

REVUE CRITIQUE

DE

Legislation et de Jurisprudence.

THE HISTORY AND SUCCESS OF LAW REFORM THROUGH THE AGENCY OF LEGISLATION IN THE UNITED STATES.

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The following is the substance of a letter addressed to one of the most eminent jurists and among the highest judicial officers in England. It was prepared with care, and we believe the statements of fact to be reliable. It will not be necessary to advertise the reader that our early admiration of law reform, and of that especial form of it known by the name of codification, has long since given place to the most unquestionable conviction that, practically, it has no existence in fact; and that, speculatively, it is of no use, further than it affords a nucleus for good purposes to cluster around in early life, and finally, when experience has begun to show the folly of our youthful hopes and aspirations, it may afford some consolation to those who have adventured in the work in assuring themselves of having at least attempted something good. It is, unquestionably, an amiable hope; an innocent dream; a somewhat pleasurable delusion, — but, at the same time, none the less a dream and a delusion. It is not like the philosopher's stone, the universal solvent, or the quadrature of the circle, a mere idle and useless speculation, impossible of attainment, and equally impossible of being turned to any practical end if attained. The perfection of the jurisprudence of any country may always be regarded as of the highest value and importance; an end to justify the most intense striving, the most persistent and invincible efforts; but unfortunately one