and professorships connected with them, were thrown open to all persons without regard to religious belief; whereas, formerly, no one could graduate from Oxford or Cambridge without subscribing to the doctrines of the Church of England.

642. The First Irish Land Act. — The same year (1870) that the government undertook to provide for the education of the masses, Mr. Gladstone, then prime minister and head of the Liberal party, brought in a bill for the relief of the Irish peasantry. The circumstances under which land was held in Ireland were peculiar. A very large part — in fact about all the best of that island — was, and still is, owned by Englishmen whose ancestors obtained it through the wholesale confiscations of Cromwell, James I., and later sovereigns, in punishment for rebellion. Very few English landlords have cared to live in the country or to do anything for its improvement. Their overseers believed they did their whole duty when they forced the farm tenants to pay the largest amount of rent that could be wrung from them, and they had it in their power to dispossess a tenant of his land whenever they saw fit, without giving a reason for the act. If by his labor the tenant made the land more fertile, he reaped no profit from his industry, for the rent was at once increased, and swallowed up all that he raised. Such a system of extortion was destructive to the peasant farmer, and produced nothing for him but misery and discontent. The new law endeavored to remedy these evils by providing that if a landlord ejected a rent-paying tenant, he should pay him damages, and also allow him a fair sum for whatever improvements he had made. In addition, provision was made for a ready means of arbitration between landlord and tenant, and the tenant who failed to pay an exorbitant rate was not to be hastily or unjustly driven from the land.

643. Distress in Ireland; the Land League. — It was hoped by the friends of the measure that the new law would be productive of relief; but from 1876 to 1879 the potato crop failed in Ireland, and the country seemed threatened with a famine like

that of 1845. Thousands who could not get the means to pay even a moderate rent, much less the amounts demanded, were now forced to leave their cabins and seek shelter in the bogs, with the prospect of dying there of starvation. This state of things led a number of influential Irishmen to form a Land League, which had for its object the abolition of the present landlord system, and the securing of such legislation as should eventually result in giving the Irish peasantry possession of the soil they cultivated.

Later, the League came to have a membership of several hundred thousand persons, extending over the greater part of Ireland. Finding that it was difficult to get parliamentary help for their grievances, the League resolved to try a different kind of tactics. Accordingly they formed a compact not to work for, buy from, sell to, or have any intercourse with, such landlords, or their agents, or with any other person, who extorted exorbitant rent, ejected tenants unable to pay, or took possession of land from which tenants had been unjustly driven. This process of social excommunication was first tried on an English agent, or overseer, named Boycott, and soon became famous under the name of "boycotting." As the struggle went on, many of the suffering poor became desperate. Farm buildings, belonging to landlords and their agents, were burned, cattle horribly mutilated, and a number of the agents shot. At the same time the cry rose of No Rent, Death to the Landlords! Hundreds of tenants now refused to pay for the places they held, and even attacked those who did. Eventually the lawlessness of the country provoked the government to take severe measures; the Land League, which was believed to be responsible for the refusal to pay rent, and for the accompanying outrages, was suppressed; but the feeling which gave rise to it could not be extinguished, and it soon burst forth more violently than ever.

644. The Second Irish Land Act; Fenian and Communist Outrages. — In 1881 Mr. Gladstone succeeded in carrying through a second land law, which it was hoped might be more effective in

relieving the Irish peasants than the first had been. This measure is familiarly known as the "Three F's," — Fair-rent, Fixity-of-tenure, and Free-sale. By the provisions of this act the tenant may appeal to a board of land commissioners appointed by the law to fix the rate of his rent in case the demands made by the landlord seem to him excessive. Next, he can continue to hold his farm, provided he pays the rate determined on, for a period of fifteen years, during which time the rent cannot be raised nor the tenant evicted except for violation of agreement or persistent neglect or waste of the land; lastly, he may sell his tenancy when he sees fit to the highest bidder.

