

may be said with as good reason of any other event as a happening, and therefore of the whole world conceived as a vast process of change. Mill calls this the "Law of Universal Causation." He expresses it by saying: "The state of the whole universe at any instant we believe to be the consequence of its state at the previous instant, insomuch that one who knew all the agents which exist at the present moment, their collocation in space, and all their properties—in other words, the laws of their agency—could predict the whole subsequent history of the universe."¹ This belief alone makes scientific induction possible; and when we talk about a reign of law, no more and no less than the reign of universal causation is implied.

Mill's philosophy goes beyond Comte's Positivism, and first gives it a solid foundation. No volitions, human or divine, interrupt the universal orderly sequence: volitions enter into it at most as links in an unbroken chain of causation. Nor is there any need to assume a First Cause for the world as a whole. For the law applies only to change, to what demonstrably has a beginning, not to the totality of things in which changes occur.²

According to Mill, we know this great truth, like every other truth, by experience alone—by having observed in numberless cases that every change has been preceded by another change, that in the same circumstances the same antecedent is followed by the same consequent, that no change

¹ *Logic*, bk. iii., chap. v., section 8.

² This is first brought out in the essay on *Theism*, published after Mill's death; but it can be read between the lines of the *Logic*.

has ever been shown to occur without an antecedent. Even the laws of arithmetic and geometry have no other proof than the evidence of unbroken experience in their favour.

While philosophers were setting forth the first principles of science in terms of such comprehensive generality, science was working up from the detailed investigation of particular phenomena, by the methods of experiment and reasoning, to generalisations almost as wide in their scope. Beginning in 1815, Michael Faraday, the greatest experimentalist of that or any age, had carried on a long series of researches, in the course of which he rediscovered what was already known on the Continent—that magnetism may be produced by electricity; and discovered for the first time that electricity may be produced from magnetism, both electricity and magnetism from mechanical motion, and mechanical motion from both, the resulting amounts of energy being always proportioned to the amounts expended elsewhere. He also succeeded in correlating magnetism with light, which had long been known as a product of electricity and of chemical affinity.

It is from this correlation of the physical forces, first completely established by Faraday, that our whole system of electric lighting and electro-motor machinery, destined ultimately to purify the air from smoke, has taken rise. Its consequences in the world of thought have been even more momentous. From the idea of correlation was deduced the still higher idea of conservation, the principle that the quantity of energy in existence

always remains constant, none being ever created or destroyed. This truth, first enunciated by Mohr, a German savant, in 1837, was rediscovered by Grove five years later, and made the subject of lectures delivered before the London Institution in 1842-43, but not published as a book until 1846. At the same time another English physicist, Joule, was ascertaining, by exact experimental measurement, the mechanical equivalent of heat.

Mill himself always remained rather sceptical about the philosophical value of these researches. But for younger thinkers they had the supreme importance of giving scientific precision to his own, or rather Laplace's, law of universal causation. It must be noticed in this connection that the idea of conservation did not become the common property even of the most highly educated classes until about 1858.

Assuming universal causation to be true, organic evolution follows from it as a necessary consequence. Geology shows that there was a time when the present species of plants and animals did not exist. They must therefore have originated either directly from their inorganic elements, or by a process of gradual variation from pre-existing species. All experience goes against spontaneous generation, all experience testifies to gradual variation; therefore the second alternative is adopted. We saw how, before the end of the eighteenth century, Erasmus Darwin enunciated the doctrine of evolution; but its first systematic exposition in the English language did not appear till 1844. This was a book called *Vestiges of the*

Natural History of Creation, by Robert Chambers, an Edinburgh bookseller. Chambers was not a scientific expert, nor altogether an original thinker, but he had studied scientific literature to better purpose than any professor, and he brought together a mass of evidence going to show that the solar system, the earth's crust, the organic world, and human civilisation had been gradually developed under the action of natural forces.

Throughout, the author's attitude towards religion is most conciliatory. Development is exhibited as another proof of design, and therefore as a fresh argument in favour of theism—the very position occupied by Bishop Temple forty years later, and now accepted by most theologians. It is also “reconciled” with Scripture, with no worse, if with no better, success than geology had been “reconciled” before it. Nevertheless, the *Vestiges* raised a storm, and probably would have ruined the bookselling business of the Chambers brothers if Robert's connection with it had not been kept a close secret. People had not yet been taught that evolution leaves Christianity stronger than ever; they thought that to admit man's development from a lower animal would seriously shake the assurance of his possessing an immortal soul; nor did they relish the prospect of his being superseded in the lordship of earth by some higher animal—or what a German plagiarist of English ideas has since called the superman. Modern science has added fresh arguments for evolution to those employed by Chambers; but the considerations that now recommend it to popular audiences are no other than those urged in the *Vestiges*. If in

two generations they have come to exercise a more persuasive influence, this is not least because the resisting power of theology has been weakened by internal decay.

English literature has often presented under an imaginative form the criticism of what is mischievous or rotten in real life, and the endeavour to replace it by nobler constructions of an ideal type. Perhaps for this reason great reforming periods seem less favourable to great literature than periods of reaction or stagnation. We have seen how literature bloomed in the dismal epochs of 1799 and 1817, and how it declined under Canning and Brougham; we have now to glance at its rebirth in the magnificent early Victorian period, when Melbourne's policy was to let things alone, when Peel's policy was to delay reforms until they commended themselves to the agricultural mind. All the great writers of that age were more or less hostile to such quiescence, to such procrastination; all were animated by a discontent more or less divine. We know some of them best in their later days, tamed by wealth and honour, thankful to rest themselves and a little impatient with the restlessness of their juniors. We look on Macaulay as a placid Whig, on Carlyle as a foe to modern Liberalism. But Macaulay was to some extent a Radical, and in India a great reformer; Carlyle was ready with "plenty of Radicalism," though not quite of Mill's sort, if Mill had made him editor of the *London Review*. We remember Tennyson as a timid Conservative, and Browning as a fantastic antiquarian. But the young Tennyson

gloried in change and novelty as such; all his hopes were for a future that should not be like the past. He bids the bells—

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring out the false, ring in the true;

his heart is with the workers who are "ever reaping something new"; he goes with advancing science, and looks forward to an age of universal peace. To the same effect, but with more swing and power, Browning exclaims:—

'Tis time
New hopes should animate the world, new light
Should dawn from new revealings on a race
Weighed down so long, forgotten so long.

For Browning also, like Burns and Keats, beneficent action rather than poetry was the ideal. Genius, he tells us in *Sordello*, is given to make mankind act, not to amuse them by seeing its possessor act each of them.¹ Carlyle had the same passion for work in preference to words, and could no more satisfy it than Browning. It turned with him to a glorification of great rulers; with Browning it vanished before a philosophy that glorified love as the only good in the world.

If Carlyle ever had hopes of an office under government, they must have perished with the advent of Sir Robert Peel to power. He replied to the Conservative reaction by editing the *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, practically a vindication of England's greatest ruler against both Whigs and Tories, and at the same time a vindication of Puritanism against the Oxford Movement. Lord Melbourne's fall may be thanked on stronger

¹ *Works*, vol. i., p. 155 (the seventeen-volume edition).

grounds for two other monumental contributions to historical Liberalism. Grote was left free by his retirement from Parliament to go on with his History of Greece; and Macaulay was left free by the loss of office to go on with his History of England. Grote's work has been called a pamphlet in twelve volumes in defence of Athenian democracy. Macaulay's History never developed the full proportions contemplated by its author, but the fragment he achieved told, so far as it went, against the Legitimist absolutism brought into fashion by the Tractarian and Romantic currents combined.

While science, philosophy, poetry, and history combined were thus liberalising English thought through and through, prose fiction was contributing its share to the transformation of English social ideals. Dickens and Thackeray are the greatest novelists of the early Victorian period. Now it has been observed that Dickens "spent his early manhood among the politicians trained in Bentham's school," and that he "hardly ever wrote a novel without attacking an abuse"; while Thackeray's "opinions have a strong resemblance to those to which Rousseau gave popularity."¹ Indeed, Thackeray goes farther than Rousseau in pouring contempt on the rich and great, and in denouncing the adulation given to high rank by the English middle classes. Intensely modern and *bourgeois* in his view of life, and a warm admirer of American society, he has nothing but scornful mockery for the pietistic and patriarchal feudalism of Young

¹ Maine, *Popular Government*, pp. 153-54.

England. Then comes Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, with its glorification of passion as a leveller of social distinctions, followed by *Villette*, with its merciless picture of Jesuit morality put in action under the most favourable conditions. From a literary point of view, both works have set before all subsequent novelists the model of a style unequalled for its combination of splendour and strength.

This gospel of pure passionate love, as against conventionality, mammon-worship, selfish ambition, sybaritism, and profligacy, found another exponent in Emily Brontë, notwithstanding the haughty stoicism of her personal character. It is, as I have said, the very essence of Browning's philosophy, and was signally realised by his marriage with a great poetess. Before meeting him, Elizabeth Barrett had been led by a false religion to believe that her father's frightful selfishness was heaven's just judgment on her for giving to an earthly object affections that God alone could rightfully claim.¹ She learned to think very differently in Italy; and the last Book of *Aurora Leigh* gives an expression of supreme eloquence to what her husband had taught before in *Colombe's Birthday* and *The Flight of the Duchess*. Tennyson, too, whose own love-match had been delayed by poverty, strikes the same note in the Poems of his second period; and his *Princess*, on the surface a manifesto against the higher education of women, seems to have been inspired by a dread that it might interfere with the rights of passion, by separating them from their

¹ See the splendid poem entitled *Confessions*.

natural companions, whereas it has resulted in a closer intimacy between the sexes than before.

The glorification of human energy on the part of historians whose dissent from the dominant religion, although complete, remained unspoken, and of human love on the part of poets who gave Christianity an ostensible support, shows how far English idealism had become estranged from the pietism of twenty years before, and how utterly the Oxford Movement had failed to recapture it for ascetic superstition. At Oxford itself a counter-movement in the direction of free inquiry had sprung up even before Newman's secession to Rome in 1845; and the younger men, of whom some had been trained by Dr. Arnold, were rapidly assimilating the results of modern German thought. Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, published in 1835, soon became known in England. A brilliant and short-lived journalist, who was also at one time a clergyman, John Sterling, still remembered from his friendship with Carlyle, seems to have finally abandoned supernaturalism on reading it. Another young clergyman who had been a disciple of Newman's, the future historian, J. A. Froude, learned from Strauss to think of all religious traditions as myths. In 1849 he published a novel called *The Nemesis of Faith*, so outspoken that it led to the resignation of his fellowship at Exeter College. More than ten years earlier a little group of men and women at Coventry, belonging to the industrial classes and brought up in the narrowest pietism, had, without any help from Germany, come to reject the Gospels as miraculous narratives.

One of them, destined hereafter to achieve a world-wide fame under the name of George Eliot, undertook to translate Strauss, and produced a masterly version of his epoch-making work in 1846.

But the writer who made the deepest mark on the rationalistic side was F. W. Newman, a younger brother of the Tractarian leader. After taking the highest honours at Oxford he had gone out to Syria as a missionary. This calling entailed on the ardent zealot a close study of the New Testament. It led him first to doubt the legitimacy of the dogmas based on Scripture, then the trustworthiness of the Scriptural record itself, then the truth and even the excellence of Christianity as a religion. His *Phases of Faith* (1850) is a detailed and sincere account of the reasonings that led him step by step to this long unwelcome conclusion.

Some months after the appearance of *Phases of Faith* W. R. Greg, a Unitarian business man and journalist of high character and intellect, brought out a work of equally destructive and more systematic character called *The Creed of Christendom*, but really directed against the Bible's claim to supernatural authority. Although a remarkably luminous summary of the arguments on that side, it did not attain any wide popularity until nearly a quarter of a century later.

