THE

PRINCETON REVIEW.

JANUARY, 1858.

No. I.

Article I.—*The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte.*

The recent decease of Auguste Comte, founder of the Positive Philosophy, suggests a fit occasion for reviewing his labours as a declared reformer in science, politics, and religion. That he has left upon his age the impress of an original and acute mind, need not be questioned; but that his speculations should have excited so much attention and even apprehension in some quarters, is probably owing to certain attractive qualities which they present to the superficial thinker, rather than to much thorough examination of the system itself. The extraordinary pretensions it couches under a modest bearing, its imposing summation of the existing results of human research, the apparent scientific rigour of its method, together with its daring assault upon all preceding and contemporaneous systems of religion and philosophy, have conspired to give it a prominence in public regard, quite beyond its real merits. Certainly any candid and patient reasoner who will trace its principles to their legitimate conclusions, or indeed to the conclusions which Comte himself finally deduced, cannot but be surprised at the meagerness of its accomplishment as contrasted with the fulness of its promise. He will breathe more freely when he finds that

Art. VI.—*Histoire D'Espagne depuis les premiers temps historiques jusqu'à la mort de Ferdinand VII. Par M.* Rosseeuw St. Hilaire, *Professeur à la Faculté des lettres de Paris, Membre correspondant de l'Académie de Madrid.* Nouvelle Edition revue et corrigée. Tome septième Paris. Furne & C^ie^. 1856.

In this volume M. St. Hilaire has reached the crowning interest of his theme. Taking up the narrative at the year 1521, he conducts it through all the more stirring events that intervened until 1552, during which period he finds it expanding into almost a history of Europe, together with the romantic adventures of those who conquered Mexico and Peru. At the opening of the volume, the grandson of Ferdinand and Isabella is found firmly seated on the throne of Spain as Charles I., and on that of the German empire as Charles V., and at its close the career of that man of remarkable fortune is drawing near its no less remarkable goal. It is the period of the Reformation, commencing with the Diet of Worms, and ending with the Peace of Passau and the victory of Protestantism.

The opinions entertained by the author are decidedly Protestant, moderate and statesmanlike. He has won for himself a position among the first historical writers of the age; his manner of handling a theme of great breadth and difficulty is that of a master, and speaks a mind richly furnished with historical lore, of admirable facility in detecting historical cause and effect, and refined and moderated by a pervading reverence for gospel faith. Without any of the theatrical airs of Michelet, Lamartine, or Thiers, he wields a rich and masculine style, an eminently graphic power of narrative, and in his grouping of events is just, clear and effective.

A good translation of the whole work could scarcely fail to be received with favour by an English public, but especially would the present volume arrest attention from the ability with which it is written, as well as from the subject of which it treats.

Though a romantic attraction pertains more or less to the whole history of Spain, and there are periods of it when the

national character appears in a nobler light, never did that country wield an influence so extensive and commanding, as during the first half of the sixteenth century. United, for the first time, under one crown, her energies were not yet relaxed by internal security, while providential circumstances conferred upon her monarch a breadth of dominion previously unparalleled in the history of Europe. By his mother, heir of the crown of Spain and Naples; by his father, of the Netherlands and estates of the house of Austria; and by election, emperor of Germany, this Spanish king saw his dominions enlarged by discovery and conquest in the East and West Indies, and on the continents of North and South America to boundaries undefined by the geography of the time.

A remarkable combination of circumstances, apparently fortuitous, had effected this result within less than the ordinary life of one man. When the king of Spain was elected emperor of Germany, only six-and-twenty years had elapsed since the discovery of America and the annexation of Granada, and only sixteen since the conquest of Naples. Castile and Aragon, though united under Ferdinand and Isabella, had become one kingdom only in the accession of Charles, three years before, and the addition of the Netherlands, though nominal somewhat earlier, became actual only in the same event. Indeed, much of that greatness is to be ascribed not to Spain, but to her monarch, and less to his talents than to the singular conjunction of hereditary rights in him. It might with as much propriety be called the full tide of fortune to the house of Austria. For it was a grandson of the emperor Maximilian who was at the head of it; another grandson, after receiving Austria from his brother, added thereto by marriage the kingdoms of Hungary and Bohemia, while one granddaughter became queen of France, another queen and afterwards regent of Portugal, and all of them used their efforts harmoniously to sustain and enlarge the power of their family. Yet it was Spain, not Austria which formed the basis of the structure, and the character of the influence thereby exerted was sovereignly Spanish. The highest honours of those eminent personages were due to their descent from the monarchs who first united Spain.

Ages of internal danger, activity, and heroism had prepared

the people of Spain for such a position. Overpowered by a Mohammedan invasion, when that fanaticism was yet in the fury of its youth, and driven from all but a corner of their country, they had maintained a war of nearly eight hundred years for its recovery. And the age by whom that consummation was effected had not yet passed away. That warfare had been prolonged, not less by dissensions among themselves than by the valour of their enemies. In its earlier periods, the petty states, into which the strip of country, remaining to the Christian inhabitants of the Peninsula, was divided, from jealousy of their respective rights, impeded each other in the enlargement of their dominion, and enfeebled each other's resources by intestine wars. Though victory in the main attended their arms against the Moor, the work of regaining their lands advanced so slowly that at the end of four hundred years the half had not been accomplished. Lessons of toil, of long endurance in hardship, of watchfulness and activity, of romantic sentiment and honour in rivalry with both Gothic and Moorish chivalry, habits of valor and daring enterprise as well as pertinacity of purpose, perpetuated from age to age, wrought effects which ultimately became hereditary. External success attended them according to the degree in which combination went forward among themselves. Yet governments formed in such circumstances were slow in uniting, and slower still in granting an interchange of confidence. Gradually, by intermarriage of royal families chiefly, steps were secured towards that end. On one side, Castile and Leon, and on the other Aragon, absorbed into themselves respectively a variety of inferior independencies. Subsequently, those larger bodies began to combine. First Leon and Castile were united under one monarch, though not yet permanently, nor without a protracted struggle of local jealousies.

