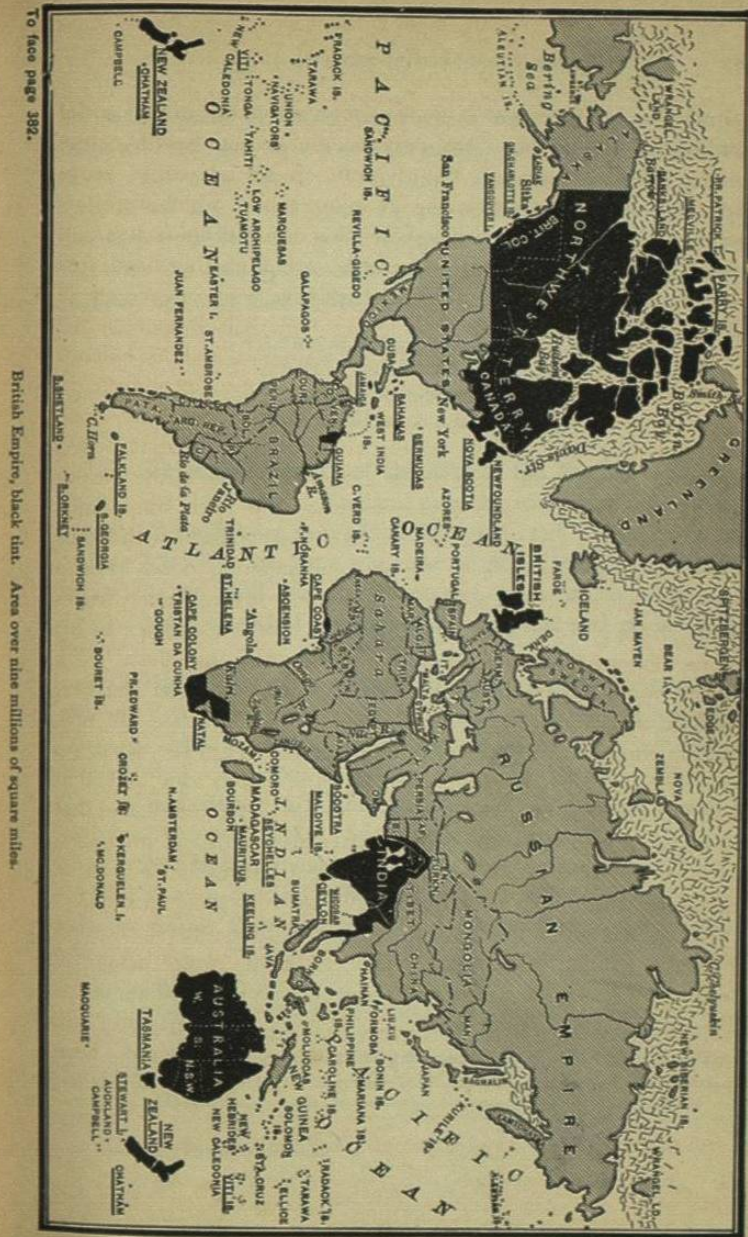


Immense improvement has likewise been made in the social condition of the people. Not only has the average wealth of the country greatly increased, but deposits in savings banks prove that the workingmen are laying away large sums which were formerly spent in drink. Statistics show<sup>1</sup> that crime, 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,<sup>2</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> See Ward, Reign of Queen Victoria.

<sup>2</sup> See Statistics, page 409.



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."<sup>1</sup>

**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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> Tennyson's "You ask me why."

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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

to be the masters; and though England continues to be a monarchy in name, yet it is well-nigh a republic in fact.

In feudal times the motto of knighthood was *Noblesse oblige* — or, nobility of rank demands nobility of character. To-day the motto of every free nation should be, Liberty is Responsibility, for henceforth both in England and America the people who govern are bound, by their own history and their own declared principles, to use their opportunities to govern well.

The danger of the past lay in the tyranny of the minority, that of the present is the tyranny of the majority. The great problem of our time is to learn how to reconcile the interests of each with the welfare of all. To do that, whether on an island or on a continent, in England or America, is to build up the kingdom of justice and good will upon the earth.

**648. Characteristics of English History; the Unity of the English-Speaking Race; Conclusion.** — This rapid and imperfect sketch shows what has been accomplished by the people of Britain. Other European peoples may have developed earlier, and made perhaps more rapid advances in certain forms of civilization, but none have surpassed, nay, none have equalled, the English-speaking race in the practical character and permanence of their progress. Guizot says<sup>1</sup> the true order of national development in free government is, first, to convert the natural liberties of man into clearly defined political rights; and, next, to guarantee the security of those rights by the establishment of forces capable of maintaining them. Nowhere do we find better illustrations of this law of progress than in the history of England, and of the colonies which England has planted. Trial by jury,<sup>2</sup> the legal right to resist oppression,<sup>3</sup> legislative representation,<sup>4</sup> religious freedom,<sup>5</sup> and, finally, the principle that all political power is a trust held for the public good<sup>6</sup> — these are the assured results of Anglo-

<sup>1</sup> Guizot's History of Representative Government, Lecture VI.

<sup>2</sup> See Paragraph No. 227.

<sup>4</sup> See Paragraph No. 265.

<sup>6</sup> See Macaulay's Essay on Walpole.

<sup>3</sup> See Paragraph No. 313.

<sup>5</sup> See Paragraph No. 548, and note 2.

Saxon growth, and the legitimate heritage of every nation of Anglo-Saxon descent.