In those times it was considered a great victory for Freethought that the publication of such works as Newman's and Greg's did not entail unpleasant consequences on their authors. Ten years earlier, according to Sir Charles Lyell, they would have been sent to Coventry for it. Such, indeed, had

been the fate of Froude, who was cut by one friend after another in the streets of Oxford. So late as 1842 a few impulsive words uttered at a public meeting brought a worse penalty than social ostracism on the speaker. This was the celebrated G. J. Holyoake. Lecturing on Home Colonisation at Cheltenham the year before, he had been taxed by one of the audience with leaving God out of his scheme. Holyoake replied that he did not believe in God, and that he would put the Deity on half-pay, meaning that he would like to see half the property of the Church devoted to the relief of the poor. He was tried at Gloucester Assizes for blasphemy, and condemned to six months' imprisonment. After being liberated he found means to open a bookseller's shop in London, and became the founder of Secularism. This he has defined as the moral duty of man deduced from considerations pertaining to this life alone. In the neater phrase of a disciple, "Secularism purports to regulate human affairs by considerations purely human."¹ At its first promulgation Secularism was understood by friends and foes alike to exclude all theological belief, whether Christian or simply theistic. Secularists need not be atheists, but they could hardly be more than Agnostics. Since then a tendency has gained ground among professing Christians to identify the divine with what is most characteristically human—*i.e.*, with man's higher faculties; and a philosophical theologian has gone the length of proclaiming the service of humanity as the true and only service of God.² But when

¹ G. W. Foote, in *Religious Systems of the World*, p. 526 (1st ed).

² Edward Caird, *The Evolution of Religion*, vol. ii., p. 320.

Holyoake began his Secularist propaganda such an identification had not become popular, and for many years he carried on an active campaign against the current beliefs, culminating in his *Trial of Theism* (1858), one of the ablest books ever directed against the belief in a personal God.

As a disciple of Robert Owen, Holyoake interested himself warmly in the cause of industrial co-operation; but he understood better than Owen the importance of bringing this and all other movements for the elevation of the people into line with the democratic agitation. He also adopted more openly than Owen the Malthusian principle that the prosperity of the working classes can only be secured by restraining the increase of their numbers.

The same doctrine is advocated with something like enthusiasm in Mill's *Principles of Political Economy* (1848), long accepted as an authoritative manual of the subject. Mill agreed with Malthus in regarding over-population, while it lasted, as an impassable obstacle to Socialism; but he believed that legislation directed towards raising the standard of comfort and spreading knowledge among the working classes might induce them to set a voluntary limit on the number of their children. He also spoke hopefully of the co-operative movement, although he did not think that it would ever succeed, by means of peaceful competition, in beating capitalistic production out of the field. So far his anticipations have been justified. Co-operative societies for consumption have thriven and multiplied; co-operative societies for production have on the whole failed, and the most successful have departed from their original principle by becoming

mere joint-stock companies employing labourers paid by fixed wages. Hence in collectivist circles the voluntary Socialism of Owen and his followers has been succeeded by a revival of Chartist State Socialism, advocating the expropriation of land-owners, mine-owners, and capitalists by local municipalities or by the government of the whole country.

Chartism itself came to an end as an organised movement in 1848, the great year of abortive revolutions. Some of its leaders had seriously discredited their cause by acting against the Free Traders and breaking up Anti-Corn-Law meetings. Free Trade, however, had not wrought miracles. Vast quantities of capital had been sunk in railway speculation ; this, combined with the potato-famine, produced a commercial crisis, the effect of which was widespread distress among the people. Then Chartism lifted its head once more. A petition demanding the famous Six Points received an immense number of genuine and not a few spurious signatures. Preparations were made to carry it to the House of Commons, followed by half a million persons. Government forbade the procession ; Wellington took effectual means to resist its approach by armed force ; volunteer constables contributed overwhelming numbers to the defence of order. Finally, the petition was carried to the House in a cab, referred to a Special Committee, and shown to bear only a third of the signatures boasted of by the leader of the demonstration, Feargus O'Connor.

A group of liberal clergymen and laymen, with the Rev. F. D. Maurice at their head, profoundly

touched by the prevalent distress, proposed as a remedy to substitute theological for secularist principles in an attempted reorganisation of the most insufficiently remunerated industries, and started a new scheme of co-operation under the title of Christian Socialism. But religious inspiration failed to do the work expected of it, and, after a brief struggle for existence, this well-meant effort towards a practical evangelisation of the masses collapsed.

A writer of surpassing genius who, towards the close of the century, did more than any other single individual to revive the cause of Socialism, first made his mark during this period. Born in 1817, John Ruskin received first a clerical, then an artistic training. Opinions differ as to whether he might have become a great painter; he certainly became a great master of pictorial language. Although by nature and education an egoist, for many years he devoted all his powers to the interpretation of Turner's art, finding in it a deep philosophic meaning of which the great landscape painter had never dreamed. Turner was in fact a romanticist in form and colour, who habitually reconstructed the visible aspects of nature in such a way as to make them yield imaginative and emotional effects comparable to those produced by the most energetic discharges of passion, or by the most impressive groupings of ideal experiences in the works of his great poetic contemporaries. Ruskin professed to regard the painter's wonderful creations as primarily a new revelation of natural truth, and therefore he prepared himself for his work as an art-critic and

prophet of Turner by diligently collecting all the information contemporary science could furnish about the structure and history of the visible world as a subject for pictorial representation, much as a critic of figure-painting might qualify himself for the office by a course of human anatomy. Thus his earlier writings represent in a strange combination, and carried to a high degree of intensity, the romanticism and the scientific enthusiasm which divided between them the genius of the earlier nineteenth century. With them he associated, what Turner stood aloof from, a strong religious feeling of the Evangelical type, not native, but stamped on his mind by early training and never quite effaced. His aversion from the Oxford Movement was extreme ; but the pietism he shared with its leaders inspired him, as it inspired the neo-Catholics, with a passion for Gothic architecture, for the poetry of Dante, and for the earlier Italian religious painters. Italian influences soon dissipated the narrow Puritanism of his youth. Physical science, combined at a later period with the rationality of Greek literature and Greek art, whose spirit he came more and more to appreciate, did the rest. Before completing *Modern Painters*, Ruskin had parted with all religious belief. Floating fragments of his lost creed came back to him afterwards under the influence of spiritistic delusions ; but, as a teacher of the English people, he never again went outside the furtherance of earthly happiness by the rational application of natural means to the fulfilment of human needs.

Ruskin had faults and limitations on which at the present day it would be needless and ungracious

to dwell. What it behoves us to remember is that in him England produced and possessed the greatest master of æsthetic appreciation that the world has ever seen. No other critic has shown so profound, so comprehensive, so discriminating a sense of beauty in all its forms; no other has acquired so intimate a knowledge of nature and of art; no other has been able to communicate his knowledge and appreciation of beautiful things through a style of such consummate energy, exactness, and sweep, or so imposing in the magnificence of its decorative effect. What England at the present day would have been without him is too dismal for fancy to conjecture; too remote for imagination to realise what his transmitted influence will make of the England that is yet to be.

MODERN ENGLAND

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A RECORD OF OPINION AND ACTION FROM
THE TIME OF THE FRENCH REVOLU-
TION TO THE PRESENT DAY

BY

ALFRED WILLIAM BENN

AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH RATIONALISM IN THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY"

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

[ISSUED FOR THE RATIONALIST PRESS ASSOCIATION, LTD.]

LONDON :

WATTS & CO.,

17, JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, E.C.

1908

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CHAPTER X.

THE PUPILS OF CANNING

THE fall of Sir Robert Peel's Ministry made little difference in the domestic policy of the English Government. The general principle of Free Trade received some further applications, and the freedom of the manufacturers to overwork their hands some further restrictions. Vindictive country gentlemen ceased to oppose Irish Coercion Bills that gave them no opportunity of shooting their lost leader from behind a hedge. What really made Russell's Administration differ from Peel's was the substitution of Lord Palmerston for Lord Aberdeen at the Foreign Office. The Minister who opened Mazzini's letters, and who is more than suspected of using the information thus obtained to warn Italy's oppressors of an approaching attempt to overthrow their power, was succeeded by the Minister whom Italian patriots regarded as their friend and champion. Aberdeen justified his conduct on the plea that an Italian revolution would have endangered the peace of Europe. In this nervous anxiety to preserve the *status quo* he differed widely from the imperious statesman whose policy had so nearly led to a European war seven years before. The change of Ministers initiated a series of events that subsequently transformed the face of Europe.

Bred in Canning's school, Palmerston, like

Canning, kept in view the double object of encouraging liberty and of promoting English interests abroad. Indeed, the two objects were closely connected, for a free people—especially one indebted for its freedom to England—would be less likely than an enslaved people to let itself be dragged into a war against her at the bidding of a great and ambitious military power. It might even on occasion become our ally. Besides, Palmerston, who had sat at the feet of Dugald Stewart, and whose recollections of the Terror were less vivid than those of the anti-Jacobin poet, probably loved liberty as such more genuinely than ever was possible to Canning.

Palmerston's high-handed Eastern policy had achieved in 1840 a complete diplomatic victory over France. Henceforth the French King and his Minister Guizot were systematically identified by the French Opposition writers and speakers with the principle of peace at any price. This reproach ultimately proved their ruin. To soothe French vanity they brought back Napoleon's body from St. Helena, and buried it with great pomp under the dome of the Invalides. But this vain pageant merely went to heighten the painful contrast between the glories of the Empire and the sordid bourgeois government of Louis Philippe. Then advantage was taken of the troubles in Spain to re-establish French ascendancy over the sister Bourbon kingdom. An intrigue was set on foot, and carried to an apparently successful issue, whose object was to secure the Spanish throne for an eventual descendant of Louis Philippe. One of his sons, the Duc de Montpensier, was married to

the sister and heir presumptive of the young Queen Isabella, while the Queen herself was married to her cousin, Don Francisco, by whom it was known that she could not have children. This arrangement was effected in direct violation of a previous agreement with England that Montpensier should not marry the Infanta until the Queen was married and had heirs. Possibly Guizot might have kept his word had Lord Aberdeen remained in office. His excuse is the alleged determination of Palmerston to marry Isabella to a Coburg Prince. Nothing can palliate the infamy of imposing such a husband as Don Francisco on the young Queen; but, justifiable or not, the Spanish marriages put an end to the *entente cordiale* established by Aberdeen, thus placing a powerful weapon in the hands of the French Opposition, who reproached Guizot and his master with sacrificing the friendship of England to the interests of the Orleans family.

In another way the unfortunate Louis Philippe's desire for peace hurried on his fall. At that time only 200,000 Frenchmen possessed the electoral franchise. As a consequence of this restriction, government was carried on by a system of gross corruption, frequently giving rise to open scandals. Extension of the suffrage became a watchword with the Liberal Opposition. A very moderate concession, amounting to the admission of 200,000 new electors, would have satisfied their demands. But so convinced were the King and Guizot of the popular craving for war that they refused to strengthen the representation of public opinion in the Chamber even to that trifling extent. In February, 1848, a Reform banquet was forbidden.

The people of Paris rose in arms; the National Guard showed signs of defection; Guizot resigned; the King fled, and a Republic was proclaimed.

France has been credited with the whole European Revolution of 1848, and no doubt her example greatly stimulated the movement; but in fact it had begun more than a month before, at Palermo, and had spread over the whole of Italy while Paris still lay quiescent. Pius IX., elected Pope in June, 1846, had given the first signal for reform, his accession exactly coinciding with the return of the English Liberals to office. Opposed by Austria, he expresses a wish to the English Government "to have the assistance of some person of rank and experience who might aid him by advice, and at the same time afford him the moral support of England."¹ A Whig nobleman, Lord Minto, is sent out for the purpose, with directions to visit Turin and Florence on the way, with a view to strengthening "the authority of the constitutional Governments in Italy."² Palmerston's instructions to this travelling agent express a strong disapproval of Austria's threatened interference with the new reforming movement. At the same time Palmerston was holding back France and Austria from forcibly interfering to help the Catholic and Jesuit-ruled cantons of Switzerland against the Federal Government. That his help, there or elsewhere, would have gone beyond words is unlikely, and he always counselled moderation to the revolutionary leaders

¹ Evelyn Ashley, *Life of Lord Palmerston*, vol. i., p. 33.

² *Ibid*, p. 34.

as well as to the kings. But with the credulous and excitable peoples of Southern Europe words told like gun-shots; and England probably repaid to Europe in 1848 more than her own Reform agitation owed to France in 1830.