One hundred years later the resources of Catalonia were added to those of Aragon; and Portugal was in the meanwhile extending her dominions on the Atlantic coast. Each of those states charged itself with expulsion of the Mohammedans from the territory immediately south of it. On the east, Aragon carried her conquests to the borders of Murcia, where being separated from her enemy by the previous advance of

Castile, her progress in that career was stayed. The long sea coast and valuable harbors of Catalonia and Valencia, now added to her dominion, furnished a new and wider outlet for enterprise; and Aragon became arbiter of the Mediterranean sea. Castile, in the centre of the Peninsula, drove the common enemy from their long honoured seat of empire on the Guadalquiver, and confined them to the narrow limits of Granada, while Portugal not only expelled them from the western borders, but even followed their fugitives into Africa, and retaliated upon them by establishing a Portuguese province on the coast of Morocco. Crowded into the small but fertile district of Granada, the Moors erected a new barrier to the forces of Castile. Art compensated for diminished territory, and a dense and active population could with greater effect defend the narrow bounds, which yet furnished not only the means of comfort, but of wealth. For more than two hundred years was that fragment of their former dominion successfully defended by the Moors against their northern foe. And not until the forces of Castile and Aragon were combined under Ferdinand and Isabella was the conquest complete, and the whole peninsula restored to European possession.

During this protracted process of aggregation and augmenting power, Spanish character was undergoing a similar formation. Energy and self-reliance were engendered in the people by those dangers to which they were continually exposed, and, perhaps not less, a disposition to ferocity. The different states, consisting of bodies of warlike nobles with their followers, of free cities not less tenacious of their rights, and of ecclesiastics, who were also the keenest men of the world, naturally limited their monarchs by a large enumeration of privileges reserved to his principal subjects. Attachment to the forms of Christian worship and to profession of its faith, also became an impassioned prejudice with a people who had so long fought in their defence, who had been accustomed to associate it with their own national existence, and to refer all their great grievances to the infidel. The cause of Christianity, as they knew it, was one with that of Spain. The war for their own rights was bound up with that for the church. Their attachment to their church was doubtless in many cases intelligent, but it was

universally passionate. It was the faith for which their fathers had fought and bled, its symbol had emblazoned their banners, it had been their battle cry, and its enemies had been their enemies for eight hundred years. Consequently to the Spaniard the Church of Rome appeared in a light entirely different from that in which it was elsewhere viewed in the end of the fifteenth century. And if that enthusiasm might have passed away after the conquest of Granada, it was artfully kept alive by directing the tide of popular feeling against the Jews, under cloak of which Rome succeeded in putting in force another agency for maintaining the allegiance of Spain. Beguiled by the plea of purifying the church, and eradicating the infidel and Jew, Spaniards submitted to the establishment among them of the most horrible instrument of despotism. But for the attitude thus occupied by them between the church and the infidel, with whom they classed the Jews, it is not to be accounted for that Spaniards, with their habits of independence, should have suffered the horrible and most offensive despotism of the Inquisition to be set up among them, even at the instance of a much honoured and beloved queen. But they were not in a condition to reason coolly upon the right and wrong within a church, for which they had so long done battle, before the fetters had been fastened upon them.

Thus, at the opening of the sixteenth century, Spaniards disciplined to force of character and self-reliance, were still unable to see the church for which their fathers bled, in any other light than that in which it had appeared to their fathers. Their enterprise victorious at home had begun to look abroad for adventures, while a united government was possessed of the means to second bolder daring and the execution of vaster designs.

In Spain, therefore, the Romish Church found a stronghold and most effective defenders at a time when her very existence was threatened elsewhere.

The German empire, though long shorn of its lands and revenues, was still the highest dignity among princes, the lingering shadow of old imperial Rome; and the reverence with which it was popularly regarded was a bond of union among nations, who otherwise had now but little in common. In the

downfall of the ancient empire of the west, the authority, still deemed resident in Rome, was naturally assumed by the bishop, then the highest dignitary there, as having receded into himself. And when Charlemagne by his own arms had reconstructed a similarly vast domain, the imperial rank was by the bishop of Rome re-transferred to him, as if it had been only held in reserve until the appearance of a prince worthy to bear it. Claiming succession from Charlemagne, subsequent emperors continued to look to the Pope for confirmation of their title. And, thus, both the German empire and the Romish Church inherited the prestige of ancient Rome, and supported themselves by the claim to more or less of her dominion. A long-continued contest between them had built up the Papacy at the expense of the empire. The estates of the latter were exhausted and alienated, and its material force reduced to the most abject feebleness, which the electors were not unwilling to perpetuate, but the grandeur of the title possessed the highest attraction for princes, and a mysterious power with the people. It consequently became an object with those who bore its honours to look to other quarters for the revenues whereby they should be supported. In this effort the house of Austria had been more successful than any of their predecessors or rivals, since the downfall of the Hohenstaufen. Their hereditary estates constituted a foundation, and their art and rapacity indefatigable architects. In this career, Maximilian, the grandfather of Charles V., though in many respects weak and vacillating, had proved himself a worthy son of Hapsburg. But only in the election of Charles, now master of the united kingdom of Spain, did the empire find that adequate support from abroad, which its honour demanded, but which itself could no longer supply.

A century before, the possessions accumulated by the dukes of Burgundy had come to form one of the wealthiest and strongest states on the continent. They consisted chiefly of two large groups, Burgundy and the Netherlands. At the death of Charles the Rash, in 1477, the whole became the inheritance of an only daughter. Maximilian of Austria succeeded in obtaining the hand of the wealthy heiress; but her broad lands of Burgundy were seized by the king of France, and her husband

either lacked the forces or the talent to recover them. The rest of her possessions were at her death transmitted to her son Philip, who, by his marriage with the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, became the father of Charles V. Thus the future emperor, through his grandmother, inherited the sovereignty of the Netherlands and an empty claim to that of Burgundy. From the former he drew a valuable support of his government, while the latter became the cause of long, bloody, and unavailing quarrels with France.

