlooked, our attention is directed to an imaginary source, by whose operation it is believed, that in a moment, and at the mere will of a prince, the highest honours may be conferred upon the meanest men. This, indeed, is but part of the old scheme to create distinctions for which nature has given no warrant; to substitute a superiority which is conventional for that which is real; and thus try to raise little minds above the level of great ones. The utter failure, and, as society advances, the eventual cessation of all such attempts, is certain; but it is evident, that as long as the attempts are made, they who profit by them must be inclined to value those from whom they proceed. Unless counteracting circumstances interpose, there must be between the two parties that sympathy which is caused by the memory of past favours, and the hope of future ones. In France, this natural feeling being strengthened by that protective spirit which induced men to cling to those above

them, it is not strange that the nobles, even in the midst of their turbulence, should seek the slightest favours of the crown with an eagerness of which some examples have just been given. They had been so long accustomed to look up to the sovereign as the source of their own dignity, that they believed there was some hidden dignity even in his commonest actions; so that, to their minds, it was a matter of the greatest importance which of them should hand him his napkin, which of them should hold his basin, and which of them should put on his shirt.⁴³¹ It is not, however, for the sake of casting ridicule upon these idle and frivolous men, that I have collected evidence respecting the disputes with which they were engrossed. So far from this, they are rather to be pitied than blamed: they acted according to their instincts; they even exerted such slender abilities as nature had given to them. But we may well feel for that great country whose interests depended on their care. And it is solely in reference to the fate of the French people that the historian need trouble himself with the history of the French nobles. At the same time, evidence of this sort, by disclosing the tendencies of the old nobility, displays in one of its most active forms that protective and aristocratic spirit, of which they know little who only know it in its present reduced and waning condition. Such facts are to be regarded as the symptoms of a cruel disease, by which Europe is indeed still afflicted, but

⁴³¹ Even just before the French Revolution, these feelings still existed. See, for instance the extraordinary details in *Campan, Mém. sur Marie-Antoinette*, vol. i. pp. 98, 99; which should be compared with an extract from *Prudhomme's Mirror de Paris*, in *Southey's Commonplace Book*, third series, 1850, p. 251, no. 165.

which we now see only in a very mitigated form, and of whose native virulence no one can have an idea, unless he has studied it in those early stages, when, raging uncontrolled, it obtained such a mastery as to check the growth of liberty, stop the progress of nations, and dwarf the energies of the human mind.

It is hardly necessary to trace at greater length the way in which France and England diverged from each other, or to point out what I hope will henceforth be considered the obvious difference between the civil wars in the two countries. It is evident that the low-born and plebeian leaders of our rebellion could have no sympathy with those matters which perplexed the understanding of the great French nobles. Men like Cromwell and his co-adjutors were not much versed in the mysteries of genealogy, or in the subtleties of heraldic lore. They had paid small attention to the etiquette of courts; they had not even studied the rules of precedence. All this was foreign to their design. On the other hand, what they did was done thoroughly. They knew that they had a great work to perform; and they performed it well.⁴³² They had risen in arms against a corrupt

⁴³² Ludlow thus expresses the sentiments which induced him to make war upon the crown: 'The question in dispute between the king's party and us being, as I apprehend, whether the king should govern as a god by his will, and the nation be governed by force like beasts? or whether the people should be governed by laws made by themselves, and live under a government derived from their own consent? being fully persuaded, that an accommodation with the king was unsafe to the people of England, and unjust and wicked in the nature of it.' *Ludlow's Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 230. Compare Whitlocke's spirited speech to Christina, in *Journal of the Swedish Embassy*, vol. i. p. 238; and see pp. 390, 391.

and despotic government, and they would not stay their hands until they had pulled down those who were in high places; until they had not only removed the evil, but had likewise chastised those bad men by whom the evil was committed. And although in this, their glorious undertaking, they did undoubtedly display some of the infirmities to which even the highest minds are subject; we, at least, ought never to speak of them but with that unfeigned respect which is due to those who taught the first great lesson to the kings of Europe, and who, in language not to be mistaken, proclaimed to them that the impunity which they had long enjoyed was now come to an end, and that against their transgressions the people possessed a remedy, sharper, and more decisive, than any they had hitherto ventured to use.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROTECTIVE SPIRIT CARRIED BY LOUIS XIV. INTO LITERATURE. EXAMINATION OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE INTELLECTUAL CLASSES AND THE GOVERNING CLASSES

The reader will now be able to understand how it was that the protective system, and the notions of subordination connected with it, gained in France a strength unknown in England, and caused an essential divergence between the two countries. To complete the comparison, it seems necessary to examine how this same spirit influenced the purely intellectual history of France as well as its social and political history. For the ideas of dependence upon which the protective scheme is based, encouraged a belief that the subordination which existed in politics and in society ought also to exist in literature; and that the paternal, inquisitive, and centralizing system which regulated the material interests of the country, should likewise regulate

the interests of its knowledge. When, therefore, the Fronde was finally overthrown, everything was prepared for that singular intellectual polity which, during fifty years characterised the reign of Louis XIV., and which was to French literature what feudalism was to French politics. In both cases, homage was paid by one party, and protection and favour accorded by the other. Every man of letters became a vassal of the French crown. Every book was written with a view to the royal favour; and to obtain the patronage of the king was considered the most decisive proof of intellectual eminence. The effects produced by this system will be examined in the present chapter. The apparent cause of the system was the personal character of Louis XIV.; but the real and overruling causes were those circumstances which I have already pointed out, and which established in the French mind associations that remained undisturbed until the eighteenth century. To invigorate those associations, and to carry them into every department of life, was the great aim of Louis XIV.; and in that he was completely successful. It is on this account that the history of his reign becomes highly instructive, because we see in it the most remarkable instance of despotism which has ever occurred; a despotism of the largest and most comprehensive kind; a despotism of fifty years over one of the most civilized people in Europe, who not only bore the yoke without repining, but submitted with cheerfulness, and even with gratitude, to him by whom it was imposed.⁴³³

⁴³³ On the disgraceful subserviency of the most eminent men of letters, see

What makes this the more strange is, that the reign of Louis XIV. must be utterly condemned if it is tried even by the lowest standard of morals, of honour, or of interest. A coarse and unbridled profligacy, followed by the meanest and most grovelling superstition, characterized his private life, while in his public career he displayed an arrogance and a systematic perfidy which eventually roused the anger of all Europe, and brought upon France sharp and signal retribution. As to his domestic policy, he formed a strict alliance with the church; and although he resisted the authority of the Pope, he willingly left his subjects to be oppressed by the tyranny of the clergy.⁴³⁴ To them he abandoned everything except the exercise of his own

Capefigue's Louis XIV., vol. i. pp. 41, 42, 116; and on the feeling of the people, Le Vassor, who wrote late in the reign of Louis XIV., bitterly says, 'mais les Français, accoutumés à l'esclavage, ne sentent plus la pesanteur de leurs chaînes.' *Le Vassor, Hist. de Louis XIII*, vol. vi. p. 670. Foreigners were equally amazed at the general, and still more, at the willing servility. Lord Shaftesbury, in a letter dated February 1704–5, passes a glowing eulogy upon liberty; but he adds, that in France 'you will hardly find this argument understood; for whatever flashes may now and then appear, I never yet knew one single Frenchman a free man.' *Forster's Original Letters of Locke, Sidney, and Shaftesbury*, 1830, p. 205. In the same year, De Foe makes a similar remark in regard to the French nobles, *Wilson's Life of De Foe*, vol. ii. p. 209; and, in 1699, Addison writes from Blois a letter which strikingly illustrates the degradation of the French. *Aikin's Life of Addison*, vol. i. p. 80. Compare *Burnet's Own Time*, vol. iv. p. 365, on 'the gross excess of flattery to which the French have run, beyond the examples of former ages, in honour of their king.'

⁴³⁴ The terms of this compact between the crown and the church are fairly stated by M. Ranke: 'Wir sehen, die beiden Gewalten unterstützten einander. Der König ward von den Einwirkungen der weltlichen, der Clerus von der unbedingten Autorität der geistlichen Gewalt des Papstthums freigesprochen.' *Die Päpste*, vol. iii. p. 168.

prerogative.⁴³⁵ Led on by them, he, from the moment he assumed the Government, began to encroach upon those religious liberties of which Henry IV. had laid the foundation, and which down to this period had been preserved intact.⁴³⁶ It was at the instigation of the clergy that he revoked the Edict of Nantes, by which the principle of toleration had for nearly a century been incorporated with the law of the land.⁴³⁷ It was at their instigation that, just before this outrage upon the most sacred rights of his subjects, he, in order to terrify the Protestants into conversion, suddenly let loose upon them whole troops of dissolute soldiers, who were allowed to practise the most revolting cruelties. The frightful barbarities which followed are related by authentic writers;⁴³⁸

⁴³⁵ This part of his character is skilfully drawn by Sismondi, *Hist. des Français*, vol. xxv. p. 43.

⁴³⁶ Flassion supposes that the first persecuting laws were in 1679: 'Des l'année 1679 les concessions faites aux protestans avaient été graduellement restreintes.' *Diplomatie Française*, vol. iv. p. 92. But the fact is, that these laws began in 1662, the year after the death of Mazarin. See Sismondi, *Hist. des Français*, vol. xxv. p. 167; Benoist, *Edit. de Nantes*, vol. iii. pp. 460–462, 481. In 1667, a letter from Thynne to Lord Clarendon (*Lister's Life of Clarendon*, vol. iii. p. 446) mentions 'the horrid persecutions the reformed religion undergoes in France;' and Locke, who travelled in France in 1675 and 1676, states in his Journal (*King's Life of Locke*, vol. i. p. 110) that the Protestants were losing 'every day some privilege or other.'

⁴³⁷ An account of the revocation will be found in all the French historians; but I do not remember that any of them have noticed that there was a rumour of it in Paris twenty years before it occurred. In March 1665 Patin writes, 'On dit que, pour miner les huguenots, le roi veut supprimer les chambres de l'édit, et abolir l'édit de Nantes.' *Lettres de Patin*, vol. iii. p. 516.

⁴³⁸ Compare Burnet's *Own Time*, vol. iii. pp. 73–76, with *Siècle de Louis XIV*, in *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. xx. pp. 377, 378. Voltaire says that the Protestants who

and of the effect produced on the material interests of the

persisted in their religion 'étaient livrés aux soldats, qui eurent toute licence, excepté celle de tuer. Il y eut pourtant plusieurs personnes si cruellement maltraitées qu'elles en moururent.' And Burnet, who was in France in 1685, says, 'all men set their thoughts on work to invent new methods of cruelty.' What some of those methods were, I shall now relate; because the evidence, however painful it may be, is necessary to enable us to understand the reign of Louis XIV. It is necessary that the veil should be rent; and that the squeamish delicacy which would hide such facts, should give way before the obligation which the historian is under of holding up to public opprobrium, and branding with public infamy, the church by which the measures were instigated, the sovereign by whom they were enforced, and the age in which they were permitted. The two original sources for our knowledge of these events are, *Quick's Synodicon in Gallia*, 1692, folio; and *Benoist, Histoire de l'Edit de Nantes*, 1695, 4to. From these works I extract the following accounts of what happened in France in 1685. 'Afterwards they fall upon the persons of the Protestants; and there was no wickedness, though never so horrid, which they did not put in practice, that they might enforce them to change their religion. . . They bound them as criminals are when they be put to the rack; and in that posture, putting a funnel into their mouths, they poured wine down their throats till its fumes had deprived them of their reason, and they had in that condition made them consent to become Catholics. Some they stripped stark naked, and after they had offered them a thousand indignities, they stuck them with pins from head to foot; they cut them with pen-knives, tear them by the noses with red-hot pincers, and dragged them about the rooms till they promised to become Roman Catholics, or that the doleful outcries of these poor tormented creatures, calling upon God for mercy, constrained them to let them go. . . In some places they tied fathers and husbands to the bed-posts, and ravished their wives and daughters before their eyes. . . From others they pluck off the nails of their hands and toes, which must needs cause an intolerable pain. They burnt the feet of others. They blew up men and women with bellows, till they were ready to burst in pieces. If these horrid usages could not prevail upon them to violate their consciences, and abandon their religion, they did then imprison them in close and noisome dungeons, in which they exercised all kinds of inhumanities upon them.' *Quick's Synodicon*, vol. i. pp. cxxx. cxxxi. 'Cependant les troupes exerçoient partout de cruautéz inouïes. Tout leur étoit permis, pourveu qu'ils ne fissent pas mourir. Ils faisoient danser quelquefois leurs hôtes, jusqu'à ce qu'ils tombassent en défaillance.

nation, some idea may be formed from the fact, that these religious persecutions cost France half a million of her most

Ils bernoient les autres jusqu'à ce qu'ils n'en pouvoient plus... Il y en eut quelques-uns à qui on versa de l'eau bouillante dans la bouche... Il y en eut plusieurs à qui on donna des coups de bâton sous les pieds, pour éprouver si ce supplice est aussi cruel que les relations le publient. On arrachoit à d'autres le poil de la barbe... D'autres brûloient à la chandelle le poil des bras et des jambes de leurs hôtes. D'autres faisoient brûler de la poudre, si près du visage de ceux qui leur resistoient, qu'elle leur grilloit toute la peau. Ils mettoient à d'autres des charbons allumez dans les mains, et les contraignoient de les tenir fermées, jusqu'à ce que les charbons fussent éteints... On brûla les pieds à plusieurs, tenant les uns long-tems devant un grand feu; appliquant aux autres une pelle ardente sous les pieds; liant les pieds des autres dans des bottines pleines de graisse, qu'on faisoit fondre et chauffer peu à peu devant un brasier ardent.' *Benoist, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. v. pp. 887–889. One of the Protestants, named Ryau, they 'lièrent fort étroitement; lui sevrèrent les doigts des mains; lui fichèrent des épingles sous les ongles; lui firent brûler de la poudre dans les oreilles; lui percèrent les cuisses en plusieurs lieux, et versèrent du vinaigre et du sel dans ses blessures. *Par ce tourment ils épuisèrent sa patience en deux jours; et le forcèrent à changer de religion*,' p. 890. 'Ses dragons étoient les mêmes en tous lieux. Ils battoient, ils étourdissoient, ils brûloient en Bourgogne comme en Poitou, en Champagne comme en Guyenne, en Normandie comme en Languedoc. Mais ils n'avoient pour les femmes ni plus de respect, ni plus de pitié que pour les hommes. Au contraire, ils abusoient de la tendre pudeur qui est une des propriétés de leur sexe; et ils s'en prevaloient pour leur faire de plus sensibles outrages. On leur levoit quelquefois leurs jupes par dessus la tête, et on leur jetoit des seaux d'eau sur le corps. Il y en eut plusieurs que les soldats mirent en chemise, et qu'ils forcèrent de danser avec eux dans cet état... Deux filles de Calais, nommées le Noble, furent mises toutes nuës sur le pavé, et furent ainsi exposées à la mocquerie et aux outrages des passans... Des dragons ayant lié la dame de Vezençai à la quenouille de son lit, lui crachoient dans la bouche quand elle l'ouvroit pour parler ou pour soupirer.' pp. 891, 892. At p. 917 are other details, far more horrible, respecting the treatment of women, and which indignation rather than shame prevents me from transcribing. Indeed, the shame can only light on the church and the government under whose united authority such scandalous outrages could be openly perpetrated, merely for the sake of compelling men to change their religious opinions.

industrious inhabitants, who fled to different parts, taking with them those habits of labour, and that knowledge and experience in their respective trades, which had hitherto been employed in enriching their own country.⁴³⁹ These things are notorious, they are incontestable, and they lie on the surface of history. Yet, in the face of them there are still found men who hold up for admiration the age of Louis XIV. Although it is well known that in his reign every vestige of liberty was destroyed; that the people were weighed down by an insufferable taxation; that their children were torn from them by tens of thousands to swell the royal armies; that the resources of the country were squandered to an unprecedented extent; that a despotism of the worst kind was firmly established; – although all this is universally admitted, yet there are writers, even in our own day, who are so infatuated with the glories of literature, as to balance them against the most enormous crimes, and who will forgive every injury inflicted by a prince during whose life there were produced the Letters of Pascal, the orations of Bossuet, the Comedies of Molière, and the Tragedies of Racine.

This method of estimating the merits of a sovereign is, indeed,

⁴³⁹ M. Blanqui (*Hist. de l'Economie Politique*, vol. ii. p. 10) says, that the revocation of the Edict of Nantes cost France 'cinq cent mille de ses enfants les plus industrieux,' who carried into other countries 'les habitudes d'ordre et de travail dont ils étaient imbus.' See also *Siècle de Louis XIV*, chap. xxxvi., in *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. xx. pp. 380, 381. Several of them emigrated to North America. Compare *Godwin on Population*, pp. 388, 389, with *Benoist, l'Edit de Nantes*, vol. v. pp. 973, 974, and *Lyell's Second Visit to the United States*, edit. 1849, vol. ii. p. 159. See also, on the effects of the Revocation, *Lettres inédites de Voltaire*, vol. ii. p. 473.

so rapidly dying away, that I shall not spend any words in refuting it. But it is connected with a more widely diffused error respecting the influence of royal patronage upon national literature. This is a delusion which men of letters have themselves been the first to propagate. From the language too many of them are in the habit of employing, we might be led to believe that there is some magical power in the smiles of a king which stimulates the intellect of the fortunate individual whose heart they are permitted to gladden. Nor must this be despised as one of those harmless prejudices that still linger round the person of the sovereign. It is not only founded on a misconception of the nature of things, but it is in its practical consequences very injurious. It is injurious to the independent spirit which literature should always possess; and it is injurious to princes themselves, because it strengthens that vanity of which they generally have too large a share. Indeed, if we consider the position they now occupy in the most civilized countries, we shall at once see the absurdity of an opinion which, in the present state of knowledge, is unfit to be held by educated men.

From the moment that there was finally abandoned the theological fiction of the divine right of kings, it necessarily followed that the respect felt for them should suffer a corresponding diminution.⁴⁴⁰ The superstitious reverence with

⁴⁴⁰ On the diminished respect for kings, caused by the abandonment of divine right, see *Spencer's Social Statics*, pp. 423, 424; and on the influence of the clergy in propagating the old doctrine, see Allen's learned work on the *Royal Prerogative*, edit. 1849, p. 156. See also some striking remarks by Locke, in *King's Life of Locke*, vol

which they were formerly regarded is extinct, and at the present day we are no longer awed by that divinity with which their persons were once supposed to be hedged.⁴⁴¹ The standard, therefore, by which we should measure them is obvious. We should applaud their conduct in proportion as they contribute towards the happiness of the nation over which they are intrusted with power; but we ought to remember that, from the manner in which they are educated, and from the childish homage always paid to them, their information must be very inaccurate, and their prejudices very numerous.⁴⁴² On this account, so far from expecting that they should be judicious patrons of literature, or should in any way head their age, we ought to be satisfied if they do not obstinately oppose the spirit of their time, and if

ii. p. 90.

⁴⁴¹ 'Qu'est devenu, en effet, le droit divin, cette pensée, autrefois acceptée par les masses, que les rois étaient les représentants de Dieu sur la terre, que la racine de leur pouvoir était dans le ciel? Elle s'est évanouie devant cette autre pensée, qu'aucun nuage, aucun mysticisme n'obscurcit; devant cette pensée si naturelle et brillant d'une clarté si nette et si vive, que la souveraine puissance, sur la terre, appartient au peuple entier, et non à une fraction, et moins encore à un seul homme.' *Rey, Science Sociale*, vol. iii. p. 308. Compare *Manning on the Law of Nations*, p. 101; *Laing's Sweden*, p. 408; *Laing's Denmark*, p. 196; *Burke's Works*, vol. i. p. 391.

⁴⁴² In this, as in all instances, the language of respect long survives the feeling to which the language owed its origin. Lord Brougham (*Political Philosophy*, vol. i. p. 42, Lond. 1849) observes, that 'all their titles are derived from a divine original – all refer to them as representing the Deity on earth. They are called "Grace," "Majesty." They are termed "The Lord's anointed," "The Vicegerent of God upon earth;" with many other names which are either nonsensical or blasphemous, but which are outdone in absurdity by the kings of the East.' True enough: but if Lord Brougham had written thus three centuries ago, he would have had his ears cut off for his pains.

they do not attempt to stop the march of society. For, unless the sovereign, in spite of the intellectual disadvantages of his position, is a man of very enlarged mind, it must usually happen that he will reward, not those who are most able, but those who are most compliant; and that while he refuses his patronage to a profound and independent thinker, he will grant it to an author who cherishes ancient prejudices and defends ancient abuses. In this way, the practice of conferring on men of letters either honorary or pecuniary rewards, is agreeable, no doubt, to those who receive them; but has a manifest tendency to weaken the boldness and energy of their sentiments, and therefore to impair the value of their works. This might be made evident by publishing a list of those literary pensions which have been granted by European princes. If this were done, the mischief produced by these and similar rewards would be clearly seen. After a careful study of the history of literature, I think myself authorised to say, that for one instance in which a sovereign has recompensed a man who is before his age, there are at least twenty instances of his recompensing one who is behind his age. The result is, that in every country where royal patronage has been long and generally bestowed, the spirit of literature, instead of being progressive, has become reactionary. An alliance has been struck up between those who give and those who receive. By a system of bounties, there has been artificially engendered a greedy and necessitous class; who, eager for pensions, and offices, and titles, have made the pursuit of truth subordinate

to the desire of gain, and have infused into their writings the prejudices of the court to which they cling. Hence it is, that the marks of favour have become the badge of servitude. Hence it is, that the acquisition of knowledge, by far the noblest of all occupations, an occupation which of all others raises the dignity of man, has been debased to the level of a common profession, where the chances of success are measured by the number of rewards, and where the highest honours are in the gift of whoever happens to be the minister or sovereign of the day.

This tendency forms of itself a decisive objection to the views of those who wish to entrust the executive government with the means of rewarding literary men. But there is also another objection, in some respects still more serious. Every nation which is allowed to pursue its course uncontrolled, will easily satisfy the wants of its own intellect, and will produce such a literature as is best suited to its actual condition. And it is evidently for the interest of all classes that the production shall not be greater than the want; that the supply shall not exceed the demand. It is, moreover, necessary to the well-being of society that a healthy proportion should be kept up between the intellectual classes and the practical classes. It is necessary that there should be a certain ratio between those who are most inclined to think, and those who are most inclined to act. If we were all authors, our material interests would suffer; if we were all men of business, our mental pleasures would be abridged. In the first case, we should be famished philosophers; in the other case, we should

be wealthy fools. Now, it is obvious that, according to the commonest principles of human action the relative numbers of these two classes will be adjusted, without effort, by the natural, or, as we call it, the spontaneous movement of society. But if a government takes upon itself to pension literary men, it disturbs this movement; it troubles the harmony of things. This is the unavoidable result of that spirit of interference, or, as it is termed, protection, by which every country has been greatly injured. If, for instance, a fund were set apart by the state for rewarding butchers and tailors, it is certain that the number of those useful men would be needlessly augmented. If another fund is appropriated for the literary classes, it is as certain that men of letters will increase more rapidly than the exigencies of the country require. In both cases, an artificial stimulus will produce an unhealthy action. Surely, food and clothes are as necessary for the body as literature is for the mind. Why, then, should we call upon government to encourage those who write our books, any more than to encourage those who kill our mutton and mend our garments? The truth is, that the intellectual march of society is, in this respect, exactly analogous to its physical march. In some instances a forced supply may, indeed, create an unnatural want. But this is an artificial state of things, which indicates a diseased action. In a healthy condition, it is not the supply which causes the want, but it is the want which gives rise to the supply. To suppose, therefore, that an increase of authors would necessarily be followed by a diffusion of knowledge, is as if we were to

suppose that an increase of butchers must be followed by a diffusion of food. This is not the way in which things are ordered. Men must have appetite before they will eat; they must have money before they can buy; they must be inquisitive before they will read. The two great principles which move the world are, the love of wealth and the love of knowledge. These two principles respectively represent and govern the two most important classes into which every civilized country is divided. What a government gives to one of these classes, it must take from the other. What it gives to literature, it must take from wealth. This can never be done to any great extent, without entailing the most ruinous consequences. For, the natural proportions of society being destroyed, society itself will be thrown into confusion. While men of letters are protected, men of industry will be depressed. The lower classes can count for little in the eyes of those to whom literature is the first consideration. The idea of the liberty of the people will be discouraged; their persons will be oppressed; their labour will be taxed. The arts necessary to life will be despised, in order that those which embellish life may be favoured. The many will be ruined, that the few may be pleased. While every thing is splendid above, all will be rotten below. Fine pictures, noble palaces, touching dramas – these may for a time be produced in profusion, but it will be at the cost of the heart and strength of the nation. Even the class for whom the sacrifice has been made, will soon decay. Poets may continue to sing the praises of the prince who has bought them

with his gold. It is, however, certain that men who begin by losing their independence, will end by losing their energy. Their intellect must be robust indeed, if it does not wither in the sickly atmosphere of a court. Their attention being concentrated on their master, they insensibly contract those habits of servility which are suited to their position; and, as the range of their sympathies is diminished, the use and action of their genius become impaired. To them submission is a custom, and servitude a pleasure. In their hands, literature soon loses its boldness, tradition is appealed to as the ground of truth, and the spirit of inquiry is extinguished. Then it is, that there comes one of those sad moments in which, no outlet being left for public opinion, the minds of men are unable to find a vent; their discontents, having no voice, slowly rankle into a deadly hatred; their passions accumulate in silence, until at length, losing all patience, they are goaded into one of those terrible revolutions, by which they humble the pride of their rulers, and carry retribution even into the heart of the palace.