From the beginning French democracy had been doubly compromised, by the support of the Socialists and by the support of the priests. A movement like Robert Owen's for putting co-operators in the place of capitalists had become confounded with a movement like that of the Chartists for confiscating the property of the rich. A terror more deadly than that once inspired by the guillotine took hold of the *bourgeoisie* and the peasants, and drove them to seek protection from the army and the Church. It soon became evident that political liberty could not yet co-exist with universal suffrage in France. Practically the only question was whether absolute power should be exercised by the heir of Charles X. or by the heir of Napoleon. A popular vote decided in favour of the Bonapartist candidate, Prince Louis Napoleon, who was elected President of the Republic. He had secured the support of the priests by promising to reinstate Pope Pius IX. in the temporal sovereignty of Rome, whence he had been driven, on failing as a reformer, by the Italian revolutionists. After a waiting game of three years the Prince-President used the army to destroy what little remained of French liberty. A so-called plebiscite condoned the treacherous and sanguinary means by which he had seized on despotic power, and in another year another

plebiscite made him Emperor under the title of Napoleon III.

Writing under Louis Philippe, an observer who studied and knew French society as no one else has ever known it, the great novelist Balzac, declared that absolutism would be the only cure for the prevalent corruption; and the greatest of French philosophers, Auguste Comte, hailed Louis Napoleon's *coup d'état* as a necessary and wholesome measure. Nevertheless, the author of that deed remains the most sinister figure in modern history. Most persons who retain any belief in public morality will agree with John Austin that "the man was a scoundrel," and will sympathise with Mr. Swinburne's wish to see him "kick heels with his throat in a rope." That his success saved France from civil war or from a Bourbon restoration can make no difference in our judgment on the atrocity of his crimes until it has been shown that no other means were available for that end.

Palmerston's foreign policy had been a necessary antecedent in the chain of events that led up to the Second Empire; and the *coup d'état* in its turn determined the rest of his career. Long used to the exercise of despotic authority in his own department, the Foreign Secretary roused the displeasure of Cabinet and Court by taking important decisions without reference to the wishes either of his colleagues or of the Queen and her Consort. Disbelieving in a French Republic, hating the Bourbons, and rejoicing in whatever insured their exclusion from the throne of France, he heard with satisfaction of what had been done on December

2, 1851, and frankly expressed his opinion in private conversation with the French Ambassador in London. Russell, who was Prime Minister, had gone as far; but advantage was taken of the Foreign Secretary's more responsible position to make the alleged indiscretion a pretext for driving him from office.

In a few weeks he had his revenge, and the same event gave occasion for it that had caused his fall. Many people in England feared that the new Napoleon would signalise his advent by waging a war of reprisals on his uncle's most inveterate enemy. It was thought that steam had bridged the Channel, and that an invading army might be expected to land any day without a previous declaration of hostilities. No armed force existed fit to cope with such an assailant, and a cry arose for providing some means of defence. For this purpose Russell proposed to reconstitute what was called the local militia. Palmerston moved an amendment to omit the word "local," "so as to constitute a regular militia which should be transportable all over the kingdom, and so be ready for any emergency,"¹ and carried it by eleven votes. Russell resigned, and was succeeded by a Protectionist Government, with Lord Derby at its head and Disraeli as his lieutenant in the Commons. Disraeli soon exhibited his unscrupulous versatility by declaring for Free Trade; but this apostasy did not save his party from defeat at the General Election of 1852, which resulted in the return of a slightly diminished Liberal majority. Defeated on

¹ Ashley, *Life of Palmerston*, vol. i., p. 333.

their Budget, the Conservatives resigned, and were succeeded by a Coalition Ministry composed of Whigs and Conservative Free Traders, or Peelites, as they were then called, under Lord Aberdeen as Prime Minister, Gladstone for the first time holding high office as Chancellor of the Exchequer. Palmerston went to the Home Office, where it was thought he would do no harm. This peculiar arrangement, as by the fatality of a Greek drama, brought on the Crimean War.

No mistake could have been greater than to suppose that the new French Emperor would attempt either to avenge or to emulate his uncle. Napoleon III. shaped his course on the simple principle of continuing the policy of his predecessor where it had been fortunate, and reversing it where it had been unlucky. France had entered on a wonderful career of material progress under Louis Philippe, and so everything was done to further her prosperity under the new Empire. Free speech had bred revolution; it ceased to exist. The priests had been alienated; education now passed for all practical purposes under their exclusive control. Above all, France had found herself isolated in Europe, and had got the reputation of being afraid to fight. She must therefore reassert her claims to respect, if possible in alliance with other Powers, but especially in alliance with England, resuming the *entente cordiale* which had benefited Louis Philippe so much, and avoiding a provocation like the Spanish marriages, which had cost him so dear.

An opportunity for carrying this policy into

effect presented itself before long. Simultaneously with the re-establishment of the Empire, on the strength of an obsolete treaty, and under strong pressure from the French Government, certain privileges connected with the Holy Places in Palestine were transferred by the Sultan from the Greek to the Latin priests. The Czar Nicholas took this for what it was probably intended to be—a personal provocation. He immediately advanced troops towards the Turkish frontier, and demanded in terms of studied insolence a Protectorate over all the Greek subjects of the Porte. Till then England had remained unconcerned in the quarrel. She now intervened, and henceforth took a foremost place in resisting claims which, had they been allowed, would have made the Sultan a vassal of the Czar. Our Government had the more reason to suspect such a design, as it had already received overtures from Nicholas amounting to a proposal for the partition of the Turkish Empire.

Our former Ambassador at Constantinople, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, himself a Canning, trained in the same school as Palmerston and long his close political ally, was sent on a special mission to cope with the new situation. He encouraged the Sultan to resist Russia's claims, and greatly simplified matters by arranging an amicable settlement of the dispute about the Holy Places. Mentschikoff, the Czar's envoy, then repeated his master's demand for a Protectorate in a modified form. By Stratford's advice it was rejected, whereupon Nicholas gave orders for the occupation of the Danubian Principalities by a Russian Army. The great Powers then intervened, and nearly succeeded

in forcing Turkey to accept an arrangement which, in substance, if not in form, would have amounted to the concession of a Russian Protectorate over her Greek Christian subjects. At a hint, as is supposed, from Lord Stratford, the Sultan's Ministers declined to go beyond a promise to confirm existing treaties, and, on the Czar's refusal to evacuate the Principalities, declared war.

Napoleon III. has been accused of breaking up the European Concert, engaging France and England in a separate alliance, and acting on a deliberate system of provocation which ultimately made it impossible for Nicholas to accept a peaceful solution of the Eastern Question. But this seems to be a mistake. For that very arrangement known to history as the Vienna Note, propounded by the Powers, accepted by Russia, and rejected by Turkey, was, in fact, drawn up by Napoleon himself,¹ while the sole power that backed up Turkey in rejecting it was England—that is, the war-party in the English Cabinet, led by Russell and Palmerston, who eventually brought over the pacific Premier, Aberdeen, to their views.

Russell counted only in the Cabinet and the House of Commons. Palmerston represented the public opinion of the country. England had not forgotten the events of 1849, when the European revolution, with which she warmly sympathised as an attempt to copy her own institutions, had been so mercilessly suppressed. Now, while it was Austria that held in bondage the two nationalities towards which English sympathies were most

¹ P. de la Gorce, *Histoire du Second Empire*, vol. i., p. 187.

attracted, Italy and Hungary, it was Russia that, by intervening against the victorious Hungarian armies just when they had won national independence, re-cemented the whole fabric of Hapsburg tyranny tottering to its fall. So violent was the indignation excited that J. S. Mill, writing ten years afterwards, declared that for England to have helped Hungary would have been "an honourable and virtuous act," and for England and France acting together even a politic act, as it would have saved them from fighting Russia in less advantageous circumstances subsequently.¹

Nor was this all. After their final defeat some thousands of proscribed Hungarian patriots had taken refuge in Turkish territory. Austria and Russia simultaneously demanded their surrender. By Stratford Canning's advice the Porte refused, and Palmerston sent a fleet up to the Dardanelles to support it. Thus the Turks came to be regarded, not only as brave men fighting for their own independence, but as champions of European freedom.

Again, a certain philosophy of history current at that time, and by no means yet extinct, taught that the world, to its great detriment, tends periodically to fall under the sway of a universal monarchy, the Babylonian Empire being the first recorded instance and the Roman Empire the last. Since then several attempts have been made to revive the system of universal domination—by the mediæval Popes, by Philip II., by Louis XIV., and by Napoleon; but all were baffled, as the English people believed,

¹ Mill, *Dissertations and Discussions*, vol. iii., p. 177.

almost entirely by English vigilance and courage. For many years past an apprehension had been gaining ground that Russia was preparing to play the old game over again—had, indeed, been playing it with such success that her work might be considered as half done. Sweden, Poland, Turkey were partially devoured, Austria and Prussia reduced to vassalage, India and China threatened, the United States made a fawning sycophant. Ought not England once more to fulfil her historic mission and strike down the Colossus with the feet of clay?

According to another philosophy of history, the civilised nations were periodically overwhelmed, and always threatened, by inundations of northern barbarism. Rome had succumbed to the Goths and Vandals, China to the Tartars; mediæval Christendom narrowly escaped being crushed by Genghis Khan. Popular ethnology classed the Russians as Mongols, descended in some way from the hordes of Attila, and destined to spread the same devastation over Europe unless prompt and energetic means were taken to restrain their encroachments. Some fatalists thought resistance useless; but the majority were not of that opinion.

Lord Palmerston was not a philosophic historian, but he had been bred up to believe in the Balance of Power; he thought that Russia, in possession of Constantinople, would be a danger at once to the future liberties of Europe, to British trade in the Levant, and, more remotely, to British empire in India. Probably he calculated that, having to fight her sooner or later, it would be safer to fight now, with France as our ally and the German

Powers neutral, than at some future time in less favourable circumstances.

It seems, therefore, that now as afterwards in three great crises of European policy Napoleon III. found himself duped by a more astute politician than himself; that Palmerston manœuvred him into the Russian war of 1854, as Cavour was to manœuvre him into the ultimately ruinous Italian war of 1859, and Bismarck into the fatal neutrality of 1866 and into the annihilating ambush of 1870. In return for being made the tool of England's policy he got the recognition of Queen Victoria for himself and for the fair adventuress who shared his throne, as her equals and her friends.

Had Palmerston been Prime Minister, or even Foreign Minister, his warlike attitude, supported as it was by the French Government, might have averted war. But the known peace principles of Lord Aberdeen and of his chief lieutenant, Gladstone, effectually screened the guiding hand of the Home Secretary. Similarly, the passionate desire of the English people to strike down the destroyer of European liberty was screened behind their more ostentatious exultation in the triumph of peace and industry recently signalised by the Great Exhibition of 1851, the more so because the Free Trade leaders, Cobden and Bright, now eloquently advocated the cause of non-interference.

Turkey's declaration of war was followed by an advance of the English and French fleets to Constantinople, ordered at the suggestion of Napoleon III., with Palmerston's full approval. Russia, in perfect conformity with her rights as

a belligerent, replied by destroying the Turkish squadron at Sinope. Then, again under pressure from the French Emperor, the allied fleets received orders to advance into the Black Sea, and to drive all Russian ships back into port. This step involved a breach of international treaties ; it amounted to a beginning of hostilities, and did actually bring on war. It had been approved of during the temporary retirement of Palmerston, who, for reasons not yet explained, had left the Ministry. But his absence told for more than his presence, if we are to believe what Kinglake supposes, that "the very apprehension of having him for an adversary weighed heavily on the decision of his late colleagues."¹ In a few days he had returned to office, stronger than before.

By their aggressive action in the Black Sea England and France separated themselves from the German Powers, and so exasperated the Czar that he disregarded their summons to evacuate the Danubian Principalities, and war ensued. It need not have lasted long, for, under pressure from Austria, the Russian troops soon afterwards recrossed the Pruth, their place being taken by an Austrian army of occupation. This, however, did not satisfy the allied Western Powers. Unwilling to bring back their fleets and armies without striking a great blow, and believing the present to be a unique opportunity for crippling their enemy, they resolved to invade the Crimea, to sink the Russian fleet, and to destroy the great fortress of Sebastopol, by which Constantinople was permanently

¹ *Invasion of the Crimea*, vol. ii., p. 27.

threatened. It is said that the idea of a Crimean expedition first originated with Napoleon III., but only acquired fixity when taken hold of by Palmerston's more energetic will.

Under more efficient leadership, the purpose of the Allies would have been accomplished a few weeks after their united forces were disembarked in the neighbourhood of the great Russian fortress. As it was, they succeeded; and, although untoward circumstances postponed the fall of Sebastopol for nearly a year, politically the delay proved no misfortune, for that long struggle ended with the complete exhaustion of Russia, the loss of her military prestige, and her exclusion from all share in the rearrangement of the Western world. Palmerston's dream of a regenerated Turkey—not shared by the better-informed Stratford de Redcliffe—led, indeed, only to more misgovernment, waste, and misery; but the embryo nationalities of the Balkan Peninsula have gained in the long run by an intervention which has ultimately secured them a larger autonomy than would have been compatible with their incorporation in the empire of the Czar.