Another fertile source of dissension with that state, was inherited in the recently conquered kingdom of Naples. In 1442, Naples and Sicily had been attached to Aragon under the reign of Alphonso V. At his death that prince exempted the former kingdom from the regular succession by conferring it upon his natural son. His brother and successor, John, king of Navarre, uniting in his own hands the resources of Navarre, Aragon and Sicily, was deterred only by domestic broils from attempting by force to realize also his expectations of Naples. The invasion of Italy by Charles VIII. of France, was a tide that ebbed with as great rapidity as it had flowed, but it laid a foundation for the claims of his successor, which aimed at nothing short of the complete possession of southern Italy. At the same time Ferdinand, as king of Aragon, had not forgotten his father's claim to the crown of Naples, while as king of Sicily he contemplated with anxiety the approach of so powerful a neighbour. The two monarchs, mutually apprehensive, entered into a compromise, which consisted in the partition of the fated kingdom between themselves, to the utter exclusion of the prince then upon the throne, under pleas the most flimsy and hypocritical. This nefarious compact was immediately carried into effect, an army being sent by each of the contracting parties into that portion of the country assigned to him. The occupant of the Neapolitan throne, having no means of successful resistance, surrendered to France and passed the remainder of his days in exile. Scarcely, however, had their respective conquests been achieved, when the two victorious parties came to blows for the possession of the whole. In disregard of attempts to prevent them by negotiations between the absent kings, the two armies on the field prolonged the contest until

by the skill and valour of the illustrious Gonsalvo the Spaniards were made sole masters of the prize. All efforts on the part of France to exact compliance with the treaty of partition or to recover possession by arms were unavailing. In 1506, Ferdinand was received by the Neapolitans, as their hereditary monarch rightfully restored. Subsequently the investiture thereof was granted by the Pope, on the same terms on which it had been held by earlier princes of the Aragonese line: and thus nothing was lacking to the completeness of his regal title. Thus also was another bond formed between the Spanish monarch and the Papacy.

For a thousand years the master of western Europe had been a priest. The authority, at first assumed from necessity and with unfeigned reluctance, had long been wielded with more than the arrogance and cruelty of a secular despot.

When the dissolution of the western empire and the barbarity of its invaders threw the burden of government upon the clergy, as the only class of society competent to its duties, that ecclesiastic, who, from the ancient dignity of his diocese, was respected as their head, became actual monarch of the disorganized countries. During the long period of decline, destruction and multiplied invasions, that sacerdotal rule was a most salutary provision. It saved the lands of ancient civilization from becoming an utter wilderness—the hunting grounds of savages —and taking hold upon the barbarian invaders themselves, it gradually shaped them into the forms, and imbued them with something of the spirit of civil order, and though new migrations of fresh tribes, and new wars of conquest continually interfered with those immature efforts, and though even priestly ideas of government were not at that time very elevated, yet it deserves the praise of keeping alive the most that was kept alive of either right government or true religion. And when, in the person of Charlemagne, a prince appeared of ability to check those migrations, and compel the roving tribes to settle on particular lands, and in occupations which gave them a local propriety, though the ecclesiastical chief conferred upon him the gift of imperial rank, it was still as a superior. Charlemagne held his empire by the right of his own good sword; but his honours and his title and all that gave legitimacy in the eyes of

the men of his time to the authority he wielded, was the gift of the Pope. And when his empire fell apart, in the hands of his feeble successors, that authority reverted with interest to the source from which it came. The great conqueror was found to have acted unawares the part of a pacificator and settler of the hitherto fluctuating population of the west, confirming the ecclesiastical rule, and adding largely to the number of its subjects. A long and calamitous struggle broke the strength of his successors on the imperial throne, and clothed the Papacy in the splendour as well as the actual possession of temporal sovereignty. For more than two hundred years, from Gregory VII. to Boniface VIII., nothing occurred to impair that culmination of power. The Pope was positively king of the kings of Europe.

But the states planted by Charlemagne, and springing out of his empire, were in the meanwhile ripening towards independence. At first disjointed and internally discordant, they gradually assumed an individuality of character, and accumulated public force. By the beginning of the fourteenth century, France had arrived at such a degree of national strength and force of character, that the contest therewith was a losing game on the side of the Papacy. Royalty, during that time fortifying itself in the confidence of the people, secured a large share of that homage, which in earlier times had been almost absorbed by the Church. Power was slowly, but by inevitable process, passing out of the hands of the Papacy into those of the monarchs. The shameful vices of some of the later Popes contributed to the same result. A dominion founded upon the reputation of peculiar sanctity and commission from Heaven, could not fail to be impaired by the profligacy of Alexander VI. and the bloodthirsty ambition of Julius II. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Papal chair, though still honoured as the highest seat of authority, was no longer equal, in its own strength, to a serious strife with any one of the great thrones of the time; and more than one of them had on their own soil braved and defied it. The only course left for the sovereign priest to pursue, was to secure the support of one or two, in any difficulty with another. Austria, by the help of a tenacious hold upon the imperial dignity, had elevated herself to an

equality with nations of the highest consideration; but taking warning by the fate of Swabia, had cultivated the most amicable relations with Rome. France and England were the most dissatisfied with papal rule, and most frequently restive under it. The ties of alliance were consequently drawn the tighter between Rome and the two other great monarchies; and nothing could have occurred more favourable to the apparent interests of the former, than that which took place when the grandson of the Catholic monarch, in the spirit of his predecessor, became master of both, at the same time that his authority, on the one hand, pressed upon the rich but refractory Netherlands, and on the other, in Sicily and Naples, stood guardian over Rome, while prepared to sustain his policy by a numerous navy and the wealth of the Indies.