The truth of this picture is well known to those who have studied the history of Louis XIV., and the connection between it and the French Revolution. That prince adopted, during his long reign, the mischievous practice of rewarding literary men with large sums of money, and of conferring on them numerous marks of personal favour. As this was done for more than half a century; and as the wealth which he thus unscrupulously employed was of course taken from his other subjects, we can

find no better illustration of the results which such patronage is likely to produce. He, indeed, has the merit of organizing into a system that protection of literature which some are so anxious to restore. What the effect of this was upon the general interests of knowledge, we shall presently see. But its effect upon authors themselves should be particularly attended to by those men of letters who, with little regard to their own dignity, are constantly reproaching the English government for neglecting the profession of which they themselves are members. In no age have literary men been awarded with such profuseness as in the reign of Louis XIV.; and in no age have they been so mean-spirited, so servile, so utterly unfit to fulfil their great vocation as the apostles of knowledge and the missionaries of truth. The history of the most celebrated authors of that time proves that, notwithstanding their acquirements, and the power of their minds, they were unable to resist the surrounding corruption. To gain the favour of the king, they sacrificed that independent spirit which should have been dearer to them than life. They gave away the inheritance of genius; they sold their birthright for a mess of pottage. What happened then, would under the same circumstances happen now. A few eminent thinkers may be able for a certain time to resist the pressure of their age. But, looking at mankind generally, society can have no hold on any class except through the medium of their interests. It behoves, therefore, every people to take heed, that the interests of literary men are on their side rather than on the side of their rulers. For,

literature is the representative of intellect, which is progressive; government is the representative of order, which is stationary. As long as these two great powers are separate, they will correct and react upon each other, and the people may hold the balance. If, however, these powers coalesce, if the government can corrupt the intellect, and if the intellect will yield to the government, the inevitable result must be, despotism in politics, and servility in literature. This was the history of France under Louis XIV.: and this, we may rest assured, will be the history of every country that shall be tempted to follow so attractive but so fatal an example.

The reputation of Louis XIV. originated in the gratitude of men of letters; but it is now supported by a popular notion that the celebrated literature of his age is mainly to be ascribed to his fostering care. If, however, we examine this opinion, we shall find that, like many of the traditions of which history is full, it is entirely devoid of truth. We shall find two leading circumstances, which will prove that the literary splendour of his reign was not the result of his efforts, but was the work of that great generation which preceded him; and that the intellect of France, so far from being benefited by his munificence, was hampered by his protection.

I. The first circumstance is, that the immense impulse which, during the administrations of Richelieu and of Mazarin, had been given to the highest branches of knowledge, was suddenly stopped. In 1661 Louis XIV. assumed the government;⁴⁴³ and

⁴⁴³ 'La première période du gouvernement de Louis XIV commence donc en 1661.'

from that moment until his death, in 1715, the history of France, so far as great discoveries are concerned, is a blank in the annals of Europe. If, putting aside all preconceived notions respecting the supposed glory of that age, we examine the matter fairly, it will be seen that in every department there was a manifest dearth of original thinkers. There was much that was elegant, much that was attractive. The senses of men were soothed and flattered by the creations of art, by paintings, by palaces, by poems; but scarcely any thing of moment was added to the sum of human knowledge. If we take the mathematics, and those mixed sciences to which they are applicable, it will be universally admitted that their most successful cultivators in France during the seventeenth century were Descartes, Pascal, Fermat, Gassendi, and Mersenne. But, so far from Louis XIV. having any share in the honour due to them, these eminent men were engaged in their investigations while the king was still in his cradle, and completed them before he assumed the government, and therefore before his system of protection came into play. Descartes died in 1650,⁴⁴⁴ when the king was twelve years old. Pascal, whose name, like that of Descartes, is commonly associated with the age of Louis XIV., had gained an European reputation while Louis, occupied in the nursery with his toys, was not aware that any such man existed. His treatise on conic

Capefigue's Louis XIV., vol. i. p. 4.

⁴⁴⁴ *Biog. Univ.* vol. xi. p. 157.

sections was written in 1639;⁴⁴⁵ his decisive experiments on the weight of air were made in 1648;⁴⁴⁶ and his researches on the cycloid, the last great inquiry he ever undertook, were in 1658,⁴⁴⁷ when Louis, still under the tutelage of Mazarin, had no sort of authority. Fermat was one of the most profound thinkers of the seventeenth century, particularly as a geometrician, in which respect he was second only to Descartes.⁴⁴⁸ The most important steps he took are those concerning the geometry of infinites, applied to the ordinates and tangents of curves; which, however, he completed in or before 1636.⁴⁴⁹ As to Gassendi and Mersenne,

⁴⁴⁵ In *Biog. Univ.* vol. xxxiii. p. 50, he is said to have composed it 'à l'âge de seize ans;' and at p. 46, to have been born in 1623.

⁴⁴⁶ *Leslie's Natural Philosophy*, p. 201; *Bordas Demoulin, Le Cartésianisme*, vol. i. p. 310. Sir John Herschel (*Disc. on Nat. Philos.* pp. 229, 230) calls this 'one of the first, if not the very first,' crucial instance recorded in physics; and he thinks that it 'tended, more powerfully than any thing which had previously been done in science, to confirm in the minds of men that disposition to experimental verification which had scarcely yet taken full and secure root.' In this point of view, the addition it actually made to knowledge is the smallest part of its merit.

⁴⁴⁷ Montucla (*Hist. des Mathématiques*, vol. ii. p. 61) says, 'vers 1658;' and at p. 65, 'il se mit, vers le commencement de 1658, à considérer plus profondément les propriétés de cette courbe.'

⁴⁴⁸ Montucla (*Hist. des Mathémat.* vol. ii. p. 136) enthusiastically declares that 'si Descartes eût manqué à l'esprit humain, Fermat l'eût remplacé en géométrie.' Simson, the celebrated restorer of Greek geometry, said that Fermat was the only modern who understood porisms. See *Trail's Account of Simson*, 1812, 4to. pp. 18, 41. On the connexion between his views and the subsequent discovery of the differential calculus, see *Brewster's Life of Newton*, vol. ii. pp. 7, 8; and compare *Comte, Philosophie Positive*, vol. i. pp. 228, 229, 726, 727.

⁴⁴⁹ See extracts from two letters written by Fermat to Roberval, in 1636, in *Montucla*,

it is enough to say that Gassendi died in 1655,⁴⁵⁰ six years before Louis was at the head of affairs; while Mersenne died in 1648,⁴⁵¹ when the great king was ten years old.

These were the men who flourished in France just before the system of Louis XIV. came into operation. Shortly after their death the patronage of the king began to tell upon the national intellect; and during the next fifty years no addition of importance was made to either branch of the mathematics, or, with the single exception of acoustics,⁴⁵² to any of the sciences to which the mathematics are applied.⁴⁵³ The further the seventeenth century advanced, the more evident did the

Hist. des Mathématiques, vol. ii. pp. 136, 137; respecting which there is no notice in the meagre article on Fermat, in *Hutton's Mathematical Dictionary*, vol. i. p. 510, 4to. 1815. It is a disgrace to English mathematicians that this unsatisfactory work of Hutton's should still remain the best they have produced on the history of their own science. The same disregard of dates is shown in the hasty remarks on Fermat by Playfair. See *Playfair's Dissertation on the Progress of Mathematical Science*, *Encyclop. Brit.* vol. i. p. 440, 7th edition.

⁴⁵⁰ *Hutton's Mathemat. Dict.* vol. i. p. 572.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 46.

⁴⁵² Of which Sauveur may be considered the creator. Compare *Eloge de Sauveur*, in *Œuvres de Fontenelle*, Paris, 1766, vol. v. p. 435, with *Whewell's Hist. of the Induc. Sciences*, vol. ii. p. 334; *Comte, Philos. Pos.* vol. ii. pp. 627, 628.

⁴⁵³ In the report presented to Napoleon by the French Institute, it is said of the reign of Louis XIV., 'les sciences exactes et les sciences physiques peu cultivées en France dans un siècle qui paroissoit ne trouver de charmes que dans la littérature.' *Dacier, Rapport Historique*, p. 24. Or, as Lacretelle expresses it (*Dix-huitième Siècle*, vol. ii. p. 10), 'La France, après avoir fourni Descartes et Pascal, eut pendant quelque temps à envier aux nations étrangères la gloire de produire des génies créateurs dans les sciences.'

decline become, and the more clearly can we trace the connexion between the waning powers of the French, and that protective spirit which enfeebled the energies it wished to strengthen. Louis had heard that astronomy is a noble study; he was therefore anxious, by encouraging its cultivation in France, to add to the glories of his own name.⁴⁵⁴ With this view, he rewarded its professors with unexampled profusion; he built the splendid Observatory of Paris; he invited to his court the most eminent foreign astronomers, Cassini from Italy, Römer from Denmark, Huygens from Holland. But, as to native ability, France did not produce a single man who made even one of those various discoveries which mark the epochs of astronomical science. In other countries vast progress was made; and Newton in particular, by his immense generalizations, reformed nearly every branch of physics, and remodelled astronomy by carrying the laws of gravitation to the extremity of the solar system. On the other hand, France had fallen into such a torpor, that these wonderful discoveries, which changed the face of knowledge, were entirely neglected, there being no instance of any French astronomer adopting them until 1732, that is, forty-five years after they had been published by their immortal author.⁴⁵⁵ Even

⁴⁵⁴ A writer late in the seventeenth century says, with some simplicity, 'the present king of France is reputed an encourager of choice and able men, in all faculties, who can attribute to his greatness.' *Aubrey's Letters*, vol. ii. p. 624.

⁴⁵⁵ The *Principia* of Newton appeared in 1687; and Maupertuis, in 1732, 'was the first astronomer of France who undertook a critical defence of the theory of gravitation.' *Grant's Hist. of Physical Astronomy*, pp. 31, 43. In 1738, Voltaire writes,

in matters of detail, the most valuable improvement made by French astronomers during the power of Louis XIV. was not original. They laid claim to the invention of the micrometer; an admirable resource, which, as they supposed, was first contrived by Picard and Auzout.⁴⁵⁶ The truth, however, is, that here again they were anticipated by the activity of a freer and less protected people; since the micrometer was invented by Gascoigne in or just before 1639, when the English monarch, so far from having leisure to patronize science, was about to embark in that struggle which, ten years later, cost him his crown and his life.⁴⁵⁷

‘La France est jusqu'à présent le seul pays où les théories de Newton en physique, et de Boerhaave en médecine, soient combattues. Nous n'avons pas encore de bons éléments de physique; nous avons pour toute astronomie le livre de Bion, qui n'est qu'un ramas informe de quelques mémoires de l'académie.’ *Correspond.* in *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. xlvii. p. 340. On the tardy reception of Newton's discoveries in France, compare *Eloge de Lacaille*, in *Œuvres de Bailly*, Paris, 1790, vol. i. pp. 175, 176. All this is the more remarkable, because several of the conclusions at which Newton had arrived were divulged before they were embodied in the *Principia*; and it appears from *Brewster's Life of Newton* (vol. i. pp. 25, 26, 290), that his speculations concerning gravity began in 1666, or perhaps in the autumn of 1665.

⁴⁵⁶ ‘L'abbé Picard fut en société avec Auzout, l'inventeur du micromètre.’ *Biog. Univ.* vol. xxxiv. p. 253. See also *Préface de l'Hist. de l'Acad. des Sciences*, in *Œuvres de Fontenelle*, Paris, 1766, vol. x. p. 20.

⁴⁵⁷ The best account I have seen of the invention of the micrometer, is in Mr. Grant's recent work, *History of Physical Astronomy*, pp. 428, 450–453, where it is proved that Gascoigne invented it in 1639, or possibly a year or two earlier. Compare *Humboldt's Cosmos*, vol. iii. p. 52; who also ascribes it to Gascoigne, but erroneously dates it in 1640. Montucla (*Hist. des Mathémat.* vol. ii. pp. 570, 571) admits the priority of Gascoigne; but underrates his merit, being apparently unacquainted with the evidence which Mr. Grant subsequently adduced.

The absence in France, during this period, not only of great discoveries, but also of mere practical ingenuity, is certainly very striking. In investigations requiring minute accuracy, the necessary tools, if at all complicated, were made by foreigners, the native workmen being too unskilled to construct them; and Dr. Lister, who was a very competent judge,⁴⁵⁸ and who was in Paris at the end of the seventeenth century, supplies evidence that the best mathematical instruments sold in that city were made, not by a Frenchman, but by Butterfield, an Englishman residing there.⁴⁵⁹ Nor did they succeed better in matters of immediate and obvious utility. The improvements effected in manufactures were few and insignificant, and were calculated, not for the comfort of the people, but for the luxury of the idle classes.⁴⁶⁰ What was

⁴⁵⁸ For a short account of this able man, see *Lankester's Mem. of Ray*, p. 17.

⁴⁵⁹ Notwithstanding the strong prejudice then existing against Englishmen, Butterfield was employed by 'the king and all the princes.' *Lister's Account of Paris at the close of the Seventeenth Century*, edited by Dr. Henning, p. 85. Fontenelle mentions 'M. Hubin,' as one of the most celebrated makers in Paris in 1687 (*Eloge d'Amoltons* in *Œuvres de Fontenelle*, Paris, 1766, vol. v. p. 113); but has forgotten to state that he too was an Englishman. 'Lutetiæ sedem posuerat ante aliquod tempus *Anglus quidam nomine Hubinus*, vir ingeniosus, atque hujusmodi machinationum peritus opifex et industrius. Hominem adii,' &c. *Huetii Commentarius de Rebus ad eum pertinentibus*, p. 346. Thus, again, in regard to time-keepers, the vast superiority of the English makers, late in the reign of Louis XIV., was equally incontestable. Compare *Biog. Univ.* vol. xxiv. pp. 242, 243, with *Brewster's Life of Newton*, vol. ii. p. 262; and as to the middle of the reign of Louis XIV., see *Eloge de Sebastien*, in *Œuvres de Fontenelle*, vol. vi. pp. 332, 333.

⁴⁶⁰ Les manufactures étoient plutôt dirigées vers le brillant que vers l'utile. On s'efforça, par un arrêt du mois de mars 1700, d'extirper, ou du moins de réduire

really valuable was neglected; no great invention was made; and by the end of the reign of Louis XIV. scarcely anything had been done in machinery, or in those other contrivances which, by economising national labour, increase national wealth.⁴⁶¹

While such was the state, not only of mathematical and astronomical science, but also of mechanical and inventive arts, corresponding symptoms of declining power were seen in other departments. In physiology, in anatomy and in medicine, we look in vain for any men equal to those by whom France had once been honoured. The greatest discovery of this kind ever made by a Frenchman, was that of the receptacle of the chyle; a discovery which, in the opinion of a high authority, is not inferior to that of the circulation of the blood by Harvey.⁴⁶² This important step in our knowledge is constantly assigned to the age of Louis XIV., as if it were one of the results of his gracious bounty; but it

beaucoup les fabriques de bas au métier. Malgré cette fausse direction, les objets d'un luxe très-recherché faisaient des progrès bien lents. En 1687, après la mort de Colbert, la cour soldait encore l'industrie des barbares, et faisait fabriquer et broder ses plus beaux habits à Constantinople.' *Lemontey, Etablissement de Louis XIV*, p. 364. Lacroix (*Dix-huitième Siècle*, vol. ii. p. 5) says, that during the last thirty years of the reign of Louis XIV. 'les manufactures tombaient.'

⁴⁶¹ Cuvier (*Biog. Univ.* vol. xxxvii. p. 199) thus describes the condition of France only seven years after the death of Louis XIV.: 'Nos forges étaient alors presque dans l'enfance; et nous ne faisons point d'acier: tout celui qu'exigeaient les différents métiers nous venait de l'étranger... Nous ne faisons point non plus alors de fer-blanc, et il ne nous venait que de l'Allemagne.'

⁴⁶² 'Certainement la découverte de Pecquet ne brille pas moins dans l'histoire de notre art que la vérité démontrée pour la première fois par Harvey.' *Sprengel, Hist. de la Médecine*, vol. iv. p. 208.

would be difficult to tell what Louis had to do with it, since the discovery was made by Pecquet in 1647,⁴⁶³ when the great king was nine years old. After Pecquet, the most eminent of the French anatomists in the seventeenth century was Riolan; and his name we also find among the illustrious men who adorned the reign of Louis XIV. But the principal works of Riolan were written before Louis XIV. was born; his last work was published in 1652; and he himself died in 1657.⁴⁶⁴ Then there came a pause, and, during three generations, the French did nothing for these great subjects: they wrote no work upon them which is now read, they made no discoveries, and they seemed to have lost all heart, until that revival of knowledge, which, as we shall presently see, took place in France about the middle of the eighteenth century. In the practical parts of medicine, in its speculative parts, and in the arts connected with surgery, the same law prevails. The French, in these, as in other matters, had formerly produced men of great eminence, who had won for themselves an European reputation, and whose works are still remembered. Thus, only to mention two or three instances, they had a long line of illustrious physicians, among whom Fernel and Joubert were the earliest;⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶³ Henle (*Anatomie Générale*, vol. ii. p. 106) says, that the discovery was made in 1649; but the historians of medicine assign it to 1647. *Sprengel, Hist. de la Médecine*, vol. iv. pp. 207, 405; *Renouard, Hist. de la Médecine*, vol. ii. p. 173.

⁴⁶⁴ *Biog. Univ.* vol. xxxviii. pp. 123, 124.

⁴⁶⁵ Some of the great steps taken by Joubert are concisely stated in *Broussais, Examen des Doctrines Médicales*, vol. i. pp. 293, 294, vol. iii. p. 361. Compare *Sprengel, Hist. de la Médecine*, vol. iii. p. 210. Fernel, though enthusiastically praised by Patin, was

they had, in surgery, Ambroise Paré, who not only introduced important practical improvements,⁴⁶⁶ but who has the still rarer merit of being one of the founders of comparative osteology;⁴⁶⁷ and they had Baillou, who late in the sixteenth and early in the seventeenth century, advanced pathology, by connecting it with the study of morbid anatomy.⁴⁶⁸ Under Louis XIV. all this was changed. Under him, surgery was neglected, though in other countries its progress was rapid.⁴⁶⁹ The English, by the

probably hardly equal to Joubert. *Lettres de Patin*, vol. iii. pp. 59, 199, 648. At p. 106, Patin calls Fernel 'le premier médecin de son temps, et peut-être le plus grand qui sera jamais.'

⁴⁶⁶ See a summary of them in *Sprengel, Hist. de la Médecine*, vol. iii. pp. 405, 406, vol. vii. pp. 14, 15. Sir Benjamin Brodie (*Lectures on Surgery*, p. 21) says, 'Few greater benefits have been conferred on mankind than that for which we are indebted to Ambrose Parey – the application of a ligature to a bleeding artery.'

⁴⁶⁷ 'C'était là une vue très-ingénieuse et très-juste qu'Ambroise Paré donnait pour la première fois. C'était un commencement d'ostéologie comparée.' *Cuvier, Hist. des Sciences*, part. ii. p. 42. To this I may add, that he is the first French writer on medical jurisprudence. See *Paris and Fonblanque's Medical Jurisprudence*, 1823, vol. i. p. xviii.

⁴⁶⁸ 'L'un des premiers auteurs à qui l'on doit des observations cadavériques sur les maladies, est le fameux Baillou.' *Broussais, Examen des Doctrines Médicales*, vol. ii. p. 218. See also vol. iii. p. 362; and *Renouard, Hist. de la Médecine*, vol. ii. p. 89. The value of his services is recognized in a recent able work, *Phillips on Scrofula*, 1846, p. 16.

⁴⁶⁹ 'The most celebrated surgeon of the sixteenth century was Ambroise Paré... From the time of Paré until the commencement of the eighteenth century, surgery was but little cultivated in France. Mauriceau, Saviard, and Belloste, were the only French surgeons of note who could be contrasted with so many eminent men of other nations. During the eighteenth century, France produced two surgeons of extraordinary genius; these are Petit and Desault.' *Bowman's Surgery*, in *Encyclop. of Medical Sciences*, 1847, 4to. pp. 829, 830.

middle of the seventeenth century, had taken considerable steps in medicine: its therapeutical branch being reformed chiefly by Sydenham, its physiological branch by Glisson.⁴⁷⁰ But the age of Louis XIV. cannot boast of a single medical writer who can be compared to these; not even one whose name is now known as having made any specific addition to our knowledge. In Paris, the practice of medicine was notoriously inferior to that in the capitals of Germany, Italy, and England; while in the French provinces, the ignorance, even of the best physicians, was scandalous.⁴⁷¹ Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that, during the whole of this long period, the French in these matters effected comparatively nothing; they made no contributions to clinical literature,⁴⁷² and scarcely any to therapeutics, to pathology, to physiology, or to anatomy.⁴⁷³

⁴⁷⁰ It is unnecessary to adduce evidence respecting the services rendered by Sydenham, as they are universally admitted; but what, perhaps, is less generally known, is, that Glisson anticipated those important views concerning irritability, which were afterwards developed by Haller and Gorter. Compare *Renouard, Hist. de le Médecine*, vol. ii. p. 192; *Elliotson's Human Physiol.* p. 471; *Bordas Demoulin, Cartésianisme*, vol. i. p. 170; In *Wagner's Physiol.* 1841, p. 655, the theory is too exclusively ascribed to Haller.

⁴⁷¹ Of this we have numerous complaints from foreigners who visited France. I will quote the testimony of one celebrated man. In 1699, Addison writes from Blois: 'I made use of one of the physicians of this place, who are as cheap as our English farriers, and generally as ignorant.' *Aikin's Life of Addison*, vol. i. p. 74.

⁴⁷² Indeed, France was the last great country in Europe in which a chair of clinical medicine was established. See *Renouard, Hist. de la Médecine*, vol. ii. p. 312; and *Bouillaud, Philos. Médicale*, p. 114.

