

## [APPENDIX E.]

## THE REFERENDUM IN SWITZERLAND.

The Swiss Referendum exists both as regards the Federal Government and as regards that of the several Cantons. In its application to the Federal Government it is in use both as to revisions of the Constitution and as to the passage of ordinary laws.

"A total revision of the Constitution may be brought about in three ways:—

1. The National Council and the Council of States may agree to an amendment, as in the case of an ordinary Federal law. The Constitution as drawn up by the two Councils, must then be submitted to the popular vote, and if it is approved by a majority of the people and by a majority of the Cantons, it becomes law.

2. If one Chamber votes for a total revision and the other refuses its assent, the question is then submitted to the electors in each Canton: 'Do you wish the Constitution to be revised—Yes or No?' If the majority of electors vote 'Yes,' in support of a revision, the two Chambers are then dissolved and a new Federal Parliament is elected charged with the work of revising and drafting a new constitution. When this has been prepared, it is submitted to the popular vote, and if it is approved by a majority of the people and by a majority of the Cantons, it becomes law.

3. If 50,000 citizens sign a petition in favour of a total revision of the Constitution, it is the duty of the Executive to submit the question to the electors: 'Do you wish the Constitution to be revised—Yes or No?' If a majority of the electors decide in favour of revision, the Federal Legislature has to carry out the popular wish, and revise the Constitution for submission to the people. If on such submission it is approved by the required double majority, it becomes law.

"There are two methods by which a partial revision or a partial amendment of the Swiss Constitution may be brought about. An amendment may be proposed by the two Federal Chambers, as in the ordinary process of legislation. It must then be submitted to and accepted by a majority of the people and by a majority of the Cantons. A demand for the adoption of a new Article, or the alteration of an old one, may be made in writing by 50,000 Swiss citizens in the same way as a demand for a total revision. If the Federal Legislature agrees with the demand of the petitioners, it proceeds to formulate the required amendment and prepare it for submission to the people. If, on the other hand, it disagrees with the demand the question is submitted to the people: 'Are you in favour of a revision of the Co. stitution—Yes or No?' If a majority of the people decide in favour of a revision, it becomes the duty of the Federal Legislature, acting as a draft Committee,