The emergency in which that support became so necessary was one that arose out of the natural growth of civilization. It is a radical error to conceive of the anti-papal movement of the sixteenth century, as merely a theological reform, springing out of the views of one or two men. It was the great throe of society to slough off the larva of mediæval hybernation. Within that hard and narrow casing the new life had formed for itself a fitting body, which had now reached such a degree of maturity, that what was formerly a protection had become a prison. Escape was indispensable to further development. As the young plant, by the imperceptible force of vegetation, upheaves the earth and overturns masses of rock in its progress to the open air, on which its future growth depends, so the new civilization had reached that point when it had to burst through the soil in which it had taken root, and nothing could obstruct it without crushing out its life. From the fact that theological error was the soul of the despotism, and ecclesiastics were its agents, it was necessary that the decisive blow of the deliverer should first take effect upon the church of that day; but from the same premises it followed as inevitably that if the blow was successful there, a shock must be given to the whole structure. That reformation was one affecting the whole breadth of society. Its tendency was to put an end to the existing relations of priest and people, to turn allegiance from Rome to the princes and governments of the respective countries, and wor-

ship from created things to the Creator; to alter, in short, political and social relations as well as to correct theological doctrines, and it went hand in hand with literary and scientific advancement.

The young intellect of modern Europe had played in scholastic speculation and lays of the Troubadours; and, practised in such gymnastics, it was gradually prepared to undertake works of genuine erudition and of elegant literature. When the capacity to enjoy them was acquired, books of ancient renown were eagerly sought after and rescued from the rubbish of the cloisters. Beautiful Latin was once more cultivated, and the modern tongues grew up to elegant maturity under the example of its productions. Greek was also revived; and with the taste for classical literature came also the revival of art. Logic and mathematics had been restored by the schoolmen; and minute scholarship became a necessity of progress by means of ancient languages. To sustain each other in the arduous labour, scholars formed themselves into associations, and princes earned renown in patronizing them, as well as in making their own courts schools of the liberal arts, while providence, a wise instructor, from time to time, threw in new elements going to sustain, direct and invigorate the movement. At the beginning of the sixteenth century the revival of learning had been in progress nearly two hundred years.

The parties who had hitherto been most forward in the march were Italy, England, and France. But during the 14th and 15th centuries Italy outstripped all competition. Naples, Rome, Florence, Ferrara, and Venice, were the homes of learning and every beautiful art, first alike in study of the ancient and culture of native resources. In England, who opened her literary career about the middle of the 14th century, learning was secondary to native production, and fewer questions were put as to what other times had done than as to what the present should do. France, which had been the stronghold of the scholastics, was slower in rising above the dreary flat of their speculations. The crusade against the Albigenses had been fatal to her Troubadours, and succeeding efforts were drowned in the disastrous wars with England. Thus France came to the opening of the 16th century chiefly a scholastic,

to which remark the metrical chronicles of her language form no exception. England, after the expulsion of her armies from France, fell, during the middle part of the 15th century, into long and dangerous civil wars, which cut off her interest in other nations, and rendered her character more native than it otherwise would have been. She emerged from the strife emancipated from the rule of the Barons, with a single sovereign, and a people who recognized him as their leader, and were not ignorant of the nature of the power that made him such. The growth of intelligence had not been stayed, but it had turned into channels of popular interest rather than of scholarship. Questions of religion were handled in the succeeding generation, with more ability by Englishmen than those of erudition.

To the same series of causes belongs also the growth of the universities, in respect to which, the highest honour was due to France. In those nations also the power of the mediæval nobility, which distributed despotism in arms over the face of the country, was giving way to the royal: that is, to a government centred in a king, at once the master and protector of the people against the injuries of any other power. Henry VII., Louis XI., and Ferdinand and Isabella, were all as zealous and successful leaders against the local lords as an oppressed people would have desired. They were despots themselves; but they crushed a class who were worse, and the condition of their people was improved.

In that work, however, they did not all proceed by the same means, and the ultimate effect upon the great issue of the 16th century was very different accordingly. In Spain the centralization of power was brought about chiefly through affinities of royal families, and in the eyes of the people by accidents which seem to have been regarded as only of temporary effect. Consequently the several states, formerly free and jealous of their rights, seemed to count upon retaining their respective constitutions, and made no adequate provision for a similarly liberal constitution of the central monarchy, which was growing up among them, and soon to comprehend them all in its embrace. While Castilians only thought of securing the constitution of Castile, and Aragonese that of Aragon, the new monarchy

unavoidably grew up to the exercise of prerogatives unchecked by either, and finally to the extinction of both.

In France, the monarchy had grown chiefly by its own cupidity and machinations; and while absorbing the estates of the great lords, it was only to distribute them among its own adherents, who were, no less than their predecessors, separate from the people, though without their weight in government.

At the same epoch, the English monarchy occupied a position hardly less absolute. But that had been reached neither by kingcraft, nor by the shortsightedness of different constituent states. England was one state, with one constitution, which still remained unchanged, and their king had come to his throne from the union of popular parties upon him. The unitedness of that support conferred the power of an autocrat, and for a time the constitution seemed suspended; but it still stood by the throne, ready to strike down the monarch who should presume too far upon its indulgence, and still sustaining the manly heart of the people.

In Italy, though the monarchical principle was in the ascendant there also, no native state was strong enough to give effect to an Italian policy. That which bore the name was only papal. In the north, a subject of contest between her stronger neighbours; in the south, the victim of Spain; and in the centre, agitated by the residence of an anomalous power, continually embroiling itself, and thereby the whole peninsula, with one or another of all the nations of Europe, Italy held but little territory as her own; and that little was divided among hostile states. Then, as now, the disunion of Italy neutralized her native strength, and notwithstanding the liberal bearings of the Italian mind, such had been the constraints and inducements addressed to it, that the practical results of two hundred years of culture were, sufficiently safely for all its masters, summed up in art.

