

CHAPTER I

CONSERVATISM IN GENERAL

NATURAL conservatism is a tendency of the human mind. It is a disposition averse from change; and it springs partly from a distrust of the unknown and a corresponding reliance on experience rather than on theoretic reasoning; partly from a faculty in men to adapt themselves to their surroundings so that what is familiar merely because of its familiarity becomes more acceptable or more tolerable than what is unfamiliar. Distrust of the unknown, and preference for experience over theory, are deeply seated in almost all minds and are expressed in often quoted proverbs: "Look before you leap," "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," "An ounce of fact is worth a pound of theory,"—these are sayings that express a well-nigh universal conservative sentiment. Novelties, at the first sight, are regarded as new-fangled and either futile or dangerous by the great majority of men. They frighten and irritate, they fatigue and perplex those who for the first time seek to understand them. Human