

s, the feudal Lords and ended in feudalism attained its height in 1066, the French were characteristic social and political possessions under the exceedingly difficult of her escape," says disastrous. Her had no hope but in the six first French were her salvation." At the beginning of the reign of the Tudors in the 13th century of the oldland, it was not

having held sway and have never been mould to impress the remnants of this

may be made to almost an essential notion known as the been inherited by conflict, when ruler " in its executive there is no ground the constitutional parliament to carry is difficult in this present organization by Ministerial act. constitutional means by systematically rgy and talent to ganize an antagon- ible occasion?

based on the true gle migrated from the French and ap interest at the of those Teutonic ace the primordial n Parliament was ed the forests of e affairs. Accord- ose taxes or their the proceedings.† ly as modern Par- ceised the right of

animosities in a common ne faithless monarch, are come more precise, and greater abilities than his f seeing his prerogative e representatives of the e, to check the abuses of number of remedial pro- a free state, and to claim ment. It was a strange et state in the fifteenth

administration of justice, and the decision of a popular

deposing their King or other ruler whenever it was held by them to be expedient. These gatherings were Parliaments of a rudimentary character; by means of them they governed themselves and carried out a political constitution which suited the simple condition of untutored Teutonic life.* It is not a little remarkable that fifteen or eighteen centuries later, after all the struggles and changes of intervening years, civilized communities should return to the first principles of Government put in practice by our ancient forefathers. This fact itself shows that the principles themselves are natural and rational, and that the races who adopted them were in their imperfect civilization imbued with sound common sense and possessed strong moral force.

At an earlier period in European history, in the last days of the Greek civilization, the Government was conducted according to the popular will. The citizens of Athens came together in formal assembly at regular intervals, to consider those matters which concerned the State. On such occasions all had the right to be present, and were required to be present to take part in the proceedings.

It was the same principles which at a later day prevailed when Angle and Saxons settled in Britain. Beginning with the 5th century, the German races chiefly Angles, Saxons and Jutes crossed the sea to take possession of the land now known as England. They carried with them the simple organization to which reference has been made. For five centuries of its existence Anglo-Saxon society adapted its political system to the expansion and growth which resulted from fresh migration from the continent and from Danish and Norseman invasions, and indeed to all the circumstances of its changing situation: in the end to be overwhelmed by the Feudalism of the 11th century. At this period the constitution of the Anglo-Saxon recognised the freeman as the fully qualified political unit, as such he had a voice in the "folkmoet" or popular meeting of the shire; he had the right of expression at the "Witan" or national assembly; he was consulted in the making of the laws by which he was ruled and he took part in the selection of those who administered them.†

Thus we learn that the ancient Greeks, the ancient Germans and the ancient English—Christian and Pagan alike—recognised the fundamental principle that the people should be assenting parties to their laws and participants in their own government; principles rudely set aside in the Mother land, when the popular assemblies of the early English were transformed into feudal courts.‡

The fact cannot be disputed that feudalism supplanted a system of Government founded on rational principles, which had prevailed during a period extending over great part of the first half of the Christian era. In the constitution of Canada we possess in theory popular Government, based on the same or analogous principles as those which have been described; the writer has however remarked that the essential principles of popular government are not carried into practice in the Dominion, and thus Government by the people exists only in theory. If we refer to the published official returns of the last census (1891) and the last general election (1891) we shall find as follows:—

(a) Population of the Dominion.....	4,833,239
(b) Number of families.....	914,504
(c) Voters on the Electoral lists.....	1,132,201
(d) Total votes polled.....	720,459
§(e) Votes polled for all Government candidates.....	368,357
§(f) Votes polled for all Opposition candidates.....	352,102
(g) Members elected.....	215
(h) Government supporters elected.....	123
(i) Opposition members elected.....	92
(k) Members elected with majorities under 100.....	50

* "Montesquieu said very truly, that the germs of parliamentary constitutions are to be found in the forests of Germany. In the primitive forms described by Tacitus in which the Teutonic Kings cooperated with the local princes and other chiefs on the one side and the great community of freemen on the other, we recognise clearly the rude beginnings of the free representative government." *Bluntschli, Theory of the State. Page 41.*

† "There was a time when every freeman of England, no less than every freeman of Uri, could claim a direct voice in the councils of his country. There was a time when every freeman of England could raise his voice or clash his weapon in the assembly which chose Bishops and Ealdormen and Kings, when he could boast that the laws which he obeyed were laws of his own framing, and that the men who bore rule over him were rulers of his own choosing." *Freeman's Growth of the English Constitution, Chap. I. p. 52.*

‡ "We have seen, through the twilight of our Anglo-Saxon records, a form of civil policy established by our ancestors, marked like the kindred governments of the continent, with aboriginal Teutonic features; barbarous indeed, and insufficient for the great ends of society, but capable and worthy of the improvement it has received, because actuated by a sound and vital spirit, the love of freedom and of justice. We have seen a foreign conqueror and his descendants trample almost alike upon the prostrate nation, and upon those who had been companions of their victory, introduce the servitudes of feudal law with more than their usual rigour." *Hallam's Middle Ages, Chap. VIII. p. 450.*

§ There were five Government and two Opposition members elected by acclamation; in these cases the statistician states that he took the figure of the previous general election in order to admit of a complete comparison.