Amid the general growth of intelligence and of liberality, it could not fail to appear that the Church, in its mediæval history, had contracted many and dangerous errors. Though not unattempted at even earlier time, the first effort at reformation of doctrine, which succeeded in working a lasting national effect, was that commenced by Wyckliffe in the latter half of the four-

teenth century. Attempts had been put forth to crush it, as that of the Albigenses; but the protection of a strong hand at home, and the divided state of the Papacy at that time, rendered ecclesiastical punishments not easy to inflict in England. Subsequently, the wars with France and of the Roses, actually sheltered the opinions of the people. No competent authority found leisure or opportunity to scrutinize them. The doctrines of Wyckliffe also went abroad, deeply leavened the west of Scotland, and multiplied converts in Germany and Bohemia.

In the meanwhile, from long impunity, and triumph when assailed, papal corruptions accumulated rather than diminished, and skepticism, under those circumstances, inevitable in many of the priesthood, led to a more barefaced and scandalous practice. Instead of shaping her service to the growing intelligence of the times, the Papacy seemed to obtrude her obsolete superstitions the more shamelessly; so that the very head of the system himself had ceased to regard it in any other light than that of a machinery for procuring wealth, and power, and splendour. When we consider also that Popery was then the religion which addressed itself to every individual of Europe, from the valley of the Theiss to the coasts of Galway, and from the Mediterranean to the Northern Sea, it is obvious, in such a relation between the growing intelligence of the people and the hopeless obstinacy of ecclesiastical authority, backed by such a weight of secular power and fiery prejudice, in certain quarters, that a tremendous convulsion was unavoidable.

The immediate cause of disruption was only the tone of insult which, added to abuse, provokes the blow. The æsthetic growth of Italy had suggested to the Papacy the erection of a palace-temple for the exhibition of its ceremonies, consistent with the taste of the times and its own stupendous ambition. Its revenues were inadequate to the design. To eke them out, the sale of indulgences was pushed to such an extent as to outrage common decency. Long had the people of Europe seen their religion treated, in its highest places, as a myth, and a means of making gain out of their credulity; but now the insult was recklessly thrust upon them, in the most barefaced manner, at their own firesides. A general murmur of disapprobation arose to the north of the Alps; and no sooner was the voice of a

spokesman heard shaping the sentiment in words, than thousands, in his clear, well-defined charges, recognized the impression of their own consciences.

Every new state of genuine progress must spring out of the heart of its predecessor, while the latter is yet in its prime. Luther was but one in a series of great teachers in the church, by whom the doctrines of the Reformation had been successively elicited by earnest study of the Scriptures, the number of whom and of their pupils had been increasing for centuries. Out of that same corrupt church, and by a process coming down from a time when it was not corrupt, must the new church arise. For even that corrupt church is the historical heir, at once of ancient civilization and of the church planted by the disciples of the Lord. It had been moulded to a mediæval form for mediæval purposes, but when mediæval times were passing away, a corresponding change upon the form would have been indispensable even had the spirit remained pure. But the form was now decaying both in becoming obsolete and because the purity of its former life had departed. Yet that pure spirit of Christianity and of civilization had never ceased its work in the earth; but ere the old had begun to depreciate, creating for itself new forms in a renovation of society, it had long proceeded quietly and for the most part unseen, like the ear of corn in the secret of the husk, not even those who were under its influence being aware of its growth or of the extent to which it pervaded society. But when the world awoke to the necessity of reform, the new creation came to view ready equipped for the emergency; and there was no other quarter from which reform could come. The genius of Luther and his indomitable courage would have been nothing in the controversy, but for their proper place in that current of things. It cost many a Bede and Waldo, and Berengarius and Wyckliffe and Huss, to prepare the way for the triumph of Luther. The new life of Christian civilization had come to the birth.

From the same inevitable order of Providence it is plain that the leader of the Reformation could be no other than an ecclesiastic, and one whose position and sympathies associated him with the people. We justly wonder at the apparent inadequacy of means to the end when we contemplate a poor monk

taking the lead in a movement which overturns long existing institutions, resists the power of the proudest monarchs, and goes to change the face of the civilized world; but, the truth is, none save a poor monk was in condition to accomplish such a work. Even Luther could not have been the Luther he was, in any rank which should have removed him further from the sympathies of the people, or from the organization of the church.

In thus remarking of the providential circumstances of his life we would not be understood to insinuate the slightest detraction of the Reformer's intrinsic abilities. Never was man more thoroughly furnished by character and education, and exercises of a spiritual experience for his life's work than Luther. Earnestness pervaded his being; from childhood, life was to him a most solemn reality. In no aspect could he regard it with levity or unconcern. And to whichever of its problems he addressed himself, it was with an instinctive resolution not to let it go until he had mastered it. He certainly did not, as what man ever did, correctly resolve all, but a superficial treatment of any, or contentment with doubt in regard to any, or professed belief in what remained to him doubtful, was an impossibility in his nature. To him, amid the numberless questions transcending human wisdom, faith in the facts of God's creation and providence and the doctrines of his word became a philosophical as well as a spiritual necessity.

Yet his was not the seriousness of a cold and unimpassioned intellect, insensible to the beautiful and affecting. Imagination had favoured Luther with her choicest gifts, and rendered him susceptible in a high degree to the charms of art. Music and poetry were the language of his most precious emotions. But he never dallied with their externals. From a strong and genuine impulse alone did he seek their melodious expression. He created, accordingly, no dainty trifles for the amateur, but rich, warm realities, which have found a response in the souls of tens of thousands of God's people. Germany still owes some of her best hymns, and the Christian world some of its noblest airs, to the genius of the Reformer.

