

The Growth of Government.

The earliest form of government was patriarchal, the father or head of the family being supreme ruler. This was transferred to the tribe, and as tribes grew into nations they were governed by monarchs, who were in nearly every case absolute in authority. In some countries, as in Egypt at first, there were strong constitutional checks on the king's power; but generally the ruler could do pretty much as he pleased as the army supported him.

The Greeks were the first civilized people who put into practice the theory that every freeman had a right to share in the making of the laws under which he had to live. In the year 594, B. C., Solon became chief magistrate of the city of Athens. He gave the franchise to every free citizen, but only those who possessed a certain amount of property could hold any important office. The Senate, elected from among the wealthy classes, was to prepare measures which were to be submitted to the popular assembly. The popular assembly consisted of all the citizens, and met once a month to discuss matters of importance laid before them by the Senate. The assembly had the power of accepting, rejecting, or even modifying the measures submitted to them by the Upper House. About 120 years after Solon's legislation, Aristides caused the lowest class of citizens to become eligible for the highest offices in the land. But a large part of the people of Athens were slaves, who practically had no rights which their masters were bound to respect. Females were kept in ignorance, and otherwise treated as minors. Had all the inhabitants of Athens been free, and had women been recognized as the equals of men, the Athenian political system would have been equal, if not superior to that now established in Switzerland.

Not long after the emancipation of Athens, Rome followed in her steps, by establishing a republic in 508, B. C. The latter was not so democratic as her Greek sister; but after long struggles the masses of Rome obtained something like equality with the aristocrats. The spread of dominion and wealth, however, corrupted the people, and bribery came to be looked upon as the only means of being elected to office. At length civil war threw the supreme power into the hands of soldiers of fortune, who extinguished the last remaining liberties of the Roman state. Athens and the other free cities of Greece were conquered by Rome, and reduced to the level of ordinary subjects of the empire.

Among the Germanic tribes who overthrew the Roman Empire about fourteen hundred years ago, the majority of the people were little better than slaves to their chiefs. With them came in the feudal system, in which each country was parcelled out into little territories each ruled by a lord who had sworn allegiance to the king. The common people were subject not to the king, but to the smaller chiefs. It will thus be seen, that the king could not always exercise his authority; and the barons did about as they chose. Civil war raged all the time, and agriculture and manufactures were only safe within the lands belonging to the priests and monks, whose property was held inviolable.

Little by little, the kings, supported by the clergy and the common people, broke down the feudal system, and serfdom was abolished. Thus the masses became personally free. But about this time, the kings began to gather standing armies, and soon they were strong enough to seize the absolute dominion over their subjects. Wherever there was a popular rebellion, the trained troops of the government easily dispersed the undisciplined mob. At the end of the seventeenth century, the only great power whose ruler was not despotic was Great Britain. In all the wide world there were no countries in which the lower classes possessed a shadow of political power, except Holland, Switzerland, and perhaps a few other minor states.

Feudalism had not been so strongly entrenched in Britain as in some other countries, and in 1215 it was the barons, and not the commons, who forced King John to sign the famous Magna Charta. In 1364, the towns and country districts of England first sent to Parliament men elected by popular vote. Villenage or slavery finally came to an end about 1485, the old race of lords having been exterminated in the civil wars of the Roses. During the sixteenth century the sovereigns of England were nearly absolute; but early in the seventeenth, when Scotland and England had one monarch, the struggle for freedom began, and ended triumphantly for the parliament, the last vestige of royal despotism being swept away in the great revolution of 1688.

In early times Russia, now under a despotism, the like of which perhaps the world has never seen, was a land of republics. In the great northern republic of Novgorod, the people made laws in open assembly, and their prince was merely a figurehead. But the Russians had no conception of the idea that the majority should rule. With them every thing had to be decided unanimously. If the minority held out, civil war was the result, and bloodshed was frightfully common. At length the country was overrun by Asiatics. By-and-by the Princes of Moscow, freed the land from the invaders who had ruled for two hundred and fifty years, and the people were so glad to get rid of the foreigners that they made no attempt to prevent the establishment of a military despotism. In 1570 Novgorod fell before the Muscovites, and Republicanism died. Next, the Czars decreed that every lord must serve the Emperor, and the people must serve nobles. Thus were the whole nation enslaved. They could be bought and sold with the land on which they lived. The aristocracy were freed in 1763; but the masses remained in slavery till 1861. They were then liberated and given land, which cannot be taken from them, even for debt. Although the bands of despotism are more tightly drawn than ever, each village has its own local government. The power of the latter, however, is more imaginary than real.

In the revolution the French people, oppressed beyond endurance, rose and put to death the nobility and clergy who did not flee, and divided the land between themselves. At last the sovereigns suffered death and a republic was set up, which was soon overthrown by Bonaparte. But the old order of things in France and Europe had received its deathblow. During the present century

all the Christian states of Europe have adopted constitutions of some kind or other.

The British parliament has gradually extended its power, until now it is supreme. The sovereign no longer gives trouble; the strife is between the House of Lords and Commons. Within the past few years the right of local self government has been placed in the hands of the masses, and the power of the aristocracy has been broken beyond all hope of recovery.

The Canadian parliament is like that of the old country. Our Senate, however, is a farce, there being no great landed interests here for an irresponsible body to represent. Whatever shadow of excuse there may be for the existence of the House of Lords in its present state, there can be no excuse whatever, for the continued existence of the Canadian Senate as a non-elective body.

The political system of the United States of America is very much like that of Britain, except that the supreme administrative power, which in Britain lies in the parliament, in the United States is the prerogative of the president. As in France and other republics the upper chamber of the American parliament is elective.

Switzerland has a system very much like that of the Ancient Athenians--as nearly as may be, a direct democracy. In Switzerland, the parliament must, if requested by a certain number of votes, submit every important measure to the direct vote of the people whose decision is final. The plebiscite, as such a popular vote is called, has also been occasionally tried in France, the United States and Canada.

HENRY HARVEY STUART.

Benton, N. B. August 23, 1895.

I BUY MY GROCERIES FROM JOHN McKNIGHT, REGENT STREET,

Who keeps constantly on hand a complete stock of

GROCERIES AND PROVISIONS, AT LOWEST PRICES.

Also School Books, Boots and Shoes, Farmers' Supplies, and a variety of other articles.

John McKnight

OCTOBER, 1895.

Suitings, Pantings, Overcoatings.

NEW GOODS.

The largest and best assortment we have ever shown.

our Prices are Low Prices.

BEST OF TRIMMINGS AND SATISFACTION GUARANTEED.

SOME PANTS MADE TO ORDER, \$2.50.—BETTER, \$4, \$5, \$6, \$7.

SUITS MADE TO ORDER, \$11 AND UPWARDS.

Our Trunks and Valises are the best value in the city.

Wool taken in Exchange for Cloth.

ANDERSON & WALKER, Opp. Post Office.