

the chosen government of democratic France and especially of that portion of the French democracy, the peasantry, which, though narrow-minded, ignorant, and easily duped, is incomparably more honest and attached to the cause of peace and order than the democracy of the large towns. This consideration, therefore, brings us one step nearer to the root of the matter. The fatal consequence of the present war, and the revolution attending it, are attributed to the Government of the Empire; but the Government of the Empire was upheld to the last by the votes and confidence of the dominant power in the French nation. Be it from ignorance, be it from corruption, be it from passion, that these evils have sprung, it is to the constituent body, the only true source of power, that we must look for the source of them. It was the pleasure of the French democracy to be governed absolutely. They dreaded and abhorred a more liberal form of government as tending to anarchy. Experience had taught them the cost of one variety of revolutionary licence; they rushed with indiscriminating vehemence into the other extreme; but that too has thrown them into anarchy and completed the circle of misfortune. 'Un popolo usa a vivere sotto un principe,' says Machiavelli, 'se per qualche accidente diventa libero, con difficoltà mantiene la libertà;' and quoting in the next chapter the example of Rome, he adds, 'Il che nacque da quella corruzione che le parti Muriane avevano messa nel popolo, delle quali essendo capo Cesare, potette accendere quella moltitudine ch'ella non conobbe il giogo che da se medesima si metteva in sul collo.' The inference we draw from these facts is that the dominant power of the French nation has been misplaced by the revolution, and misdirected by universal suffrage: that the classes invested with the franchise were incapable of discerning their true interests; and that the classes by whom the government of the country might have been safely carried on were paralysed and proscribed by numbers. It may be worth while to trace the operation of these causes in greater detail.

Before we proceed, however, to this part of our task, we pause for a moment to point out the striking contrast to the institutions and social condition of France which is to be found in the institutions and social condition of her victorious adversary. The counterpart is complete. If France is the representative of the most advanced form of European democracy, Prussia is the representative of monarchy in its most complete modern organization. The King of Prussia is not a tyrant or an autocrat, for he governs in strict accordance with the laws of his kingdom; but the law itself, emanates for the most part from the royal authority. The Royal House of Prussia is the impersonation of the State and the central force of the nation. For two centuries that family has had the good fortune to produce a series of princes, many of them able and brave, some of them great, but all following with exact uniformity the principles of government, of policy, and of war which have raised their kingdom to its present eminence. They have had the talent and good sense to place themselves at the head of the cause of progress, and though by no means liberal in the sense of a readiness to relinquish any portion of their own regal authority, they have not been slow to adopt every improvement and reform which could increase their own power and ameliorate the condition of the people. In peace and in war they have served their country with extraordinary zeal and energy. In their hands monarchy has never been suffered to degenerate into a thing of empty pageants,

luxurious indulgences, or ceremonial forms. It stands erect because it is real.

The constitution of the aristocracy in Germany, and especially in Prussia, has never enabled it to exercise a preponderating independent influence in the State. But it has retained, even now, a very strong tradition of the privileges of birth; it stands aloof from the middle classes and the people; and it regards as its sole profession a devoted service of the State and the Crown. The army, more especially, though raised on the broadest principles of national conscription, is officered and led by the upper classes. Large families of noble birth, poor, brave, and loyal, are the natural resource of a military monarchy; and whatever may be thought of the Junkerdom of Berlin in its politics and in its manners, it will not be denied to be an element of strength to the Crown and to the army.

The civil government, which embraces with inconceivable minuteness all the relations of social life, and restrains the freedom of action, in the hands of a powerful bureaucracy. The representative bodies, mere recently introduced in Prussia, have in truth no real control over it. They are not even composed of men capable of carrying it on. On almost all important questions, their wishes and votes have been set aside and trampled on by the Ministers of the Crown with absolute contempt. Of that freedom which consists in the government of the nation by the nation, or in obedience to the will of the nation, there is in Prussia no sign, and not even a pretence. Authority subsists in its severest and most naked form.