A heart that beat in tenderest sympathy with his fellow-men, together with a clear common sense, gave practical bearing to everything which Luther undertook, shaping his conceptions of

truth into tangible and acceptable forms for the men of his day. That it should have been sometimes rough in its plainness, or violent in denunciation of wrong, was incident to such a direct and energetic mind.

That man of warm, earnest heart, searching intellect, and genial imagination, had a fearful novitiate for his work, in an age filled as that was with obsolete forms, with professions which were recognized as hollow both by those who received and those who made them, when art in its highest splendour, still toiled the slave of superstition, when unbelief with flippant levity assumed the most solemn offices in the Church, and the most solemn truths of revelation were treated with neglect by the majority of those who sought honour in expounding them. Well for him and for the world he was designed so widely to influence, that his youth was spent in the heart of Germany, and that his poverty constrained him to the humblest and most honest society. Well for him that a solemn experience had led him from step to step of Christian knowledge, that a distressing and protracted inquiry had conducted him from truth to truth, and that the providence of God had supplied him from time to time with books, situations, and friendly counsel, and above all, that he had proceeded in his studies of the Holy Scriptures, until he was firmly established in the position he had to defend, before the actual corruption and hollowness of the times were spread before him. The effect of such an unveiling upon his earnest nature at an earlier date must have been disastrous. It occurred when it could only fortify his determination to do battle for the truth, of which he was convinced. He who had all his life sought for truth with the zeal of those who dig for hidden treasure; who in that pursuit had denied himself all but the coarsest fare; who in his comfortless cell at Erfurt had macerated himself with watchings and fastings; who for days in succession had forgotten food and drink in his pursuit of peace with God; who had resisted the temptations of every honour to his scholarship, and every comfort to his body, until on one occasion he was actually found in a dying state upon the floor of his cell, that he might reach unto that spiritual good which his soul craved, and who at last had been rewarded by discovering the pearl of great price, was pre-

pared to view the licentious indulgence and hypocritical professions which prevailed among ecclesiastics of his time, only with horror and unutterable contempt. The visit of Luther to Italy, and his brief residence in Rome, at a time when his intellect approximated to maturity, and his faith was fixed by converse with the word of God, was most opportune to open his eyes to the necessity of reform, as well as to prepare his mind for that attitude which it was soon to assume. It was his to battle with effete mediæval institutions, his youth was spent in the midst of them, where they were still most honestly regarded; it was his to emancipate thinking from the fetters of scholasticism; his education had made him the acutest of dialecticians; and, learned in the subtleties of Albertus and Aquinas, it was his to check the prevalence of false doctrine and corrupt practice; his education had put him in the way of so doing with the utmost effect in a fervent and faithful exposition of truth, while his humble yet ecclesiastical position gave him at once influence with a large body of the priesthood and with the populace.

The simple-hearted, and, then at least, religious population of Northern Germany, were just the people to be most seriously offended with the impudent tricks of imposture, then paraded before them, and thence, as well as by their apprehension of the truth he taught, were prepared to fall in with the views of the Reformer. Popular will had, however, but little place in government, except in as far as it might influence or coincide with that of the monarchs: and as some of them did not coincide with their subjects on this matter, it early became necessary to have a separate and independent organization, with a wise and dauntless man at its head. God had provided the man for the emergency. Co-labourers arose in various directions, awakened by his arguments, or encouraged by his daring. Then rapidly increasing numbers soon demonstrated the safety as well as the propriety of union. A spiritual commonwealth sprang up from roots far ramified through the length and breadth of Europe.

The ninety-five theses of Luther against indulgences, on the one side, and the condemnatory bull of Leo X. on the other, brought the controversy to issue, and declared the war of the Reformation. A new element of civilization had entered

the arena, destined ultimately to transform the policy of the world. But none of the great rulers rightly understood its bearing and force. They attempted to play fast and loose with it, as if it had been a mere temporary excitement, according to their occasional necessities or convenience. Among the inferior princes, it is the peculiar praise of the elector Frederic of Saxony, that he manifested a sense of its grandeur from the beginning. Few of those whom the world calls wise have proved themselves so worthy of the title. No common brain could have dreamed his dream. Such, however, was the respect which the movement very soon compelled, that several of the highest crowned heads, not even excepting the emperor, at one time or other courted its alliance; and such was the providential disposition of events, that their blindest and most selfish measures went to its support and extension, and even the Sultan of Turkey was made an involuntary contributor to a cause of which perhaps he had never heard the name.

The question of the Reformation was the central point of European politics for the 16th century. On one side stood the Papacy, supported by the prescriptive position of the past, and the armed might of Spain; on the other, Martin Luther, supported by the force of truth, and those out of every land who like himself had been made free thereby.

The two forces extensively interramified with each other. In every country the people were more or less divided at first; but a short time served to bring over to Reform fully half of Germany, Prussia, Livonia, and the kingdoms of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, who accepted it as set forth in the Augsburg Confession; England, Switzerland, Scotland, and Holland, who adopted the tenets of Geneva, while large numbers also embraced the same doctrines in France, Bohemia, Hungary, and Poland. At first, however, this extensive popularity was far from obvious. It needed a few devoted heroes to uphold the now unfurled banner, until it had secured the confidence of those who were prepared to sympathize with the cause. And it was chiefly during that time that the capacity of rulers was tried, in relation to it. As for the emperor, his attitude was predetermined by that of the principal nation he

governed; but his conduct proves that he never rightly understood it.