⁴⁷³ M. Bouillaud, in his account of the state of medicine in the seventeenth century,

In what are called the natural sciences, we also find the French now brought to a stand. In zoology, they had formerly possessed remarkable men, among whom Belon and Rondelet were the most conspicuous:⁴⁷⁴ but, under Louis XIV., they did not produce one original observer in this great field of inquiry.⁴⁷⁵ In chemistry, again, Rey had, in the reign of Louis XIII., struck out views of such vast importance, that he anticipated some of those generalizations which formed the glory of the French intellect in the eighteenth century.⁴⁷⁶ During the corrupt and frivolous age of Louis XIV., all this was forgotten; the labours of Rey were neglected; and so complete was the indifference, that even the celebrated experiments of Boyle remained unknown in France for more than forty years after they were published.⁴⁷⁷

does not mention a single Frenchman during this period. See *Bouillaud, Philosophie Médicale*, pp. 13 seq. During many years of the power of Louis XIV., the French Academy only possessed one anatomist; and of him, few students of physiology have ever heard: 'M. du Verney fut assez long-temps le seul anatomiste de l'académie, et ce ne fut qu'en 1684 qu'on lui joignit M. Mery.' *Eloge de Du Verney*, in *Œuvres de Fontenelle*, vol. vi. p. 392.

⁴⁷⁴ Cuvier, *Hist. des Sciences*, part ii. pp. 64–73, 76–80.

⁴⁷⁵ After Belon, nothing was done in France for the natural history of animals until 1734, when there appeared the first volume of Reaumur's great work. See *Swainson on the Study of Nat. Hist.* pp. 24, 43.

⁴⁷⁶ On this remarkable man, who was the first philosophic chemist Europe produced, and who, so early as 1630, anticipated some of the generalizations made a hundred and fifty years later by Lavoisier, see *Liebig's Letters on Chemistry*, pp. 46, 47; *Thomson's Hist. of Chemistry*, vol. ii. pp. 95, 96; *Humboldt's Cosmos*, vol. ii. p. 729; *Cuvier, Progrès des Sciences*, vol. i. p. 30.

⁴⁷⁷ Cuvier (*Progrès des Sciences*, vol. i. p. 30) says of Rey, 'son écrit était tombé dans

Connected with zoology, and, to a philosophic mind, inseparable from it, is botany: which, occupying a middle place between the animal and mineral world, indicates their relation to each other, and at different points touches the confines of both. It also throws great light on the functions of nutrition,⁴⁷⁸ and on the laws of development; while, from the marked analogy between animals and vegetables, we have every reason to hope that its further progress, assisted by that of electricity, will prepare the way for a comprehensive theory of life, to which the resources of our knowledge are still unequal, but towards which the movements of modern science are manifestly tending. On these grounds, far more than for the sake of practical advantages, botany will always attract the attention of thinking men; who,

l'oubli le plus profond;' and, in another work, the same great authority writes (*Hist. des Sciences*, part ii. p. 333): 'Il y avait plus de quarante ans que Becker avait présenté sa nouvelle théorie, développée par Stahl; il y avait encore plus long-temps que les expériences de Boyle sur la chimie pneumatique avaient été publiées, et cependant, rien de tout cela n'entraît encore dans l'enseignement général de la chimie, du moins en France.'

⁴⁷⁸ The highest present generalizations of the laws of nutrition are those by M. Chevreul; which are thus summed up by MM. Robin et Verdeil, in their admirable work, *Chimie Anatomique*, vol. i. p. 203, Paris, 1853: 'En passant des plantes aux animaux, nous voyons que plus l'organisation de ces derniers est compliquée, plus les aliments dont ils se nourrissent sont complexes et analogues par leurs principes immédiats aux principes des organes qu'ils doivent entretenir.' 'En définitive, on voit que les végétaux se nourrissent d'eau, d'acide carbonique, d'autres gaz et de matières organiques à l'état d'engrais, ou en d'autres termes altérées, c'est-à-dire ramenées à l'état de principes plus simples, plus solubles. Au contraire, les animaux plus élevés dans l'échelle organique ont besoin de matières bien plus complexes quant aux principes immédiats qui les composent, et plus variées dans leurs propriétés.'

neglecting views of immediate utility, look to large and ultimate results, and only value particular facts in so far as they facilitate the discovery of general truths. The first step in this noble study was taken towards the middle of the sixteenth century, when authors, instead of copying what previous writers had said, began to observe nature for themselves.⁴⁷⁹ The next step was, to add experiment to observation: but it required another hundred years before this could be done with accuracy; because the microscope, which is essential to such inquiries, was only invented about 1620, and the labour of a whole generation was needed to make it available for minute investigations.⁴⁸⁰ So soon, however, as this resource was sufficiently matured to be applied to plants, the march of botany became rapid, at least as far as details are concerned; for it was not until the eighteenth century that the facts were actually generalized. But, in the preliminary work of accumulating the facts, great energy was shown; and,

⁴⁷⁹ Brunfels in 1530, and Fuchs in 1542, were the two first writers who observed the vegetable kingdom for themselves, instead of copying what the ancients had said. Compare *Whewell's Hist. of the Sciences*, vol. iii. pp. 305, 306, with *Pulteney's Hist. of Botany*, vol. i. p. 38.

⁴⁸⁰ The microscope was exhibited in London, by Drebbel, about 1620; and this appears to be the earliest unquestionable notice of its use, though some writers assert that it was invented at the beginning of the seventeenth century, or even in 1590. Compare the different statements, in *Pouillet, Elémens de Physique*, vol. ii. p. 357; *Humboldt's Cosmos*, vol. ii. pp. 699, 700; *Sprengel, Hist. de la Médecine*, vol. iv. p. 337; *Winckler, Gesch. der Botanik*, p. 136; *Quekett's Treatise on the Microscope*, 1848, p. 2; *Cuvier, Hist. des Sciences*, part ii. p. 470; *Hallam's Lit. of Europe*, vol. iii. p. 202; *Leslie's Nat. Philos.* p. 52. On the subsequent improvement of the microscope during the seventeenth century, see *Brewster's Life of Newton*, vol. i. pp. 29, 242, 243.

for reasons stated in an earlier part of the Introduction, this, like other studies relating to the external world, advanced with peculiar speed during the reign of Charles II. The tracheæ of plants were discovered by Henshaw in 1661;⁴⁸¹ and their cellular tissue by Hooke in 1667.⁴⁸² These were considerable approaches towards establishing the analogy between plants and animals; and, within a few years, Grew effected still more of the same kind. He made such minute and extensive dissections, as to raise the anatomy of vegetables to a separate study, and prove that their organization is scarcely less complicated than that possessed by animals.⁴⁸³ His first work was written in 1670;⁴⁸⁴ and, in 1676,

⁴⁸¹ See *Balfour's Botany*, p. 15. In Pulteney's *Progress of Botany in England*, this beautiful discovery is, if I rightly remember, not even alluded to; but it appears, from a letter written in 1672, that it was then becoming generally known, and had been confirmed by Grew and Malpighi. *Ray's Correspond.* edit. 1848, p. 98. Compare *Richard, Eléments de Botanique*, p. 46; where, however, M. Richard erroneously supposes that Grew did not know of the tracheæ till 1682.

⁴⁸² Compare *Cuvier, Hist. des Sciences*, part ii. p. 471, with *Thomson's Vegetable Chemistry*, p. 950.

⁴⁸³ Dr. Thomson (*Vegetable Chemistry*, p. 950) says: 'But the person to whom we are indebted for the first attempt to ascertain the structure of plants by dissection and microscopical observations, was Dr. Nathaniel Grew.' The character of Grew's inquiries, as 'viewing the internal, as well as external parts of plants,' is also noticed in *Ray's Correspond.* p. 188; and M. Winckler (*Gesch. der Botanik*, p. 382) ascribes to him and Malpighi the 'neuen Aufschwung' taken by vegetable physiology late in the seventeenth century. See also, on Grew, *Lindley's Botany*, vol. i. p. 93; and *Third Report of Brit. Assoc.* p. 27.

⁴⁸⁴ The first book of his *Anatomy of Plants* was laid before the Royal Society in 1670, and printed in 1671. *Hallam's Lit. of Europe*, vol. iii. p. 580; and *Thomson's Hist. of the Royal Society*, p. 44.

another Englishman, Millington, ascertained the existence of a distinction of sexes;⁴⁸⁵ thus supplying further evidence of the harmony between the animal and vegetable kingdoms, and of the unity of idea which regulates their composition.

This is what was effected in England during the reign of Charles II.; and we now ask what was done in France, during the same period, under the munificent patronage of Louis XIV. The answer is, nothing; no discovery, no idea, which forms an epoch in this important department of natural science. The son of the celebrated Sir Thomas Brown visited Paris in the hope of making some additions to his knowledge of botany, which he thought he could not fail to do in a country where science was held in such honour, its professors so caressed by the court, and its researches so bountifully encouraged. To his surprise, he, in 1665, found in that great city no one capable of teaching his favourite pursuit, and even the public lectures on it miserably meagre and unsatisfactory.⁴⁸⁶ Neither then, nor

⁴⁸⁵ 'The presence of sexual organs in plants was first shown in 1676, by Sir Thomas Millington; and it was afterwards confirmed by Grew, Malpighi, and Ray.' *Balfour's Botany*, p. 236. See also *Pulteney's Progress of Botany*, vol. i. pp. 336, 337; and *Lindley's Botany*, vol. ii. p. 217: and, as to Ray, who was rather slow in admitting the discovery, see *Lankester's Mem. of Ray*, p. 100. Before this, the sexual system of vegetables had been empirically known to several of the ancients, but never raised to a scientific truth. Compare *Richard, Eléments de Botanique*, pp. 353, 427, 428, with *Matter, Hist. de l'Ecole d'Alexandrie*, vol. ii. p. 9.

⁴⁸⁶ In July 1665 he writes from Paris to his father, 'The lecture of plants here is only the naming of them, their degrees in heat and cold, and sometimes their use in physick; scarce a word more than may be seen in every herball.' *Browne's Works*, vol. i. p. 108.

at a much later period, did the French possess a good popular treatise on botany: still less did they make any improvement in it. Indeed, so completely was the philosophy of the subject misunderstood, that Tournefort, the only French botanist of repute in the reign of Louis, actually rejected that discovery of the sexes of plants, which had been made before he began to write, and which afterwards became the corner-stone of the Linnæan system.⁴⁸⁷ This showed his incapacity for those large views respecting the unity of the organic world, which alone give to botany a scientific value; and we find, accordingly, that he did nothing for the physiology of plants, and that his only merit was as a collector and classifier of them.⁴⁸⁸ And even in his classification he was guided, not by a comprehensive comparison of their various parts, but by considerations drawn from the mere appearance of the flower:⁴⁸⁹ thus depriving botany of its

⁴⁸⁷ Cuvier mentioning the inferiority of Tournefort's views to those of his predecessors, gives as an instance, 'puisqu'il a rejeté les sexes des plantes.' *Hist. des Sciences*, part ii. p. 496. Hence he held that the farina was ex-crementitious. *Pulteney's Progress of Botany*, vol. i. p. 340.

⁴⁸⁸ This is admitted even by his eulogist Duvau. *Biog. Univ.* vol. xlvi. p. 363.

⁴⁸⁹ On the method of Tournefort, which was that of a corollist, compare *Richard, Eléments de Botanique*, p. 547; *Jussieu's Botany*, edit. Wilson, 1849, p. 516; *Ray's Correspond.* pp. 381, 382; *Lankester's Mem. of Ray*, p. 49; *Winckler, Gesch. der Botanik*, p. 142. Cuvier (*Hist. des Sciences*, part ii. p. 496), with quiet irony, says of it, 'vous voyez, messieurs, que cette méthode a le mérite d'une grande clarté; qu'elle est fondée sur la forme de la fleur, et par conséquent sur des considérations agréables à saisir... Ce qui en fit le succès, c'est que Tournefort joignit à son ouvrage une figure de fleur et de fruit appartenant à chacun de ses genres.' Even in this, he appears to have been careless, and is said to have described 'a great many plants he never examined

real grandeur, degrading it into an arrangement of beautiful objects, and supplying another instance of the way in which the Frenchmen of that generation impoverished what they sought to enrich, and dwarfed every topic, until they suited the intellect and pleased the eye of that ignorant and luxurious court, to whose favour they looked for reward, and whose applause it was the business of their life to gain.

The truth is, that in these, as in all matters of real importance, in questions requiring independent thought, and in questions of practical utility, the age of Louis XIV. was an age of decay: it was an age of misery, of intolerance, and oppression; it was an age of bondage, of ignominy, of incompetence. This would long since have been universally admitted, if those who have written the history of that period had taken the trouble to study subjects without which no history can be understood; or, I should rather say, without which no history can exist. If this had been done, the reputation of Louis XIV. would at once have shrunk to its natural size. Even at the risk of exposing myself to the charge of unduly estimating my own labours, I cannot avoid saying, that the facts which I have just pointed out have never before been collected, but have remained isolated in the text-books and repertories of the sciences to which they belong. Yet without them it is impossible to study the age of Louis XIV. It is impossible to estimate the character of any period except by

nor saw.' *Letter from Dr. Sherard, in Nichols's Illustrations of the Eighteenth Century, vol. i. p. 356.*

tracing its development; in other words, by measuring the extent of its knowledge. Therefore it is, that to write the history of a country without regard to its intellectual progress, is as if an astronomer should compose a planetary system without regard to the sun, by whose light alone the planets can be seen, and by whose attraction they are held in their course, and compelled to run in the path of their appointed orbits. For the great luminary, even as it shines in the heaven, is not a more noble or a more powerful object than is the intellect of man in this nether world. It is to the human intellect, and to that alone, that every country owes its knowledge. And what is it but the progress and diffusion of knowledge which has given us our arts, our sciences, our manufactures, our laws, our opinions, our manners, our comforts, our luxuries, our civilization; in short, everything that raises us above the savages, who by their ignorance are degraded to the level of the brutes with which they herd? Surely, then, the time has now arrived when they who undertake to write the history of a great nation should occupy themselves with those matters by which alone the destiny of men is regulated, and should abandon the petty and insignificant details by which we have too long been wearied; details respecting the lives of kings, the intrigues of ministers, the vices and the gossip of courts.

It is precisely these higher considerations which furnish the key to the history of the reign of Louis XIV. In that time, as in all others, the misery of the people and the degradation of the country followed the decline of the national intellect; while

this last was, in its turn, the result of the protective spirit – that mischievous spirit which weakens whatever it touches. If in the long course and compass of history there is one thing more clear than another, it is, that whenever a government undertakes to protect intellectual pursuits, it will almost always protect them in the wrong place, and reward the wrong men. Nor is it surprising that this should be the case. What can kings and ministers know about those immense branches of knowledge, to cultivate which with success is often the business of an entire life? How can they, constantly occupied with their lofty pursuits, have leisure for such inferior matters? Is it to be supposed that such acquirements will be found among statesmen, who are always engaged in the most weighty concerns; sometimes writing despatches, sometimes making speeches, sometimes organising a party in the parliament, sometimes baffling an intrigue in the privy-chamber? Or if the sovereign should graciously bestow his patronage according to his own judgment, are we to expect that mere philosophy and science should be familiar to high and mighty princes, who have their own peculiar and arduous studies, and who have to learn the mysteries of heraldry, the nature and dignities of rank, the comparative value of the different orders, decorations, and titles, the laws of precedence, the prerogatives of noble birth, the names and powers of ribbons, stars, and garters, the various modes of conferring an honour or installing into an office, the adjustment of ceremonies, the subtleties of etiquette, and all those other courtly accomplishments necessary

to the exalted functions which they perform?

The mere statement of such questions proves the absurdity of the principle which they involve. For, unless we believe that kings are omniscient as well as immaculate, it is evident that in the bestowal of rewards they must be guided either by personal caprice or by the testimony of competent judges. And since no one is a competent judge of scientific excellence unless he is himself scientific, we are driven to this monstrous alternative, that the rewards of intellectual labour must be conferred injudiciously, or else that they must be given according to the verdict of that very class by whom they are received. In the first case, the reward will be ridiculous; in the latter case, it will be disgraceful. In the former case, weak men will be benefited by wealth which is taken from industry to be lavished on idleness. But in the latter case, those men of real genius, those great and illustrious thinkers, who are the masters and teachers of the human race, are to be tricked out with trumpety titles; and after scrambling in miserable rivalry for the sordid favours of a court, they are then to be turned into beggars of the state, who not only clamour for their share of the spoil, but even regulate the proportions into which the shares are to be divided.

Under such a system, the natural results are, first, the impoverishment and servility of genius: then the decay of knowledge; then the decline of the country. Three times in the history of the world has this experiment been tried. In the ages of Augustus, of Leo X., and of Louis XIV., the same method

was adopted, and the same result ensued. In each of these ages, there was much apparent splendour, immediately succeeded by sudden ruin. In each instance, the brilliancy survived the independence; and in each instance, the national spirit sank under that pernicious alliance between government and literature, by virtue of which the political classes become very powerful, and the intellectual classes very weak, simply because they who dispense the patronage will, of course, receive the homage; and if, on the one hand, government is always ready to reward literature, so on the other hand, will literature be always ready to succumb to government.

Of these three ages, that of Louis XIV. was incomparably the worst; and nothing but the amazing energy of the French people could have enabled them to rally, as they afterwards did, from the effects of so enfeebling a system. But though they rallied, the effort cost them dear. The struggle, as we shall presently see, lasted two generations, and was only ended by that frightful Revolution which formed its natural climax. What the real history of that struggle was, I shall endeavour to ascertain towards the conclusion of this volume. Without, however, anticipating the course of affairs, we will now proceed to what I have already mentioned as the second great characteristic of the reign of Louis XIV.

II. The second intellectual characteristic of the reign of Louis XIV. is, in importance, hardly inferior to the first. We have already seen that the national intellect, stunted by the protection

of the court, was so diverted from the noblest branches of knowledge, that in none of them did it produce anything worthy of being recorded. As a natural consequence, the minds of men, driven from the higher departments, took refuge in the lower, and concentrated themselves upon those inferior subjects, where the discovery of truth is not the main object, but where beauty of form and expression are the things chiefly pursued. Thus, the first consequence of the patronage of Louis XIV. was, to diminish the field for genius, and to sacrifice science to art. The second consequence was, that, even in art itself, there was soon seen a marked decay. For a short time, the stimulus produced its effect; but was followed by that collapse which is its natural result. So essentially vicious is the whole system of patronage and reward, that after the death of those writers and artists, whose works form the only redeeming point in the reign of Louis, there was found no one capable of even imitating their excellences. The poets, dramatists, painters, musicians, sculptors, architects, were, with hardly an exception, not only born, but educated under that freer policy, which existed before his time. When they began their labours, they benefited by a munificence which encouraged the activity of their genius. But in a few years, that generation having died off, the hollowness of the whole system was clearly exposed. More than a quarter of a century before the death of Louis XIV., most of these eminent men had ceased to live; and then it was seen to how miserable a plight the country was reduced under the boasted patronage of the great king. At the

moment when Louis XIV. died, there was scarcely a writer or an artist in France who enjoyed an European reputation. This is a circumstance well worth our notice. If we compare the different classes of literature, we shall find that sacred oratory, being the least influenced by the king, was able the longest to bear up against his system. Massillon belongs partly to the subsequent reign; but even of the other great divines, Bossuet and Bourdaloue both lived to 1704,⁴⁹⁰ Mascaron to 1703,⁴⁹¹ and Flechier to 1710.⁴⁹² As, however, the king, particularly in his latter years, was very fearful of meddling with the church, it is in profane matters that we can best trace the workings of his policy, because it is there that his interference was most active. With a view to this, the simplest plan will be, to look, in the first place, into the history of the fine arts; and after ascertaining who the greatest artists were, observe the year in which they died, remembering that the government of Louis XIV. began in 1661, and ended in 1715.

If, now, we examine this period of fifty-four years, we shall be struck by the remarkable fact, that everything which is celebrated was effected in the first half of it; while more than twenty years before its close, the most eminent masters all died without leaving any successors. The six greatest painters in the reign of Louis XIV. were Poussin, Lesueur, Claude Lorraine, Le

⁴⁹⁰ *Biog. Univ.* vol. v. pp. 236, 358.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.* xxvii. p. 351.

⁴⁹² *Ibid.* xv. p. 35.

Brun, and the two Mignards. Of these, Le Brun died in 1690;⁴⁹³ the elder Mignard in 1668;⁴⁹⁴ the younger in 1695;⁴⁹⁵ Claude Lorraine in 1682;⁴⁹⁶ Lesueur in 1655;⁴⁹⁷ and Poussin, perhaps the most distinguished of all the French school, died in 1665.⁴⁹⁸ The two greatest architects were, Claude Perrault and Francis Mansart; but Perrault died in 1688;⁴⁹⁹ Mansart in 1666;⁵⁰⁰ and Blondel, the next in fame, died in 1686.⁵⁰¹ The greatest of all the sculptors was Puget, who died in 1694.⁵⁰² Lulli, the founder of French music, died in 1687.⁵⁰³ Quinault, the greatest poet of

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.* xxiii. p. 496.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.* xxix. p. 17.

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.* xxix. p. 19.

⁴⁹⁶ 'His best pictures were painted from about 1640 to 1660; he died in 1682.' *Wornum's Epochs of Painting*, Lond. 1847. p. 399. Voltaire (*Siècle de Louis XIV*, in *Œuvres*, vol. xix. p. 205) says that he died in 1678.

⁴⁹⁷ *Biog. Univ.* vol. xxiv. p. 327; *Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, vol. ii. pp. 454, 455.

⁴⁹⁸ *Biog. Univ.* vol. xxxv. p. 579. Poussin was Barry's 'favourite' painter. *Letter from Barry*, in *Burke's Correspond.* vol. i. p. 88. Compare *Otter's Life of Clarke*, vol. ii. p. 55. Sir Joshua Reynolds (*Works*, vol. i. pp. 97, 351, 376) appears to have preferred him to any of the French school; and in the report presented to Napoleon by the Institute, he is the only French painter mentioned by the side of the Greek and Italian artists. *Dacier, Rapport Historique*, p. 23.

⁴⁹⁹ *Biog. Univ.* vol. xxxiii. p. 411; *Siècle de Louis XIV*, in *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. xix. p. 158.

⁵⁰⁰ *Biog. Univ.* vol. xxvi. p. 503.

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.* vol. iv. p. 593.

⁵⁰² *Ibid.* vol. xxxvi. p. 300. Respecting him, see *Lady Morgan's France*, vol. ii. pp. 30, 31.

⁵⁰³ M. Capefigue (*Louis XIV*, vol. ii. p. 79) says, 'Lulli mourut en 1689;' but 1687

French music, died in 1688.⁵⁰⁴ Under these eminent men, the fine arts, in the reign of Louis XIV., reached their zenith; and during the last thirty years of his life, their decline was portentously rapid. This was the case, not only in architecture and music, but even in painting, which, being more subservient than they are to personal vanity, is more likely to flourish under a rich and despotic government. The genius, however, of painters fell so low, that long before the death of Louis XIV., France ceased to possess one of any merit; and when his successor came to the throne, this beautiful art was, in that great country, almost extinct.⁵⁰⁵

These are startling facts; not matters of opinion, which may be disputed, but stubborn dates, supported by irrefragable testimony. And if we examine in the same manner the literature

is the date assigned in *Biog. Univ.* vol. xxv. p. 425; in *Chalmer's Biog. Dict.* vol. xx. p. 483; in *Rose's Biog. Dict.* vol. ix. p. 350; and in *Monteil, Divers Etats*, vol. vii p. 63. In *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. xix. p. 200, he is called 'le père de la vraie musique en France.' He was admired by Louis XIV. *Lettres de Sévigné*, vol. ii. pp. 162, 163.

⁵⁰⁴ *Biog. Univ.* vol. xxxvi. p. 42. Voltaire (*Œuvres*, vol. xix. p. 162) says, 'personne n'a jamais égalé Quinault;' and Mr. Hallam (*Lit. of Europe*, vol. iii. p. 507), 'the unrivalled poet of French music.' See also *Lettres de Duffaud à Walpole*, vol. ii. p. 432.