Such were some of the ulterior effects of the Crimean War. Its immediate effect on home politics was to lay bare the gross inefficiency of our aristocratically organised administration. Military maladministration was no new thing; it had raged through the French War. The new thing was its speedy exposure, due in this instance to the *Times* correspondent in the Crimea, the late Sir William Russell. Popular indignation turned itself, in the first instance, not against the faulty system, but against the Government of Lord Aberdeen, which

resigned after a vote of censure in the House of Commons. Palmerston, the national choice, succeeded Aberdeen as Premier; and, after a little delay, the whole Peelite section of the Cabinet followed its chief, leaving the more warlike Whigs in sole possession of power.

Among the seceders was W. E. Gladstone, already at that time, "without dispute and beyond rivalry, the first man in the House of Commons."¹ Some months later he advocated granting peace to Russia on terms less onerous than those accepted by her after the fall of Sebastopol. It so happened that a few years before these events, in the course of an Italian journey, Gladstone's attention had been drawn to the frightful way in which the Neapolitan Liberals were treated by their Sovereign, King Ferdinand, 20,000 of them being kept in dungeons as political prisoners. Among others, Carlo Poerio, who had been Minister of Public Instruction under the Liberal Government of 1848, was found "chained to a murderer, and suffering terrible privations."² Gladstone exposed this state of things to all Europe in a pamphlet which, though it did not procure the liberation of the sufferers—they were only released in April, 1859—ultimately contributed to the independence and unification of Italy. But apparently he did not grasp the solidarity of interests linking Bourbon tyranny with Russian power. Yet the connection seemed obvious enough, and was pressed on his

¹ *The National Review*, vol i., p. 423 (1855).

² Herbert Paul, in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, Supplement, vol. ii., p. 285. Mr. Paul erroneously gives the date of Poerio's release as 1852.

notice by a candid friend in a new organ of public opinion just then beginning to appear.¹

Already, indeed, the greatest of Italian statesmen had caught this connection, and had begun to utilise the war against Russia for the benefit of Italian independence. In April, 1855, Count Cavour sent 15,000 Piedmontese troops to the assistance of the Allies in the Crimea, placing them under the orders of the English general. They took part in the last battle fought before Sebastopol fell; and, although on that occasion the French did nearly everything, the Italians were allowed to claim far more than their proportionate share of the honours of victory. A Catholic orator, Montalembert, denounced in the French *Corps Legislatif* the danger to European Conservatism of this alliance with Austria's revolutionary enemy, but his warnings passed unheeded.² In the Congress held at Paris in 1856 to arrange a Treaty of Peace, Cavour sat officially as the representative of Sardinia, virtually as the representative of all Italy. He took advantage of his position to bring Italy's wrongs before Europe; Count Walewski and Lord Clarendon, the French and English Plenipotentiaries, supported his attack on Austria; and, although nothing came of it at the moment, a deep impression remained that something must be done for Italy, and that the Powers which had overthrown Russia were her friends.

While in Europe England had shone for fifty

¹ *National Review*, *ut supra*, pp. 427-28. The article is evidently by R. H. Hutton.

² De la Gorce, *Histoire du Second Empire*, vol. i., p. 376.

years as the champion of right and liberty against oppression, England as an Asiatic Power continued to appear in a somewhat less favourable light. At the close of the Crimean War we find her attacking Persia, in pursuance of a quarrel for which her own Minister at Tehran was chiefly responsible. Before the conclusion of this discreditable affair our agents at Hong Kong committed a much worse outrage on Chinese rights. A certain vessel called the *Arrow*, belonging to a Chinese merchant and manned by Chinese sailors, had, with doubtful propriety, been authorised to fly the British flag. This privilege, whatever its justification, had been merely temporary; and ten days after its expiry Chinese officials boarded the *Arrow* and took away her crew, on the plea that some of them had been guilty of piracy. Sir John Bowring, the Governor of Hong Kong, demanded their surrender, and, on its being refused, the forts guarding the approaches to Canton were attacked and taken. Yeh, the Chinese Commissioner, then restored the crew, but demanded that those accused of piracy should be given up to Chinese justice, besides refusing to apologise for his proceedings. Then came fresh claims and further hostilities, Bowring's whole attitude being apparently modelled on the behaviour of Russia to Turkey, which had recently excited so much indignation in English breasts.

It excited some indignation even when the bully happened to be an Englishman. Palmerston, who made a rule of backing up his agents whether right or wrong, defended Bowring; but a vote of censure moved by Cobden and supported by Russell, Gladstone, Disraeli, and the whole Conservative

party, passed the House of Commons by sixteen votes, Charles Greville, a rather cynical man of the world, "rejoicing, for the honour of the country, that it had condemned this iniquitous case."¹ The country, however, held a different view of its honour, and, on an appeal to its judgment, gave a triumphant majority to the policy of the popular Minister; the leading advocates of peace, Cobden, Bright, W. J. Fox, and Milner Gibson, who had also headed the Anti-Corn-Law movement, all losing their seats. In the war subsequently carried on with varying fortune, until the final submission of the Chinese in 1860 to the united forces of England and France, we had just complaints to make of their cruel and treacherous conduct. By way, it is to be supposed, of civilising them, the treaty of peace provided that the opium traffic should thenceforth be legalised, and that the duty on it should be fixed at ten instead of twenty per cent., the rate which the Chinese Government vainly entreated us to permit.

Our differences with China would have been settled sooner but for the diversion of the forces first intended for service in that quarter to meet the more pressing necessities of India. So denuded indeed was India of European soldiers, owing to the requirements of the Crimea, that, but for their timely help, a formidable mutiny, which had broken out in the East India Company's Native Bengal army, might have necessitated the entire reconquest of the Peninsula. Discontent had for some time been growing. A policy of territorial aggrandisement, pursued by a series of Governors-General,

¹ *The Greville Memoirs*, Part III., vol. ii., p. 95.

culminated in Lord Dalhousie's annexation of Oudh, against treaty obligations, and on grounds that would equally have justified the Czar in seizing on Constantinople. And the extension of our sway had become associated with the suspicion of designs against the religion of the people. It had been part of the policy pursued by the East India Company in the eighteenth century strictly to forbid any approach to Christian proselytism among the Hindoos. But the Evangelical movement, manifested among other forms by a vast increase of missionary activity, had led first to the establishment of an ecclesiastical organisation to meet the spiritual needs of the civil and military establishment, and then to direct efforts, in which even some officers took part, to spread Christianity among the natives.

Matters came to a crisis when, by an act of stupid official negligence, cartridges were served out to the Sepoys, greased with a mixture of cow's and swine's fat. Before using the cartridges, their ends had to be bitten off. Now, for a Hindoo to put either cow's or swine's fat into his mouth involved loss of caste in the present life, and eternal damnation in the life to come; while defilement with pig's fat alone would render a Moham-
medan liable to no less serious penalties. A rumour spread and obtained universal credence that the greased cartridges were designed for the express purpose of destroying the soldiers' caste, and compelling them to embrace Christianity. It would have been difficult to disabuse the Sepoys of this belief without having recourse to arguments which might have been turned with fatal

effect against the doctrine of Original Sin as then held by nearly every adherent of the creed it was thought so desirable for them to embrace.

After simmering for five months, discontent turned to mutiny and massacre in May, 1857. Oudh, so unjustly seized, proved the focus of disturbance and disaster. John Lawrence saved the Punjaub, and native troops from the Punjaub saved India. Colin Campbell, arriving with reinforcements from England, completed the work of restoring order, and in a year from its beginning the Mutiny was over. Lord Canning, the Governor-General, a son of the great Minister, showed, perhaps, less promptness of decision than the situation demanded; but his courage was unshaken, his confidence wisely bestowed, and his mercifulness, amid a storm of vindictive passion, inflexibly maintained.

Throughout the whole of this tragic episode one is struck by the great superiority in ability and efficiency of the Indian over the English administration, due, no doubt, to its being less hampered by the survival of mediæval institutions. It is worth noting that not one of the three great men just mentioned belonged by birth to the aristocratic caste. Lawrence's father was colonel in a marching regiment; Colin Campbell's father was a Scotch carpenter; while the statesman from whose widow Canning inherited his peerage had been stigmatised as an adventurer by high-born Whigs and Tories alike. Finally, he whom public opinion singled out as the fighting hero of the whole war, Havelock, was the son of a Sunderland shipbuilder. People observed with a mixture of amusement and

indignation that the same *Gazette* where Havelock's promotion to the rank of K.C.B. appeared announced the bestowal of the same honour on a certain courtier named Phipps, a relation of Lord Normanby, popularly supposed to have earned it by his zeal in supplying the Queen with entertaining gossip from the newspapers.

In view of such facts, it might seem no gain, at least for India, that the Mutiny led to a transfer of authority from the East India Company to the Crown. But while the conduct of Indian affairs on relatively rational principles does not seem to have suffered, but the contrary, from a revolution less momentous in reality than in appearance, the State as a whole has gained. As a consequence of the Mutiny, the contingent of European troops in the Indian Army has been considerably augmented, thus affording enlarged opportunities of military training and experience to English officers. And, what is equally important for East and West, the transference of India to the Crown, or, in other words, to the complete control of our elected Parliamentary Government, has carried with it the transference of appointments in the Indian Civil Service from interest to ability. It had been a part of Macaulay's reconstitution of the Indian Government that its Civil Service should be opened to the public by means of competitive examinations. But this provision had been allowed to remain dormant, and, although re-enacted in 1853, was now for the first time, at J. S. Mill's recommendation, fully enforced.¹ Under the stress of Indian example,

¹ Molesworth, *History of England*, vol. iii., p. 142.

the same principle soon extended itself to the English Civil Service, to the scientific army services, and finally to the whole army.

Whatever importance may belong to the reaction of Asiatic interests on the policy and public opinion of England, the influence exercised by Continental affairs counted for much more. We have seen how the Crimean War arose as an indirect consequence from English sympathy with the unsuccessful revolutions of 1848, and from the change of dynasty brought about in France by the events of that year. Italian liberty, made possible once more by the ruin of Russia's European domination, now took the place of the Eastern Question as the centre of European interest and the determining antecedent of all further political progress.

Italy numbered more sympathisers in England than anywhere else. Many English travellers had carried home happy memories of her cities, mountains, and seashores; others had made her a second home, and had intermarried with her people. Italian refugees found England their safest European asylum; it was not forgotten that Bentinck had given Sicily a free constitution in 1812; quite recently Palmerston had sided with the national movement of 1848. Both countries had even a common enemy in the Papacy, although the causes of their hostility differed widely enough. A year after his restoration to the temporal sovereignty of Rome by French bayonets, Pius IX. had thought fit to divide England and Wales into twelve Bishoprics, with the celebrated Dr. Wiseman (the original of Browning's Bishop Blougram), as

Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, at their head. There were at that time considerably under a million Roman Catholics in England, mostly Irish or of Irish parentage, and the new episcopate seemed rather in excess of their spiritual requirements. But the secessions from Protestantism to Rome that followed the decline of the Tractarian movement, although a vanishing quantity as compared with the total population, seemed numerous enough to justify the credulous ecclesiastical imagination in hoping for conversions on a larger scale in the near future. Anyhow, the Papal Brief creating the new episcopal organisation described it as a measure for "re-establishing and extending the Catholic faith in England."¹ Even so, however, English Protestants, with their innumerable missions for converting the world in general and Roman Catholics in particular to what they called the pure Gospel, should have been the very last religious body to complain of similar proceedings when adopted, without the slightest attempt at concealment or constraint, to win them over to what a majority of Christians considered the only true faith. And if, as they alleged, their own religion rested on reason, it had nothing to fear from the unaided show of authority among such a reasonable people as the English were supposed to be. But in fact the current Biblicism had no such basis; it rested, like the rival creed, merely on authority and prescription; it had been established by force at the Reformation, and it quivered to the centre when challenged by a more imperious

¹ Walpole, *History of England*, vol. v., p. 421.

voice than any that its accredited representatives could raise in reply.

