

chain of mountains from the mouth of the Loire, or the neighbourhood of La Rochelle, across to Lyons and Geneva, there might have befallen a permanent separation of France into northern and southern; but such a separation has never taken place. There was a time when the *langue d'oc* was more different from the *langue d'oïl* than from the speech of Northern Italy; and even now, in the lower valley of the Rhone, the passing traveller is struck by the difference between the dialects there and those of Northern France; but the fact that there is nothing that constitutes a natural boundary has prevented a sharp separation of north and south in France, and has made France what it is, an eminently unified country, in spite of the original diversity of its races.* On the other hand, the Burgundian kingdom, which was an important political factor at one time, found itself cut in two by the Jura Mountains. Its northern part included both Western Switzerland and Franche Comté; but these regions, because severed by the Jura, fell asunder, and while Eastern Burgundy became the western part of modern Switzerland, Western Burgundy dropped into the hands of the French kings, and is now as French as any other part of France.

The British Isles do not offer us quite as much opportunity for observing the influences of physical geography as those other countries that I have mentioned. The scale of physical phenomena in our isles is comparatively small, and the features of our history so peculiar as to require a long examination in order to trace their relation to our physical geo-

graphy. But one may attempt to indicate a few points. It is remarkable that the balance of population and political influence should have, within the last hundred years, shifted from the south to the north of England. This is mainly due to the mineral wealth of the north of England; perhaps also to the larger immixture in the north-eastern counties of Scandinavian blood. The discovery of the coal-fields and deposits of ironstone has given an immense impetus to wealth, to manufactures, and to population there, and has correspondingly shifted the balance of power. In the days of the early Plantagenet kings the north was of no account whatever. English history, except in connection with the wars with the Scots, lay south of the Trent, but it now lies quite as much to the north as to the south. The same remark may be made with regard to Scotland. There you have the Highlands dividing the northern part from the southern, and until a century ago the inhabitants of the Highlands were almost foreigners to the inhabitants of the south; and it was not until after 1745, when roads were introduced into the Highlands, and the country was reduced to peace and order, that the population began to become assimilated to that of the Lowlands. The battle-fields of Scotland lie either between Edinburgh and the English border, or about the frontier line of the Lowlands and the Highlands. Within a radius of ten miles from Stirling Castle there are four famous battlefields (Bannockburn, Abbey Craig, Falkirk, Sheriffmuir); and the history of Scotland, in the romantic times of the Stuart kings, centres itself in the piece of country from Edinburgh to Perth and Stirling, including the so called kingdom of Fife.

In our most recent political history it is worth while to notice how the

*It is worth remarking that there are considerable differences between the population, as also between the architecture, of the parts of France to the east and west respectively of the Cevennes and mountains of the Ardèche.