

political importance by cities whose inhabitants had already gained personal liberty and municipal jurisdiction. From local they now advanced to national freedom, and gained a voice in the government of the state. The objects of legislation were thus changed,—laws were made for the *general* good,—and the popular spirit thus became an overwhelming rival of the narrow prejudices of the aristocracy.

*Fourth*.—The recovery of liberty by the agricultural population, by which an incentive was given to industry, and the fruits of his labour became the property of the labourer.

*Fifth*.—The introduction of expedients for the regular and equal administration of justice, by abolishing the right of private warfare, the form of trial by combat, and by authorising the right of appeal from the Barons to the Sovereign.

*Sixth*.—The assistance afforded to the improvement in jurisprudence by the forms and maxims of the Roman law.

*Seventh*.—The renewal of the knowledge and study of the Roman law.

*Eighth*.—The improvement in manners by the institution of chivalry, introduced among the nobles.

*Ninth and tenth*.—The progress of literature and science, and the spread of commerce.

The growth of kingdoms in power and wealth, and the formation of political constitutions in nations, were the natural effects of these causes—but to dwell on their gradual developement is unnecessary for our present purpose.

In an elaborate speech of Mr. L. Tupper, on this question, that gentleman reviewed the condition of Rome and her provinces immediately previous to the invasion, and argued that the Roman people, patrician and plebeian, and their subjects in other portions of their dominions, had sunk to that degree of vice—of moral degradation, when it was impossible that the spirit of “reform” could be engendered in any breast,—and that the barbarians brought with them “a germ” that has since expanded in the present high degree of refinement and discovery.

This was met by Mr. — Donovan, and others, who argued that the barbarians, so far from benefiting the human race by their invasion, brought only desolation on Europe and destruction to its inhabitants, which it was impossible to call by any other name than a grievous calamity,—that the Roman people would have reformed,—that the Christian religion, even immediately previous to the invasion, had gained the voice of the senate in its favour, and that this fact was a strong proof

of their argument;—also, that “the germ” did not expand into any attempt at good order and government for four centuries after the invasion had closed, when the barbarians had sunk to a degree of degradation quite equal to that of the Romans, and to a state of ignorance far beneath them. The circumstances of the invasion were also strongly described, in order to show that nothing could exceed its horrors, and that it was preposterous to mention the benefits of the event in comparison with its miseries.

I agree with the latter side of the question, upon these grounds: that the civilization which succeeded the invasion, did not appear till such a length of time had elapsed, that it disproves the idea of the barbarians having brought its germ with them,—that the causes which contributed to this event were in no way peculiarly connected with the moral or intellectual character of the barbarians, but that these causes would have existed, and ultimately produced similar good effects, had the barbarian hordes remained in their native countries.

During four centuries succeeding the invasion, so far from there being any symptoms of improvement in the moral character of mankind, from which we might argue a gradual improvement, the close of that time is mentioned as the period when the human race had degenerated to its most degraded condition. A good tree will not bring forth evil fruit, nor more than an evil one will produce good fruit,—and we shall have some difficulty in ascribing all this evil to a good germ. What could this germ have been—this *good* germ, which so singularly slept in the bosoms of ruthless savages, prompted by the desire of plunder to ransack Europe, and put its inhabitants to the sword? It was their moral dignity or their bravery, perhaps,—perhaps, their unsophisticated manners, their love of adventure, their inflexible virtue, their love of freedom? All these, except their virtue, of which we can discern little, though it has been asserted for them, we may admit. Their freedom they brought “*full blown*”—that could not have been the germ: the love of freedom is natural to all men in a state of nature, and this predominant quality languished, after the invasion, till the people were in a state of servitude, and freedom flourished only among the nobles. Their moral dignity was torn from the people, and added to the nobles, who spent their time in continual warfare among themselves,—their unsophisticated manners were not, certainly, the licentiousness of the Romans, but exhibited a fierce barbarity more destructive, though not so