Probably the Whigs, who then ruled England, if they had fallen back from the complete religious unbelief of Holland House, looked in their hearts on all additions to pure Deism as so much superstition. Publicly they went some length in the Liberal direction. We have seen how Lord John Russell made Hampden a Bishop in spite of a protest signed by half the episcopate. Palmerston, as Home Secretary, at a time when cholera was raging, replied to an application from the Edinburgh Presbytery for the appointment of a national fast by suggesting that appropriate measures of sanitation would furnish a more efficacious check to the ravages of the disease; and he subsequently gave great scandal to the whole Evangelical party by informing a labourers' meeting that "all children were born good."¹

Party leaders so scornful of superstition in general were particularly impatient of superstition when it appeared under an anti-national form. Lord John took the opportunity of combining the Pope and the Puseyite clergy in a common denunciation addressed to the Bishop of Durham. Amid much confusion he brought in a Bill forbidding the assumption of territorial titles by the Pope's new Bishops, and annulling all gifts or bequests made to them under such titles. The second provision, which alone mattered, had to be withdrawn. The first provision became law, but was never obeyed, and has since been repealed. Ministers and people

¹ Ashley, *Life of Palmerston*, vol. ii., p. 15.

covered themselves with ridicule, while Cardinal Wiseman kept up his dignity throughout. But a feeling of soreness remained, and England became more the friend of Italy than ever from having been involved in a discreditable conflict with their common enemy, the Pope.

Cavour would have preferred an English to a French alliance, but in the circumstances it was totally impossible; Austria could more easily have supported the Sepoy Mutiny than we could have sent an army to Lombardy. Napoleon III. hesitated long, and might never have made up his mind had it not been made up for him by Italian assassins. As the imperial pair were driving to the Paris Opera on the evening of January 14, 1858, bombs thrown by Orsini, a Roman exile, and some accomplices exploded under their carriage, killing and wounding 156 persons. Neither the Emperor nor the Empress was hurt; but the purpose of the attack was better secured by their escape than by their death. Orsini, while awaiting his doom, wrote to Louis Napoleon, whose companion in arms he had once been, entreating him to free Italy; and an appeal backed by such terrible arguments did not pass unheeded.

Orsini's attempt had been prepared and his bombs manufactured in London. The French Government asked for new legislation imposing severer penalties on the plotting of such outrages for the future. This seemed a reasonable request, and Palmerston proposed to meet it by a Bill making conspiracy to commit murder either within or without the United Kingdom punishable by

imprisonment for life.¹ Unfortunately for him, some hot-headed French colonels had used language suggesting recourse to armed invasion if their master's enemies continued to find shelter and impunity within our shores, and their angry addresses had received a sort of official sanction by being printed in the *Moniteur*. Lord John Russell and the Radicals opposed the second reading of the Conspiracy Bill on the ground that the laws of England should not be changed at the dictation of a foreign despot. It is said that Lord Derby, watching the debate from the gallery of the House of Commons, saw the unique opportunity of putting his rival in a minority, and sent down orders to the Conservatives to join the Liberal malcontents in defeating a measure of which both he and they entirely approved. The country gentlemen of England did as they were commanded; the Bill was lost by a majority of nineteen; Palmerston resigned, and Derby took his place. A trick that would have ruined any man's reputation on the racecourse put him and his party in office; but their tenure of it was insecure from the beginning, nor did it long continue.

As has been already observed, Orsini's bombs did their work more effectually by failure than they could have done it by success. In fear of a fresh attempt on his life, Napoleon III. arranged a secret meeting with Cavour at Plombières, where a plan for the expulsion of Austria from Italy by the united forces of France and Piedmont was concerted. Lombardy, Venice, and some other

¹ Walpole, *History of Twenty-five Years*, vol. i., p. 118.

territories were to be united with the Sardinian dominions into a North Italian kingdom, while Savoy and perhaps Nice were to be ceded to France. In pursuance of this programme Austria was goaded into declaring war in the following April, and almost on the same day the English Parliament was dissolved, a decisive opportunity being thus afforded to our people for showing on which side their sympathies lay ; for, although the appeal was made on a question of purely domestic policy, it was practically decided by reference to the great crisis in foreign affairs.

Ten years of Chartist agitation had left behind an impression that the people were imperfectly represented. There were fewer working-men's constituencies than under the unreformed Parliament ; and the supremacy of the middle classes remained much less complete than had been intended and expected in 1832. It seemed unjust that so many Englishmen should be excluded from the suffrage ; nor was that the only evil complained of. Had the million voters been distributed among constituencies of approximately equal numerical strength, their representatives might have given a fairly adequate expression to the public opinion of the country. But so far was this just arrangement from being realised that a fifth of the electorate actually returned a majority of the House, the difference of voting values being sometimes as thirty to one, according to the population of the boroughs in which they were cast.

Nor was the variation a mere arithmetical curiosity of no political significance. Voters in

small constituencies were much more amenable to the influences of rank and wealth than voters in large ones; they could be more easily bribed or bullied into returning a plutocrat or a territorial magnate; while again the persons who so obtained seats in the Legislature used their power to thwart all attempts at an equitable readjustment of taxation, and to support an administrative system which threw the public service into the hands of the titled class or of their nominees.

Another evil, less noticed at the time, was the loss of legislative power caused by the tendency of parties towards a Parliamentary equilibrium. We saw how a somewhat similar state of things had become permanent in the unreformed Parliament, and how it made for utter legislative stagnation, as no Government could afford to alienate groups of members interested in the support of any particular abuse. Since the fall of Sir Robert Peel there had been, in name at least, a permanent Liberal majority, but it consisted of four different sections—Whig, Radical, Peelite, and Irish Catholic—between which it was Disraeli's policy to be always driving wedges, without any particular scruple as to the measures he advocated, opposed, or surrendered; while the art of the Liberal leaders lay in keeping them together by judicious management, in winning Opposition support by concessions to Conservative prejudices, or in bringing outside opinion to bear on the whole House by an ostentatiously national policy.

Finally, the settlement of 1832, while it made the ruling Chamber an organ of middle-class opinion, by the very act of conferring sovereignty on the

middle class, made the administrative power an almost exclusively aristocratic privilege. In advocating a wide democratic suffrage, James Mill had foretold that the poorer classes would bestow their confidence on the middle class, whom they had always taken for models and advisers; he may not have observed that the middle class in turn was similarly disposed to imitate and confide in the aristocracy. Anyhow, such had proved to be the law of English society; and the preference given to titled persons for posts in the administration manifested itself more especially under Whig Governments, so that Whig and oligarch became almost convertible terms; at any rate, both Tories and Radicals combined to foster that belief. In practice, however, the difference between Whigs and Tories merely amounted to this, that statesmen sprung from the middle class, like Canning, Huskisson, Peel, Gladstone, and Disraeli, found a more open field for their talents in a party which, as J. S. Mill observed, was by the law of its existence the stupidest—and he might have added the laziest—than among that which included the ablest, the most energetic, and the most ambitious of those born to hereditary wealth.

The first Reform agitation had been headed by Whig nobles; the Free Trade agitation had brought to the front gifted middle-class leaders who had learned to look on the territorial aristocracy, whether Whig or Tory, as monopolists who deliberately starved the people and obstructed the development of manufacturing industry for the express and avowed purpose of keeping wealth and power in their own exclusive possession. Regarding

them thus as natural enemies, their hostility did not cease with the abolition of the Corn Laws, but led to an exposure of the abuses which, as was alleged, were inseparable from a titled administration, and would be remedied by thorough-going democracy. What the new Radicals wanted was less to give the people power than to take power away from the oligarchy of inherited wealth, and to transfer it to an aristocracy of industrial ability, hating war as a source of expenditure and an interruption to trade, besides being directly productive of pain, disease, and death. And they thought that by giving votes to the working classes, together with the ballot and a sweeping redistribution of seats, this object would be secured.

Lord John Russell was the first statesman to take up Parliamentary Reform after the collapse of Chartism in 1848. In 1852, and again in 1854, he introduced Bills of which the second, at least, would have enfranchised a large section of the working-classes and considerably diminished the number of small boroughs. His object was probably rather to increase the Parliamentary strength of moderate Liberalism than to gain power for passing Radical measures. On neither occasion did he receive any support either within or without the House. But the value of Reform as a card in the game of party politics came before long to be recognised, and it was periodically played for many years between the Ins and the Outs, with hardly less unscrupulousness on the one side than on the other. Disraeli, now as before Chancellor of the Exchequer in Lord Derby's Conservative Government, now as before confronted by a hostile

majority in the House of Commons, was the first to use it for this purpose. It became known in the autumn of 1858 that the Conservative chiefs were preparing a measure on the subject to be laid before Parliament in the Session of 1859.

They had the disadvantage of finding the ground pre-occupied by the great classic orator of Radicalism with a Radical programme. Restored to Parliamentary life by the choice of a city since found unfaithful to the principles he held most dear, John Bright had spent the autumn recess in delivering a series of speeches at Birmingham, Manchester, and Glasgow on behalf of Parliamentary reform. Of these it will be enough to say that the reasons just given for the reconstitution of our representative system have been chiefly drawn from the materials they supply, and that the scheme they advocate differs from that since adopted with the consent of all parties only by being somewhat less democratic.

At the time Bright's oratorical campaign failed of its intended effect, and was acknowledged by his friends to be a failure. His opposition to the Russian and Chinese wars may have discredited his advocacy of any other cause; and the generally prosperous state of the working classes left them pretty well satisfied with things as they were. But his impressive caution against accepting any such illusory compromise as the Conservative scheme threatened to be sealed beforehand the fate of Disraeli's Reform Bill. No one who studies the provisions of that Bill can possibly accept as sincere the modern claim of the Conservatives to be a democratic party, although they may sometimes

use demagogic methods. Indeed, at that time their leaders made no such pretence. Lord Derby stated in 1852 that "one of the chief objects of his Government would be to stem the tide of democracy";¹ and a little earlier Disraeli pledged himself to oppose any measure having for its object to displace "the territorial influence and power" by which the country had been hitherto governed.² Accordingly, his own Bill was based on private information obtained from a number of territorial magnates giving satisfactory assurances that their power would not be endangered by its enfranchising clauses.³ In fact, those clauses were so framed as to admit none but new middle-class voters, and to make the hold of the Tory country gentlemen on the counties stronger than ever.

Lord John Russell moved the rejection of this paltry measure, on the express ground that it left the borough franchise unaltered; in other words, because it kept up the exclusion of the working classes from power. His amendment was carried by a majority of 39, and the Conservative Government appealed to the country—that is, to the million electors of whom one-fifth returned more than half the House. They won twenty-four seats, and might have won enough to give them a working majority had not Italy intervened. For the elections really turned on the question whether, in the war that had just begun, England's moral support should be given to Austria, whose cause the Conservative statesmen thought a

¹ Bright, *Speeches*, p. 280 (People's edition).

² Molesworth, *History of England*, vol. ii., p. 407.

³ Walpole, *History of Twenty-Five Years*, vol. i., p. 187.

good one, or to France and Piedmont, who were backed by Palmerston and Russell. When Parliament met it placed the Whig leaders in power by a majority of 13 only. To the general surprise, Gladstone, who had spoken and voted for the Conservative Reform Bill, took office in the new Ministry as Chancellor of the Exchequer—a step marking the definite junction of the Peelites with the Whigs. As love of Italy was the only point on which he agreed with Palmerston, the head of the new Administration, against the Conservative leaders, we shall probably not be mistaken in looking on this as the decisive element of the situation. We shall see in the next chapter how English political history, for the next six years, resolves itself entirely into a history of England's relations with the rest of the world.

CHAPTER XI.

LIGHT FROM THE WEST

HARDLY had the new Liberal Cabinet been formed when it became of more vital moment than ever to Italian independence that it should have the support of the English Government and people. Two great French victories in the field had freed Lombardy from the Austrians, and with Austria's defeats the petty despotisms of Central Italy had fallen. Then suddenly the two Emperors, shocked by the carnage incident to their last battle, stopped the war. Napoleon III. failed to carry out his promise that Italy should be free from the Alps to the Adriatic. Austria ceded Lombardy, but retained Venice. The dispossessed Princes were to be restored, and Italian unity reduced to the mockery of a Confederation under the presidency of Pius IX. The details of this precious arrangement were to be settled by a European Congress. Then Italy's statesmen and people took the matter into their own hands, and, working all the time with consummate prudence, baffled the French Emperor's irresolute counsels by the logic of accomplished facts. Everywhere in Central Italy the proposal for union with Piedmont under King Victor Emanuel was accepted by enormous majorities. Napoleon III., who had forfeited all claim to Savoy by failing to carry out his original engagement,

now exacted its cession, and the cession of Nice also, as the price of tolerating this large addition to the territory of his ally.