After the passage of this second Land Act, Lord Frederick Cavendish, chief secretary of Ireland, and Mr. Burke, a prominent government official, were murdered in Phœnix Park, Dublin. Later, members of various secret and communistic societies perpetrated dynamite outrages in London and other parts of England for the purpose of intimidating the government. These dastardly plots for destruction and murder have been denounced with horror by the leaders of the Irish National Party, who declare that "the cause of Ireland is not to be served by the knife of the assassin or the infernal machine." Notwithstanding the vindictive feeling which these rash acts have caused, despite also of the passage of the coercion bill of 1887, the majority of the more intelligent and thoughtful of the Irish people have faith that the logic of events will ultimately obtain for them the full enjoyment of those political rights which England so fully possesses, and which she cannot, without being false to herself, deny to her sister-island.

645. The Leading Names in Science, Literature, and Art. — In the progress of science the present age has had no equal in the past history of England, except in the discovery of the law of gravitation by Sir Isaac Newton. That great thinker demonstrated that all forms of matter, great or small, near or distant, are governed by one universal law. In like manner the researches of the past fifty years have virtually established the belief that all material forms,

whether living or not, obey an equally universal law of development, by which the higher are derived from the lower through a succession of gradual but progressive changes.

This conception originated long before the beginning of the Victorian era, but it lacked the acknowledged support of carefully examined facts, and was regarded by most sensible men as a plausible but untenable idea. The thinker who did more than any other to supply the facts, and to put the theory, so far as it relates to natural history, on a solid and lasting foundation, was the distinguished English naturalist, Charles Darwin,[1] who died in 1882, and found an honored resting-place in Westminster Abbey, near the graves of the well-known geologist, Sir Charles Lyell, and Livingstone, the African explorer.

On his return in 1837 from a voyage of scientific discovery round the world, he began to examine and classify the facts which he had collected, and continued to collect, relating to natural history. After twenty-two years of uninterrupted labor he published a work ("The Origin of Species") in 1859 in which he showed that animal life owes its course of development to the struggle for existence and "the survival of the fittest." Darwin's work may truthfully be said to have wrought a revolution in the study of nature as great as that accomplished by Newton in the seventeenth century. Though calling forth the most heated and prolonged discussion, the Darwinian theory has gradually made its way, and is now generally received, though sometimes in a modified form, by nearly every eminent man of science throughout the world. A little later than the date at which Mr. Darwin began his researches, Sir William Grove, an eminent electrician, commenced a series of experiments which have led to a great change in our conceptions of matter and force. He showed that heat, light, and electricity are mutually convertible; that they must be regarded as

[1] Alfred Russell Wallace, also noted as a naturalist, worked out the theory of evolution by "natural selection" about the same time, though not so fully with respect to details, as Darwin: as each of these investigators arrived at his conclusions independently of the other, the theory was thus doubly confirmed.

modes of motion; and, finally, that all force is persistent and indestructible,[1] thus proving, as Professor Tyndall says, that "To nature, nothing can be added; from nature, nothing can be taken away." Together, these, with kindred discoveries, have resulted in the theory of evolution, or development, which Herbert Spencer and others have endeavored to make the basis of a system of philosophy embracing the whole field of nature and life.

In literature so many names of note are found that the mere enumeration of them would be impracticable here. It will be sufficient to mention the novelists, Dickens, Thackeray, Brontë, and "George Eliot"; the historians, Hallam, Arnold, Grote, Macaulay, Alison, Buckle, Froude, and Freeman; the essayists, Carlyle, Landor, and De Quincey; the poets, Browning and Tennyson; the philosophical writers, Hamilton, Mill, and Spencer; with Lyell, Faraday, Carpenter, Tyndall, Huxley, and Wallace in science; the eminent art-critic and writer on political economy, John Ruskin; and in addition, the chief artists of the period, Millais, Rossetti, Burne-Jones, Watts, and Hunt.

