

CRADLE OF MODERN GERMANY 23

brewers and bankers, and statesmen and lawyers, and leaders of public opinion, covering their humble past with ermine, and crowning their achievements with coronets.

The Crusades brought about as great a shifting of the balance of power, as did later the rise of the rich merchants, industrials, and nabobs in England. As the power of the nobles decreased, the central power or the power of the kings increased; increased indeed, and lasted, down to the greatest crusade of all, when democracy organized itself, and marched to the redemption of the rights of man as man, without regard to his previous condition of servitude.

During the thousand years between the time when we first hear of the German tribes, in 113 B. C., and the year 1411, which marks the beginnings of what is now the Prussian monarchy, customs were becoming habits, and habits were becoming laws, and the political and social origins of the life of our day were being beaten into shape, by the exigencies of living together of these tribes in the woods of Germany.

There it was that the essence of democracy was distilled. Democracy, *Demos*, the crowd, the people, the nation, were already, in the woods of Germany, the court of last resort. They growled dissent, and they gave assent with the brandish-