The Italians had to yield, but they retorted by another bold stroke. Sicily, always writhing under the Bourbon yoke, took advantage of the general revolutionary movement to rise against it once more in the spring of 1860. With the connivance of the North Italian Government a thousand or more volunteers sailed to her assistance in May. At their head was Garibaldi, the popular hero of Italian liberty, famous for his defence of Rome against the French in 1849, and for his victories over Austrian troops in some of the minor engagements of 1859. Those former exploits were now eclipsed by the glory of his Sicilian campaign, in which he fought unaided and fought with brilliant success. What delays he experienced were caused by the unwillingness of Francesco Crispi, then and always his country's bane, to accept Victor Emanuel as King. Still, not much time was lost, for in August Garibaldi crossed over to the mainland, and on September 7th entered Naples, amid the frenzied enthusiasm of the populace. Meanwhile, a Piedmontese army sent by Cavour crossed the Papal frontier, defeated the Pope's mercenaries, liberated the Marches, and joined hands with Garibaldi's volunteers in October.

The rest belongs to Italian history. What interests us here is England's part in freeing Italy from foreign domination. This was considerable, perhaps decisive. In the European negotiations that followed the Peace of Villafranca, diplomacy had to deal more particularly with the question,

should the Central Italian States, including part of what had once been Pontifical territory, be permitted to annex themselves to Piedmont? Austria did not like such proceedings; French politicians rather dreaded, and French Catholics abhorred them; Queen Victoria and Prince Albert sympathised with the dispossessed dynasts. But Palmerston and Russell, with Gladstone's full support, steadily insisted on the right of the people to determine their own fate, and in the end they won the diplomatic game. Again, when it was proposed by the French Foreign Minister that the French and English fleets should prevent Garibaldi from crossing the Straits of Messina, Lord John Russell refused his consent, and our allies shrank from acting alone. Finally—although this is not yet a historical certainty—there is reason to believe that, not content with having exacted Savoy and Nice as the price of his acquiescence in the annexation of Central Italy, Napoleon III. was preparing to sell his agreement to the union of all Italy for further territorial concessions, the island of Sardinia, or Sardinia and Genoa, being mentioned as possible objects of plunder. On hearing this, Palmerston, whether he believed the rumour or not, distinctly gave it to be understood that England would oppose herself, if necessary by force of arms, to any such depredations.¹ Already, as regards Savoy, Lord John Russell had expressed himself in terms of no measured indignation, and his attitude had Palmerston's full approval. As our Ministers had certainly no intention of fighting France on

¹ Ashley, *Life of Palmerston* (1846-1865), vol. ii., p. 182.

that subject, their remonstrance has been ridiculed as so much impotent bluster. But, as a warning to the French Emperor that any further schemes of plunder on his part would encounter more active resistance, the strong language used may not have been entirely thrown away.

Nor was this menace limited to words. In view of a possible French invasion the Volunteer Movement, begun during the Crimean War in Devonshire, received an immense impulse after the events of 1858 and 1859; while Palmerston made it a paramount object of his second Administration to see that the English arsenals should be placed in an adequate defensive condition, and that the fleet should be kept at full fighting strength.

Palmerston and Gladstone were both disciples of Canning; and it now seemed as if, under their auspices, Canning's principles were to be applied all over the world with brilliant success. Constitutional government on the English model had at length been given to Italy, and a beginning of the same system showed itself in Austria after the war of 1859, coupled with some recognition of Hungarian autonomy. At Cobden's persuasion, Napoleon III. accepted a commercial treaty with England, substituting a certain measure of free trade for the traditional French policy of protectionist exclusion. This, combined with the liberation of Italy and the partial surrender of Papal territory to the new Italian kingdom, took away so much of that Conservative and Catholic support which had hitherto been a mainstay of the Second Empire that the reactionary despot of 1852 had to seek for support

among freethinking Liberals, granting a little more freedom to the Press, and full publicity to the debates, in which a handful of Opposition speakers eloquently took part.

Beyond the Atlantic also, English ideas of liberty seemed to be gaining ground. After a long struggle, in which, thanks to the help of Northern Democrats, the Southern slaveholders had hitherto been invariably successful, the anti-slavery party at last succeeded in carrying the election of Abraham Lincoln, their candidate for the Presidency of the United States, in November, 1860. Although personally an Abolitionist, Lincoln did not stand as such, but as a Free-soiler—that is, as pledged to oppose the extension of slavery into the vast territory between the Mississippi and the Pacific, not yet organised into entirely self-governing States, but destined one day to become the most powerful section of the Union. Now slavery, shut up within its old limits, would be doomed by economic causes to ultimate extinction ; and, apart from that prospect, the Southern planters were persuaded that the Free States, when they commanded a sufficient majority, would have become so infected with Abolitionist principles as to demand a change in the Constitutional provision guaranteeing the perpetuity of their peculiar institution.

Without exactly understanding what was decided by Lincoln's election, the English middle classes joyfully welcomed it as a triumph for the anti-slavery cause that they had long held so dear ; and our democratic reformers in particular looked forward hopefully to the removal of a standing reproach to institutions they were accustomed to

hold up as in all other respects an example for English imitation.

Lincoln's election was followed in a few weeks by the break-up of the American Union. All the slave States seceded and set up a new Confederacy, of which slavery was declared to be the cornerstone. Opinion in the Northern States hesitated for some time as to whether the South should be let go in peace, or won back by fresh guarantees to slavery, or coerced back into the Union by armed force. English opinion at first went with the North, while assuming separation to be inevitable. A wit suggested that when the flag was divided the North should take the stars, leaving the stripes to the South. Unfortunately, our presuming to have any opinion at all on the subject was bitterly resented by the sensitive American people, and violent attacks were made on England in the American newspapers.¹

There are occasions on which the President of the United States exercises autocratic power, and this was one of them. Entering on his exalted functions in March, 1861, Lincoln declared his intention of upholding the Federal Constitution according to the strict letter of the law. South Carolina, one of the seceding States, replied by firing on the Federal flag and capturing a Federal fortress. Then at last the majority of the American people resolved to maintain their national existence by force of arms, and a civil war, the most tremendous in all history, began.

When the news of this resolution reached our

¹ For evidence of this see Herbert Spencer, *Facts and Comments*, and his *Autobiography*.

shores, English upper and middle-class opinion underwent a remarkable change. Its sympathies still went with freedom, but the freedom was of a different sort. It was not now the freedom of an individual labourer to choose his own master, but the freedom of a whole people to choose the form of government they preferred to live under. For violating that right we had fought Russia, and were willing to fight Austria. For asserting that right Italy, Hungary, and Poland had won our applause. For its sake we had helped the Belgians, who were bigoted Romanists, against the Dutch, who were our fellow-Protestants, and were racially akin to us. Then, again, it seemed peculiarly unbecoming and inconsistent that the Americans, of all people, who owed their own national existence to a successful rebellion against their lawful Sovereign, should refuse to admit the same justification when urged against themselves, and should even fling the name of "rebel" as a term of reproach at those who did but inherit the tradition of Washington and Jefferson, Southerners and slave-holders also. Besides, our own experience seemed to show that the attempt to coerce Americans was not only unjustifiable, but hopeless. The Southerners were in a minority, but they were a hardy and high-spirited race, fighting in their own country for all they held most dear, with men born and trained to command at their head. History offered no example to show that such resistance as might be expected from them could be overcome.¹ Finally,

¹ The fate of the Swiss Sonderbund had been quite forgotten in 1861.

the boasted English tradition of always siding with the weaker party—singularly illustrated in recent years by the attacks on our own pro-Boers—furnished an argument without appeal for siding with the South.

Plausible as such reasonings might seem, they betrayed a complete misconception of the real interests at stake. Neither England herself nor any other homogeneous European State would have tamely submitted to such a fate as that which America was invited to accept without a struggle. Italy, Hungary, and Poland offered no parallel to the case of the seceding States. They differed in language, race, and tradition from the Powers which held them in bondage by brutally offensive means. Nor did the conflict between England and her colonies furnish an appropriate parallel; for that arose from an endeavour on the side of the Mother-country to violate the liberties of self-governing dependencies, which, moreover, were not an integral part of her nationality. Many people were so impressed by eager Northern disclaimers of any wish to interfere with slavery that they quite overlooked the legitimate claim of the Federal Government to preserve its authority intact. And they equally overlooked the decisive circumstance that the Confederates were fighting to preserve slavery for ever and ever—which should alone have sufficed to alienate the sympathies of an Abolitionist nation, as indeed it did draw the sympathies of Continental Liberalism to the North.

So well did the pro-Southerners appreciate the strength of English prejudice against slavery that they had to put forward a tariff question as the

pretended cause of separation. Then, as now, American interests were divided, the Southern planters being Free Traders and the Northern manufacturers Protectionists. These latter took advantage of the secession to pass a Protectionist measure, the Morrill Tariff, in all haste through Congress. But to represent their conduct as a justification for the South was a singular inversion of cause and effect, only to be accounted for by a very powerful exercise of the will to believe.

As to the expediency of fighting for the Union and the possibility of maintaining it by force, time has proved that Lincoln was a better prophet than the bulk of the educated classes in England. It has to be mentioned, however, that one Englishman did distinctly foretell the ultimate victory of the North. This was not a practical statesman or a soldier, but the idealist philosopher John Stuart Mill.¹ Whether the victory was or was not bought too dear may, of course, be disputed. But if, as seems likely, those four years of fighting have effectually prevented any future wars on the North American Continent, even such a frightful sacrifice of blood and treasure has not been made in vain.

A crushing defeat suffered by the chief Northern army at the beginning of the war inspired our respectable classes with a belief in the invincibility of the South which never wavered until its final collapse. Hatred for American democracy naturally sent the whole Tory party and Tory Press to the

¹ See his *Conflict in America*, first published in *Fraser's Magazine*, February, 1862 (reprinted in *Dissertations and Discussions*, vol. iii.).

side of the slaveholders.¹ And for the reasons above stated the greater number of London Liberal newspapers went with them. Among these were *The Times*, *The Morning Post*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Saturday Review*, *The Examiner*, and *Punch*. The North found its principal advocate in *The Daily News*, to which Harriet Martineau contributed three leading articles of supreme ability every week. It was also supported by *The Morning Star* and *The Spectator*, at that time a less widely circulated journal than it has since become.

The leading Liberal statesmen then in power—especially those who favoured Italy—favoured the South. The Foreign Secretary, now raised to the peerage as Earl Russell, described the war as waged for empire on the one side, and for independence on the other. The learned and philosophic Cornwall Lewis wrote to a friend that the South fought for independence, the North “to gratify passion and pride.”² Gladstone, speaking at a time when nationalities were thought sacred, declared that Jefferson Davis, the Confederate President, had “made a nation of the South.” Lord Palmerston, from his high position, felt bound to greater reserve; but, speaking in the House of Commons, he did not hesitate to stigmatise as “infamous” a disciplinary order issued by General Butler as Federal Governor of New Orleans.

On this question, as on the Italian question,

¹ In Parliament and on the platform Disraeli kept his pro-Southern sympathies under a veil, but they are disclosed in *Lothair*.

² Lewis, *The Administrations of Great Britain*, Preface, p. xx.

Queen Victoria held views directly opposed to those of her Ministers. In both instances she was probably under the influence of her husband, who, like most enlightened Germans, sided against the slaveholders. As it happened, the opinions of the royal pair, while they had no influence on the fate of Italy, told decisively on the fate of America. At the end of 1861 two Southern emissaries, named Slidell and Mason, while on their way to plead the cause of the Confederacy in Europe, were seized on board an English mail steamer, the *Trent*, by Captain Wilkes, the commanding officer of an American warship, and carried captive to Washington. When the news of this lawless action—for such it was—reached England the Government, after due consultation with the law officers of the Crown, resolved to demand the surrender of Slidell and Mason from the American authorities. A despatch in that sense was accordingly drafted and laid before the Queen for her approval. Prince Albert, at that time already smitten by a mortal disease, still retained strength and discretion enough to study the draft, and to suggest such alterations in the wording as to convert Palmerston's imperious summons into a reasonable demand that the United States Government could agree to, as in fact they did, without any loss of self-respect.