⁵⁰⁵ When Louis XV. ascended the throne, painting in France was in the lowest state of degradation. *Lady Morgan's France*, vol. ii. p. 31. Lacroix (*Dix-huitième Siècle*, vol. ii. p. 11) says 'Les beaux arts dégénérent plus sensiblement que les lettres pendant la seconde partie du siècle de Louis XIV... Il est certain que les vingt-cinq dernières années du règne de Louis XIV n'offrirent que des productions très-inférieures,' &c. Thus too Barrington (*Observations on the Statutes*, p. 377), 'It is very remarkable that the French school hath not produced any very capital painters since the expensive establishment by Louis XIV. of the academies at Rome and Paris.'

of the age of Louis XIV., we shall arrive at similar conclusions. If we ascertain the dates of those masterpieces which adorn his reign, we shall find that during the last five-and-twenty years of his life, when his patronage had been the longest in operation, it was entirely barren of results; in other words, that when the French had been most habituated to his protection, they were least able to effect great things. Louis XIV. died in 1715. Racine produced *Phedre* in 1677; *Andromaque* in 1667; *Athelie* in 1691.⁵⁰⁶ Molière published the *Misanthrope* in 1666; *Tartuffe* in 1667; the *Avare* in 1668.⁵⁰⁷ The *Lutrin* of Boileau was written in 1674; his best Satires in 1666.⁵⁰⁸ The last Fables of La Fontaine appeared in 1678, and his last Tales in 1671.⁵⁰⁹ The *Inquiry respecting Truth*, by Malebranche, was published in 1674;⁵¹⁰ the *Caractères* of La Bruyère in 1687;⁵¹¹ the *Maximes* of Rochefoucauld in 1665.⁵¹² The *Provincial Letters* of Pascal were written 1656, and he himself died in 1662.⁵¹³

⁵⁰⁶ *Biog. Univ.* vol. xxxvi. pp. 499, 502; *Hallam's Lit.* vol. iii. p. 493.

⁵⁰⁷ *Biog. Univ.* vol. xxix. pp. 306, 308.

⁵⁰⁸ *Rose's Biog. Dict.* vol. iv. p. 376; and *Biog. Univ.* vol. v. pp. 7, 8, where it is said that 'ses meilleures satires' were those published in 1666.

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.* vol. xxiii. p. 127.

⁵¹⁰ *Tennemann, Gesch. der Philos.* vol. x. p. 322.

⁵¹¹ *Biog. Univ.* vol. vi. p. 175.

⁵¹² *Brunet, Manuel du Libraire*, vol. iv. p. 105, Paris 1843; and note in *Lettres de Patin*, vol. i. p. 421.

⁵¹³ *Biog. Univ.* vol. xxxiii. pp. 64, 71; *Palissot, Mém. pour l'Hist. de Lit.* vol. ii. pp. 239, 241.

As to Corneille, his great Tragedies were composed, some while Louis was still a boy, and the others before the king was born.⁵¹⁴ Such were the dates of the masterpieces of the age of Louis XIV. The authors of these immortal works all ceased to write, and nearly all ceased to live, before the close of the seventeenth century; and we may fairly ask the admirers of Louis XIV. who those men were that succeeded them. Where have their names been registered? Where are their works to be found? Who is there that now reads the books of those obscure hirelings, who for so many years thronged the court of the great king? Who has heard anything of Campistron, La Chapelle, Genest, Ducerceau, Dancourt, Danchet, Vergier, Catrou, Chaulieu, Legendre, Valincour, Lamotte, and the other ignoble compilers, who long remained the brightest ornaments of France? Was this, then, the consequence of the royal bounty? Was this the fruit of the royal patronage? If the system of reward and protection is really advantageous to literature and to art, how is it that it should have produced the meanest results when it had been the longest in operation? If the favour of kings is, as their flatterers tell us, of such importance, how comes it that the more the favour was displayed, the more the effects were contemptible?

Nor was this almost inconceivable penury compensated by superiority in any other department. The simple fact is that Louis

⁵¹⁴ *Polyeucte*, which is probably his greatest work, appeared in 1640; *Médée* in 1635; *The Cid* in 1636; *Horace and Cinna* both in 1639. *Biog. Univ.* vol. ix. pp. 609–613.

XIV. survived the entire intellect of the French nation, except that small part of it which grew up in opposition to his principles, and afterwards shook the throne of his successor.⁵¹⁵ Several years before his death, and when his protective system had been in full force for nearly half a century, there was not to be found in the whole of France a statesman who could develop the resources of the country, or a general who could defend it against its enemies. Both in the civil service and in the military service, every thing had fallen into disorder. At home there was nothing but confusion; abroad there was nothing but disaster. The spirit of France succumbed, and was laid prostrate. The men of letters, pensioned and decorated by the court, had degenerated into a fawning and hypocritical race, who, to meet the wishes of their masters, opposed all improvement, and exerted themselves in support of every old abuse. The end of all this was, a corruption, a servility, and a loss of power more complete than has ever been witnessed in any of the great countries of Europe. There was no popular liberty; there were no great men; there was no science; there was no literature; there were no arts. Within, there was a discontented people, a rapacious government, and a beggared exchequer. Without, there were foreign armies, which pressed upon all the frontiers, and which nothing but their mutual jealousies, and a change in the English cabinet, prevented from

⁵¹⁵ Voltaire (*Siècle de Louis XIV*, in *Œuvres*, vol. xx. pp. 319–322) reluctantly confesses the decline of the French intellect in the latter part of the reign of Louis; and Flassan (*Diplomat. Franç.* vol. iv. p. 400) calls it 'remarquable.' See also *Barante, Littérature Française*, p. 28; *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xxvi. p. 217.

dismembering the monarchy of France.⁵¹⁶

Such was the forlorn position of that noble country towards the close of the reign of Louis XIV.⁵¹⁷ The misfortunes which

⁵¹⁶ Oppressed by defeats abroad, and by famine and misery at home, Louis was laid at the mercy of his enemies; and 'was only saved by a party revolution in the English ministry.' *Arnold's Lectures on Modern History*, p. 137. Compare *Fragments sur l'Histoire*, article xxiii. in *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. xxvii. p. 345, with *De Tocqueville, Règne de Louis XV*, vol. i. p. 86.

⁵¹⁷ For evidence of the depression and, indeed, utter exhaustion of France during the latter years of Louis XIV., compare *Duclos, Mémoires*, vol. i. pp. 11–18, with *Marmontel, Hist. de la Régence*, Paris, 1826, pp. 79–97. The *Lettres inédites de Madame de Maintenon* (vol. i. pp. 263, 284, 358, 389, 393, 408, 414, 422, 426, 447, 457, 463, vol. ii. pp. 19, 23, 33, 46, 56, and numerous other passages) fully confirm this, and, moreover, prove that in Paris, early in the eighteenth century, the resources, even of the wealthy classes, were beginning to fail; while both public and private credit were so shaken, that it was hardly possible to obtain money on any terms. In 1710, she, the wife of Louis XIV., complains of her inability to borrow 500 livres: 'Tout mon crédit échoue souvent auprès de M. Desmaretz pour une somme de cinq cents livres.' *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 33. In 1709, she writes (vol. i. p. 447): 'Le jeu devient insipide, parce qu'il n'y a presque plus d'argent.' See also vol. ii. p. 112; and in February 1711 (p. 151): 'Ce n'est pas l'abondance mais l'avarice qui fait jouer nos courtisans; on met le tout pour le tout pour avoir quelque argent, et les tables de lansquenet ont plus l'air d'un triste commerce que d'un divertissement.' In regard to the people generally, the French writers supply us with little information, because in that age they were too much occupied with their great king and their showy literature, to pay attention to mere popular interests. But I have collected from other sources some information which I will now put together, and which I recommend to the notice of the next French author who undertakes to compose a history of Louis XIV. Locke, who was travelling in France in 1676 and 1677, writes in his journal, 'The rent of land in France fallen one-half in these few years, by reason of the poverty of the people.' *King's Life of Locke*, vol. i. p. 139. About the same time, Sir William Temple says (*Works*, vol. ii. p. 268), 'The French peasantry are wholly dispirited by labour and want.' In 1691, another observer, proceeding from Calais, writes, 'From hence, travelling to Paris, there was opportunity enough to observe what

embittered the declining years of the king were, indeed, so serious, that they could not fail to excite our sympathy, if we did not know that they were the result of his own turbulent ambition, of his insufferable arrogance, but, above all, of a grasping and restless vanity, which, making him eager to concentrate on his single person all the glory of France, gave rise to that insidious policy, which, with gifts, with honours, and with honied words, began by gaining the admiration of the intellectual classes, then made them courtly and time-serving, and ended by destroying

a prodigious state of poverty the ambition and absoluteness of a tyrant can reduce an opulent and fertile country to. There were visible all the marks and signs of a growing misfortune; all the dismal indications of an overwhelming calamity. The fields were uncultivated, the villages unpeopled, the houses dropping to decay.’ *Burton's Diary*, note by Rutt, vol. iv. p. 79. In a tract published in 1689, the author says (*Somers Tracts*, vol. x. p. 264), ‘I have known in France poor people sell their beds, and lie upon straw; sell their pots, kettles, and all their necessary household goods, to content the unmerciful collectors of the king's taxes.’ Dr. Lister, who visited Paris in 1698, says, ‘Such is the vast multitude of poor wretches in all parts of this city, that whether a person is in a carriage or on foot, in the street, or even in a shop, he is alike unable to transact business, on account of the importunities of mendicants.’ *Lister's Account of Paris*, p. 46. Compare a *Letter from Prior*, in *Ellis's Letters of Literary Men*, p. 213. In 1708, Addison, who, from personal observation, was well acquainted with France, writes: ‘We think here as you do in the country, that France is on her last legs.’ *Aikin's Life of Addison*, vol. i. p. 233. Finally, in 1718 – that is, three years after the death of Louis – Lady Mary Montagu gives the following account of the result of his reign, in a letter to Lady Rich, dated Paris, 10th October, 1718: ‘I think nothing so terrible as objects of misery, except one had the god-like attribute of being able to redress them; and all the country villages of France show nothing else. While the post-horses are changed, the whole town comes out to beg, with such miserable starved faces, and thin, tattered clothes, they need no other eloquence to persuade one of the wretchedness of their condition.’ *Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, vol. iii. p. 74, edit. 1803.

all their boldness, stifling every effort of original thought, and thus postponing for an indefinite period the progress of national civilization.

CHAPTER V

DEATH OF LOUIS XIV. REACTION AGAINST THE PROTECTIVE SPIRIT, AND PREPARATIONS FOR THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

At length Louis XIV. died. When it was positively known that the old king had ceased to breathe, the people went almost mad with joy.⁵¹⁸ The tyranny which had weighed them down was removed; and there at once followed a reaction which, for sudden violence, has no parallel in modern history.⁵¹⁹ The great majority indemnified themselves for their forced hypocrisy by indulging in the grossest licentiousness. But among the generation then forming, there were some high-spirited youths, who had far

⁵¹⁸ 'L'annonce de la mort du grand roi ne produisit chez le peuple français qu'une explosion de joie.' *Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xxvii. p. 220. 'Le jour des obsèques de Louis XIV, on établit des guinguettes sur le chemin de Saint-Denis. Voltaire, que la curiosité avoit mené aux funérailles du souverain, vit dans ces guinguettes le peuple ivre de vin et de joie de la mort de Louis XIV.' *Duvernet, Vie de Voltaire*, p. 29: see also *Condorcet, Vie de Voltaire*, p. 118; *De Tocqueville, Règne de Louis XV*, vol. i. p. 18; *Duclos, Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 221; *Lemontey, Etablissement de Louis XIV*, pp. 311, 388.

⁵¹⁹ 'Kaum hatte er aber die Augen geschlossen, als alles umschlug. Der reprimirte Geist warf sich in eine zügellose Bewegung.' *Ranke, die Päpste*, vol. iii. p. 192.

higher views, and whose notions of liberty were not confined to the license of the gaming-house and the brothel. Devoted to the great idea of restoring to France that freedom of utterance which it had lost, they naturally turned their eyes towards the only country where the freedom was practised. Their determination to search for liberty in the place where alone it could be found, gave rise to that junction of the French and English intellects, which, looking at the immense chain of its effects, is by far the most important fact in the history of the eighteenth century.

During the reign of Louis XIV., the French, puffed up by national vanity, despised the barbarism of a people who were so uncivilized as to be always turning on their rulers, and who, within the space of forty years, had executed one king, and deposed another.⁵²⁰ They could not believe that such

⁵²⁰ The shock which these events gave to the delicacy of the French mind was very serious. The learned Saumaise declared that the English are 'more savage than their own mastiffs.' *Carlyle's Cromwell*, vol. i. p. 444. Another writer said that we were 'barbares révoltés;' and 'les barbares sujets du roi.' *Mém. de Motteville*, vol. ii. pp. 105, 362. Patin likened us to the Turks; and said, that having executed one king, we should probably hang the next. *Lettres de Patin*, vol. i. p. 261, vol. ii. p. 518, vol. iii. p. 148. Compare *Mém. de Campion*, p. 213. After we had sent away James II., the indignation of the French rose still higher, and even the amiable Madame Sévigné, having occasion to mention Mary the wife of William III., could find no better name for her than Tullia: 'la joie est universelle de la dérouté de ce prince, dont la femme est une Tullie.' *Lettres de Sévigné*, vol. v. p. 179. Another influential French lady mentions 'la férocité des anglais.' *Lettres inédites de Maintenon*, vol. i. p. 303; and elsewhere (p. 109), 'je hais les anglais comme le peuple... Véritablement je ne les puis souffrir.' I will only give two more illustrations of the wide diffusion of such feelings. In 1679, an attempt was made to bring bark into discredit as a 'remède anglais' (*Sprengel, Hist. de la Médecine*, vol. v. p. 430); and at the end of the seventeenth century, one of the arguments in Paris

a restless horde possessed anything worthy the attention of enlightened men. Our laws, our literature, and our manners, were perfectly unknown to them; and I doubt if at the end of the seventeenth century there were, either in literature or in science, five persons in France acquainted with the English language.⁵²¹ But a long experience of the reign of Louis XIV. induced the French to reconsider many of their opinions. It induced them to suspect that despotism may have its disadvantages, and that a government composed of princes and bishops is not necessarily the best for a civilized country. They began to look, first with

against coffee was that the English liked it. *Monteil, Divers Etats*, vol. vii. p. 216.

⁵²¹ 'Au temps de Boileau, personne en France n'apprenait l'anglais.' *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. xxxviii. p. 337, and see vol. xix. p. 159. 'Parmi nos grands écrivains du xviiiè siècle, il n'en est aucun, je crois, ou l'on puisse reconnaître un souvenir, une impression de l'esprit anglais.' *Villemain, Lit. au XVIIIè Siècle*, vol. iii. p. 324. Compare *Barante, XVIIIè Siècle*, p. 47, and *Grimm, Correspond.* vol. v. p. 135, vol. xvii. p. 2. The French, during the reign of Louis XIV., principally knew us from the accounts given by two of their countrymen, Monconys and Sorbière; both of whom published their travels in England, but neither of whom were acquainted with the English language. For proof of this, see *Monconys, Voyages*, vol. iii. pp. 34, 69, 70, 96; and *Sorbière, Voyage*, pp. 45, 70. When Prior arrived at the court of Louis XIV. as plenipotentiary, no one in Paris was aware that he had written poetry (*Lettres sur les Anglais*, in *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. xxvi. p. 130); and when Addison, being in Paris, presented Boileau with a copy of the *Musæ Anglicanæ*, the Frenchman learnt for the first time that we had any good poets: 'first conceived an opinion of the English genius for poetry.' Tickell's statement, in *Aikin's Life of Addison*, vol. i. p. 65. Finally, it is said that Milton's *Paradise Lost* was not even by report in France until after the death of Louis XIV., though the poem was published in 1667, and the king died in 1715; 'Nous n'avions jamais entendu parler de ce poëme en France, avant que l'auteur de la Henriade nous en eût donné une idée dans le neuvième chapitre de son Essai sur la poésie épique.' *Dict. Philos.* article *Epopée*, in *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. xxxix. p. 175; see also vol. lxvi. p. 249.

complacency, and then with respect, upon that strange and outlandish people, who, though only separated from themselves by a narrow sea, appeared to be of an altogether different kind; and who, having punished their oppressors, had carried their liberties and their prosperity to a height of which the world had seen no example. These feelings, which before the Revolution broke out, were entertained by the whole of the educated classes in France, were in the beginning, confined to those men whose intellects placed them at the head of their age. During the two generations which elapsed between the death of Louis XIV. and the outbreak of the Revolution, there was hardly a Frenchman of eminence who did not either visit England or learn English; while many of them did both. Buffon, Brissot, Broussonnet, Condamine, Delisle, Elie de Beaumont, Gournay, Helvétius, Jussieu, Lalande, Lafayette, Larcher, L'Héritier, Montesquieu, Maupertuis, Morellet, Mirabeau, Nollet, Raynal, the celebrated Roland, and his still more celebrated wife, Rousseau, Ségur, Suard, Voltaire – all these remarkable persons flocked to London, as also did others of inferior ability, but of considerable influence, such as Brequiny, Bordes, Calonne, Coyer, Cormatin, Dufay, Dumarest, Dezallier, Favier, Girod, Grosley, Godin, D'Hancarville, Hunauld, Jars, Le Blanc, Ledru, Lescallier, Linguet, Lesuire, Lemonnier, Levesque de Pouilly, Montgolfier, Morand, Patu, Poissonier, Reveillon, Septchènes, Silhouette, Siret, Soulavie, Soulès, and Valmont de Brienne.

Nearly all of these carefully studied our language, and most

of them seized the spirit of our literature. Voltaire, in particular, devoted himself with his usual ardour to the new pursuit, and acquired in England a knowledge of those doctrines, the promulgation of which, afterwards won for him so great a reputation.⁵²² He was the first who popularized in France the philosophy of Newton, where it rapidly superseded that of Descartes.⁵²³ He recommended to his countrymen the writings of Locke;⁵²⁴ which soon gained immense popularity, and which supplied materials to Condillac for his system of metaphysics,⁵²⁵ and to Rousseau for his theory of education.⁵²⁶ Besides this,

⁵²² 'Le vrai roi du xviiiè siècle, c'est Voltaire; mais Voltaire à son tour est un écolier de l'Angleterre. Avant que Voltaire eût connu l'Angleterre, soit par ses voyages, soit par ses amitiés, il n'était pas Voltaire, et le xviiiè siècle se cherchait encore.' *Cousin, Hist. de la Philos.* Ire série, vol. iii. pp. 38, 39. Compare *Damiron, Hist. de la Philos. en France*, Paris, 1828, vol. i. p. 34.

⁵²³ 'J'avais été le premier qui eût osé développer à ma nation les découvertes de Newton, en langage intelligible.' *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. i. p. 315; see also vol. xix. p. 87, vol. xxvi. p. 71; *Whewell's Hist. of Induc. Sciences*, vol. ii. p. 206; *Weld's Hist. of the Royal Society*, vol. i. p. 441. After this, the Cartesian physics lost ground every day; and in *Grimm's Correspondence*, vol. ii. p. 148, there is a letter, dated Paris, 1757, which says, 'Il n'y a guère plus ici de partisans de Descartes que M. de Mairan.' Compare *Observations et Pensées*, in *Œuvres de Turgot*, vol. iii. p. 298.

⁵²⁴ Which he was never weary of praising; so that, as M. Cousin says (*Hist. de la Philos.* II. série, vol. ii. pp. 311, 312), 'Locke est le vrai maître de Voltaire.' Locke was one of the authors he put into the hands of Madame du Châtelet. *Condorcet, Vie de Voltaire*, p. 296.

⁵²⁵ *Morell's Hist. of Philos.* 1846, vol. i. p. 134; *Hamilton's Discuss.* p. 3.

⁵²⁶ 'Rousseau tira des ouvrages de Locke une grande partie de ses idées sur la politique et l'éducation; Condillac toute sa philosophie.' *Villemain, Lit. au XVIIIè Siècle*, vol. i. p. 83. See also, on the obligations of Rousseau to Locke, *Grimm*,

Voltaire was the first Frenchman who studied Shakespeare; to whose works he was greatly indebted, though he afterwards wished to lessen what he considered the exorbitant respect paid to them in France.⁵²⁷ Indeed, so intimate was his knowledge of the English language,⁵²⁸ that we can trace his obligations to Butler,⁵²⁹ one of the most difficult of our poets, and to Tillotson,⁵³⁰ one of the dullest of our theologians. He was acquainted with the speculations of Berkeley,⁵³¹ the most subtle metaphysician who has ever written in English; and he had read the works, not only of Shaftesbury,⁵³² but even of Chubb,⁵³³

Correspond. vol. v. p. 97; *Musset Pathay, Vie de Rousseau*, vol. i. p. 38, vol. ii. p. 394; *Mém. de Morellet*, vol. i. p. 113; *Romilly's Memoirs*, vol. i. pp. 211, 212.

⁵²⁷ In 1768, Voltaire (*Œuvres*, vol. lxvi. p. 249) writes to Horace Walpole, 'Je suis le premier qui ait fait connaître Shakespeare aux français.' See also his *Lettres inédites*, vol. ii. p. 500; *Villemain, Lit. au XVIIIe Siècle*, vol. iii. p. 325; and *Grimm, Correspond.* vol. xii. pp. 124, 125, 133.

⁵²⁸ There are extant many English letters written by Voltaire, which, though of course containing several errors, also contain abundant evidence of the spirit with which he seized our idiomatic expressions. In addition to his *Lettres inédites*, published at Paris in the present year (1856), see *Chatham Correspond.* vol. ii. pp. 131–133; and *Phillimore's Mém. of Lyttelton*, vol. i. pp. 323–325, vol. ii. pp. 555, 556, 558.

⁵²⁹ *Grimm, Correspond.* vol. i. p. 332; *Voltaire, Lettres inédites*, vol. ii. p. 258; and the account of Hudibras, with translations from it, in *Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. pp. 132–137; also a conversation between Voltaire and Townley, in *Nichols's Illustrations of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. iii. p. 722.

⁵³⁰ Compare *Mackintosh's Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 341, with *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. xxxix. p. 259, vol. xlvi. p. 85.

⁵³¹ *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. xxxviii. pp. 216–218, vol. xlvi. p. 282, vol. xlvi. p. 439, vol. lvii. p. 178.

⁵³² *Ibid.* vol. xxxvii. p. 353, vol. lvii. p. 66; *Correspond. inédite de Duffand*, vol.

Garth,⁵³⁴ Mandeville,⁵³⁵ and Woolston.⁵³⁶ Montesquieu imbibed in our country many of his principles; he studied our language; and he always expressed admiration for England, not only in his writings, but also in his private conversation.⁵³⁷ Buffon learnt English, and his first appearance as an author was as the translator of Newton and of Hales.⁵³⁸ Diderot, following in the same course, was an enthusiastic admirer of the novels of Richardson;⁵³⁹ he took the idea of several of his plays from the English dramatists, particularly from Lillo; he borrowed many of his arguments from Shaftesbury and Collins, and his earliest publication was a translation of Stanyan's *History of Greece*.⁵⁴⁰

ii. p. 230.

⁵³³ *Œuvres*, vol. xxxiv. p. 294, vol. lvii. p. 121.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.* vol. xxxvii. pp. 407, 441.

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.* vol. xxxvi. p. 46.

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.* vol. xxxiv. p. 288, vol. xli. pp. 212–217; *Biog. Univ.* vol. li. pp. 199, 200.

⁵³⁷ *Lerminier, Philos. du Droit*, vol. i. p. 221; *Klimrath, Hist. du Droit*, vol. ii. p. 502; *Harris's Life of Hardwicke*, vol. ii. p. 398, vol. iii. pp. 432–434; *Mém. de Diderot*, vol. ii. pp. 193, 194; *Lacretelle, XVIIIe Siècle*, vol. ii. p. 24.

⁵³⁸ *Villemain, Lit. au XVIIIe Siècle*, vol. ii. p. 182; *Biog. Univ.* vol. vi. p. 235; *Le Blanc, Lettres*, vol. i. p. 93, vol. ii. pp. 159, 160.

⁵³⁹ 'Admirateur passionné du romancier anglais.' *Biog. Univ.* vol. xxxvii. p. 581. Compare *Diderot, Corresp.* vol. i. p. 352; vol. ii. pp. 44, 52, 53; *Mercier sur Rousseau*, vol. i. p. 44.

