

despotic to democratic forms of government. Each state, however, has had its own peculiar method of development. Some states, like France for example, have made the change suddenly by means of revolution, while others have achieved the same end by the longer method of reform. In the beginning it will be well to point out the characteristic feature which distinguishes our own constitution from all others.

The British Constitution was never made in the sense in which other constitutions have been made. There has never been a time when English statesmen have drawn up their whole political system in the shape of a formal document either to carry out political theories or to imitate the systems of other nations. There are, indeed, certain documents which form land marks in our history. There is the Magna Charta, the Petition of Right, the Bill of Rights, the three charters of liberty, which Chatham called the Bible of the British Constitution. But none of these did more than to set forth and emphasize those rights and principles which were already old. In all their political struggles Englishmen have not called for the assertion of new principles or enactment of new laws, but rather for the better observance of those already in force.

Having clearly seen this distinction, let us next ask, where and with whom did these principles originate? Principles, in general, are the outgrowth of custom and find their first expression in legend. The democratic principles that are the foundation of the British Constitution are purely Teutonic in origin and were brought over from Germany to England by our forefathers sometime during the fifth century. The Celts and Romans, who preceded them, have left no trace of their political institutions. Rome, it is true, both by the introduction of Christianity in the sixth century and by the revised study of the Roman law during the twelfth century, has had a marked influence on our constitution. But the chief effect of the Roman law has been to aid the practical working out of these earlier principles rather than to modify them.

The prototype of our modern Parliament is seen in the popular assemblies of our Teutonic ancestors held beneath the forests of Germany, and in which all matters of common concern were discussed and determined. This principle of popular freedom appears in the relation of the German warriors to their leaders, whom they regarded as a companion rather than as a superior. Soon after coming to England