

lienn system ; it gave birth to a national law and conventional rights, founded on the agreement of treaties, and the usages of common practice. A laudable emulation sprung up among contemporary states. Their jealousies, and even their competitions and divisions, contributed to the progress of civilization, and the attainment of that high state of perfection to which all human sciences and institutions have been carried by the nations of modern Europe.

It is these political connections, this reciprocal influence of kingdoms and their revolutions, and especially the varieties of system which Europe has experienced in the lapse of so many ages, that require to be developed in a general view, such as that which professes to be the object of the present work.

The author has here remodeled his "Views of the Revolutions of the Middle Ages," (published in 1790,) and extended or abridged the different periods according to circumstances. In continuing this work down to the present time, he has deemed necessary to conclude at the French Revolution, as the numerous results of that great event are too much involved in uncertainty to be clearly or impartially exhibited by contemporary writers.*

The work is divided into eight periods of time,† according with the principal revolutions which have changed, in succession, the political state of Europe. At the head of each period, is placed either the designation of its particular revolution, or that of the power or empire which held the ascendancy at the time. In limiting his treatise solely to his Revolutions of Europe, the writer has not touched upon those of Asia and the East, except in so far as they have had immediate influence on the destinies of Europe. Conscious also that the distinguishing characteristic of an historian is veracity, and that the testimony of a writer who has not himself been an eye-witness of the events he records, cannot be relied on

* In the edition of 1823, from which the present translation is made, the *Tableau* has been continued by the Editor, M. Schœll, down to the 24th of November, 1815.

† Nine in the last editions, including the continuation.