

**GENERAL VIEW OF
THE POLITICAL
HISTORY OF EUROPE**

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General View of the Political History of Europe by Ernest Lavisse & Charles Gross

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BY
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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE title of Professor Lavisse's work is *Vue Générale de l'Histoire Politique de l'Europe*. (Third edition. Paris : Armand Colin & Co. 1890.) While giving the essential facts of universal history, he aims, above all, to describe the formation and political development of the states of Europe, and to indicate the historical causes of their present condition and mutual relations. In other words, he shows how the existing political divisions of Europe, with their peculiar tendencies, were created. To accomplish this, it was necessary to begin with the history of Greece and Rome, which played an important part in Europe long after their death ; then, to show the potent influence of the Holy Roman Empire and of the Papacy in the Middle Ages ; next, to point out how these two great ideal powers were superseded by modern Europe, an organic entity composed of various states, new and old, most of which were dominated by the monarchical idea ; and, finally, how, in the nineteenth century, the new principle

of nationality and the power of the people have supplanted the old monarchical element. The ability of Professor Lavisse to compress the essence of a great event or sequence of events into a few comprehensive and expressive sentences, has enabled him to accomplish his difficult task with signal success. At any rate, this is the opinion of the Translator, and hence he believes that the work will prove useful to general readers, as well as to college students, in America and England.

The Translator has attempted to adhere as closely to the original as the English idiom permits. He has, however, taken the liberty to divide the work into chapters and sections, and to make some slight changes in the titles of the sections; he has also added an Index.

He desires to express his thanks to the friends who have kindly aided him with suggestions, especially to Professor A. B. Hart, of Harvard College, and Professor A. G. Canfield, of Kansas State University.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.
October 1, 1891.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

WHEN a writer presents to the public a *General View of the Political History of Europe*,* he exposes himself to the reproach of having undertaken too much. We know, at the present day, the trouble and care that are necessary to establish the truth of a single fact. How, then, can anyone aspire to deal with the great mass of facts that make up the political history of Europe?

The historians who, nevertheless, venture to treat such subjects, can say in their defence that if the details are often doubtful, the leading facts are not. We do not know with complete certainty the inner motives of Luther's revolt, and there are obscurities in the history of the battle of Waterloo; but it is certain that Luther revolted, and that the battle of Waterloo was lost by Napoleon. Now

* The idea of this volume was suggested to me by a preface which I wrote in 1886 for the translation of one of Mr. Freeman's books (*Historical Geography of Europe*, by Edward A. Freeman, translated by Mr. Gustave Lefèvre, under the title, *Histoire Générale de l'Europe par la Géographie Politique*. Paris: Armand Colin & Co.). It seemed to me that it might be useful to expand this first undertaking into a book.