⁵⁴⁰ *Villemain, Lit.* vol. ii. p. 115; *Schlosser's Eighteenth Century*, vol. i. pp. 34, 42; *Tennemann, Gesch. der Philos.* vol. xi. p. 314; *Biog. Univ.* vol. xi. p. 314; *Grimm, Correspond.* vol. xv. p. 81. Stanyan's *History of Greece* was once famous, and even so late as 1804, I find Dr. Parr recommending it. *Parr's Works*, vol. viii. p. 422. Diderot told Sir Samuel Romilly that he had collected materials for a history of the trial of

Helvétius, who visited London, was never weary of praising the people; many of the views in his great work on the Mind are drawn from Mandeville; and he constantly refers to the authority of Locke, whose principles hardly any Frenchman would at an earlier period have dared to recommend.⁵⁴¹ The works of Bacon, previously little known, were now translated into French; and his classification of the human faculties was made the basis of that celebrated Encyclopædia, which is justly regarded as one of the greatest productions of the eighteenth century.⁵⁴² The *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, by Adam Smith, was during thirty-four years translated three different times, by three different French authors.⁵⁴³ And such was the general eagerness, that directly the *Wealth of Nations*, by the same great writer, appeared, Morellet, who was then high in reputation, began to turn it into French; and was only prevented from printing his translation by the circumstance, that before it could be completed, another version of it was published in a French periodical.⁵⁴⁴ Coyer, who is still remembered for his *Life of Sobieski*, visited England; and after

Charles I. *Life of Romilly*, vol. i. p. 46.

⁵⁴¹ *Diderot, Mém.* vol. ii. p. 286; *Cousin, Hist. de la Philos.* IIe série, vol. ii. p. 331; *Helvétius de l'Esprit*, vol. i. pp. 31, 38, 46, 65, 114, 169, 193, 266, 268, vol. ii. pp. 144, 163, 165, 195, 212; *Letters addressed to Hume*, Edinb. 1849, pp. 9, 10.

⁵⁴² This is the arrangement of our knowledge under the heads of Memory, Reason, and Imagination, which D'Alembert took from Bacon. Compare *Whewell's Philos. of the Sciences*, vol. ii. p. 306; *Cuvier, Hist. des Sciences*, part ii. p. 276; *Georgel, Mém.* vol. ii. p. 241; *Bordas Demoulin, Cartésianisme*, vol. i. p. 18.

⁵⁴³ *Quérard, France Lit.* ix. 193.

⁵⁴⁴ *Mém. de Morellet*, i. 236, 237.

returning to his own country, showed the direction of his studies by rendering into French the Commentaries of Blackstone.⁵⁴⁵ Le Blanc travelled in England, wrote a work expressly upon the English, and translated into French the Political Discourses of Hume.⁵⁴⁶ Holbach was certainly one of the most active leaders of the liberal party in Paris; but a large part of his very numerous writings consists solely in translations of English authors.⁵⁴⁷ Indeed, it may be broadly stated, that while, at the end of the seventeenth century, it would have been difficult to find, even among the most educated Frenchmen, a single person acquainted with English, it would, in the eighteenth century, have been nearly as difficult to find in the same class one who was ignorant of it. Men of all tastes, and of the most opposite pursuits, were on this point united as by a common bond. Poets, geometricians, historians, naturalists, all seemed to agree as to the necessity of studying a literature on which no one before had wasted a thought. In the course of general reading, I have met with proofs that the English language was known, not only to those eminent Frenchmen whom I have already mentioned, but also to mathematicians,

⁵⁴⁵ *Œuvres de Voltaire*, lxxv. 161, 190, 212; *Biog. Univ.* x. 158, 159.

⁵⁴⁶ *Burton's Life of Hume*, vol. i. pp. 365, 366, 406.

⁵⁴⁷ See the list, in *Biog. Univ.* vol. xx. pp. 463–466; and compare *Mém. de Diderot*, vol. iii. p. 49, from which it seems that Holbach was indebted to Toland, though Diderot speaks rather doubtingly. In *Almon's Mem. of Wilkes* 1805, vol. iv. pp. 176, 177, there is an English letter, tolerably well written, from Holbach to Wilkes.

as D'Alembert,⁵⁴⁸ Darquier,⁵⁴⁹ Du Val le Roy,⁵⁵⁰ Jurain,⁵⁵¹ Lachapelle,⁵⁵² Lalande,⁵⁵³ Le Cozic,⁵⁵⁴ Montucla,⁵⁵⁵ Pezenas,⁵⁵⁶ Prony,⁵⁵⁷ Romme,⁵⁵⁸ and Roger Martin,⁵⁵⁹ to anatomists, physiologists, and writers on medicine, as Barthèz,⁵⁶⁰ Bichat,⁵⁶¹ Bordeu,⁵⁶² Barbeau Dubourg,⁵⁶³ Bosquillon,⁵⁶⁴ Bourru,⁵⁶⁵ Begue de Presle,⁵⁶⁶ Cabanis,⁵⁶⁷ Demours,⁵⁶⁸ Duplanil,⁵⁶⁹ Fouquet,⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁴⁸ *Musset Pathay, Vie de Rousseau*, ii. 10, 175; *Œuvres de Voltaire*, liv. 207.

⁵⁴⁹ *Biog. Univ.* x. 556.

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.* xii. 418.

⁵⁵¹ *Quérard, France Lit.* iv. 34, 272.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.* iv. 361.

⁵⁵³ *Biog. Univ.* xxiii. 226.

⁵⁵⁴ *Montucla, Hist. des Mathém.* ii. 170.

⁵⁵⁵ *Montucla*, ii. 120, iv. 662, 665, 670.

⁵⁵⁶ *Biog. Univ.* iii. 253, xxxiii. 564.

⁵⁵⁷ *Quérard, France Lit.* vii. 353.

⁵⁵⁸ *Biog. Univ.* xxxviii. 530.

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibid.* xxxviii. 411.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.* iii. 450.

⁵⁶¹ *Bichat sur la Vie*, 244.

⁵⁶² *Quérard*, i. 416.

⁵⁶³ *Biog. Univ.* iii. 345.

⁵⁶⁴ *Quérard*, i. 260, 425, ii. 354.

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.* i. 476.

⁵⁶⁶ *Biog. Univ.* iv. 55, 56.

⁵⁶⁷ *Notice sur Cabanis*, p. viii. in his *Physique et Moral.*

⁵⁶⁸ *Biog. Univ.* xi. 65, 66.

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.* xii. 276.

Goulin,⁵⁷¹ Lavirotte,⁵⁷² Lassus,⁵⁷³ Petit Radel,⁵⁷⁴ Pinel,⁵⁷⁵
Roux,⁵⁷⁶ Sauvages,⁵⁷⁷ and Sue,⁵⁷⁸ to naturalists, as Alyon,⁵⁷⁹
Brémond,⁵⁸⁰ Brisson,⁵⁸¹ Broussonnet,⁵⁸² Dalibard,⁵⁸³ Haüy,⁵⁸⁴
Latapie,⁵⁸⁵ Richard,⁵⁸⁶ Rigaud,⁵⁸⁷ and Romé de Lisle;⁵⁸⁸ to
historians, philologists, and antiquaries, as Barthélemy,⁵⁸⁹ Butel
Dumont,⁵⁹⁰ De Brosses,⁵⁹¹ Foucher,⁵⁹² Freret,⁵⁹³ Larcher,⁵⁹⁴ Le

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.* xv. 359.

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.* xviii. 187.

⁵⁷² *Quérard*, iv. 641, vi. 9, 398.

⁵⁷³ *Cuvier, Eloges*, i. 354.

⁵⁷⁴ *Quérard*, vii. 95.

⁵⁷⁵ *Cuvier, Eloges*, iii. 382.

⁵⁷⁶ *Biog. Univ.* xxxix. 174.

⁵⁷⁷ *Le Blanc, Lettres*, i. 93.

⁵⁷⁸ *Quérard*, ix. 286.

⁵⁷⁹ *Robin et Verdeil, Chim. Anat.* ii. 416.

⁵⁸⁰ *Biog. Univ.* v. 530, 531.

⁵⁸¹ *Cuvier, Eloges*, i. 196.

⁵⁸² *Biog. Univ.* vi. 47.

⁵⁸³ *Quérard*, ii. 372.

⁵⁸⁴ *Haüy, Minéralogie*, ii. 247, 267, 295, 327, 529, 609, iii. 75, 293, 307, 447, 575,
iv. 45, 280, 292, 362.

⁵⁸⁵ *Quérard*, iv. 598.

⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid.* viii. 22.

⁵⁸⁷ *Swainson, Disc. on Nat. Hist.* 52; *Cuvier, Règne Animal*, iii. 415.

⁵⁸⁸ *De Lisle, Cristallographie*, 1772, xviii. xx. xxiii. xxv. xxvii. 78, 206, 254.

⁵⁸⁹ *Albemarle's Rockingham*, ii. 156; *Campbell's Chancellors*, v. 365.

⁵⁹⁰ *Biog. Univ.* vi. 386.

Coc de Villeraŷ,⁵⁹⁵ Millot,⁵⁹⁶ Targe,⁵⁹⁷ Velly,⁵⁹⁸ Volney,⁵⁹⁹ and Wailly;⁶⁰⁰ to poets and dramatists, as Chéron,⁶⁰¹ Colardeau,⁶⁰² Delille,⁶⁰³ Desforŷes,⁶⁰⁴ Ducis,⁶⁰⁵ Florian,⁶⁰⁶ Laborde,⁶⁰⁷ Lefèvre de Beauvray,⁶⁰⁸ Mercier,⁶⁰⁹ Patu,⁶¹⁰ Pompignan,⁶¹¹ Quétant,⁶¹² Roucher,⁶¹³ and Saint Ange,⁶¹⁴ to miscellaneous writers, as

⁵⁹¹ *Letters to Hume*, Edin. 1849, 276, 278.

⁵⁹² *Biog. Univ.* xv. 332.

⁵⁹³ *Brewster's Life of Newton*, ii. 302.

⁵⁹⁴ *Palissot, Mém.* ii. 56.

⁵⁹⁵ *Biog. Univ.* ix. 549.

⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid.* xxix. 51, 53.

⁵⁹⁷ *Ibid.* xlv. 534.

⁵⁹⁸ *Ibid.* xlvi. 93.

⁵⁹⁹ *Volney, Syrie et Egypte*, ii. 100, 157; *Quérard*, x. 271, 273.

⁶⁰⁰ *Biog. Univ.* i. 42.

⁶⁰¹ *Ibid.* viii. 340, 341.

⁶⁰² *Mém. de Genlis*, i. 276.

⁶⁰³ *Palissot, Mém.* i. 243.

⁶⁰⁴ *Biog. Univ.* xi. 281, xi. 172, 173.

⁶⁰⁵ *Quérard*, ii. 626, 627.

⁶⁰⁶ *Ibid.* iii. 141.

⁶⁰⁷ *Quérard*, iv. 342.

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid.* v. 83.

⁶⁰⁹ *Ibid.* vi. 62.

⁶¹⁰ *Garrick Correspond.* 4to, 1832, ii. 385, 395, 416.

⁶¹¹ *Biog. Univ.* xxxv. 314.

⁶¹² *Quérard*, vii. 399.

⁶¹³ *Biog. Univ.* xxxix. 93.

Bassinet,⁶¹⁵ Baudeau,⁶¹⁶ Beaulaton,⁶¹⁷ Benoist,⁶¹⁸ Bergier,⁶¹⁹
Blavet,⁶²⁰ Bouchaud,⁶²¹ Bougainville,⁶²² Bruté,⁶²³ Castera,⁶²⁴
Chantreau,⁶²⁵ Charpentier,⁶²⁶ Chastellux,⁶²⁷ Contant d'Orville,⁶²⁸
De Bissy,⁶²⁹ Demeunier,⁶³⁰ Desfontaines,⁶³¹ Devienne,⁶³²
Dubocage,⁶³³ Dupré,⁶³⁴ Duresnel,⁶³⁵ Eidous,⁶³⁶ Estienne,⁶³⁷

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid.* xxxix. 530.

⁶¹⁵ *Quérard*, i. 209.

⁶¹⁶ *Biog. Univ.* iii. 533.

⁶¹⁷ *Ibid.* iii. 631.

⁶¹⁸ *Cuvier, Règne Animal*, iii. 334.

⁶¹⁹ *Quérard*, i. 284, vii. 287.

⁶²⁰ *Mém. de Morellet*, i. 237.

⁶²¹ *Biog. Univ.* v. 264.

⁶²² *Dutens, Mém.* iii. 32.

⁶²³ *Biog. Univ.* vi. 165.

⁶²⁴ *Murray's Life of Bruce*, 121; *Biog. Univ.* vi. 79.

⁶²⁵ *Ibid.* viii. 46.

⁶²⁶ *Ibid.* viii. 246.

⁶²⁷ *Ibid.* viii. 266.

⁶²⁸ *Ibid.* ix. 497.

⁶²⁹ *Ibid.* xlv. 394.

⁶³⁰ *Lettres de Dudeffand à Walpole*, iii. 184.

⁶³¹ *Œuvres de Voltaire*. lvi. 527.

⁶³² *Biog. Univ.* xi. 264.

⁶³³ *Quérard*, ii. 598.

⁶³⁴ *Biog. Univ.* xii. 313, 314.

⁶³⁵ *Nichols's Lit. Anec.* ii. 154; *Palissot, Mém.* ii. 311.

⁶³⁶ *Biog. Univ.* iv. 547, xii. 595.

Favier,⁶³⁸ Flavigny,⁶³⁹ Fontanelle,⁶⁴⁰ Fontenay,⁶⁴¹ Framery,⁶⁴²
Fresnais,⁶⁴³ Fréville,⁶⁴⁴ Frossard,⁶⁴⁵ Galtier,⁶⁴⁶ Garsault,⁶⁴⁷
Goddard,⁶⁴⁸ Goudar,⁶⁴⁹ Guénée,⁶⁵⁰ Guillemard,⁶⁵¹ Guyard,⁶⁵²
Jault,⁶⁵³ Imbert,⁶⁵⁴ Joncourt,⁶⁵⁵ Kéralio,⁶⁵⁶ Laboreau,⁶⁵⁷
Lacombe,⁶⁵⁸ Lafargue,⁶⁵⁹ La Montagne,⁶⁶⁰ Lanjuinais,⁶⁶¹

⁶³⁷ *Ibid.* xiii. 399.

⁶³⁸ *Quérard*, iii. 79.

⁶³⁹ *Biog. Univ.* xv. 29.

⁶⁴⁰ *Ibid.* xv. 203.

⁶⁴¹ *Ibid.* 218.

⁶⁴² *Quérard*, i. 525.

⁶⁴³ *Biog. Univ.* xvi. 48.

⁶⁴⁴ *Ibid.* li. 508.

⁶⁴⁵ *Smith's Tour on the Continent in 1786*, i. 143.

⁶⁴⁶ *Biog. Univ.* xvi. 388.

⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid.* xvi. 502.

⁶⁴⁸ *Sinclair's Correspond.* i. 157.

⁶⁴⁹ *Quérard*, iii. 418.

⁶⁵⁰ *Biog. Univ.* xix. 13.

⁶⁵¹ *Quérard*, i. 10, iii. 536.

⁶⁵² *Ibid.* iii. 469.

⁶⁵³ *Biog. Univ.* xxi. 419.

⁶⁵⁴ *Ibid.* xxi. 200.

⁶⁵⁵ *Œuvres de Voltaire*, xxxviii. 244.

⁶⁵⁶ *Palissot, Mém.* i. 425.

⁶⁵⁷ *Biog. Univ.* xxiii. 34.

⁶⁵⁸ *Ibid.* xxiii. 56.

⁶⁵⁹ *Ibid.* xxiii. 111.

Lasalle,⁶⁶² Lasteyrie,⁶⁶³ Le Breton,⁶⁶⁴ Lécuy,⁶⁶⁵ Léonard des Malpeines,⁶⁶⁶ Letourneur,⁶⁶⁷ Linguet,⁶⁶⁸ Lottin,⁶⁶⁹ Luneau,⁶⁷⁰ Maillet Duclairon,⁶⁷¹ Mandrillon,⁶⁷² Marsy,⁶⁷³ Moet,⁶⁷⁴ Monod,⁶⁷⁵ Mosneron,⁶⁷⁶ Nagot,⁶⁷⁷ Peyron,⁶⁷⁸ Prévost,⁶⁷⁹ Puisieux,⁶⁸⁰ Rivoire,⁶⁸¹ Robinet,⁶⁸² Roger,⁶⁸³ Roubaud,⁶⁸⁴

⁶⁶⁰ *Quérard*, iv. 503.

⁶⁶¹ *Biog. Univ.* xxiii. 373.

⁶⁶² *Quérard*, iv. 579.

⁶⁶³ *Sinclair's Correspond.* ii. 139.

⁶⁶⁴ *Mem. and Correspond. of Sir. J. E. Smith*, i. 163.

⁶⁶⁵ *Biog. des Hommes Vivants*, iv. 164.

⁶⁶⁶ *Quérard*, v. 177.

⁶⁶⁷ *Nichols's Lit. Anec.* iv. 583; *Longchamp et Wagnière, Mém.* i. 395.

⁶⁶⁸ *Quérard*, v. 316.

⁶⁶⁹ *Biog. Univ.* xxv. 87.

⁶⁷⁰ *Ibid.* xxv. 432.

⁶⁷¹ *Ibid.* xxvi. 244.

⁶⁷² *Ibid.* xxvi. 468.

⁶⁷³ *Ibid.* xxvii. 269.

⁶⁷⁴ *Ibid.* xxix. 208.

⁶⁷⁵ *Lettres de Duffand à Walpole*, i. 222.

⁶⁷⁶ *Quérard*, vi. 330.

⁶⁷⁷ *Biog. Univ.* xxx. 539.

⁶⁷⁸ *Ibid.* xxxiii. 553.

⁶⁷⁹ *Lettres de Duffand à Walpole*, i. 22, iii. 307, iv. 207.

⁶⁸⁰ *Biog. Univ.* xxxvi. 305, 306.

⁶⁸¹ *Ibid.* xxxviii. 174.

⁶⁸² *Peignot, Dict. des Livres*, ii. 233.

Salaville,⁶⁸⁵ Sauseuil,⁶⁸⁶ Secondat,⁶⁸⁷ Septchènes,⁶⁸⁸ Simon,⁶⁸⁹ Soulès,⁶⁹⁰ Suard,⁶⁹¹ Tannevot,⁶⁹² Thurot,⁶⁹³ Toussaint,⁶⁹⁴ Tressan,⁶⁹⁵ Trochereau,⁶⁹⁶ Turpin,⁶⁹⁷ Ussieux,⁶⁹⁸ Vaugeois,⁶⁹⁹ Verlac,⁷⁰⁰ and Virloys.⁷⁰¹ Indeed, Le Blanc, who wrote shortly before the middle of the eighteenth century, says: ‘We have placed English in the rank of the learned languages; our women study it, and have abandoned Italian in order to study the language of this philosophic people; nor is there to be found

⁶⁸³ *Quérard*, viii. 111.

⁶⁸⁴ *Biog. Univ.* xxxix. 84.

⁶⁸⁵ *Biog. des Hommes Vivants*, v. 294.

⁶⁸⁶ *Quérard*, viii. 474.

⁶⁸⁷ *Biog. Univ.* xli. 426.

⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid.* xlii. 45, 46.

⁶⁸⁹ *Ibid.* xlii. 389.

⁶⁹⁰ *Ibid.* xliii. 181.

⁶⁹¹ *Garrick Correspond.* ii. 604; *Mém. de Genlis*, vi. 205.

⁶⁹² *Biog. Univ.* xlv. 512.

⁶⁹³ *Life of Roscoe, by his Son*, i. 200.

⁶⁹⁴ *Biog. Univ.* xlvi. 398, 399.

⁶⁹⁵ *Ibid.* xlvi. 497.

⁶⁹⁶ *Quérard*, iv. 45, ix. 558.

⁶⁹⁷ *Biog. Univ.* xlvii. 98.

⁶⁹⁸ *Ibid.* xlvii. 232.

⁶⁹⁹ *Mém. de Brissot*, i. 78.

⁷⁰⁰ *Biog. Univ.* xlviii. 217, 218.

⁷⁰¹ *Ibid.* xlix. 223.

among us any one who does not desire to learn it.⁷⁰²

Such was the eagerness with which the French imbibed the literature of a people whom but a few years before they had heartily despised. The truth is, that in this new state of things they had no alternative. For where but in England was a literature to be found that could satisfy those bold and inquisitive thinkers who arose in France after the death of Louis XIV.? In their own country there had no doubt been great displays of eloquence, of fine dramas, and of poetry, which, though never reaching the highest point of excellence, is of finished and admirable beauty. But it is an unquestionable fact, and one melancholy to contemplate, that during the sixty years which succeeded the death of Descartes, France had not possessed a single man who dared to think for himself. Metaphysicians, moralists, historians, all had become tainted by the servility of that bad age. During two generations, no Frenchman had been allowed to discuss with freedom any question, either of politics or of religion. The consequence was, that the largest intellects, excluded from their legitimate field, lost their energy; the national spirit died away; the very materials and nutriment of thought seemed to be wanting. No wonder then, if the great Frenchmen of the eighteenth century sought that aliment abroad which they were

⁷⁰² 'Nous avons mis depuis peu leur langue au rang des langues savantes; les femmes même l'apprennent, et ont renoncé à l'italien pour étudier celle de ce peuple philosophe. Il n'est point dans la province d'Armande et de Belise qui ne veuille savoir l'anglois.' *Le Blanc, Lettres*, vol. ii. p. 465. Compare *Grimm, Corresp.* vol. xiv. p. 484; and *Nichols's Lit. Anec.* vol. iii. pp. 460, 461.

unable to find at home. No wonder if they turned from their own land, and gazed with admiration at the only people who, pushing their inquiries into the highest departments, had shown the same fearlessness in politics as in religion; a people who, having punished their kings and controlled their clergy, were storing the treasures of their experience in that noble literature which never can perish, and of which it may be said in sober truth, that it has stimulated the intellect of the most distant races, and that, planted in America and in India, it has already fertilized the two extremities of the world.

There are, in fact, few things in history so instructive as the extent to which France was influenced by this new pursuit. Even those who took part in actually consummating the Revolution, were moved by the prevailing spirit. The English language was familiar to Carra,⁷⁰³ Dumouriez,⁷⁰⁴ Lafayette,⁷⁰⁵ and Lanthénas.⁷⁰⁶ Camille Desmoulins had cultivated his mind from the same source.⁷⁰⁷ Marat travelled in Scotland as well as

⁷⁰³ *Williams's Letters from France*, vol. iii. p. 68, 2nd edit. 1796; *Biog. Univ.* vol. vii. p. 192.

⁷⁰⁴ *Adolphus's Biog. Mem.* 1799, vol. i. p. 352.

⁷⁰⁵ *Lady Morgan's France*, vol. ii. p. 304; *Mém. de Lafayette*, vol. i. pp. 41, 49, 70, vol. ii. pp. 26, 74, 83, 89.

⁷⁰⁶ *Quérard, France Littéraire*, vol. iv. p. 540.

⁷⁰⁷ The last authors he read, shortly before his execution, were Young and Hervey. *Lamartine, Hist. des Girondins*, vol. viii. p. 45. In 1769 Madame Riccoboni writes from Paris, that Young's *Night Thoughts* had become very popular there; and she justly adds, 'c'est une preuve sans réplique du changement de l'esprit français.' *Garrick Correspondence*, vol. ii. p. 566, 4to. 1832.

in England, and was so profoundly versed in our language that he wrote two works in it; one of which, called *The Chains of Slavery*, was afterwards translated into French.⁷⁰⁸ Mirabeau is declared by a high authority to have owed part of his power to a careful study of the English constitution;⁷⁰⁹ he translated not only Watson's *History of Philip II.*, but also some parts of Milton;⁷¹⁰ and it is said that when he was in the National Assembly, he delivered, as his own, passages from the speeches of Burke.⁷¹¹ Mounier was well acquainted with our language, and with our political institutions both in theory and in practice;⁷¹² and in a work, which exercised considerable influence, he proposed for his own country the establishment of two chambers, to form that balance of power of which England supplied the example.⁷¹³ The

⁷⁰⁸ *Lamartine, Hist. des Girondins*, vol. iv. p. 119; *Mém. de Brissot*, vol. i. pp. 336, 337, vol. ii. p. 3.