646. Progress in England.—The legislation of the last twenty-five years offers abundant evidence that Macaulay was right when he declared that "the history of England is the history of a great and progressive nation." Merely to read the records of the statute-book during that time would convince any person not hopelessly prejudiced that no people of Europe have made greater advancement than the people of Great Britain. Nor has this progress been confined to political reform. On the contrary, it is found in every department of thought and action. Since the beginning of the century, and, in fact, to a great degree since the accession of the present queen, the systems of law and judicature have been in large measure reconstructed.[2] This is especially evident in the

[1] An Essay on the Correlation of Physical Forces, by W. R. Grove.

[2] Twenty-five years ago the Parliamentary Statutes filled forty-four huge folio volumes, and the Common Law, as contained in judicial decisions dating from the time of Edward II., filled about twelve hundred more. The work of examining, digesting, and consolidating this enormous mass of legal lore was begun in 1863, and is still in progress.

Court of Chancery[1] and the criminal courts. In 1825 the property belonging to suitors in the former court amounted to nearly two hundred millions of dollars.[2] The simplest case required a dozen years for its settlement, while difficult ones consumed a lifetime, or more, and were handed down from father to son—a legacy of baffled hopes, of increasing expense, of mental suffering worse than that of hereditary disease. Much has been done to remedy these evils, which Dickens set forth with such power in his novel, "Bleak House," and which at one time seemed so utterly hopeless that it was customary for a prize-fighter, when he had got his opponent wholly at his mercy, to declare that he had his head "in chancery"!

In criminal courts an equal reform has taken place, and men accused of burglary and murder are now allowed to have counsel to defend them; whereas, up to the era of the coronation of Victoria, they were obliged to plead their own cases as best they might against skilled public prosecutors, who used every resource known to the law to convict them.

Great changes for the better have also taken place in the treatment of the insane. Until near the close of the last century, this unfortunate class was quite generally regarded as possessed by demons, and dealt with accordingly. In 1792 William Tuke, a member of the Society of Friends, inaugurated a better system; but the old method continued for many years longer. In fact, we have the highest authority for saying, that down to a late period in the present century the inmates of many asylums were worse off than the most desperate criminals. They were shut up in dark, and often filthy, cells, where "they were chained to the wall, flogged, starved, and not infrequently killed."[3] Since then, all mechanical restraint has been abolished, and the patients are, as a rule, treated with the care and kindness which their condition demands.

[1] See Paragraph No. 195.

[2] See Walpole's History of England, Vol. III.

[3] Encyclopædia Britannica, 9th ed., "Insanity."

Immense improvement has likewise been made in the social condition of the people. Not only has the average wealth of the country greatly increased, but deposits in savings banks prove that the workingmen are laying away large sums which were formerly spent in drink. Statistics show[1] that crime, drunkenness, and pauperism have materially diminished. On the other hand, free libraries, reading-rooms, and art-galleries have been opened in all the large towns. Liverpool is no longer "that black spot on the Mersey" which its cellar population of 40,000, and its hideous slums, with a population of nearly 70,000 more, once made it. Sanitary regulations, with house-to-house inspection, have done away with filth and disease, which were formerly accepted as a matter of course, and new safeguards now protect the health and life of classes of the population who were once simply miserable outcasts. Hospitals and charitable associations, with bands of trained nurses, provide for the sick and suffering poor. Prison discipline has ceased to be the terrible thing it was when Charles Reade wrote "Never too Late to Mend," and the convict in his cell no longer feels that he is utterly helpless and friendless.