But two people naturally docile and submissive to acts which would produce a change of government in England, a revolution in France, and a pronunciamento in Spain, are satisfied that in the long run the policy of the government is enlightened and just. They know that the administration of the public finances is inflexibly honest and frugal. They see that the government has by its zeal in the work of education made them the most instructed people in Europe, and they are perhaps unconscious that this education has so moulded their minds and very being, that they are trained to habits of obedience, loyalty and respect, not common in more democratic communities. Even the popular opinions and prevailing sentiments of the day, encouraged by the press, have been skillfully used by the government to promote the aggrandizement of the monarchy by pursuing objects marked out by national ambition.

There is something of Spartan character in the institutions of Prussia—the authority of the kings, who are also the commanders of the people—the simplicity and frugality which all ranks have retained in an age of luxury and indulgence—the crushing weight of public authority which shapes everything to its will and extinguishes the individual in the State—and the harsh unamiable manners formed by a life of discipline—belong alike to the ancient and the modern military State; and these characteristics were united to a stronger sense of duty, of moral obligation, and of religion, than could be found amongst the wits and philosophers of volatile Athens. The Lacedæmonians were notoriously the least courteous and hospitable of all the Greek States; art, eloquence, and poetry never flourished on their soil. Training and discipline with a view to regimental preparation and rigid obedience were and are alike the object of the Spartan and the Prussian law-givers. Oratory, which plays so great a part in the affairs of more popular States, was and is alike unknown

and powerless at Lacedæmon and at Berlin, and the policy of each of these capitals is therefore essentially secret and self-contained. This circumstance gives a rare steadiness to their political action, and engenders a hatred of revolutions. The object of the athletic exercises of the other Grecian States, as it is in England, was excellence in games; the exercises of the Prussians, like those of Sparta, are all directed to war. Lastly, it is possible that the laws of Lacedæmon may have had purposes and results analogous to the great land reform introduced by Baron von Stein.

A State thus constituted on the strictest dynastic principles is in the antithesis of France. Accordingly, Prussia has been the most constant and bitter enemy of the French Revolution. She began the contest of the anti-revolutionary war, which led to results so disastrous to Europe, because in that period France was in all the magnificent energy of her new-born hopes of freedom, and monarchical Europe was in a stage of extreme decrepitude. Prussia more than any other State drank that cup of humiliation to the dregs. It was Prussia who put her hand to the Treaty of Basle, which first made over to France the left bank of the Rhine, since so fiercely contested. It was Prussia that accepted Hanover from the dominator of Europe. She expiated that weakness by Jena, and by seven years of successive suffering from the French occupation. But in those sufferings her regeneration began. The structure of the monarchy and of the army was laid afresh on a broader and stronger basis. When she took the field again in 1813 she commenced a new life. In 1814 her dominions were extended till they touched the frontier of France on its most sensitive and vulnerable point, and she consented to mount guard there, which she has done with effect for more than half a century. And when the attack was rashly, madly, renewed by France, Prussia arose with all her ancient hatred of her revolutionary neighbour—with a lively recollection of ancient wrong which have been studiously kept alive in the hearts of the people—and with a strong faith that the time was come when her Sovereign could claim the first rank in Germany and in Europe. The climax and consummation of this great revolution is to be found in the recent act by which the princes of Germany have been led to place the renovated Imperial Crown of Germany on the head of the King of Prussia. Hohenzollern has succeeded Hapsburg. The reluctant vassals of the Empire have acknowledged their own defeat in the celebration of a national triumph. The crown which was refused by the late King when tendered by a democratic assembly in 1849, has been accepted in 1870 as the symbol of military might. It has been purchased by great achievements in war, attended by infinite misery and suffering; and no doubt it is the dearest to the Sovereign who will wear it, as the pledge of the triumph of the monarchical principles of Germany over the democratic armies of France.

Thus, then, while France has during a lengthened period of time undergone a series of political changes, and been subject to the operation of social causes, which appear to have undermined and diminished her power as a nation, Prussia has been steadily growing under the influence of her monarchy—the supremacy of the reigning House has been raised to the highest pitch; her territories have been greatly extended; her alliances have given her the military command of Southern Germany; her population has largely augmented; her military system and armament have been reformed and carried