⁷⁰⁹ 'Une des supériorités secondaires, une des supériorités d'étude qui appartenait à Mirabeau, c'était la profonde connaissance, la vive intelligence de la constitution anglaise, de ses ressorts publics et de ses ressorts cachés.' *Villemain, Lit. au XVIIIe Siècle*, vol. iv. p. 153.

⁷¹⁰ Particularly the democratic passages, 'un corps de doctrine de tous ses écrits républicains.' *Dumont, Souvenirs sur Mirabeau*, p. 119. As to his translation of Watson, see *Alison's Europe*, vol. i. p. 452. He also intended to translate Sinclair's *History of the Revenue*. *Correspond. of Sir J. Sinclair*, vol. ii. p. 119.

⁷¹¹ *Prior's Life of Burke*, p. 546, 3rd edit. 1839.

⁷¹² 'Il étudiait leur langue, la théorie et plus encore la pratique de leurs institutions.' *Biog. Univ.* vol. xxx. p. 310.

⁷¹³ *Continuation de Sismondi, Hist. des Français*, vol. xxx. p. 434. Montlosier (*Monarchie Française*, vol. ii. p. 340) says that this idea was borrowed from England; but he does not mention who suggested it.

same idea, derived from the same source, was advocated by Le Brun, who was a friend of Mounier's, and who, like him, had paid attention to the literature and government of the English people.⁷¹⁴ Brissot knew English; he had studied in London the working of the English institutions, and he himself mentions that, in his treatise on criminal law, he was mainly guided by the course of English legislation.⁷¹⁵ Condorcet also proposed as a model our system of criminal jurisprudence,⁷¹⁶ which, bad as it was, certainly surpassed that possessed by France. Madame Roland, whose position, as well as ability, made her one of the leaders of the democratic party, was an ardent student of the language and literature of the English people.⁷¹⁷ She too, moved by the universal curiosity, came to our country; and, as if to show that persons of every shade and of every rank were actuated by the same spirit, the Duke of Orleans likewise visited England; nor did his visit fail to produce its natural results. 'It was,' says a celebrated writer, 'in the society of London that he acquired a taste for liberty; and it was on his return from there that he brought into France a love of popular agitation, a contempt for his own rank, and a familiarity with those beneath him.'⁷¹⁸

⁷¹⁴ *Du Mesnil, Mém. sur Le Brun*, pp. 10, 14, 29, 82, 180, 182.

⁷¹⁵ *Mém. de Brissot*, vol. i. pp. 63, 64, vol. ii. pp. 25, 40, 188, 206, 260, 313.

⁷¹⁶ Dupont de Nemours (*Mém. sur Turgot*, p. 117) says of criminal jurisprudence, 'M. de Condorcet proposait en modèle celle des Anglais.'

⁷¹⁷ *Mém. de Roland*, vol. i. pp. 27, 55, 89, 136, vol. ii. pp. 99, 135, 253.

⁷¹⁸ 'Le duc d'Orléans puisa ainsi le goût de la liberté dans la vie de Londres. Il en rapporta en France les habitudes d'insolence contre la cour, l'appétit des agitations

This language, strong as it is, will not appear exaggerated to any one who has carefully studied the history of the eighteenth century. It is no doubt certain, that the French Revolution was essentially a reaction against that protective and interfering spirit which reached its zenith under Louis XIV., but which, centuries before his reign, had exercised a most injurious influence over the national prosperity. While, however, this must be fully conceded, it is equally certain that the impetus to which the reaction owed its strength, proceeded from England; and that it was English literature which taught the lessons of political liberty, first to France, and through France to the rest of Europe.⁷¹⁹ On this account, and not at all from mere literary curiosity, I have traced with some minuteness that union between the French and English minds, which, though often noticed, has never been examined with the care its importance deserves. The circumstances which reinforced this vast movement will be related towards the end of the volume; at present I will confine myself to its first great consequence, namely, the establishment of a complete schism between the literary men of France, and the classes who exclusively governed the country.

populaires, le mépris pour son propre rang, la familiarité avec la foule,' &c. *Lamartine, Hist. des Girondins*, vol. ii. p. 102.

⁷¹⁹ M. Lerminier (*Philos. du Droit*, vol. i. p. 19) says of England, 'cette île célèbre donne à l'Europe l'enseignement de la liberté politique; elle en fut l'école au dix-huitième siècle pour tout ce que l'Europe eut de penseurs.' See also *Soulavie, Règne de Louis XVI*, vol. iii. p. 161; *Mém. de Marmontel*, vol. iv. pp. 38, 39; *Süudlin, Gesch. der theolog. Wissenschaften*, vol. ii. p. 291.

Those eminent Frenchmen who now turned their attention to England, found in its literature, in the structure of its society, and in its government, many peculiarities of which their own country furnished no example. They heard political and religious questions of the greatest moment debated with a boldness unknown in any other part of Europe. They heard dissenters and churchmen, whigs and tories, handling the most dangerous topics, and treating them with unlimited freedom. They heard public disputes respecting matters which no one in France dared to discuss; mysteries of state and mysteries of creed unfolded and rudely exposed to the popular gaze. And, what to Frenchmen of that age must have been equally amazing, they not only found a public press possessing some degree of freedom, but they found that within the very walls of parliament the administration of the crown was assailed with complete impunity, the character of its chosen servants constantly aspersed, and, strange to say, even the management of its revenues effectually controlled.⁷²⁰

The successors of the age of Louis XIV., seeing these things, and seeing, moreover, that the civilization of the country increased as the authority of the upper classes and of the crown diminished, were unable to restrain their wonder at so novel and exciting a spectacle. ‘The English nation,’ says Voltaire, ‘is

⁷²⁰ Hume, who was acquainted with several eminent Frenchmen who visited England, says (*Philosophical Works*, vol. iii. p. 8), ‘nothing is more apt to surprise a foreigner than the extreme liberty which we enjoy in this country, of communicating whatever we please to the public, and of openly censuring every measure entered into by the king or his ministers.’

the only one on the earth, which, by resisting its kings, has succeeded in lessening their power.⁷²¹ How I love the boldness of the English! how I love men who say what they think!⁷²² The English, says Le Blanc, are willing to have a king, provided they are not obliged to obey him.⁷²³ The immediate object of their government, says Montesquieu, is political liberty;⁷²⁴ they possess more freedom than any republic;⁷²⁵ and their system is in fact a republic disguised as a monarchy.⁷²⁶ Grosley, struck with amazement, exclaims, 'Property is in England a thing sacred, which the laws protect from all encroachment, not only from

⁷²¹ 'La nation anglaise est la seule de la terre qui soit parvenue à régler le pouvoir des rois en leur résistant.' *Lettre VIII sur les Anglais*, in *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. xxvi. p. 37.

⁷²² 'Que j'aime la hardiesse anglaise! que j'aime les gens qui disent ce qu'ils pensent!' *Letter from Voltaire*, in *Correspond. de Duffeffand*, vol. ii. p. 263. For other instances of his admiration of England, see *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. xl. pp. 105–109; vol. li. pp. 137, 390; vol. liv. pp. 298, 392; vol. lvi. pp. 162, 163, 195, 196, 270; vol. lvii. p. 500; vol. lviii. pp. 128, 267; vol. lix. pp. 265, 361; vol. lx. p. 501; vol. lxi. pp. 43, 73, 129, 140, 474, 475; vol. lxii. pp. 343, 379, 392; vol. lxiii. pp. 128, 146, 190, 196, 226, 237, 415; vol. lxiv. pp. 36, 96, 269; vol. lxvi. pp. 93, 159; vol. lxvii. pp. 353, 484.

⁷²³ 'Ils veulent un roi, aux conditions, pour ainsi dire, de ne lui point obéir.' *Le Blanc, Lettres d'un François*, vol. i. p. 210.

⁷²⁴ 'Il y a aussi une nation dans le monde qui a pour objet direct de sa constitution la liberté politique.' *Esprit des Lois*, livre xi. chap. v. in *Œuvres de Montesquieu*, p. 264. Conversely De Staël (*Consid. sur la Rév.* vol. iii. p. 261), 'la liberté politique est le moyen suprême.'

⁷²⁵ 'L'Angleterre est à présent le plus libre pays qui soit au monde, je n'en excepte aucune république.' *Notes sur l'Angleterre*, in *Œuvres de Montesquieu*, p. 632.

⁷²⁶ 'Une nation où la république se cache sous la forme de la monarchie.' *Esprit des Lois*, livre v. chap. xix. in *Œuvres de Montesquieu*, page 225; also quoted in *Bancroft's American Revolution*, vol. ii. p. 36.

engineers, inspectors, and other people of that stamp, but even from the king himself.⁷²⁷ Mably, in the most celebrated of all his works, says, ‘The Hanoverians are only able to reign in England because the people are free, and believe they have a right to dispose of the crown. But if the kings were to claim the same powers as the Stuarts, if they were to believe that the crown belonged to them by divine right, they would be condemning themselves and confessing that they were occupying a place which is not their own.’⁷²⁸ In England, says Helvétius, the people are respected; every citizen can take some part in the management of affairs; and authors are allowed to enlighten the public respecting its own interests.⁷²⁹ And Brissot, who had made these matters his especial study, cries out, ‘Admirable constitution! which can only be disparaged either by men who know it not, or else by those whose tongues are bridled by slavery.’⁷³⁰

Such were the opinions of some of the most celebrated Frenchmen of that time; and it would be easy to fill a volume with similar extracts. But, what I now rather wish to do, is, to point out the first great consequence of this new and sudden admiration for a country which, in the preceding age, had been held in

⁷²⁷ *Grosley's Tour to London*, vol. i. pp. 16, 17.

⁷²⁸ *Mably, Observ. sur l'Hist. de France*, vol. ii. p. 185.

⁷²⁹ *Helvétius de l'Esprit*. vol. i. pp. 102, 199: ‘un pays où le peuple est respecté comme en Angleterre; ... un pays où chaque citoyen a part au maniement des affaires générales, où tout homme d'esprit peut éclairer le public sur ses véritables intérêts.’

⁷³⁰ *Mém. de Brissot*, vol. ii. p. 25.

profound contempt. The events which followed are, indeed, of an importance impossible to exaggerate; since they brought about that rupture between the intellectual and governing classes, of which the revolution itself was but a temporary episode.

The great Frenchmen of the eighteenth century being stimulated by the example of England into a love of progress, naturally came into collision with the governing classes, among whom the old stationary spirit still prevailed. This opposition was a wholesome reaction against that disgraceful servility for which, in the reign of Louis XIV., literary men had been remarkable; and if the contest which ensued had been conducted with anything approaching to moderation, the ultimate result would have been highly beneficial; since it would have secured that divergence between the speculative and practical classes which, as we have already seen, is essential to maintain the balance of civilization, and to prevent either side from acquiring a dangerous predominance. But, unfortunately, the nobles and clergy had been so long accustomed to power, that they could not brook the slightest contradiction from those great writers, whom they ignorantly despised as their inferiors. Hence it was, that when the most illustrious Frenchmen of the eighteenth century attempted to infuse into the literature of their country a spirit of inquiry similar to that which existed in England, the ruling classes became roused into a hatred and jealousy which broke all bounds, and gave rise to that crusade against knowledge which forms the second principal precursor of the French Revolution.

The extent of that cruel persecution to which literature was now exposed, can only be fully appreciated by those who have minutely studied the history of France in the eighteenth century. For it was not a stray case of oppression, which occurred here and there; but it was a prolonged and systematic attempt to stifle all inquiry, and punish all inquirers. If a list were drawn up of all the literary men who wrote during the seventy years succeeding the death of Louis XIV., it would be found, that at least nine out of every ten had suffered from the government some grievous injury; and that a majority of them had been actually thrown into prison. Indeed, in saying thus much, I am understating the real facts of the case; for I question if one literary man out of fifty escaped with entire impunity. Certainly, my own knowledge of those times, though carefully collected, is not so complete as I could have wished; but, among those authors who were punished, I find the name of nearly every Frenchman whose writings have survived the age in which they were produced. Among those who suffered either confiscation, or imprisonment, or exile, or fines, or the suppression of their works, or the ignominy of being forced to recant what they had written, I find, besides a host of inferior writers, the names of Beaumarchais, Berruyer, Bougeant, Buffon, D'Alembert, Diderot, Duclos, Freret, Helvétius, La Harpe, Linguet, Mably, Marmontel, Montesquieu, Mercier, Morellet, Raynal, Rousseau, Suard, Thomas, and Voltaire.

The mere recital of this list is pregnant with instruction. To

suppose that all these eminent men deserved the treatment they received, would, even in the absence of direct evidence, be a manifest absurdity; since it would involve the supposition, that a schism having taken place between two classes, the weaker class was altogether wrong, and the stronger altogether right. Fortunately, however, there is no necessity for resorting to any merely speculative argument respecting the probable merits of the two parties. The accusations brought against these great men are before the world; the penalties inflicted are equally well known; and, by putting these together, we may form some idea of the state of society, in which such things could be openly practised.

Voltaire, almost immediately after the death of Louis XIV., was falsely charged with having composed a libel on that prince; and, for this imaginary offence, he, without the pretence of a trial, and without even the shadow of a proof, was thrown into the Bastille, where he was confined more than twelve months.⁷³¹ Shortly after he was released, there was put upon him a still more grievous insult; the occurrence, and, above all, the impunity of which, supply striking evidence as to the state of society in which such things were permitted. Voltaire, at the table of the Duke de Sully, was deliberately insulted by the Chevalier de Rohan Chabot, one of those impudent and dissolute nobles who then abounded in Paris. The duke, though the outrage was committed

⁷³¹ *Condorcet, Vie de Voltaire*, pp. 118, 119; *Duvernet, Vie de Voltaire*, pp. 30, 32; *Longchamp et Wagnière, Mém. sur Voltaire*, vol. i. p. 22.

in his own house, in his own presence, and upon his own guest, would not interfere; but seemed to consider that a poor poet was honoured by being in any way noticed by a man of rank. But, as Voltaire, in the heat of the moment, let fall one of those stinging retorts which were the terror of his enemies, the chevalier determined to visit him with further punishment. The course he adopted was characteristic of the man, and of the class to which he belonged. He caused Voltaire to be seized in the streets of Paris, and in his presence ignominiously beaten, he himself regulating the number of blows of which the chastisement was to consist. Voltaire, smarting under the insult, demanded that satisfaction which it was customary to give. This, however, did not enter into the plan of his noble assailer, who not only refused to meet him in the field, but actually obtained an order, by which he was confined in the Bastille for six months, and at the end of that time was directed to quit the country.⁷³²

Thus it was that Voltaire, having first been imprisoned for a libel which he never wrote, and having then been publicly beaten because he retorted an insult wantonly put upon him, was

⁷³² *Duvernety Vie de Voltaire*, pp. 46–48; *Condorcet, Vie de Voltaire*, pp. 125, 126. Compare vol. lvi. p. 162; *Lepan, Vie de Voltaire*, 1837, pp. 70, 71; and *Biog. Univ.* vol. xlix. p. 468. Duvernety who, writing from materials supplied by Voltaire, had the best means of information, gives a specimen of the fine feeling of a French duke in the eighteenth century. He says, that, directly after Rohan had inflicted this public chastisement, ‘Voltaire rentre dans l’hôtel, demande au duc de Sully de regarder cet outrage fait à l’un de ses convives, comme fait à lui-même: il le sollicite de se joindre à lui pour en poursuivre la vengeance, et de venir chez un commissaire en certifier la déposition. *Le duc de Sully se refuse à tout.*’

now sentenced to another imprisonment, through the influence of the very man by whom he had been attacked. The exile which followed the imprisonment seems to have been soon remitted; as, shortly after these events, we find Voltaire again in France, preparing for publication his first historical work, a life of Charles XII. In this, there are none of those attacks on Christianity which gave offence in his subsequent writings; nor does it contain the least reflection upon the arbitrary government under which he had suffered. The French authorities at first granted that permission, without which no book could then be published; but as soon as it was actually printed, the license was withdrawn, and the history forbidden to be circulated.⁷³³ The next attempt of Voltaire was one of much greater value: it was therefore repulsed still more sharply. During his residence in England, his inquisitive mind had been deeply interested by a state of things so different from any he had hitherto seen; and he now published an account of that remarkable people, from whose literature he had learned many important truths. His work, which he called *Philosophic Letters*, was received with general applause; but, unfortunately for himself, he adopted in it the arguments of Locke against innate ideas. The rulers of France, though not likely to know much about innate ideas, had a suspicion that the doctrine of Locke was in some way dangerous; and, as they were told that it was a novelty, they felt themselves bound to prevent

⁷³³ 'L'Histoire de Charles XII, dont on avait arrêté une première édition après l'avoir autorisée.' *Biog. Univ.* vol. xlix. p. 470. Comp. *Nichols's Lit. Anec.* vol. i. p. 388.

its promulgation. Their remedy was very simple. They ordered that Voltaire should be again arrested and that his work should be burned by the common hangman.⁷³⁴

These repeated injuries might well have moved a more patient spirit than that of Voltaire.⁷³⁵ Certainly, those who reproach this illustrious man, as if he were the instigator of unprovoked attacks upon the existing state of things, must know very little of the age in which it was his misfortune to live. Even on what has been always considered the neutral ground of physical science, there was displayed the same despotic and persecuting spirit. Voltaire, among other schemes for benefiting France, wished to make known to his countrymen the wonderful discoveries of Newton, of which they were completely ignorant. With this view, he drew up an account of the labours of that extraordinary thinker; but here again the authorities interposed, and forbade the work to be printed.⁷³⁶ Indeed, the rulers of France, as if sensible that their only security was the ignorance of the people, obstinately set their face against every description of knowledge. Several

⁷³⁴ *Duvernct, Vie de Voltaire*, pp. 63–65; *Condorcet, Vie de Voltaire*, pp. 138–140; *Lepan, Vie de Voltaire*, pp. 93, 381.

⁷³⁵ The indignation of Voltaire appears in many of his letters; and he often announced to his friends his intention of quitting for ever a country where he was liable to such treatment. See *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. liv. pp. 58, 335, 336, vol. lv. p. 229, vol. lvi. pp. 162, 163, 358, 447, 464, 465, vol. lvii. pp. 144, 145, 155, 156, vol. lviii. pp. 36, 222, 223, 516, 517, 519, 520, 525, 526, 563, vol. lix. pp. 107, 116, 188, 208.

⁷³⁶ *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. i. pp. 147, 315, vol. lvii. pp. 211, 215, 219, 247, 295; *Villemain, Lit. au XVIIIe Siècle*, vol. i. p. 14; *Brougham's Men of Letters*, vol. i. pp. 53, 60.

eminent authors had undertaken to execute, on a magnificent scale, an Encyclopædia, which should contain a summary of all the branches of science and of art. This, undoubtedly the most splendid enterprise ever started by a body of literary men, was at first discouraged by the government, and afterwards entirely prohibited.⁷³⁷ On other occasions, the same tendency was shown in matters so trifling that nothing but the gravity of their ultimate results prevents them from being ridiculous. In 1770, Imbert translated Clarke's *Letters on Spain*: one of the best works then existing on that country. This book, however, was suppressed as soon as it appeared; and the only reason assigned for such a stretch of power is, that it contained some remarks respecting the passion of Charles III. for hunting, which were considered disrespectful to the French crown, because Louis XV. was himself a great hunter.⁷³⁸ Several years before this, La Bletterie, who was favourably known in France by his works, was elected a member of the French Academy. But he, it seems, was a Jansenist, and had, moreover, ventured to assert that the Emperor

⁷³⁷ *Grimm, Correspond.* vol. i. pp. 90–95, vol. ii. p. 399; *Biog. Univ.* vol. xi. p. 316; *Brougham's Men of Letters*, vol. ii. p. 439.

⁷³⁸ *Boucher de la Richarderie, Bibliothèque des Voyages*, vol. iii. pp. 390–393, Paris, 1808: 'La distribution en France de la traduction de ce voyage fut arrêtée pendant quelque temps par des ordres supérieurs du gouvernement... Il y a tout lieu de croire que les ministres de France crurent, ou feignirent de croire, que le passage en question pouvoit donner lieu à des applications sur le goût effréné de Louis XV pour la chasse, et inspirèrent aisément cette prévention à un prince très-sensible, comme on sait, aux censures les plus indirectes de sa passion pour ce genre d'amusement.' See also the account of Imbert, the translator, in *Biog. Univ.* vol. xxi. p. 200.

Julian, notwithstanding his apostacy, was not entirely devoid of good qualities. Such offences could not be overlooked in so pure an age; and the king obliged the Academy to exclude La Bletterie from their society.⁷³⁹ That the punishment extended no further, was an instance of remarkable leniency; for Fréret, an eminent critic and scholar,⁷⁴⁰ was confined in the Bastille, because he stated in one of his memoirs, that the earliest Frankish chiefs had received their titles from the Romans.⁷⁴¹ The same penalty was inflicted four different times upon Lenglet du Fresnoy.⁷⁴² In the case of this amiable and accomplished man, there seems to have been hardly the shadow of a pretext for the cruelty with which he was treated; though, on one occasion, the alleged offence was, that he had published a supplement to the History of De Thou.⁷⁴³

⁷³⁹ *Grimm, Correspond.* vol. vi. pp. 161, 162; the crime being, 'qu'un janséniste avait osé imprimer que Julien, apostat exécrable aux yeux d'un bon chrétien, n'était pourtant pas un homme sans quelques bonnes qualités à en juger mondainement.'

⁷⁴⁰ M. Bunsen (*Egypt*, vol. i. p. 14) refers to Fréret's 'acute treatise on the Babylonian year;' and Turgot, in his *Etymologie*, says (*Œuvres de Turgot*, vol. iii. p. 83), 'l'illustre Fréret, un des savans qui ont su le mieux appliquer la philosophie à l'érudition.'

⁷⁴¹ This was at the very outset of his career: 'En 1715, l'homme qui devait illustrer l'érudition française au xviiiè siècle, Fréret, était mis à la Bastille pour avoir avancé, dans un mémoire sur l'origine des Français, que les Francs ne formaient pas une nation à part, et que leurs premiers chefs avaient reçu de l'empire romain le titre de *patrices*.' *Villemain, Lit. au XVIIIè Siècle*, vol. ii. p. 30; see also *Nichols's Lit. Anec.* vol. ii. p. 510.

⁷⁴² He was imprisoned in the Bastille, for the first time, in 1725; then in 1743, in 1750, and finally in 1751. *Biographie Universelle*, vol. xxiv. p. 85.

⁷⁴³ In 1743, Voltaire writes: 'On vient de mettre à la Bastille l'abbé Lenglet, pour avoir publié des mémoires déjà très-connus, qui servent de supplément à l'histoire de notre célèbre De Thou. L'infatigable et malheureux Lenglet rendait un signalé

Indeed, we have only to open the biographies and correspondence of that time, to find instances crowding upon us from all quarters. Rousseau was threatened with imprisonment, was driven from France, and his works were publicly burned.⁷⁴⁴ The celebrated treatise of Helvétius on the mind was suppressed by an order from the royal council: it was burned by the common hangman, and the author was compelled to write two letters, retracting his opinions.⁷⁴⁵ Some of the geological views of Buffon having offended the clergy, that illustrious naturalist was obliged to publish a formal recantation of doctrines which are now known to be perfectly accurate.⁷⁴⁶ The learned Observations on the History of France, by Mably, were suppressed as soon as they appeared;⁷⁴⁷ for what reason it would be hard to say, since M. Guizot, certainly no friend either to anarchy or to irreligion, has thought it worth while to republish them, and thus stamp them with the authority of his own great name. The History of the Indies, by Raynal, was condemned to the

service aux bons citoyens, et aux amateurs des recherches historiques. Il méritait des récompenses; on l'emprisonne cruellement à l'âge de soixante-huit ans.' *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. i. pp. 400, 401, vol. lviii. pp. 207, 208.