It is no exaggeration to say that the best men and the best minds in England, without distinction of rank or class, are now laboring for the advancement of the people. They see, what has never been so clearly seen before, that the nation is a unit, that the welfare of each depends ultimately on the welfare of all, and that the higher a man stands, and the greater his wealth and privileges, so much the more is he bound to extend a helping hand to those less favored than himself. Undoubtedly the weak point in England is the fact that a few thousand of her population own all the land which thirty millions live upon,[2] and here lies the great danger of the future. Yet aside from that hot-headed socialism which insists alike on the abolition of rank and of private property in land, there has thus far been little disposition to violent action. England, by nature conservative, is slow to break the bond of historic

1 See Ward, Reign of Queen Victoria. 2 See Statistics, page 409.

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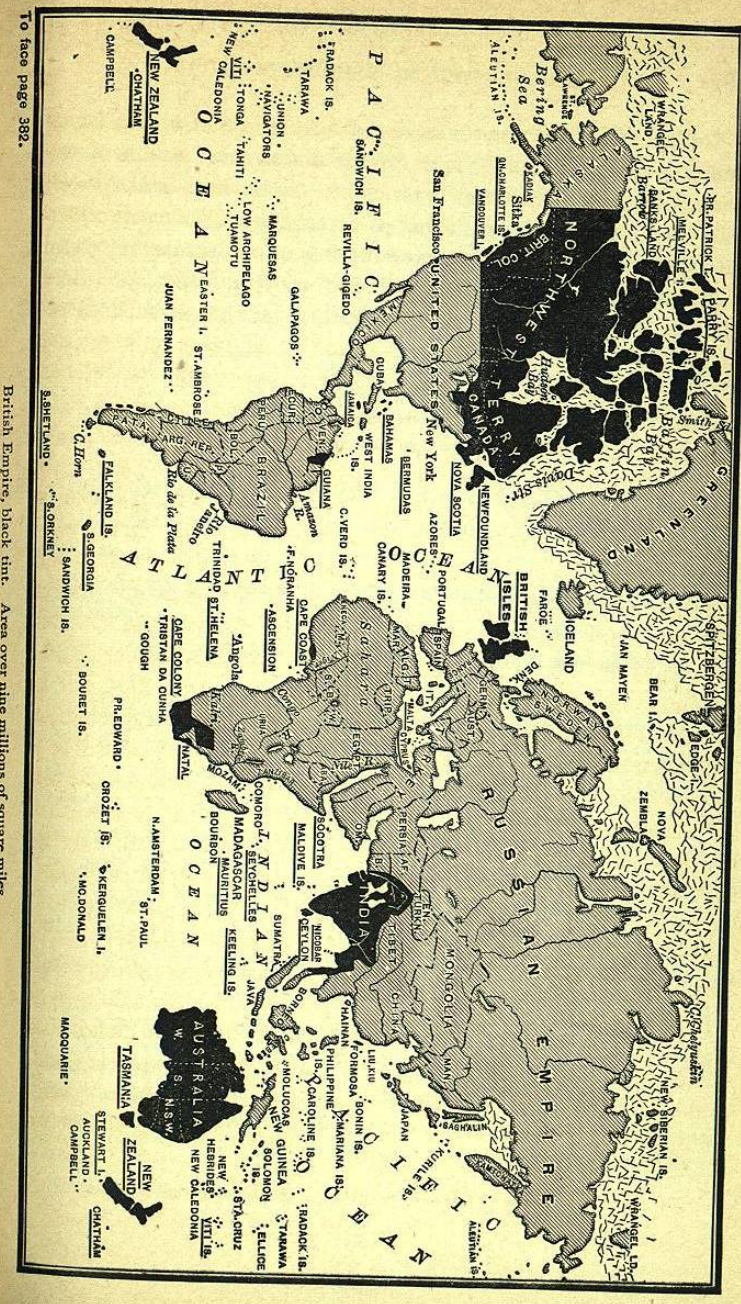
No. 15.

THE BRITISH EMPIRE AT THE PRESENT TIME.



