

# **THE DREAD OF RESPONSIBILITY**

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The Dread of Responsibility by Émile Faguet

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**ÉMILE FAGUET**

**THE DREAD OF  
RESPONSIBILITY**



**By Émile Faguet**

**Initiation into Philosophy**

**Initiation into Literature**

# THE DREAD OF RESPONSIBILITY

BY

ÉMILE FAGUET

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*et l'horreur des responsa-  
bilités*

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## INTRODUCTION

M. Faguet has hitherto been known chiefly as the author of a brilliant destructive criticism of pure democracy and the socialistic tendency. In the present volume he supports his position by fresh examples, and in addition he outlines a constructive suggestion for a true aristocracy, a government, under democratic forms, by the really best.

The polity of the United States, as M. Faguet points out, is not a democracy at all; and he is doubtless amused by the circumstance that after nearly a century and a half of it we cannot tell whether its failure of perfection is due to its being too nearly a democracy or to its being too remote from one. M. Faguet finds in France the nearest approach to a pure democracy that the world has seen, except for fifty years in Athens, and

he believes that the course of events will be in the direction of a still closer approximation. Perhaps we shall see in actual operation the ideal of government entertained by Élie Reclus and his friends in 1870, who believed that France could best be administered if every citizen on his way to business each morning dropped into a suitable box his vote on all questions from foreign relations to the police regulation of ownerless cats. This ideal is not shared by M. Faguet, but he is far from opposing to it the alternative ideal of monarchy. He believes, on the contrary, in the possibility of restoring the sense of social responsibility, which, in his view, democracies abhor, by the creation of a literal aristocracy.

There is very perceptible in this country, in opposition to the extreme democratic theory, a wish to increase rather than to decrease personal official responsibility, to cut down the number of elective offices, and to lengthen terms. The work of the Short Ballot Organisation and the increasing popularity