

it is chiefly in the north and centre that we find the new republics springing up, filled with an active and industrious population, soon displaying a wonderful creative power in art and literature. Thus the brilliant and eventful annals of mediæval Italy are conditioned partly by the circumstances of soil and climate, which are more generally favourable in Lombardy and Tuscany than in Southern Italy, since in the plains of Apulia and Lucania the richness of the soil is balanced by its unhealthiness; partly by an ethnological influence, that of the Teutonic invaders, who coming from the north settled in the northern parts of the peninsula, and reinvigorated its decaying population; partly by the hold which the East Roman Empire maintains on South-Eastern Italy, because that region lies near the coast of Epirus, which still obeyed the Emperors.

France offers herself for a few remarks, which show the connection of her geographical structure with her history. The salient facts in French geography are the sharp lines of demarcation between France and Spain, created by the Pyrenees, and between France and Italy, created by the Alps. It has been found extremely difficult to maintain any political connection across these. Among the Romans there was a marked distinction between Cis-Alpine Gaul and Trans-Alpine Gaul, though the population of both sides was Gallic; and you find that when the French kings, at the end of the Middle Ages, endeavoured to keep a hold on Northern Italy, the existence of the Alps was a fatal obstacle. They could carry an army across the Alps, but they found the greatest possible difficulty in keeping a country in subjection divided by that great mountain barrier. The same remark applies to the Pyrenees. No opposition in Europe is sharper than that between

the French and the Spaniards, and yet you are struck by the fact that along the Eastern Pyrenees the language is almost the same in Catalonia on the South, and in Foix and Roussillon on the north, while at the western end of the chain the Basque race and tongue occupy both slopes of the mountains. The antagonism of Frenchmen and Spaniards lies not so much in a difference of race as in the fact that history has impressed so deep and diverse a stamp of nationality on each people. The political history of the two countries has been so much severed by the existence of this mountain chain, that the Pyrenees always became a political boundary, even when territories belonging to Spain were added to France. Charles the Great, for instance, held the north-east corner of Spain, but it was soon lost. Some one said after a famous Franco-Spanish marriage, "The Pyrenees have ceased to exist." They soon reappeared, and Spain was again the enemy of France. The debatable ground in France is in the north-east. That is the region through which the immigrations come. It was the open gate whereby the Burgundian and Frankish tribes entered Gaul. So far as there is a natural boundary on this side, it is constituted, not as geographers used to allege, by the Rhine, but by the mountains, the principal part of which we know under the name of the Vosges, which are really the dividing line between the Latinized Celtic population on the one side and the Germanic population on the other. It is also a remarkable fact that you have got no division of mountains or high land running across France from east to west; consequently, although ethnological or linguistic differences have at various times existed between Northern and Southern France, these have tended to disappear. There have been many times in the history of France when, if there had been a