⁷⁴⁴ *Musset Pathay, Vie de Rousseau*, vol. i. pp. 68, 99, 296, 377, vol. ii. pp. 111, 385, 390; *Mercier sur Rousseau*, vol. i. p. 14, vol. ii. pp. 179, 314.

⁷⁴⁵ *Grimm, Corresp.* vol. ii. p. 349; *Walpole's Letters*, 1840, vol. iii. p. 418.

⁷⁴⁶ *Lyell's Principles of Geology*, pp. 39, 40; *Mém. of Mallet du Pan*, vol. i. p. 125.

⁷⁴⁷ *Soulavie, Règne de Louis XVI*, vol. ii. p. 214; *Williams's Letters from France*, vol. ii. p. 86, 3rd edit. 1796.

flames, and the author ordered to be arrested.⁷⁴⁸ Lanjuinais, in his well-known work on Joseph II., advocated not only religious toleration, but even the abolition of slavery; his book, therefore, was declared to be 'seditious;' it was pronounced 'destructive of all subordination,' and was sentenced to be burned.⁷⁴⁹ The Analysis of Bayle, by Marsy, was suppressed, and the author was imprisoned.⁷⁵⁰ The History of the Jesuits, by Linguet, was delivered to the flames; eight years later his *Journal* was suppressed; and, three years after that, as he still persisted in writing, his Political Annals were suppressed, and he himself was thrown into the Bastille.⁷⁵¹ Delisle de Sales was sentenced to perpetual exile, and confiscation of all his property, on account of his work on the Philosophy of Nature.⁷⁵² The treatise by Mey, on French Law, was suppressed;⁷⁵³ that by Boncerf, on

⁷⁴⁸ *Mém. de Ségur*, vol. i. p. 253; *Mém. de Lafayette*, vol. ii. p. 34 note; *Lettres de Duffand à Walpole*, vol. ii. p. 365. On Raynal's flight, compare a letter from Marseilles, written in 1786, and printed in *Mem. and Correspond. of Sir J. E. Smith*, vol. i. p. 194.

⁷⁴⁹ See the proceedings of the avocat-général, in *Peignot, Livres condamnés*, vol. i. pp. 230, 231; and in *Soulavie, Règne de Louis XVI*, vol. iii. pp. 93–97.

⁷⁵⁰ *Quérard, France Lit.* vol. v. p. 565.

⁷⁵¹ *Peignot, Livres condamnés*, vol. i. pp. 241, 242.

⁷⁵² *Biog. Univ.* vol. xxiv. p. 561; *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. lxi. pp. 374, 375; *Lettres inédites de Voltaire*, vol. ii. p. 528; *Duvernoy, Vie de Voltaire*, pp. 202, 203. According to some of these authorities, parliament afterwards revoked this sentence; but there is no doubt that the sentence was passed, and De Sales imprisoned, if not banished.

⁷⁵³ *Peignot, Livres condamnés*, vol. i. pp. 314, 316.

Feudal Law, was burned.⁷⁵⁴ The Memoirs of Beaumarchais were likewise burned;⁷⁵⁵ the Eloge on Fénelon by La Harpe was merely suppressed.⁷⁵⁶ Duvernet having written a History of the Sorbonne, which was still unpublished, was seized and thrown into the Bastille, while the manuscript was yet in his own possession.⁷⁵⁷ The celebrated work of De Lolme on the English constitution was suppressed by edict directly it appeared.⁷⁵⁸ The fate of being suppressed, or prohibited, also awaited the Letters of Gervaise, in 1724;⁷⁵⁹ the Dissertations of Courayer, in 1727;⁷⁶⁰ the Letters of Montgon, in 1732;⁷⁶¹ the History of Tamerlane, by Margat, also in 1732;⁷⁶² the Essay on Taste, by Cartaud, in 1736;⁷⁶³ the Life of Domat, by Prévost de la Jannès, in 1742;⁷⁶⁴ the History of Louis XI., by Duclos, in 1745;⁷⁶⁵ the Letters

⁷⁵⁴ *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. lxxix. p. 204; *Lettres de Duffand à Walpole*, vol. iii. p. 260.

⁷⁵⁵ 'Quatre mémoires ... condamnés à être lacérés et brûlés par la main du bourreau.' *Peignot*, vol. i. p. 24.

⁷⁵⁶ *Biog. Univ.* vol. xxiii. p. 187.

⁷⁵⁷ *Duvernet, Hist. de la Sorbonne*, vol. i. p. vi.

⁷⁵⁸ 'Supprimée par arrêt du conseil' in 1771, which was the year of its publication. Compare *Cassagnac's Révolution*, vol. i. p. 33; *Biog. Univ.* vol. xxiv. p. 634.

⁷⁵⁹ *Quérard, France Lit.* vol. iii. p. 337.

⁷⁶⁰ *Biog. Univ.* vol. x. p. 97.

⁷⁶¹ *Peignot*, vol. i. p. 328.

⁷⁶² *ibid.* vol. i. p. 289.

⁷⁶³ *Biog. Univ.* vol. vii. p. 227.

⁷⁶⁴ *Lettres d'Aguesseau*, vol. ii. pp. 320, 321.

⁷⁶⁵ *Cassagnac, Causes de la Rév.* vol. i. p. 32.

of Bargeton, in 1750;⁷⁶⁶ the Memoirs on Troyes, by Grosley, in the same year;⁷⁶⁷ the History of Clement XI., by Reboulet, in 1752;⁷⁶⁸ the School of Man, by Génard, also in 1752;⁷⁶⁹ the Therapeutics of Garlon, in 1756;⁷⁷⁰ the celebrated thesis of Louis, on Generation, in 1754;⁷⁷¹ the Treatise on Presidial Jurisdiction, by Jousse, in 1755;⁷⁷² the Ericie of Fontanelle, in 1768;⁷⁷³ the Thoughts of Jamin, in 1769;⁷⁷⁴ the History of Siam, by Turpin, and the Eloge of Marcus Aurelius, by Thomas, both in 1770;⁷⁷⁵ the works on Finance by Darigrand in 1764; and by Le Trosne, in 1779;⁷⁷⁶ the Essay on Military Tactics, by Guibert, in 1772; the Letters of Boucquet, in the same year;⁷⁷⁷ and the Memoirs of Terrai, by Coquereau, in 1776.⁷⁷⁸ Such wanton destruction of property was, however, mercy itself,

⁷⁶⁶ *Biog. Univ.* vol. iii. p. 375.

⁷⁶⁷ *Quérard*, vol. iii. p. 489.

⁷⁶⁸ *Ibid.* vol. vii. pp. 483, 484.

⁷⁶⁹ *Ibid.* vol. iii. p. 302.

⁷⁷⁰ *Ibid.* vol. iii. p. 261.

⁷⁷¹ On the importance of this remarkable thesis, and on its prohibition, see *Saint-Hilaire, Anomalies de l'Organisation*, vol. i. p. 355.

⁷⁷² *Quérard*, vol. iv. p. 255.

⁷⁷³ *Biog. Univ.* vol. xv. p. 203.

⁷⁷⁴ *Ibid.* vol. xxi. p. 391.

⁷⁷⁵ *Ibid.* vol. xlv. p. 462, vol. xlvii. p. 98.

⁷⁷⁶ *Peignot*, vol. i. pp. 90, 91, vol. ii. p. 164.

⁷⁷⁷ *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 170, vol. ii. p. 57.

⁷⁷⁸ *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 214.

compared to the treatment experienced by other literary men in France. Desforges, for example, having written against the arrest of the Pretender to the English throne, was, solely on that account, buried in a dungeon eight feet square, and confined there for three years.⁷⁷⁹ This happened in 1749; and in 1770, Audra, professor at the college of Toulouse, and a man of some reputation, published the first volume of his Abridgment of General History. Beyond this, the work never proceeded; it was at once condemned by the archbishop of the diocese, and the author was deprived of his office. Audra, held up to public opprobrium, the whole of his labours rendered useless, and the prospects of his life suddenly blighted, was unable to survive the shock. He was struck with apoplexy, and within twenty-four hours was lying a corpse in his own house.⁷⁸⁰

It will probably be allowed that I have collected sufficient evidence to substantiate my assertion respecting the persecutions directed against every description of literature; but the carelessness with which the antecedents of the French Revolution have been studied, has given rise to such erroneous opinions on this subject, that I am anxious to add a few more instances, so as to put beyond the possibility of doubt the nature of the provocations habitually received by the most eminent

⁷⁷⁹ 'Il resta trois ans dans la cage; c'est un caveau creusé dans le roc, de huit pieds en carré, où le prisonnier ne reçoit le jour que par les crevasses des marches de l'église.' *Biog. Univ.* vol. xi. p. 171.

⁷⁸⁰ *Peignot, Livres condamnés*, vol. i. pp. 14, 15.

Frenchmen of the eighteenth century.

Among the many celebrated authors who, though, inferior to Voltaire, Montesquieu, Buffon, and Rousseau, were second only to them, three of the most remarkable were Diderot, Marmontel, and Morellet. The first two are known to every reader; while Morellet, though comparatively forgotten, had in his own time considerable influence, and had, moreover, the distinguished merit of being the first who popularized in France those great truths which had been recently discovered in political economy by Adam Smith, and in jurisprudence by Beccaria.

A certain M. Cury wrote a satire upon the Duke d'Aumont, which he showed to his friend Marmontel, who, struck by its power, repeated it to a small circle of his acquaintance. The duke, hearing of this, was full of indignation, and insisted upon the name of the author being given up. This, of course, was impossible without a gross breach of confidence; but Marmontel, to do everything in his power, wrote to the duke, stating, what was really the fact, that the lines in question had not been printed, that there was no intention of making them public, and that they had only been communicated to a few of his own particular friends. It might have been supposed that this would have satisfied even a French noble; but Marmontel, still doubting the result, sought an audience of the minister, in the hope of procuring the protection of the crown. All, however, was in vain. It will hardly be believed, that Marmontel, who was then at the height of his reputation, was seized in the middle of Paris,

and because he refused to betray his friend, was thrown into the Bastille. Nay, so implacable were his persecutors, that after his liberation from prison they, in the hope of reducing him to beggary, deprived him of the right of publishing the *Mercur*, upon which nearly the whole of his income depended.⁷⁸¹

To the Abbé Morellet a somewhat similar circumstance occurred. A miserable scribbler, named Palissot, had written a comedy ridiculing some of the ablest Frenchmen then living. To this Morellet replied by a pleasant little satire, in which he made a very harmless allusion to the Princess de Robeck, one of Palissot's patrons. She, amazed at such presumption, complained to the minister, who immediately ordered the abbé to be confined in the Bastille, where he remained for some months, although he had not only been guilty of no scandal, but had not even mentioned the name of the princess.⁷⁸²

The treatment of Diderot was still more severe. This remarkable man owed his influence chiefly to his immense correspondence, and to the brilliancy of a conversation for which, even in Paris, he was unrivalled, and which he used to display with considerable effect at those celebrated dinners where, during a quarter of a century, Holbach assembled the

⁷⁸¹ *Mémoires de Marmontel*, vol. ii. pp. 143–176; and see vol. iii. pp. 30–46, 95, for the treatment he afterwards received from the Sorbonne, because he advocated religious toleration. See also *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. liv. p. 258; and *Letters of Eminent Persons addressed to Hume*, pp. 207, 212, 213.

⁷⁸² *Mém. de Morellet*, vol. i. pp. 86–89; *Mélanges par Morellet*, vol. ii. pp. 3–12; *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. liv. pp. 106, 111, 114, 122, 183.

most illustrious thinkers in France.⁷⁸³ Besides this, he is the author of several works of interest, most of which are well known to the students of French literature.⁷⁸⁴ His independent spirit, and the reputation he obtained, earned for him a share in the general persecution. The first work he wrote was ordered to be publicly burned by the common hangman.⁷⁸⁵ This, indeed, was the fate of nearly all the best literary productions of that time; and Diderot might esteem himself fortunate in merely losing his property, provided he saved himself from imprisonment. But, a few years later, he wrote another work, in which he said that people who are born blind have some ideas different from those who are possessed of their eyesight. This assertion is by no

⁷⁸³ Marmontel (*Mém.* vol. ii. p. 313) says, 'qui n'a connu Diderot que dans ses écrits ne l'a point connu:' meaning that his works were inferior to his talk. His conversational powers are noticed by Ségur, who disliked him, and by Georgel, who hated him. *Ségur, Souvenirs*, vol. iii. p. 34; *Georgel, Mém.* vol. ii. p. 246. Compare *Forster's Life of Goldsmith*, vol. i. p. 69; *Musset Pathay, Vie de Rousseau*, vol. i. p. 95, vol. ii. p. 227; *Mémoires d'Epinay*, vol. ii. pp. 73, 74, 88; *Grimm, Corresp.* vol. xv. pp. 79–90; *Morellet, Mém.* vol. i. p. 28; *Villemain, Lit. au XVIIIe Siècle*, vol. i. p. 82. As to Holbach's dinners, on which Madame de Genlis wrote a well-known libel, see *Schlosser's Eighteenth Century*, vol. i. p. 166; *Biog. Univ.* vol. xx. p. 462; *Jesse's Selwyn*, vol. ii. p. 9; *Walpole's Letters to Mann*, vol. iv. p. 283; *Gibbon's Miscellaneous Works*, p. 73.

⁷⁸⁴ It is also stated by the editor of his correspondence, that he wrote a great deal for authors, which they published under their name. *Mém. et Corresp. de Diderot*, vol. iii. p. 102.

⁷⁸⁵ This was the *Pensées Philosophiques*, in 1746, his first original work; the previous ones being translations from English. *Biog. Univ.* xi. p. 314. Duvernet (*Vie de Voltaire*, p. 240) says, that he was imprisoned for writing it, but this I believe is a mistake; at least I do not remember to have met with the statement elsewhere, and Duvernet is frequently careless.

means improbable,⁷⁸⁶ and it contains nothing by which any one need be startled. The men, however, who then governed France discovered in it some hidden danger. Whether they suspected that the mention of blindness was an allusion to themselves, or whether they were merely instigated by the perversity of their temper, is uncertain; at all events, the unfortunate Diderot, for having hazarded this opinion, was arrested, and without even the form of a trial, was confined in the dungeon of Vincennes.⁷⁸⁷ The natural results followed. The works of Diderot rose in popularity;⁷⁸⁸ and he, burning with hatred against his persecutors, redoubled his efforts to overthrow those institutions, under shelter of which such monstrous tyranny could be safely

⁷⁸⁶ Dugald Stewart, who has collected some important evidence on this subject, has confirmed several of the views put forward by Diderot. *Philos. of the Mind*, vol. iii. pp. 401 seq.; comp. pp. 57, 407, 435. Since then still greater attention has been paid to the education of the blind, and it has been remarked that 'it is an exceedingly difficult task to teach them to think accurately.' *M. Alister's Essay on the Blind*, in *Jour. of Stat. Soc.* vol. i. p. 378: see also Dr. Fowler, in *Report of Brit. Assoc. for 1847; Transac. of Sec.* pp. 92, 93, and for 1848, p. 88. These passages unconsciously testify to the sagacity of Diderot; and they also testify to the stupid ignorance of a government, which sought to put an end to such inquiries by punishing their author.

⁷⁸⁷ *Mém. et Corresp. de Diderot*, vol. i. pp. 26–29; *Musset Pathay, Vie de Rousseau*, vol. i. p. 47, vol. ii. p. 276; *Letter to d'Argental* in *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. lviii. p. 454; *Lacretelle, Dix-huitième Siècle*, vol. ii. p. 54.

⁷⁸⁸ A happy arrangement, by which curiosity baffles despotism. In 1767, an acute observer wrote, 'Il n'y a plus de livres qu'on imprime plusieurs fois, que les livres condamnés. Il faut aujourd'hui qu'un libraire prie les magistrats de brûler son livre pour le faire vendre.' *Grimm, Corresp.* vol. v. p. 498. To the same effect, *Mém. de Ségur*, vol. i. pp. 15, 16; *Mém. de Georgel*, vol. ii. p. 256.

practised.

It seems hardly necessary to say more respecting the incredible folly with which the rulers of France, by turning every able man into a personal enemy,⁷⁸⁹ at length arrayed against the government all the intellect of the country, and made the Revolution a matter not of choice but of necessity. I will, however, as a fitting sequel to the preceding facts, give one instance of the way in which, to gratify the caprice of the higher classes, even the most private affections of domestic life, could be publicly outraged. In the middle of the eighteenth century, there was an actress on the French stage of the name of Chantilly. She, though beloved by Maurice de Saxe, preferred a more honourable attachment, and married Favart, the well-known writer of songs and of comic operas. Maurice, amazed at her boldness, applied for aid to the French crown. That he should have made such an application is sufficiently strange; but the result of it is hardly to be paralleled except in some Eastern despotism. The government of France, on hearing the circumstance, had the inconceivable baseness to issue an order

⁷⁸⁹ 'Quel est aujourd'hui parmi nous l'homme de lettres de quelque mérite qui n'ait éprouvé plus ou moins les fureurs de la calomnie et de la persécution?' etc. *Grimm, Corresp.* vol. v. p. 451. This was written in 1767, and during more than forty years previously we find similar expressions; the earliest I have met with being in a letter to Thiriot, in 1723, in which Voltaire says (*Œuvres*, vol. lvi. p. 94), 'la sévérité devient plus grande de jour en jour dans l'inquisition de la librairie.' For other instances, see his letter to De Formont, pp. 423–425, also vol. lvii. pp. 144, 351, vol. lviii. p. 222; his *Lettres inédites*, vol. i. p. 547; *Mém. de Diderot*, vol. ii. p. 215; *Letters of Eminent Persons to Hume*, pp. 14, 15.

directing Favart to abandon his wife, and intrust her to the charge of Maurice, to whose embraces she was compelled to submit.⁷⁹⁰

These are among the insufferable provocations, by which the blood of men is made to boil in their veins. Who can wonder that the greatest and noblest minds in France were filled with loathing at the government by whom such things were done? If we, notwithstanding the distance of time and country, are moved to indignation by the mere mention of them, what must have been felt by those before whose eyes they actually occurred? And when, to the horror they naturally inspired, there was added that apprehension of being the next victim which every one might personally feel; when, moreover, we remember that the authors of these persecutions had none of the abilities by which even vice itself is sometimes ennobled; – when we thus contrast the poverty of their understandings with the greatness of their crimes, we, instead of being astonished that there was a revolution, by which all the machinery of the state was swept away, should rather be amazed at that unexampled patience by which alone the revolution was so long deferred.

To me, indeed, it has always appeared, that the delay of the

⁷⁹⁰ Part of this is related, rather inaccurately, in *Schlosser's Eighteenth Century*, vol. iii. p. 483. The fullest account is in *Grimm, Corresp. Lit.* vol. viii. pp. 231–233: ‘Le grand Maurice, irrité d’une résistance qu’il n’avait jamais éprouvée nulle part, eut la faiblesse de demander une lettre de cachet pour enlever à un mari sa femme, et pour la contraindre d’être sa concubine; et, chose remarquable, cette lettre de cachet fut accordée et exécutée. Les deux époux plièrent sous le joug de la nécessité, et la petite Chantilly fut à la fois femme de Favart et maîtresse de Maurice de Saxe.’

Revolution is one of the most striking proofs history affords of the force of established habits, and of the tenacity with which the human mind clings to old associations. For, if ever there existed a government inherently and radically bad, it was the government of France in the eighteenth century. If ever there existed a state of society likely, by its crying and accumulated evils, to madden men to desperation, France was in that state. The people, despised and enslaved, were sunk in abject poverty, and were curbed by laws of stringent cruelty, enforced with merciless barbarism. A supreme and irresponsible control was exercised over the whole country by the clergy, the nobles, and the crown. The intellect of France was placed under the ban of a ruthless proscription, its literature prohibited and burned, its authors plundered and imprisoned. Nor was there the least symptom that these evils were likely to be remedied. The upper classes, whose arrogance was increased by the long tenure of their power, only thought of present enjoyment: they took no heed of the future: they saw not that day of reckoning, the bitterness of which they were soon to experience. The people remained in slavery until the Revolution actually occurred; while as to the literature, nearly every year witnessed some new effort to deprive it of that share of liberty which it still retained. Having, in 1764, issued a decree forbidding any work to be published in which questions of government were discussed;⁷⁹¹ having, in

⁷⁹¹ L'Averdy was no sooner named controller of finance than he published a decree, in 1764 (*arrêt du conseil*), – which, according to the state of the then existing

1767, made it a capital offence to write a book likely to excite the public mind;⁷⁹² and having, moreover, denounced the same penalty of death against any one who attacked religion,⁷⁹³ as also against any one who spoke of matters of finance;⁷⁹⁴— having taken these steps, the rulers of France, very shortly before their final fall, contemplated another measure still more comprehensive. It is, indeed, a singular fact, that only nine years before the Revolution, and when no power on earth could have saved the institutions of the country, the government was so ignorant of the real state of affairs, and so confident that it could quell the spirit which its own despotism had raised, that a proposal was made by an officer of the crown to do away with all the

constitution, had the force of a law, — by which every man was forbidden to print, or cause to be printed, anything whatever upon administrative affairs, or government regulations in general, under the penalty of a breach of the police laws; by which the man was liable to be punished without defence, and not as was the case before the law courts, where he might defend himself, and could only be judged according to law.’ *Schlosser's Eighteenth Century*, vol. ii. p. 166: see also *Mém. de Morellet*, vol. i. p. 141, vol. ii. p. 75, ‘un arrêt du conseil, qui défendait d’imprimer sur les matières d’administration.’

⁷⁹² ‘L’ordonnance de 1767, rendue sous le ministère du chancelier Maupeou, portait la peine de mort contre tout auteur d’écrits tendant à émouvoir les esprits.’ *Cassagnac, Causes de la Révolution*, vol. i. p. 313.

⁷⁹³ In April 1757, D’Alembert writes from Paris, ‘on vient de publier une déclaration qui inflige la peine de mort à tous ceux qui auront publié des écrits tendants à attaquer la religion.’ *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. liv. p. 34. This, I suppose, is the same edict as that mentioned by M. Amédée Renée, in his continuation of *Sismondi, Histoire des Français*, vol. xxx. p. 247.

⁷⁹⁴ ‘Il avait été défendu, sous peine de mort, aux écrivains de parler de finances.’ *Lavallée, Hist. des Français*, vol. iii. p. 490.

publishers, and not allow any books to be printed except those which were issued from a press paid, appointed, and controlled by the executive magistrate.⁷⁹⁵ This monstrous proposition, if carried into effect, would of course have invested the king with all the influence which literature can command; it would have been as fatal to the national intellect as the other measures were to national liberty; and it would have consummated the ruin of France, either by reducing its greatest men to complete silence, or else by degrading them into mere advocates of those opinions which the government might wish to propagate.

For these are by no means to be considered as trifling matters, merely interesting to men of letters. In France, in the eighteenth century, literature was the last resource of liberty. In England, if our great authors should prostitute their abilities by inculcating servile opinions, the danger would no doubt be considerable, because other parts of society might find it difficult to escape the contagion. Still, before the corruption had spread, there would be time to stop its course, so long as we possessed those free political institutions, by the mere mention of which the generous imagination of a bold people is easily fired. And although such institutions are the consequence, not the cause, of liberty, they do unquestionably react upon it, and from the force of habit they could for a while survive that from which they originally sprung.

⁷⁹⁵ This was the suggestion of the *avocat-général* in 1780. See the proposal, in his own words, in *Grimm, Correspond.* vol. xi. pp. 143, 144. On the important functions of the *avocats-généraux* in the eighteenth century, see a note in *Lettres d'Aguessseau*, vol. i. p. 264.