The course pursued by Francis I., may have been induced to some extent by the divided opinions of his people; but not the less was it at variance with the hereditary spirit of his country and the cause to her of evils incalculable. The true interest of France was with the Reformation, and had some of her great rulers, such as Philip the Fair, or Richelieu, been at the head of affairs, they could hardly have failed, however much Romanists by private preference, to perceive on which side lay the interest of their country. Had France sustained the Reformation, she must have stood at its head, and thereby having become the leader of two-thirds of continental Europe, would have secured herself most effectually against the designs of the emperor, and provided for her people that freedom of life and conscience, for which they have since shed so much blood almost in vain. Instead of that, her shallow and fickle-minded king spent his reign in gayety and Quixotic enterprises, without either profit or honour, fluctuating between the two great parties, as his necessities or short-sighted policy seemed to demand; for a petty principality in Italy risking the safety of his whole dominion, and involving it in a war which laid waste one of its finest provinces; and for the alliance of an aged Pope, whose interests could have no weight with his successor, forming a marriage for his son, which entailed upon France her darkest disgrace and heaviest heritage of woe, while leaving the glory of seconding the great liberal movement of Europe to one of the inferior princes of Germany. If any one questions the willingness of his people to follow him in such a step, it may be confidently answered, that over and above France's large Reformation element at that time, the necessity of self-defence against the aggressions of the emperor, and valid reasons of state for dissatisfaction with the Papacy, there could be no doubt of national support for a French king, who by any honourable means of either peace or war, should have put France at the head of Europe. But the opportunity was lost; and the national policy once adopted could not afterwards be changed by similar means.

After all, the misfortune of France was probably the safety

of the Reformation. For, if not patronized in its youth by a great nation, neither was it shaped by any particular nation's interests. If unprotected, it was also independent.

Nor was the king of England more intelligent of the subject, though, as he ruled a people so numerously Protestant in their opinions already, that he could not fail to perceive how strongly they would support him in resistance to the Pope, he availed himself thereof to gratify his violent and despotic temper. As was to have been anticipated, the part he did take in it proved of serious and lasting injury. The Reformation was not a policy of princes, but the action of a religious public now sufficiently enlightened to understand the foundations of their faith, in opposition to incorrigible corruption. On the other hand, not even the mighty power of Spain, though united with the authority of the empire, was permitted to offer an insurmountable barrier to its progress. With the gravest intentions to extinguish it, the emperor really effected very little towards that end. Providential circumstances always interfered to divert his arms elsewhere, or to wrest out of his hands even the results of victory.

In assuming this point of view for the sixteenth century, we do not overlook the interests of commerce, of government, of national wealth, and of learning. We would not underrate the vast material resources then disclosed in the new world, the great conflict with Turkey, nor the opening of direct trade with the East Indies, and thereby of a mine beneath the Turkish empire at the very moment when it had reached the summit of its power; we would not deny their importance to the growth of more liberal doctrines of national rights, the rise of that system which operates to render a common despotism of Europe impossible, or the unprecedented diffusion of intelligence, which that century effected; but, after the utmost value of these and other elements of civilization, unfolded or ripened in that time, has been fully admitted, that which pertains to the Reformation will be found to overtop them all. Most of them, in fact, pertain to one or other series of causes or effects leading to, or springing out of, that revolution. And prominent as was the part, then acted by Spain in the world's drama, it was her championship of the old against the new, which crowned its

importance. Notwithstanding some inconsistent measures of her king, Spain was throughout the central stronghold of the Papal defences, without which, neither France nor the empire could have been relied upon. Every great enterprise of Spanish intellect or prowess was then conducted under the profession of defending or propagating the faith. Wars against the Turks, by sea and land, conquests in Mexico and Peru, as well as campaigns in Europe against the Reformers, and establishment within their own borders of the Inquisition, and persecution of Jews and heretics, were all consecrated of the Spaniard by the same fiery zeal for the faith of Rome, which reached its extreme in the order of Jesuits.

Had the rest of Europe been fully prepared to accept the Reformation, such an attitude of any one people must have been subject of unqualified regret; but, in the actual state of things, it was better that the dominion of the old should continue to be enforced upon all who were not yet ready to admit the authority of the new. In every revolution the danger most to be dreaded springs from that class of persons, who, without preparation for the change, are thereby emancipated from the control to which they have been accustomed. Such was then the number of the truly Protestant from conviction, that it was no longer possible, if it had been expedient, for them to remain in allegiance to Rome; but to have broken off that allegiance in the case of the millions, who were still without any such convictions, could have been productive only of mischief. But, in the tremendous convulsion, which divided the civilized world, no ordinary force was competent to prevent that consequence, which would have embarrassed, if not defeated, the work of Reform, by mingling with it a mass of heterogeneous elements, and thrown the world back into the anarchy out of which it had so long been struggling. At the same time, that attitude, together with the necessity which demanded it, arising equally out of popular ignorance and depravity, were no justification of each other, nor could the nation which assumed it, escape either the immediate or remoter consequences of penalty. These soon became abundantly manifest. In the meanwhile, the integrity of the Reformation had been, in the main, preserved. False and ignorant professors of its faith had been

deterred from incumbering it to any such extent as seriously to misrepresent it to the world. The great danger pertaining to the opening of such a career had been averted, and a new era of Christian civilization successfully inaugurated. Papacy believed itself saved. The Reformers deemed their work obstructed. Both misconceived. It was the Reformation that was saved, while Papacy was gently let down. For there was another aspect, in which the Romish authorities might have contemplated their great ally. Though then their principal bulwark, and as such, indispensable in the existing conflict, he operated by that very position to the overthrow of their supremacy, inasmuch as a confessedly superior colleague on the throne more effectually subverts the reign of a monarch than the revolt of one or two provinces. And it is now an historical fact that the power, which imperceptibly and unintentionally percolated through those amicable relations from the Papal chair to the Spanish throne, though ultimately lost by Spain, never returned to the Papacy. The secular dominion of that once great, but now obsolete power, went down with its protector. If Luther sought to hurl it from a precipice, Charles V. propelled it no less surely towards the same level by an inclined plane. Such gradual decline is more consistent with the interests of the world than a sudden overthrow could have been. It is long since Spain lost her predominance in European politics, and Papal domination out of Italy is a thing of the past. A creed and ecclesiastical system remain, and must remain for some time longer, but the secular power can never rise again. Rome, it is true, may think otherwise. An old man may present a great many arguments to support his opinion that he shall live as long as his son, or even survive him; but the law of nature remains unchangeable, that the fathers pass away and the sons come into their stead. Spain, though now far sunk below the rank of states which were one time her inferiors, may revive. For Spain is a nation of strong minded men, whose intellect, so far from being exhausted, has never yet had free development. But the Papacy can never revive. For it was a mere system springing out of peculiar circumstances which are for ever passed away. To all the world, excepting his own scanty estates, the successor of Hildebrand is no longer anything but a priest.