British Empire, black tint. Area over nine millions of square miles.

continuity which connects her present with her past. "Do you think we shall ever have a second revolution?" the Duke of Wellington was once asked. "We may," answered the great general, "but if we do, it will come by act of Parliament." That reply probably expresses the general temper of the people, who believe that they can gain by the ballot more than they can by an appeal to force, knowing that theirs is —

> "A land of settled government,
> A land of just and old renown,
> Where freedom broadens slowly down,
> From precedent to precedent." [1]

647. General Summary of the Rise of the English People. — Such is the condition of England near the close of the nineteenth century, in the jubilee year of the Victorian era.[2] If we pause now and look back to the time when the island of Britain first became inhabited, we shall see the successive steps which have transformed a few thousand barbarians into a great and powerful empire.[3]

1. Judging from the remains of their flint implements and weapons, we have every reason to suppose that the original population of Britain was in no respect superior to the American Indians that Columbus found in the New World. They had the equality which everywhere prevails among savages, where all are alike ignorant, alike poor, and alike miserable. The tribal unity which bound them together in hostile clans resembled that found among a pack of wolves or a herd of buffalo — it was instinctive rather than intelligent, and sprang from necessity rather

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[1] Tennyson's "You ask me why."

[2] The queen celebrated her jubilee year on the 21st of June, 1887, by services held in Westminster Abbey. It is to be regretted that the occasion could not also have been celebrated by the beginning of some national work for the welfare of the people, such as might have given her majesty an opportunity to commemorate her long and prosperous reign in the glad remembrance of thousands of grateful hearts.

[3] See Map No. 14, page 382.

than from independent choice. Gradually these tribes learned to make tools and weapons of bronze, and to some extent even of iron; then they ceased the wandering life of men who live by hunting and fishing, and began to cultivate the soil, raise herds of cattle, and live in rudely fortified towns. Such was their condition when Cæsar invaded the island, and when the power of Roman armies and Roman civilization reduced the aborigines to a state but little better than that of the most abject slavery. When, after several centuries of occupation, the Roman power was withdrawn, we find that the race they had subjugated had gained nothing from their conquerors, but that, on the other hand, they had lost much of their native courage and manhood.

2. With the Saxon invasion the true history of the country may be said to begin. The fierce blue-eyed German race living on the shores of the Baltic and of the North Sea, brought with them a love of liberty and a power to defend it which even the Romans in their continental campaigns had not been able to subdue. They laid the foundations of a new nation; their speech, their laws, their customs, became permanent, and by them the Britain of the Celts and the Romans was baptized with that name of England which it has ever since retained.

3. Five hundred years later came the Norman Conquest. By it the Saxons were temporarily brought into subjection to a people who, though they spoke a different language, sprang originally from the same Germanic stock as themselves.

This conquest introduced higher elements of civilization, the life of England was to a certain extent united with the broader and more cultivated life of the continent, and the feudal or military tenure of the land, which had begun among the Saxons, was fully organized and developed. At the same time the king became the real head of the government, which before was practically in the hands of the nobles, who threatened to split it up into a self-destructive anarchy.

The most striking feature of this period was the fact that political liberty depended wholly on the possession of the soil. The

landless man was a slave or a serf; in either case, so far as the state was concerned, his rank was simply zero. Above him there was, properly speaking, no English people; that is, no great body of inhabitants united by common descent, by participation in the government, by common interests, by pride of nationality and love of country. On the contrary, there were only classes separated by strongly marked lines — ranks of clergy, or ranks of nobles, with their dependents. Those who owned and ruled the country were Normans, speaking a different tongue from those below, and looking upon them with that contempt with which the victor regards the vanquished, while those below returned the feeling with sullen hate and fear.

4. The rise of the people was obscure and gradual. It began in the conflicts between the barons and the crown. In those contests both parties needed the help of the working classes. To get it each side made haste to grant some privilege to those whose assistance they required. Next, the foreign wars had no small influence, since friendly relations naturally sprang up between those who fought side by side, and the Saxon yeoman and the Norman knight henceforth felt that England was their common home, and that in her cause they must forget differences of rank and blood.