Thus the two countries were saved from the calamity of war. But in another way the governing classes of England were enabled to give considerable though indirect help to the Slave Power. Prevented by a close blockade from sending out native privateers to prey on the merchant shipping

of the North, the Confederate chiefs supplied themselves with armed cruisers for that purpose from the dockyards of Birkenhead. While one of these, the *Alabama*, was building, the American Minister in London drew Lord Russell's attention to her obvious destination, and asked to have her stopped. Trusting to the report of a subordinate, the Foreign Secretary refused to interfere. A subsequent and more urgent remonstrance was referred to the Queen's Advocate. An attack of illness prevented him from giving immediate attention to the case. Pending his decision, an embargo ought, of course, to have been laid on the suspected ship; but this obvious precaution was delayed, as if intentionally, until it came too late. When orders for her detention ultimately arrived at Liverpool, the *Alabama* had already escaped, and was on her way to begin a career of successful depredation which continued for nearly two years. Lord Russell, to do him justice, proposed in the Cabinet that the British-built privateer, which had never even entered a Confederate harbour, should be arrested in any British or Colonial port where she put in; but even so very moderate a measure of reparation was refused by his colleagues. To some it may seem that the employment of England's whole naval strength for her capture on the high seas would not have been excessive severity. In 1871 an international Court of Arbitration condemned our country to pay over three millions sterling as compensation for the damage done by the *Alabama* and her consorts to American ship-owners. What ought by rights to have been exacted from Messrs. Laird of Birkenhead, who

built this mischief-making cruiser with the full knowledge of her destination, and from their abettors in the Cabinet, was taken out of the pockets of the people.

A more subtle effect of the American war on English public opinion has now to be considered. Our Radicals had long looked across the Atlantic for their example, if not for their ideal. But with the temporary break-up of the Union a terrible discredit fell on democracy, which now seemed incompatible with the existence of a great Power. That the Americans were struggling desperately to preserve their national existence gave occasion to fresh reproach, as the war temporarily put an end to personal liberty in both the contending Republics. And some people confidently predicted that the most successful general would possess himself of despotic power on the conclusion of the war. Meanwhile the most was made of the military and financial errors necessarily incidental to so great a conflict waged by an inexperienced administration. Southern successes, due to a defensive position and to the presence of more professional officers than the Northern armies could obtain, were credited to the aristocratic character of the slave power. It seemed to be forgotten for what military disasters our own aristocratic institutions had been responsible. In striking contrast to George III., Lincoln always put the ablest generals he could find in high command, so that in two years the ablest of all came to the top.

All this time the splendour and prosperity of the Second Empire was exercising a fascination on

English upper-class opinion which told also in an anti-democratic sense. More especially Napoleon III.'s Free Trade policy, although inspired by an English Liberal, tended to prejudice men's minds against free representative government; for the commercial treaty with England was unquestionably imposed on France by a despot's will.

With public opinion given over to reactionary political influences, it was inevitable that Parliamentary reform should be shelved. The Liberal Government had redeemed the promise on whose strength they regained office in 1859, by introducing, in 1860, a Bill that would have increased the electorate by thirty-five per cent. But, being received with indifference both by the House and the people, it died of sheer neglect. There could not have been a better proof that the last general election had been won, not on the question of reform, but on the question of Italian independence. And, although the American Civil War had nothing to do with this failure, not having then begun, it effectually prevented the question from being revived for some years to come.

The short-lived Parliament of 1857 was in other ways more Liberal than its successor. A Bill for the Abolition of Church Rates, which passed the Commons by a majority of sixty-three in 1858, was defeated over and over again in the 'sixties. In 1858, also, the Commons forced the Lords to admit Jews to Parliament. In 1860 they only passed the repeal of the paper duty, a tax on knowledge, by a majority of nine, and then submitted to its reimposition by the Lords. Next year it only passed by

eighteen votes, the resistance of the Upper House being this time with extreme difficulty overcome. The session of 1858 saw also the abolition of the property qualification for members of Parliament—one of the points of the Charter. But the greatest triumph of reason over tradition was won the year before, when the divorce law, as it now exists, first came into being. Before that date marriage with an unfaithful partner could be dissolved only by a special Act of Parliament, obtainable only after two distinct suits, in two separate law courts, had been won. Practically, of course, this meant the denial of redress to all but the very rich; while among the rich, with very few exceptions, it was granted only to men. What share superstition had in the resistance offered to the Divorce Bill is shown by the fact that Gladstone fought it clause by clause in the Commons Committee, and that fourteen Bishops against two wished to prohibit the re-marriage of divorced persons. Palmerston's stubborn resolution alone saved the Bill, which, as it was, escaped wreckage in the Lords only by two votes. But for his firmness it might have been delayed till thirty years later.

A reactionary Ministry and Parliament might well have plunged the country into war with America by breaking the blockade of the Southern ports, had they not been held back by the silent determination of those most interested in the matter—the English people. Of these, according to no friendly witness, Earl Russell, the majority—that is to say, the working classes—sympathised with the North. Their choice did them the more honour

because vast numbers of operatives engaged in the cotton manufacture had been deprived of their subsistence by the stoppage of the raw material, for which at that time we were almost entirely dependent on the plantations of the Southern slaveholders, who, indeed, would probably not have kindled a civil war but for their confident reliance on the necessities of the English market. Now, the patience and dignity with which the operatives—and not these alone, but also the small traders who lived on their custom—bore the sufferings of what was called the Cotton Famine gave the upper classes quite a new idea of their worth; while again the liberality of all who were not themselves in want to the sufferers gave these a friendlier feeling towards those above them in the social scale.¹

Besides this very obvious reaction, the American War exercised another and profounder effect on the future of English Liberalism. It dissociated the democratic cause from the idea of peace at any price, from the taint of a supposed devotion to material interests, from the suspected bias of anti-patriotism. If reform excited no enthusiasm, this indifference, as has been already observed, owed something to the fact that its most eloquent advocate, John Bright, had made himself unpopular by opposing the Russian War. But now Bright came forward as also the most eloquent advocate of the North; and, although he never fairly faced the

¹ I am sorry to have to mention, as a dark shade in this otherwise pleasing picture, the infamous calumny, long circulated among the respectables, that John Bright contributed nothing to the relief of the operatives. The real fact, if I remember rightly, is that he sacrificed the savings of a lifetime in helping them through the crisis.

implications of his championship, it constituted a virtual admission that there were circumstances in which a sanguinary war might with justice be waged—not only, as by Poles, Hungarians, and Italians, for national independence, but also, as Lincoln said over the dead of Gettysburg, that government of the people, by the people, for the people should not perish from the earth.

While the friends of peace were pointing England to the paths of honour and safety, the friends of intervention were dragging her through excruciating alternatives between disaster and shame. First came the ineffective Ministerial attacks, already mentioned, on the French Emperor for his annexation of Savoy and Nice. Then the Polish insurrection of 1863 gave a fresh opportunity, which was not neglected, for addressing Platonic remonstrances to Russia. On this occasion Lord Russell got France and Austria to join in the ridiculous performance, which only drew down on them the cool and cutting insolence of Prince Gortchakoff, the Russian Chancellor. Our Foreign Secretary never intended to fight for Poland; but the next European complication that arose involved a serious risk of war. This was the Schleswig-Holstein question. We need not enter into the legal intricacies of that fateful affair. It will suffice to mention that the interests of a considerable German population were at stake, whose wishes for a long time won no more attention than if they had been a flock of sheep. All were forcibly attached to the Crown of Denmark, which passed into a new family towards the end of 1863;

while some were forcibly incorporated with the Danish kingdom, and subjected to the oppression of Danish administrators, who tried to deprive them of their German nationality. When the change of dynasty took place, the smaller German members of the Diet sent troops into Holstein, which was a member of the Germanic Confederation, but refrained from entering Schleswig. Count Bismarck, the Prussian Prime Minister, saw and used the opportunity to intervene. Taking the work out of the feeble hands of the Diet, he persuaded Austria to join Prussia in occupying both the Duchies with their combined armies.

Bismarck was, at that time, not popular either in Germany or in England. Animated, like Cavour, by the highest patriotic purposes, and, like Cavour, absolutely unscrupulous in the means he adopted for carrying them out, this man had resolved to attempt again what the Parliament of Professors had failed to achieve in 1848—the union of all Germany, under the supremacy of Prussia. Seeing that the expulsion of Austria from the Germanic Confederation was a necessary preliminary to this work; seeing, further, that, in his own vigorous language, her expulsion had to be effected, not by speeches and resolutions, but by blood and iron, he began by re-fashioning the Prussian army into an irresistible weapon of war. His object could not be publicly explained; and the Prussian Representative Chamber, fearing that the new model might be used to destroy the small amount of public liberty then existing, refused to grant the necessary supplies. Bismarck, with his master's support, raised taxes on the sole authority of the Upper

House. A grave constitutional crisis seemed imminent, and ominous references to Charles I. and Strafford ran round the German Press; but the taxes were obediently paid, and the policy of the great Minister triumphed.

It triumphed no less signally abroad than at home. The policy of the German Powers excited the indignation of the English people, who, as usual, supposed that, because they were strong, they must also be wrong. It so happened that an interesting domestic occurrence enlisted their sympathies still more deeply on the Danish side. Early in 1863 the Prince of Wales had married the beautiful daughter of the Prince to whom diplomacy had assigned the fateful heritage of Denmark and the Duchies. The charms of this young lady won all hearts, and many Don Quixotes longed to send over champions to fight for her injured sire. Palmerston vainly tried to form a triple alliance with France and Russia, vainly blustered about what England's unaided strength could do. With the Queen and the majority of the Cabinet against him, he could only convene a Conference in London, which failed to reconcile the belligerents. Denmark fought on, but had to lay down her arms in a few weeks, lured to her ruin, men thought, by a blind reliance on England's help.

Canning's policy, in the hands of his most brilliant successor, after freeing Italy, had suffered three signal defeats. It was now utterly bankrupt, and could no more stave off the new Reform Bill than it had staved off the old.

The first to recognise the change in public

opinion wrought by the influence of the American War, combined with the collapse of our foreign policy, was Gladstone. Before the close of the Danish question his adhesion to the democratic cause was announced in a powerful speech on a private Bill for lowering the franchise, which at once marked him out as its coming leader. But in the cause of religious Liberalism he still lagged behind, giving only an equivocal support to Irish Church disestablishment, and frankly opposing the abolition of university tests. Yet the currents of public opinion were flowing with a greater impetus in that direction, and were destined to effect as rapid a revolution. We have now to trace the history of the great intellectual movement to which they gave expression, and which constitutes so vital an element in the English history of the later nineteenth century.

CHAPTER XII.

COSMIC ECONOMY

IN a former chapter we traced the development of English philosophy, science, literature, and religious thought, down to a point approximately dated by the outbreak of the Russian War. We have now to deal with a period of about equal length, roughly coinciding with the political supremacy of Lord Palmerston. There is no sharp line of demarcation between the two, and to a certain extent they even overlap. But, on the whole, we shall not be mistaken in saying that, while the first is a period of quiet seed-time in which ideas are prepared, outlined, and either tentatively put forward or stored up for future use, in the second they are ripened, elaborated, applied, and, so to speak, violently exploded on the world, with the result of obtaining, if not its assent, at least its full attention and respect.

The Palmerstonian period is also one of hero-worship, of splendid publicity and homage given not only to ideas, but even more to their representatives; a time when work done with little honour in the previous years comes in for universal recognition and applause, with this effect also that new reputations are made at a single stroke, being rapidly imposed by the best judges on the multitude of listeners. I have said that the Conservative

reaction under Peel, by diverting the English intellect from practice to theory and imagination, contributed to, if it did not create, the great ideal achievements of the early Victorian age. Now in the Palmerstonian period a fresh source of energy comes into play—the ready reception given to new genius, the hope of winning immediate applause, the certainty almost of winning it when genius is displayed. It seems as if the French alliance and the fashionableness of French things gives a certain French tone to our ways of thinking; while mere brilliancy being much less common here than in France, the true superiorities are not yet discouraged and crowded out by the mediocrities of distinction.

