

tain. In most of the Greek States, and in Rome there long remained the vestiges of an ascending series of groups out of which the state was at first constituted. The family, house and tribe of the Romans may be taken as a type of them, and they are so described to us that we can scarcely help conceiving them as a system of concentric circles, which have gradually expanded from the same point. The elementary group is the family connected by common subjection to the highest male ascendant. The aggregation of families forms the *gens*, or house. The aggregation of houses makes the tribe. The aggregation of tribes constitute the commonwealth. Are we at liberty to follow these indications, and to lay down that the commonwealth is a collection of persons united by common descent from the progenitor of an original family? Of this we may at least be certain, that all ancient societies regarded themselves as having proceeded from one original stock, and even laboured under an incapacity for comprehending any reason except this for their holding together in political union. The history of political ideas begins, in fact, with the assumption that kinship in blood is the sole possible ground of community in political functions; nor is there any of those subversions of feeling, which we term emphatically revolutions, so startling and so complete as the change which is accomplished when some other principle—such as that for instance, of local contiguity—establishes itself for the first time as the basis of common political action."

Little by little our prime parents having started, or been started on the race of self improvement, took larger views, and gained experience. The wants of their descendants ceased to be simple and easily satisfied, and fresh desires brought an eager striving after the means of self-gratification. Man replenished the earth, and subdued it. The arts, rude at first, began to flourish; then, but separated by a long interval, came the reign of science. We can never hope to trace the steps by which communities were first formed, and acquired distinctive features, nor how it was that some races advanced in wisdom and refinement, while others remained stationary, nay, more wonderful still, how sections of the human race, having, after the struggles of thous-