

together a vast relapse of humanity, or at best a suspension of progress, simply because physical science during those centuries did not advance, though it advanced not less than it had done under the pagan empire. A man of comprehensive mind, however devoted to science and hostile to priestcraft, will not refuse to recognise the happy transition of society from slavery through serfage to free labour; the notions of mutual right and duty of which even the feudal system was the school; the combination of responsibility with power in Christian monarchy; the development of liberty, both political and personal, by means of Parliaments and free cities; the services rendered by monasticism in its better day, as the asylum of culture and gentleness; the dignity which the monk conferred on labour; the ideal of self-devotion presented by chivalry, which in the battle-fields of Palestine rescued Western civilization, as it had before been rescued at Marathon and Salamis, from the barbarism and pollution of Eastern invasion. But the great achievement, and the one to which, for the purpose of the present enquiry, we would specially call attention, is the homage which force, in a military age, was constrained to pay to something higher than itself, and which forms the first condition and the most distinct mark of civilization. The fierce and proud Longsword, Earl of Salisbury, after a life of war, sends on his death-bed for a bishop; when the bishop enters with the body of the Lord, he ties a rope round his own neck in token of his being a felon before God, casts himself down on the floor, and refuses to be raised till he has been received back as a penitent into the allegiance which, in the midst of his violence, his heart had never renounced. His corpse is borne to the tomb through a great storm; but the tapers are not extinguished, and the people infer that the terrible earl has been received among the sons of light. Here we have a moral restraint; for the earl evidently does not think that he can buy salvation, or secure it by mere priestly thaumaturgy and talismans. It is a restraint which may not have been without its influence even over that wild life, and which in the case of natures less fierce can hardly have failed to produce considerable effects. Religion inspired the international equity of St. Louis, who voluntarily gave up territories which he thought not right-

fully his, to the ill-concealed disgust of the Chauvinist historians of his country at the present day. In the thirteenth century as in the seventeenth, political progress in England was closely connected with religious enthusiasm. De Montfort was devout and the associate of ecclesiastical reformers, while the character of the magnanimous foster father of liberty, the great Edward I., was also distinctly formed by his religion.

Catholicism fell through the superstitions and impostures which had gathered round it, and which intellect, awakened by the Renaissance, spurned away; through papal tyranny and clerical corruption; through the general ossification, so to speak, of a system, which had once in all its organs ministered to spiritual life. With it fell the morality which it had sustained, and once more we find ourselves in a moral interregnum. In Italy it is the era of the Borgias, the Tyrants, and Machiavelli; in France, of the civil wars, with all their crimes and treacheries; in England, of the Wars of the Roses. Catharine de Medicis and the Guises belong to it as well as the profligate and murderous leaders of the Burgundians and the Armagnacs. So does Henry VIII., with his uxoricides and his judicial murders, and so does Elizabeth with her vicious court and her own wickedness. It does not end among the upper class in England till religion is revived in the form of Puritanism, and brings with it a renewed morality. Machiavel is everywhere the great political teacher of this period. Bacon himself shows the taint in his political writings as well as in his public life: 'To deal in person is best, where a man's face breedeth regard, as commonly with inferiors; or in tender cases, where a man's eyes upon the countenance of him with whom he speaketh may give him a direction how far to go; and generally when a man will reserve to himself liberty, either to disavow or to expound.'

In Italy a last stand was made for morality and liberty together by the religious enthusiast, Savonarola. A scene in the life of that man helps us to understand the difference between the genuine religion, the morality with a divine support, which was passing away, and the formal religion, of which abundance still remained. The formal religion was ready enough to shrive the dying Lorenzo; but his conscience told him that this was not the voice of morality, and that he could