It was, however, in the provisions of the Great Charter that the people first gained legal recognition. When the barons forced King John to issue that document, they found it expedient to protect the rights of all. For that reason, the great nobles and the clergy made common cause with peasants, tradesmen, and serfs. Finally, the rise of the free cities secured to their inhabitants many of the privileges of self-government, while the Wat Tyler insurrection of a later period led eventually to the emancipation of that numerous class which was bound to the soil.

5. But the real unity of the people first showed itself unmistakably in consequence of a new system of taxation, levied on persons of small property as well as on the wealthy landholders. The moment the government laid hands on the tradesman's and the laborer's pockets, they demanded to have a share in legislation.

Out of that demand sprang the House of Commons, a body, as its name implies, made up of representatives chosen mainly from the people and by the people.

The great contest now was for the power to levy taxes — if the king could do it he might take the subject's money when he pleased; if Parliament alone had the control in this matter, then it would be as they pleased. Little by little not only did Parliament obtain the coveted power, but that part of Parliament which directly represented the people got it, and it was finally settled that no tax could be demanded save by their vote. This victory, however, was not gained except by a long and bitter conflict, in which sometimes one and sometimes the other of the contestants got the best of it, and in which also Jack Cade's insurrection in behalf of free elections had its full influence. But though temporarily beaten, the people never quite gave up the struggle; thus "the murmuring Parliament of Mary became the grumbling Parliament of Elizabeth, and finally the rebellious and victorious Parliament of Charles I.," when the executioner's axe settled the question who was to rule, set up a short-lived but vigorous republic.

6. Meanwhile a great change had taken place in the condition of the aristocracy. The wars of the Roses had destroyed the power of the Norman barons, and the Tudors — especially Henry VIII. by his action in suppressing the monasteries, and granting the lands to his favorites — virtually created a new aristocracy, many of whom sprang from the ranks of the people.

Under Cromwell, the republic practically became a monarchy, — though Cromwell was at heart no monarchist; all power was in the hands of the Army, with the Protector at its head. After the restoration of the monarchy, the government of the country was carried on mainly by the two great political parties, the Whigs and the Tories, representing the Cavaliers and Roundheads, or the aristocratic and people's parties of the civil war. With the flight of James II., the passage of the Bill of Rights and the Act of Settlement, Parliament set aside the regular hereditary order of succession, and established a new order, in which the sovereign was

made dependent on the people for his right to rule. Next, the Mutiny Bill put the power of the army practically into the hands of Parliament, which already held full control of the purse. The Toleration Act granted liberty of worship, and the abolition of the censorship of the press gave freedom to expression. With the coming in of George I., the king ceased to appoint his cabinet, leaving its formation to his prime minister. Hereafter the cabinet no longer met with the king, and the executive functions of the government were conducted, to a constantly increasing extent, without his taking any active part in them. Still, though the people through Parliament claimed to rule, yet the great landholders, and especially the Whig nobility, held the chief power; the sovereign, it is true, no longer tried to govern in spite of Parliament, but by controlling elections and legislation he managed to govern through it.

7. With the invention of the steam-engine, and the growth of great manufacturing towns in the central and northern counties of England, many thousands of the population were left without representation. Their demands to have this inequality righted resulted in the Reform Bill of 1832, which broke up in great measure the political monopoly hitherto enjoyed by the landholders and aristocracy, and distributed the power among the middle classes. The accession of Queen Victoria established the principle that the cabinet should be held directly responsible to the majority of the House of Commons, and that they should not be appointed contrary to the wish, or dismissed contrary to the consent, of that majority. By the Reform Bills of 1867 and 1884, the suffrage has been greatly extended, so that, practically, the centre of political gravity which was formerly among the wealthy and privileged classes, and which passed from them to the manufacturing and mercantile population, has shifted to the working classes, who now possess the balance of power in England almost as completely as they do in America. Thus we see that by gradual steps those who once had few or no rights, have come