Here, in America, we sometimes lose sight of what those have done for us who occupied the world before we came into it. We forget that English history is in a very large degree our history, and that England is, as Hawthorne liked to call it, "our old home." In fact, if we go back less than three centuries, the record of America becomes one with that of the mother country, which first discovered<sup>1</sup> and first permanently settled this, and which gave us for leaders and educators Washington, Franklin, the Adamses, and John Harvard. In descent, by far the greater part of us are of English blood;<sup>2</sup> while in language, literature, law, legislative forms of government, and the essential features of civilization, we all owe to England a greater debt than to any other country; and without a knowledge of her history we cannot rightly understand our own. Standing on her soil we possess practically the same personal rights that we do here; we speak the same tongue, we meet with the same familiar names. We feel that whatever is glorious in her past is ours also; that Westminster Abbey belongs as much to us as to her, for our ancestors helped to build its walls, and their dust is gathered in its tombs; that Shakespeare and Milton belong to us in like manner, for they wrote in the language we speak, for the instruction and delight of our fathers' fathers, who beat back the Spanish Armada, and gave their lives for liberty on the fields of Marston Moor and Naseby.

Let it be granted that grave issues have arisen in the past to separate us; yet, after all, our interests and our sympathies, like

<sup>1</sup> See Paragraphs No. 387 and No. 473.

<sup>2</sup> In 1840 the population of the United States, in round numbers, was 17,000,000, of whom the greater part were probably of English descent. Since then there has been an enormous immigration, forty per cent of which was from the British Islands; but it is perhaps safe to say that three-quarters of our present population of 60,000,000 are those who were living here in 1840, with their descendants. Of the immigrants coming from non-English-speaking races, the Germans predominate, and it is to them, as we have seen, that the English owe their origin, they being in fact but a modification of the Teutonic race.

our national histories, have more in common than they have apart. The progress of each country now reacts for good on the other. If we consider the total combined population of the United States and of the British Empire, we find that to-day upwards of one hundred millions of people speak the English tongue, and are governed by the fundamental principles of English constitutional law. They hold possession of over twelve millions of square miles of the earth's surface — an area nearly equal to the united continents of North America and Europe. By far the greater part of the wealth and power of the globe is theirs. They have expanded by their territorial and colonial growth as no other people have. They have absorbed and assimilated the millions of emigrants from every race and of every tongue which have poured into their dominions. The result is, that the inhabitants of the British islands, of Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Canada, practically form one great Anglo-Saxon race, diverse in origin, separated by distance, but everywhere exhibiting the same spirit of intelligent enterprise and of steady, resistless growth. Thus considered, America and England are necessary one to the other. Their interests now and in the future are essentially the same.

In view of these facts let us say, with an eminent thinker,<sup>1</sup> whose intellectual home is on both sides the Atlantic, "Whatever there be between the two nations to forget and forgive, is forgotten and forgiven. If the two peoples, which are one, be true to their duty, who can doubt that the destinies of the world are in their hands?"

<sup>1</sup> Archdeacon Farrar, Address on General Grant, Westminster Abbey, 1885.

## GENERAL SUMMARY OF ENGLISH CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY.<sup>1</sup>

**1. Origin and Primitive Government of the English People.**—The main body of the English people did not originate in Britain, but in Northwestern Germany. The Jutes, Saxons, and Angles were independent, kindred tribes living on the banks of the Elbe and its vicinity. They had no written laws, but obeyed time-honored customs which had all the force of laws. All matters of public importance were decided by each tribe at meetings held in the open air. There every freeman had an equal voice in the decision. There the people chose their rulers and military leaders; they discussed questions of peace and war; finally, acting as a high court of justice, they tried criminals and settled disputes about property.

In these rude methods we see the beginning of the English Constitution. Its growth has been the slow work of centuries, but the great principles underlying it have never changed. At every stage of their progress the English people and their descendants throughout the globe have claimed the right of self-government; and, if we except the period of the Norman Conquest, whenever that right has been persistently withheld or denied the people have risen in arms and regained it.

**2. Conquest of Britain; Origin and Power of the King.**—After the Romans abandoned Britain the English invaded the island, and in the course of a hundred and fifty years (449–600) conquered it and established a number of rival settlements. The native Britons were, in great part, killed off or driven to take refuge in Wales and Cornwall.

The conquerors brought to their new home the methods of government and modes of life to which they had been accustomed in Germany. A cluster of towns — that is, a small number of enclosed<sup>2</sup> habitations — formed a hundred (a district having either a hundred families or able to furnish a hundred warriors); a cluster of hundreds formed a shire or county. Each of these divisions had its public meeting, composed of all its freemen or their representatives, for the management of its own affairs. But a state of war — for the English tribes fought each other as well as fought the Britons — made a strong central government necessary. For this reason the leader of each tribe was made king. At first he was chosen, at large, by the entire tribe; later, unless there was some good reason for a different choice, the king's eldest son was selected as his successor. Thus the right to rule was practically fixed in the line of a certain family descent.

The ruler of each of these petty kingdoms was (1) the commander-in-chief in war; (2) he was the supreme judge.

<sup>1</sup> This Summary is inserted for the benefit of those who desire a compact, connected view of the development of the English Constitution, such as may be conveniently used either for reference, for a general review of the subject, or for purposes of special study. — D. H. M. For authorities, see Stubbs (449–1485); Hallam (1485–1760); May (1760–1870); Amos (1870–1880); see also Hansard's and Cobbett's Parliamentary History, the works of Freeman, Tassell-Langmead (the best one-volume Constitutional History), Feilden (as a convenient reference-book this manual has no equal), and Ransome, in the List of Books on page 404.

The references at the bottom of the page are to the body of the History unless otherwise stated.

<sup>2</sup> See page 56, Paragraph 139.