Thus it happens that the value and literary power of Carlyle, Grote, and Macaulay among historians, of Dickens, Thackeray, and Charlotte Brontë among novelists, of Tennyson and the Brownings among poets, of Ruskin as an æsthetician, of Maurice as a theologian, of Mill as a philosopher and publicist, although founded on previous performances whose eminence contemporary critics had not failed to recognise, seem first to have found universal admission between the early 'fifties and 'sixties; while, again, Anthony Trollope, Charles Reade, and George Eliot in fiction, Froude in history, Jowett in theology, Bain and Herbert Spencer in philosophy, Buckle and Maine in sociology, Darwin in science, Matthew Arnold in criticism, and Swinburne in poetry, reach their full reputation immediately after the publication of their first very important works, which fall within the specified period.

On looking back across this distance of time to all those high and diversified activities, one is most impressed by the complete emergence and incipient triumph of a single idea—the idea of evolution. But that idea would have been self-contradictory had it come as a sudden revelation, or had it effected an instantaneous transformation of thought. We have seen, in fact, how Robert Chambers applied the doctrine of development as a universal law of change in the *Vestiges*, thus preparing the way for Spencer and Darwin. Hardly any advance has since been made on his general arguments, which at the time when they appeared would have been accepted as convincing but for theological truculence and scientific timidity. And Chambers himself only gave unity to thoughts already in wide circulation. Progress and development were great words in English, French, and German philosophy at the time of the French Revolution. But they had a very uphill battle to fight along the whole line. The theory of catastrophes in geology, the theory of immutable species in biology, the mediæval enthusiasm of the Romantics, the dogma of human corruption in theology—these were among the obstacles to be overcome.

What ultimately secured the victory for evolution was the cumulative argument, the convergence of effects, the concentration of forces on a single point of attack, the interpenetration of ideas constantly thought of together. Neither Comte nor Mill was an evolutionist; but the *Positive Philosophy* and the *System of Logic* tended to make their readers evolutionists by bringing nature and man under the same categories. Human history

subjected to order gave progress in return as a constitutive principle to biology. And a really universal law of causation must include the formation by some physical process of new organic species from pre-existing forms of matter. Now, to repeat what has been said before, it seemed infinitely more probable that those pre-existing forms were slightly different organisms than that they were unorganised matter.

Such was the line taken by a very vigorous and independent thinker, who happened to be also a clergyman, Baden Powell (father of the celebrated General), at that time Professor of Astronomy at Oxford. He had been a strenuous opponent of the Tractarian Movement, and he now resisted with equal energy the narrow Biblical Evangelicalism which had profited by its collapse to impose a degrading Sabbatarian tyranny on the necks of Englishmen. By way of giving a religious colouring to the higher education, University teaching had been kept in the hands of the clergy, with the result that at Oxford the ablest clerics had mostly become freethinkers, and of these Baden Powell was one. Perhaps from being behind the scenes he had learned to look on ecclesiastical terrors with more contempt than his lay brethren. At any rate, no other official representative of science adhered to the general doctrine of the *Vestiges* with the fearless publicity of this Professor.

Granting that, with the exclusion of supernatural interference from the order of nature, evolution became a logical necessity of thought, the question arose by what physical agency the production of

organic species had been accomplished. Geologists had no difficulty in explaining how the present conformation of the earth's crust had come about, for the forces determining its shape and composition might be seen perpetually at work. Astronomers had never witnessed the birth of a stellar system; but physical analogies enabled them to interpret it as a process of condensation on the largest scale. Millenniums of recorded experience taught historians how social structures are built up. But no human eye had ever seen a new species come into existence, nor could naturalists name any force capable of creating so much as a new beetle. Palæontology proved that the marvel had somehow or other come about over and over again in geologic time; how it came about remained a mystery. Robert Chambers sought the key in embryology, which is indeed an abridged record of evolution, suggesting the successive transformations of one living type into another; but it merely gives evidence of the changes, leaving their causes unexplained.

Help came from the social sciences, and especially from the most complete among them, which was Political Economy. Since Adam Smith, the increasing division of labour had been a recognised note of industrial progress; and Aristotle, the greatest naturalist of antiquity, had long ago pointed out that in the higher animal organisms the physiological division of labour is more perfect than in the lower. But neither Aristotle nor Milne-Edwards, who revived his doctrine in the last century, connected it with evolution, which, indeed, neither of them accepted. This step seems

to have been first taken by Herbert Spencer in an essay on "Progress," published by the *Westminster Review* in 1857.

The industrial division of labour is an arrangement designedly entered into by the members of a human society for their common advantage. We cannot suppose that the components of an animal or vegetal organism are capable of such conscious adjustments to each other's convenience; and so some other cause must be sought to account for the physiological division of labour.

Such a cause is suggested by the economical idea of competition. Malthus has explained how this force is brought to bear on society by the law of population. The number of individuals to be fed tends to grow faster than the means of feeding them. Hence arises a struggle for existence, in which the stronger or better equipped survive, and the weaker or worse equipped perish. Therefore, an organism which in some way or other has become more differentiated than its competitors will beat them out of the field, just as a society will when it possesses a similar advantage. And the same holds true of every imaginable superiority by which one individual or species is distinguished from the rest. Speaking generally, what is best adapted to the conditions of life has the best chance of living and of propagating its kind.

England was the European country where the growth of population and the resulting competition for the means of subsistence most obtruded themselves on public notice, and first became subjects of systematic study. And so for thirty years Englishmen alone had the happy idea of extending

the competitive principle to biology, and using it as a method for explaining the origin of varieties and species. In 1813 Wells, to whom we owe the true theory of dew, accounted for the different colours of the different races of mankind by natural selection; in 1831 Matthew, a botanist, applied it to organic evolution in general; in 1852 Herbert Spencer used what he called "the survival of the fittest" to explain the development of brain-power in man; while at the same time Charles Darwin and Mr. A. R. Wallace, quite unknown to him and to each other, were working out the law of natural selection over the whole field of animal and vegetal life. Their views were first made public in 1858, and Darwin brought out his *Origin of Species* in the following year. Only the adverse influence of religious opinion can account for such a long delay; and, in fact, one of England's foremost naturalists, Richard Owen, in a private conversation with a clergyman soon after the publication of Darwin's book, blamed the great discoverer for offending vulgar prejudice, and himself tried to crush the new theory, with which he agreed all the time, by a coldly supercilious criticism, which he never thought fit to acknowledge, in the *Edinburgh Review*.

Evolution gave offence to theological prejudice in three distinct ways. It contradicted the obvious meaning of what most people had been taught to accept as an inspired and infallible account of the origin of things in the Bible. It destroyed Paley's argument for the existence of God—that is, the attempt to show that the structure of the animal body can only be accounted for on the hypothesis

that it is the work of an intelligent creator. And by deriving the human race from an animal ancestor it suggested that the human soul is reserved for no higher destinies than the soul of a brute. This last departure from current orthodoxy was the most easily intelligible and the most likely to excite popular feeling against the new views. Even Lyell, who accepted Darwinism as a whole, could not reconcile himself to man's derivation from an ape-like ancestor; while Carlyle, who, disbelieving as he did in miracles, would have been puzzled to find any other genealogy, rejected it with utter abhorrence. *The Daily Telegraph*, at that time a Liberal newspaper, tried to excite a prejudice against Fawcett, the future Liberal Minister, among the electors of Southwark, on the ground that he had written a favourable notice of Darwin in *Macmillan's Magazine*.

A few months before the Southwark election Darwinism had come up for discussion at the annual meeting of the British Association. Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, who had some pretensions to figure as a man of science, took part in the debate, and so far forgot his good manners as to ask Professor Huxley, who represented the evolutionist side, whether he was descended from an ape through his grandfather or his grandmother. Huxley, who excelled the Bishop as much in sarcasm as in science, answered that he would prefer such an ancestor to a rhetorician who sought to cover his ignorance of the question by irrelevant appeals to religious prejudice.

It has become the fashion among more recent

theologians to contend that, assuming what they admit to be highly probable, the derivation of man's body from an ape-like ancestor, his mind owes its origin to some higher process of creation—which, indeed, is only another way of saying that mind does not depend on brain. But this line of retreat from an untenable position had been cut off before Darwin's discoveries were made known. Herbert Spencer, already named as one of the early evolutionists, published in 1855 the first draft of his *Principles of Psychology*. Here, at the very outset, he shows by a masterly analysis of the reasoning process that the most abstract mathematical inferences involve no more than a continuous application of the power to identify, combined with the power to discriminate. Now these two powers are exhibited by the humblest creature possessing any trace of consciousness whatever; and these, combined with the power of retention, or memory, which also can be denied to no animal, suffice to account for the highest intellectual acquisitions that have ever been stored in a human mind. And all such exercises of conscious intelligence, however they may vary in quantity, agree in the one essential quality, which alone gives them any value as vital functions—the quality of bringing the organism into harmony with its environment. In other words, the evolution of life is one vast process of natural education, preparing its pupils to hold their own in the battle of life—a principle, of course, not less, but more, applicable to the development of the emotions and the will than to the development of the intellect.

By a remarkable coincidence, just as Darwin and Wallace had rediscovered Natural Selection and

used it to explain the origin of species, independently of one another, so also another psychologist, Alexander Bain, gave substantially the same explanation of reason as Spencer's, in his work on *The Senses and the Intellect*, published at the same time, and, apparently, without any previous communication between the two philosophers. Bain says nothing about evolution, but his analysis was perhaps all the more effective in suggesting a fundamental unity of composition between human and animal intelligence. His work also had at first a much wider circulation than Spencer's *Psychology*.

Spencer belonged to a family of schoolmasters; there was a good deal of the pedagogue in his composition, and a volume on education figures among his miscellaneous works. It therefore lay very near that one with his generalising habits should conceive all experience and all nature as a process of rigorous schooling, conducted on a self-acting system of rewards and punishments, promotions and expulsions, with continual reference to a period of future emancipation, and having for its ideal the ultimate identification of work with play in some far-off society of the future, revived from the dreams of Priestley, Godwin, and Shelley. Thus, in Spencer's case at least, evolution, so far from being a method borrowed by the study of man from the study of nature, seems to be the very reverse—a light thrown back from human experience on unconscious physical processes.

Nor was it educational ideas alone that Spencer used to elucidate the mystery of organic origins. We have seen how both he and others extended

the laws of political economy to all vital phenomena, finding the struggle for existence and the increasing division of labour exemplified in fields unknown to Malthus and Adam Smith. Spencer had been brought up by an uncle zealous for the new Poor Law and the Anti-Corn-Law League, a sworn foe to Protection. By his Nonconformist connections also he had learned to look with profound distrust on State interference with religion and education. Thus, from the conviction that men, for their own good, had better be left to their own natural instincts arose the far wider conviction that, in building up the great edifice of nature, things had been let alone—had been made what they are by the spontaneous play of physical forces without the aid of a superintending Providence, or even the initial impulse of a Creator.

By a curious fatality, the individualistic ideas, so prevalent in his youth, out of which Spencer evolved evolution itself were at first far more intelligible and popular than the vast cosmic philosophy they inspired him to conceive. Then, as time went on and the new theory of a self-made world won ever wider assent, the enthusiasm for self-made men, for self-help, for Individualism, grew less, to the extreme scandal of the aging philosopher, who had become, if possible, a still more confident believer in *laissez-faire*, above all in the matter of national education, on finding it confirmed, as he thought, by the laws of Nature herself. In fact, with far less ingenuity than Spencer's, it is perfectly possible to extract from the laws of nature any system of morality and social organisation that we choose to put into them. When they have constructed their

human system on what seem to be the most rational motives—whether these lead to Individualism or Socialism, or something between the two—philosophers will always be able to satisfy themselves that it is the inevitable outcome of a cosmic evolution.

A thinker of less combining and deducing power than Herbert Spencer, but with more knowledge and greater literary brilliancy, acquired a world-wide reputation by applying much the same economical philosophy to the interpretation of history. This was Henry Thomas Buckle, the first volume of whose famous *History of Civilisation in England* appeared in 1857. Brought up in the same Free Trade and Individualist principles, he showed the same eagerness to read social phenomena by their light. According to Buckle, the Protectionist spirit in Church and State is, and always has been, the great obstacle to advancing civilisation. Where population multiplies very rapidly civilisation does not advance at all, for there the supply of labour always outruns the demand, and so the great majority of the people fall into helpless dependence on the landlords and capitalists. Only in Europe and its Colonies has there been some approach to an emancipation of the masses, and therefore some effective resistance to oppression. Still, even in Europe priests and kings have done untold mischief by undertaking more or less to manage everybody's affairs, and to choose everybody's beliefs for him. Left to themselves, men naturally seek to accumulate knowledge and to accumulate wealth. What they do