So long as a country retains its political freedom, there will always remain associations by which, even in the midst of mental degradation, and out of the depths of the lowest superstition, the minds of men may be recalled to better things. But in France such associations had no existence. In France everything was for the governors and nothing for the governed. There was neither free press, nor free parliament, nor free debates. There were no public meetings; there was no popular suffrage; there was no discussion on the hustings; there was no habeas-corpus act; there was no trial by jury. The voice of liberty, thus silenced in every department of the state, could only be heard in the appeals of those great men, who, by their writings, inspirited the people to resistance. This is the point of view from which we ought to estimate the character of those who are often accused of having wantonly disturbed the ancient fabric.⁷⁹⁶ They, as well as the people at large, were cruelly oppressed by the crown, the nobles, and the church; and they used their abilities to retaliate the injury. There can be no doubt that this was the best course open to them. There can be no doubt that rebellion is the last remedy against tyranny, and that a despotic system should be encountered by a revolutionary literature. The upper classes were to blame, because they struck the first blow; but we must by no means censure those great men, who, having

⁷⁹⁶ And we should also remember what the circumstances were under which the accusation was first heard in France. 'Les reproches d'avoir tout détruit, adressés aux philosophes du dix-huitième siècle, ont commencé le jour où il s'est trouvé en France un gouvernement qui a voulu rétablir les abus dont les écrivains de cette époque avaient accéléré la destruction.' *Comte, Traité de Législation*, vol. i. p. 72.

defended themselves from aggression, eventually succeeded in smiting the government by whom the aggression was originally made.

Without, however, stopping to vindicate their conduct, we have now to consider what is much more important, namely, the origin of that crusade against Christianity, in which, unhappily for France, they were compelled to embark, and the occurrence of which forms the third great antecedent of the French Revolution. A knowledge of the causes of this hostility against Christianity is essential to a right understanding of the philosophy of the eighteenth century, and it will throw some light on the general theory of ecclesiastical power.

It is a circumstance well worthy of remark, that the revolutionary literature which eventually overturned all the institutions of France, was at first directed against those which were religious, rather than against those which were political. The great writers who rose into notice soon after the death of Louis XIV., exerted themselves against spiritual despotism; while the overthrow of secular despotism was left to their immediate successors.⁷⁹⁷ This is not the course which would be

⁷⁹⁷ The nature of this change, and the circumstances under which it happened, will be examined in the last chapter of the present volume; but that the revolutionary movement, while headed by Voltaire and his coadjutors, was directed against the church, and not against the state, is noticed by many writers; some of whom have also observed, that soon after the middle of the reign of Louis XV. the ground began to be shifted, and a disposition was first shown to attack political abuses. On this remarkable fact, indicated by several authors, but explained by none, compare *Lacretelle, XVIIIe Siècle*, vol. ii. p. 305; *Barruel, Mém. pour l'Hist. du Jacobinisme*, vol. i. p. xviii., vol. ii.

pursued in a healthy state of society; and there is no doubt, that to this peculiarity the crimes and the lawless violence of the French Revolution are in no small degree to be ascribed. It is evident, that in the legitimate progress of a nation, political innovations should keep pace with religious innovations, so that the people may increase their liberty while they diminish their superstition. In France, on the contrary, during nearly forty years, the church was attacked, and the government was spared. The consequence was, that the order and balance of the country were destroyed; the minds of men became habituated to the most daring speculations, while their acts were controlled by the most oppressive despotism; and they felt themselves possessed of capacities which their rulers would not allow them to employ. When, therefore, the French Revolution broke out, it was not a mere rising of ignorant slaves against educated masters, but it was a rising of men in whom the despair caused by slavery was quickened by the resources of advancing knowledge; men who were in that frightful condition when the progress of intellect outstrips the progress of liberty, and when a desire is felt, not only to remove a tyranny, but also to avenge an insult.

There can be no doubt that to this we must ascribe some of the most hideous peculiarities of the French Revolution. It, therefore, becomes a matter of great interest to inquire how

p. 113; *Tocqueville, L'Ancien Régime*, p. 241; *Alison's Europe*, vol. i. p. 165, vol. xiv. p. 286; *Mém. de Rivarol*, p. 35; *Soulavie, Règne de Louis XVI*, vol. iv. p. 397; *Lamartine, Hist. des Girondins*, vol. i. p. 183; *Œuvres de Voltaire*, vol. lx. p. 307, vol. lxvi. p. 34.

it was, that while in England political freedom and religious scepticism have accompanied and aided each other, there should, on the other hand, have taken place in France a vast movement, in which, during nearly forty years, the ablest men neglected the freedom, while they encouraged the scepticism, and diminished the power of the church, without increasing the liberties of the people.

The first reason of this appears to be, the nature of those ideas out of which the French had long constructed the traditions of their glory. A train of circumstances which, when treating of the protective spirit, I attempted to indicate, had secured to the French kings an authority which, by making all classes subordinate to the crown, flattered the popular vanity.⁷⁹⁸ Hence it was, that in France the feelings of loyalty worked into the national mind deeper than in any other country of Europe, Spain alone excepted.⁷⁹⁹ The difference between this spirit and that observable in England has been already noticed, and may be still further illustrated by the different ways in which the two nations have dealt with the posthumous reputation of their

⁷⁹⁸ See some striking remarks in M. Tocqueville's great work, *De la Démocratie*, vol. i. p. 5; which should be compared with the observation of Horace Walpole, who was well acquainted with French society, and who says, happily enough, that the French 'love themselves in their kings.' *Walpole's Mem. of George III*, vol. ii. p. 240.

⁷⁹⁹ Not only the political history of Spain, but also its literature, contains melancholy evidence of the extraordinary loyalty of the Spaniards, and of the injurious results produced by it. See, on this, some useful reflections in *Ticknor's Hist. of Spanish Literature*, vol. i. pp. 95, 96, 133, vol. iii. pp. 191–193.

sovereigns. With the exception of Alfred, who is sometimes called the Great,⁸⁰⁰ we in England have not sufficiently loved any of our princes to bestow upon them titles expressive of personal admiration. But the French have decorated their kings with every variety of panegyric. Thus, to take only a single name, one king is Louis the Mild, another is Louis the Saint, another is Louis the Just, another is Louis the Great, and the most hopelessly vicious of all was called Louis the Beloved.

These are facts which, insignificant as they seem, form most important materials for real history, since they are unequivocal symptoms of the state of the country in which they exist.⁸⁰¹

⁸⁰⁰ Our admiration of Alfred is greatly increased by the fact, that we know very little about him. The principal authority referred to for his reign is Asser, whose work, there is reason to believe, is not genuine. See the arguments in *Wright's Biog. Brit. Lit.* vol. i. pp. 408–412. It moreover appears, that some of the institutions popularly ascribed to him, existed before his time. *Kemble's Saxons in England*, vol. i. pp. 247, 248.

⁸⁰¹ The French writers, under the old régime, constantly boast that loyalty was the characteristic of their nation, and taunt the English with their opposite and insubordinate spirit. 'Il n'est pas ici question des François, qui se sont toujours distingués des autres nations par leur amour pour leurs rois.' *Le Blanc, Lettres d'un François*, vol. iii. p. 523. 'The English do not love their sovereigns as much as could be desired.' *Sorbière's Voyage to England*, p. 58. 'Le respect de la majesté royale, caractère distinctif des Français.' *Mém. de Montbarey*, vol. ii. p. 54. 'L'amour et la fidélité que les Français ont naturellement pour leurs princes.' *Mém. de Motteville*, vol. ii. p. 3. 'Les Français, qui aiment leurs princes.' *De Thou, Hist. Univ.* vol. iii. p. 381; and see vol. xi. p. 729. For further evidence, see *Sully, Economies*, vol. iv. p. 346; *Monteil, Divers Etats*, vol. vii. p. 105; *Séguir, Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 32; *Lamartine, Hist. des Girondins*, vol. iv. p. 58. Now, contrast with all this the sentiments contained in one of the most celebrated histories in the English language: 'There is not any one thing more certain and more evident, than that princes are made for the people, and not the people for

Their relation to the subject before us is obvious. For, by them, and by the circumstances from which they sprung, an intimate and hereditary association was engendered in the minds of Frenchmen, between the glory of their nation and the personal reputation of their sovereign. The consequence was, that the political conduct of the rulers of France was protected against censure by a fence far more impassable than any that could be erected by the most stringent laws. It was protected by those prejudices which each generation bequeathed to its successor. It was protected by that halo which time had thrown round the oldest monarchy in Europe.⁸⁰² And above all, it was protected by that miserable national vanity, which made men submit to taxation and to slavery, in order that foreign princes might be dazzled by the splendour of their sovereign, and foreign countries intimidated by the greatness of his victories.

The upshot of all this was, that when, early in the eighteenth

them; and perhaps there is no nation under heaven that is more entirely possessed with this notion of princes than the English nation is in this age; so that they will soon be uneasy to a prince who does not govern himself by this maxim, and in time grow very unkind to him.' *Burnet's History of his Own Time*, vol. vi. p. 223. This manly and wholesome passage was written while the French were licking the dust from the feet of Louis XIV.

⁸⁰² 'La race des rois la plus ancienne.' *Mém. de Genlis*, vol. ix. p. 281. 'Nos rois, issus de la plus grande race du monde, et devant qui les Césars, et la plus grande partie des princes qui jadis ont commandé tant de nations, ne sont que des roturiers.' *Mém. de Motteville*, vol. ii. p. 417. And a Venetian ambassador, in the sixteenth century, says, that France is 'il regno più antico d'ogn' altro che sia in essere al presente.' *Relat. des Ambassad.* vol. i. p. 470. Compare *Boullier, Maison Militaire des Rois de France*, p. 360.

century, the intellect of France began to be roused into action, the idea of attacking the abuses of the monarchy never occurred even to the boldest thinker. But, under the protection of the crown, there had grown up another institution, about which less delicacy was felt. The clergy, who for so long a period had been allowed to oppress the consciences of men, were not sheltered by those national associations which surrounded the person of the sovereign; nor had any of them, with the single exception of Bossuet, done much to increase the general reputation of France. Indeed, the French church, though during the reign of Louis XIV. it possessed immense authority, had always exercised it in subordination to the crown, at whose bidding it had not feared to oppose even the pope himself.⁸⁰³ It was, therefore, natural, that in France the ecclesiastical power should be attacked before the temporal power; because, while it was as despotic, it was less influential, and because it was unprotected by those popular traditions which form the principal support of every ancient institution.

These considerations are sufficient to explain why it was that, in this respect, the French and English intellects adopted courses so entirely different. In England, the minds of men, being less hampered with the prejudices of an indiscriminate

⁸⁰³ *Capefigue's Louis XIV*, vol. i. pp. 204, 301; *Koch, Tableau des Révolutions*, vol. ii. p. 16. M. Ranke (*Die Päpste*, vol. ii. p. 257) ascribes this to the circumstances attending the apostasy of Henry IV.; but the cause lies much deeper, being connected with that triumph of the secular interests over the spiritual, of which the policy of Henry IV. was itself a consequence.

loyalty, have been able at each successive step in the great progress to direct their doubts and inquiries on politics as well as on religion; and thus establishing their freedom as they diminished their superstition, they have maintained the balance of the national intellect, without allowing to either of its divisions an excessive preponderance. But in France the admiration for royalty had become so great, that this balance was disturbed; the inquiries of men not daring to settle on politics, were fixed on religion, and gave rise to the singular phenomenon of a rich and powerful literature, in which unanimous hostility to the church was unaccompanied by a single voice against the enormous abuses of the state.

There was likewise another circumstance which increased this peculiar tendency. During the reign of Louis XIV. the personal character of the hierarchy had done much to secure their dominion. All the leaders of the church were men of virtue, and many were men of ability. Their conduct, tyrannical as it was, seems to have been conscientious; and the evils which it produced are merely to be ascribed to the gross impolicy of entrusting ecclesiastics with power. But after the death of Louis XIV. a great change took place. The Clergy, from causes which it would be tedious to investigate, became extremely dissolute, and often very ignorant. This made their tyranny more oppressive, because to submit to it was more disgraceful. The great abilities and unblemished morals of men like Bossuet, Fénelon, Bourdaloue, Fléchier, and Mascaron, diminished in

some degree the ignominy which is always connected with blind obedience. But when they were succeeded by such bishops and cardinals as Dubois, Lafiteau, Tencin, and others who flourished under the regency, it became difficult to respect the heads of the church, tainted as they were with open and notorious depravity.⁸⁰⁴ At the same time that there occurred this unfavourable change among the ecclesiastical rulers, there also occurred that immense reaction of which I have endeavoured to trace the early workings. It was therefore, at the very moment when the spirit of inquiry became stronger that the character of the Clergy became more contemptible.⁸⁰⁵ The great writers who were now rising in France, were moved to indignation when they saw that those who usurped unlimited power over consciences had themselves no consciences at all. It is evident, that every argument which they borrowed from England against ecclesiastical power, would gain additional force when

⁸⁰⁴ *Lavallée, Hist. des Français*, vol. iii. p. 408; *Flassan, Hist. de la Diplomatie*, vol. v. p. 3; *Tocqueville, Règne de Louis XV*, vol. i. pp. 35, 347; *Duclos, Mémoires*, vol. ii. pp. 42, 43, 154, 155, 223, 224. What was, if possible, still more scandalous, was, that in 1723 the assembly of the clergy elected as their president, unanimously ('d'une voix unanime'), the infamous Dubois, the most notoriously immoral man of his time. *Duclos, Mém.* vol. ii. p. 262.

⁸⁰⁵ On this decline of the French clergy, see *Villemain, XVIIIe Siècle*, vol. iii. pp. 178, 179; *Cousin, Hist. de la Philos.* IIe série, vol. i. p. 301. *Tocqueville (Règne de Louis XV)*, vol. i. pp. 35–38, 365) says, 'le clergé prêchait une morale qu'il compromettait par sa conduite;' a noticeable remark, when made by an opponent of the sceptical philosophy, like the elder M. Tocqueville. Among this profligate crew, Massillon stood alone; he being the last French bishop who was remarkable for virtue as well as for ability.

directed against men whose personal unfitness was universally acknowledged.⁸⁰⁶

Such was the position of the rival parties, when, almost immediately after the death of Louis XIV., there began that great struggle between authority and reason, which is still unfinished, although in the present state of knowledge its result is no longer doubtful. On the one side there was a compact and numerous priesthood, supported by the prescription of centuries and by the authority of the crown. On the other side there was a small body of men, without rank, without wealth, and as yet without reputation, but animated by a love of liberty, and by a just confidence in their own abilities. Unfortunately, they at the very outset committed a serious error. In attacking the clergy, they lost their respect for religion. In their determination to weaken ecclesiastical power, they attempted to undermine the foundations of Christianity. This is deeply to be regretted for their own sake, as well as for its ultimate effects in France; but it must not be imputed to them as a crime, since it was forced on them by the exigencies of their position. They saw the frightful evils which their country was suffering from the institution of priesthood as it then existed; and yet they were told that the

⁸⁰⁶ Voltaire says of the English, 'quand ils apprennent qu'en France de jeunes gens connus par leurs débauches, et élevés à la prélature par des intrigues de femmes, font publiquement l'amour, s'égaient à composer des chansons tendres, donnent tous les jours des soupers délicats et longs, et de là vont implorer les lumières du Saint-Esprit, et se nomment hardiment les successeurs des apôtres ils remercient Dieu d'être protestants.' *Lettres sur les Anglais*, in *Œuvres*, vol. xxvi. p. 29.

preservation of that institution in its actual form was essential to the very being of Christianity. They had always been taught that the interests of the clergy were identical with the interests of religion; how then could they avoid including both clergy and religion in the same hostility? The alternative was cruel, but it was one from which, in common honesty, they had no escape. We, judging these things by another standard, possess a measure which they could not possibly have. We should not now commit such an error, because we know that there is no connexion between any one particular form of priesthood and the interests of Christianity. We know that the clergy are made for the people, and not the people for the clergy. We know that all questions of church government are matters, not of religion, but of policy, and should be settled, not according to traditional dogmas, but according to large views of general expediency. It is because these propositions are now admitted by all enlightened men, that in our country the truths of religion are rarely attacked except by superficial thinkers. If, for instance, we were to find that the existence of our bishops, with their privileges and their wealth, is unfavourable to the progress of society, we should not on that account feel enmity against Christianity; because we should remember that episcopacy is its accident, and not its essential, and that we could do away with the institution and yet retain the religion. In the same way, if we should ever find, what was formerly found in France, that the clergy were tyrannical, this would excite in us an opposition, not to Christianity, but

merely to the external form which Christianity assumed. So long as our clergy confine themselves to the beneficent duties of their calling, to the alleviation of pain and distress, either bodily or mental, so long will we respect them as the ministers of peace and of charity. But if they should ever again entrench on the rights of the laity, – if they should ever again interfere with an authoritative voice in the government of the state, – it will then be for the people to inquire, whether the time has not come to effect a revision of the ecclesiastical constitution of the country. This, therefore, is the manner in which we now view these things. What we think of the clergy will depend upon themselves; but will have no connection with what we think of Christianity. We look on the clergy as a body of men who, notwithstanding their disposition to intolerance, and notwithstanding a certain narrowness incidental to their profession, do undoubtedly form part of a vast and noble institution, by which the manners of men have been softened, their sufferings assuaged, their distresses relieved. As long as this institution performs its functions, we are well content to let it stand. If, however, it should be out of repair, or if it should be found inadequate to the shifting circumstances of an advancing society, we retain both the power and the right of remedying its faults; we may, if need be, remove some of its parts; but we would not, we dare not, tamper with those great religious truths which are altogether independent of it; truths which comfort the mind of man, raise him above the instincts of the hour, and infuse into him those lofty aspirations which, revealing to him his own

immortality, are the measure and the symptom of a future life.

Unfortunately, this was not the way in which these matters were considered in France. The government of that country, by investing the clergy with great immunities, by treating them as if there were something sacred about their persons, and by punishing as heresy the attacks which were made on them, had established in the national mind an indissoluble connexion between their interests and the interests of Christianity. The consequence was, that when the struggle began, the ministers of religion, and religion itself, were both assailed with equal zeal. The ridicule, and even the abuse, heaped on the clergy, will surprise no one who is acquainted with the provocation that had been received. And although, in the indiscriminate onslaught which soon followed, Christianity was, for a time, subjected to a fate which ought to have been reserved for those who called themselves her ministers; this, while it moves us to regret, ought by no means to excite our astonishment. The destruction of Christianity in France was the necessary result of those opinions which bound up the destiny of the national priesthood with the destiny of the national religion. If both were connected by the same origin, both should fall in the same ruin. If that which is the tree of life, were, in reality, so corrupt that it could only bear poisonous fruits, then it availed little to lop off the boughs and cut down the branches; but it were better, by one mighty effort, to root it up from the ground, and secure the health of society by stopping the very source of the contagion.

These are reflections which must make us pause before we censure the deistical writers of the eighteenth century. So perverted, however, are the reasonings to which some minds are accustomed, that those who judge them most uncharitably are precisely those whose conduct forms their best excuse. Such are the men who, by putting forth the most extravagant claims in favour of the clergy, are seeking to establish the principle, by the operation of which the clergy were destroyed. Their scheme for restoring the old system of ecclesiastical authority depends on the supposition of its divine origin: a supposition which, if inseparable from Christianity, will at once justify the infidelity which they hotly attack. The increase of the power of the clergy is incompatible with the interests of civilization. If, therefore, any religion adopts as its creed the necessity of such an increase, it becomes the bounden duty of every friend to humanity to do his utmost, either to destroy the creed, or failing in that, to overturn the religion. If pretensions of this sort are an essential part of Christianity, it behoves us at once to make our choice; since the only option can be, between abjuring our faith or sacrificing our liberty. Fortunately, we are not driven to so hard a strait; and we know that these claims are as false in theory, as they would be pernicious in practice. It is, indeed, certain, that if they were put into execution, the clergy, though they might enjoy a momentary triumph, would have consummated their own ruin, by preparing the way among us for scenes as disastrous as those which occurred in France.

The truth is, that what is most blamed in the great French writers, was the natural consequence of the development of their age. Never was there a more striking illustration of the social law already noticed, that, if government will allow religious scepticism to run its course, it will issue in great things, and will hasten the march of civilization; but that, if an attempt is made to put it down with a strong hand, it may, no doubt, be repressed for a time, but eventually will rise with such force as to endanger the foundation of society. In England, we adopted the first of these courses; in France, they adopted the second. In England, men were allowed to exercise their own judgment on the most sacred subjects; and, as soon as the diminution of their credulity had made them set bounds to the power of the clergy, toleration immediately followed, and the national prosperity has never been disturbed. In France, the authority of the clergy was increased by a superstitious king; faith usurped the place of reason, not a whisper of doubt was allowed to be heard, and the spirit of inquiry was stifled, until the country fell to the brink of ruin. If Louis XIV. had not interfered with the natural progress, France, like England, would have continued to advance. After his death, it was, indeed, too late to save the clergy, against whom all the intellect of the nation was soon arrayed. But the force of the storm might still have been broken, if the government of Louis XV. had conciliated what it was impossible to resist; and, instead of madly attempting to restrain opinions by laws, had altered the laws to suit the opinions. If the rulers of France, instead

of exerting themselves to silence the national literature, had yielded to its suggestions, and had receded before the pressure of advancing knowledge, the fatal collision would have been avoided; because the passions which caused the collision would have been appeased. In such case, the church would have fallen somewhat earlier; but the state itself would have been saved. In such case, France would, in all probability, have secured her liberties, without increasing her crimes; and that great country, which, from her position and resources, ought to be the pattern of European civilization, might have escaped the ordeal of those terrible atrocities, through which she was compelled to pass, and from the effects of which she has not yet recovered.

It must, I think, be admitted that, during, at all events, the first half of the reign of Louis XV., it was possible, by timely concessions, still to preserve the political institutions of France. Reforms there must have been; and reforms too of a large and uncompromising character. So far, however, as I am able to understand the real history of that period, I make no doubt that, if these had been granted in a frank and ungrudging spirit, everything could have been retained necessary for the only two objects at which government ought to aim, namely, the preservation of order, and the prevention of crime. But, by the middle of the reign of Louis XV., or, at all events, immediately afterwards, the state of affairs began to alter; and, in the course of a few years, the spirit of France became so democratic, that it was impossible even to delay a revolution, which, in the

preceding generation, might have been altogether averted. This remarkable change is connected with that other change already noticed, by virtue of which, the French intellect began, about the same period, to direct its hostility against the state, rather than, as heretofore, against the church. As soon as this, which may be called the second epoch of the eighteenth century, had been fairly entered, the movement became irresistible. Event after event followed each other in rapid succession; each one linked to its antecedent, and the whole forming a tendency impossible to withstand. It was in vain that the government, yielding some points of real importance, adopted measures by which the church was controlled, the power of the clergy diminished, and even the order of the jesuits suppressed. It was in vain that the crown now called to its councils, for the first time, men imbued with the spirit of reform; men, like Turgot and Necker, whose wise and liberal proposals would, in calmer days, have stilled the agitation of the popular mind. It was in vain that promises were made to equalize the taxes, to redress some of the most crying grievances, to repeal some of the most obnoxious laws. It was even in vain that the states-general were summoned; and that thus, after the lapse of a hundred and seventy years, the people were again admitted to take part in the management of their own affairs. All these things were in vain; because the time for treaty had gone by, and the time for battle had come. The most liberal concessions that could possibly have been devised would have failed to avert that deadly struggle, which the course of preceding

events made inevitable. For the measure of that age was now full. The upper classes, intoxicated by the long possession of power, had provoked the crisis; and it was needful that they should abide the issue. There was no time for mercy; there was no pause, no compassion, no sympathy. The only question that remained was, to see whether they who had raised the storm could ride the whirlwind; or, whether it was not rather likely that they should be the first victims of that frightful hurricane, in which, for a moment, laws, religion, morals, all perished, the lowest vestiges of humanity were effaced, and the civilization of France not only submerged, but, as it then appeared, irretrievably ruined.

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