Of the other party which then rose to divide the Christian world, we are perhaps not yet fully furnished with the materials of a just estimate. For it is still in the youth of its progress. Viewing it, for the present, only as a power affecting the state of the world, its aim was from the beginning, not temporal dominion, but the conversion of men from sin unto righteousness, and the securing of their perfect liberty to live accordingly. To the whole extent of its genuine operation, therefore, it increased the value of all its adherents, and constituted them free citizens of a pure and enlightened community. It was the very genius of true liberty, and being unconfined by local possessions, the more readily diffused itself through the nations, leavening the individual mind, and thence sending out its fruits in the improvement of society. These outward effects are much more extensive than we ordinarily conceive. For they appear not only in what is known as Protestant, but also in the Roman Catholicism of the present day, in the intercourse of nations, both in war and peace, in society in general, in fact, they colour the whole civilization of our time. It was the Reformation that saved Romanism, as far as it is a Church, and not a political system. When it occurred, it was unavoidable; but had it not occurred, Christianity must have been extinguished in idolatry, licentiousness and unbelief. We entirely credit the professions of Romanists when they claim to be in theory and spirit the same with their predecessors of the eleventh century; but their practice is materially different when it falls under the eye of a Protestant public—a public which they must henceforth expect to meet, in increasing numbers, in all quarters of the globe. Christians now in Romanist communion have much to thank the Reformation for. But an age is yet approaching when grander effects shall be seen from that question of the sixteenth century, and a future critic may charge even our own time with under-estimating the movement headed by the brave young monk of Wittemberg.

At the same time, we shall certainly not be understood as meaning that, for the reasons now mentioned, Romanism was so improved as to do well enough for those who retained it. Constraint to decency and the outgrowth of spiritual life are very different things, and more different in their fruits than in their

looks. The one is an artificial flower, which is always the same, or changes only by fading; the other, a product of creative energy, is ever advancing from one state of development to another, and even its apparent death is only retreat into the germ of a new life. While the countries which accept the Reformation are marked by popular intelligence, enterprise and prosperity, taking the lead in everything that pertains to the elevation of human nature; those who adhere to the Romish faith, without exception, lag behind, or make advance only by feeble imitation of their Protestant neighbours, and that always at the expense of their Romanist principles. France is no exception. For the pride of her monarchy was the humiliation of her people, and her popular movements have all been after Protestant example, and would have been more successful had they caught the spirit while aiming at the results. Of Protestantism, it is remarked by M. St. Hilaire, in the *Revue Chrétienne*, that "When it has disappeared, it may be said to have carried with it the vital force of the people who permitted it to die. Of this, Spain and Italy are witnesses. Not with impunity do men reject the gospel to attach themselves to human traditions. Is not the blessing of God, which rests so visibly upon England and all Protestant Europe, averted from those beautiful lands? Yet in them Catholicism reigns in all its pride." France and Sardinia, to all the extent that they are prosperous, are unpapal: and necessarily so. To think of living and thriving now, after the fashion of the middle ages, is preposterous, as it would be to attempt to restore the civilization of ancient Egypt, to revive a mummy, or to combat the Minnie rifle with the bow and arrow. Not to take any higher view of the matter than that of mere statesmanship, it is vain to hope for national prosperity now through any principles other than those of the Reformation.

The most instructive lesson taught us by this review of the historical causes of the Reformation, and of its nature and effects, which we have thus imperfectly traced, is that the truth of God, the gospel of his Son, or rather, the Son of God himself, is the life of the world. The real invisible power which prepared the way for Luther; which overthrew the dominion of the Papacy; which emancipated so large a part of Europe from civil

as well as ecclesiastical bondage; which opened the way for science, commerce, and the useful arts to their wonderful achievements, was none other than the power of the truth and Spirit of God. There is no real life, no desirable progress, no true liberty, but in connection with true religion. What is called civilization, the progress of society, development of the race, is nothing but the progress of evil, tending more and more to darkness and degradation, except so far as that progress has its source and guiding power in the truth of true religion. All the efforts of infidel or atheistic advocates of liberty, equality, or human happiness, have ended only in the increase of despotism, vice, and misery. It is this great lesson that all the blessings of the Reformation, all its power to promote the progress of the nations, all its good effects in the past and in the future, are due, not to emancipation of mind, or to the civil liberty which it secured, but to its religious element—to its springing from the desire to secure the image and favour of God, which the volume before us is designed and adapted to teach. There is no secular vocation of man comparable in responsibility and importance to that of the historian. He is the interpreter of God. He unfolds the meaning of God's doings, as the preacher expounds his word. If the exposition which he gives of history be false; and especially if it be irreligious; if it ignores the hand of God and the power of his truth and Spirit, it is in effect the transfer of atheism into the ordinary affairs of life, and has all the evil consequences which must flow from Atheism. The idea that religion is to be confined to the Church, or to the department of morals; that God is to be worshipped in the sanctuary or the chamber, but disregarded in the world and in history, an idea which has such a hold on the minds of most men, is thoroughly anti-scriptural. We regard, therefore, as a very great event, the appearance of a history destined to take rank with the first works of its class, written by a true Christian in a bold, open, yet moderate and catholic Christian spirit; which everywhere recognizes the gospel as the word of God, and points it out as the true life of the world.

We rejoice to hear that this work has received the three thousand francs' prize from the Sorbonne, a decision not less honourable to that venerable body than to M. St. Hilaire.