

Conclusion

It is quite true that in many cases in non-Prussian Germany, owing to other political traditions, conceptions of State rule and freedom prevail that are fundamentally different from those that have sprung from the soil of Prussian traditions. This distinction is found, not only in party differences, but in the parties themselves. In the South of Germany there is a tendency to slacken the reins of political power below, in Prussia a tendency to tighten them from above. In the former case a conception of political life more from the intellectual standpoint; in the latter more from the standpoint of the State. Each of them is the result of historical growth and is justified in its peculiarity. The Prussian does wrong if he refuses to see anything but destructive democracy in the political life of South Germany; the South German is equally wrong if he exclaims in horror at the antiquated politics of Prussian State life.

Progress in political life is a very fluid idea, and in what direction of political development true progress will lie is more than all the wise men of the world can tell. Each State, each nation tries to advance in its own way and to perfect its political institutions. We Germans, who for historical reasons have not a uniform but a manifold political life, are the last nation in the world that can afford to indulge in abstract political principles, either such as are derived only from Prussian or such as are derived only from South German traditions, and to fit all politics to these principles. It is our task to conduct political