

**EUROPE INCAPABLE OF
AMERICAN DEMOCRACY: AN
OUTLINE TRACING OF THE
IRREVERSIBLE COURSE OF
CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY**

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Europe Incapable of American Democracy: An Outline Tracing of the Irreversible Course of constitutional history by C. B. Adderley

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BY THE

RT. HON. C. B. ADDERLEY, M.P.

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LETTER

TO THE

RIGHT HON. BENJAMIN DISRAELI, M.P.

ON THE

PRESENT RELATIONS OF

ENGLAND WITH THE COLONIES,

WITH

AN APPENDIX

OF EXTRACTS FROM EVIDENCE TAKEN BEFORE THE SELECT COMMITTEE
ON COLONIAL MILITARY EXPENDITURE, 1861.

CONSTITUTIONAL STAGES OF HISTORY.

THE track of human affairs, though traversed by a thousand cloudy theories of each passing day, comes out wonderfully simple in review. There is little of intricacy in the mighty plans of Providence. Broad-featured, slow in process, and to be recognized by all, are the ways of God in the affairs of men.

The world has plainly exhibited a regular development of social economy, progressing from its first inhabitation by man, taking one westward direction as the sun, never ceasing, and never reverting.

Political constitutions have been based on one of three principles successively, and in three several stages of experiment.

Human government naturally began as monarchy, and Asia was the first scene of its action.

In its westward course, Europe saw its next development on the wider basis of aristocracy.

It is now spreading itself in broad democracy, over the gigantic area apparently prepared for its utmost expansion, in America.

I mean by Monarchy, in principle, the sovereignty of one; by Aristocracy, that of leaders; and by pure American Democracy, that of the whole people making and unmaking their own administration, from time to time, at their will.

To each of three great divisions of the globe in

turn, a special type of government seems to have mainly attached itself as a native and ineradicable growth—capable indeed of admixture and variety, but incapable of entire extirpation, or even of extensive transplantation whether by way of reversion or repetition of the sequence.

Russia appears to form a connecting link between the two first stages of this series; and England between the second and the third. I hope there may be special vitality about nations imbibing life from both past and present sources, and showing a capacity to draw new inspiration into ancient forms.

Irrespectively of these connecting links, monarchy will probably be for ever the peculiar characteristic of Asiatic government, aristocracy of European, and pure democracy will remain the perennial and prevalent, as it was the indigenous, growth of the Western world.

I do not mean to say that the science of government has ever been confined to any one of these principles—or that the forms of government have ever been wholly restricted to the type of any age or period—or that different circumstances allow of universal identity of characteristics. Monarchy, Aristocracy, and Democracy have always been recognized in the philosophy of Government as its three elementary principles; and the spirit of one may pervade and vary the forms special to another; but it has required the particular circumstances of successive eras to set up each principle in turn as a primary element, to elaborate each form in its

chief distinctive features, and to establish each as a prevalent and perpetual type of government in three great divisions of the world.

The progress has been incessant from the adoption of the first principle, towards the development of the last, and from the most concentrated to the most distributed form of government; and always connectedly, in one westward course, unfolding itself. Constitutional expansion has in fact kept pace and direction with the increase of the world's population, (interrupted only by violent reactions and revolutions); and during the dominance of each successive principle the onward process has never wholly stagnated. No one of the three distinctive principles of government has ever long retained a pure realization of its unmitigated essence in any quarter. Some mixture is always resulting from the very process of development, and from the perpetual changes in human conditions. Some mixture, indeed, is not only inevitable, but indispensable for tolerable government on any principle. No human power can long remain unchecked without abuse.

The popular disintegration of original monarchy was a necessary concomitant with the increase of numbers, levelling distinctions, expanding forms, introducing new adaptations. The ideas of men on all subjects have widened with their increasing multitude. The religions of Asia partook of its political concentration. The theocratic principle confounded its earthly and heavenly sovereignties, and identified its priests

and nobles. The more developed religious forms of Europe have been chiefly hierarchical, while American universalism points to the Church of the Future in which the inheritors of the dominant Puritan inspiration claim for every man his own priesthood, as their civil constitutions provide self-government for every citizen.

Upon each successive stage of this general development of ideas the incessant tide of human progress has been ever bearing in its one direction, but never so as to obliterate any of the essentially distinct types of thought and action from its own stage.

Diverse constitutional forms and principles may mingle, but foundations will be found true to their own ground. The basements of the world's three constitutional structures, even in ruins, still remain where they were first laid. Millar considers circumstances of origin to be among the chief elements of national history. The social conditions which attended the original settlement of each quarter of the globe necessitated peculiar modes of government.

The sovereign control of all by one man, the partnership in sovereignty of many leaders, or the power of the whole people without distinction to make and unmake their own administration at will—each in its own theatre of history—have been, are, and we may suppose ever will be, the predominant principle, with mainly corresponding forms, of government.

The practical inference from this general view is

that such great writers as Arnold, De Tocqueville, and others erred in supposing that Democracy, in the sense defined, is destined to universal conquest over every former kind of government, as Christianity has been a dissolvent of heathendom; and that they wrongly warned Europeans to look ahead to America for their future, instead of reforming and adapting their own institutions to admit the full progress of contemporary requirements within themselves. De Tocqueville wrote to Europeans that to attempt to check Democracy would be to resist the will of God. He warned his countrymen, "launched in a rapid stream, not obstinately to fix their eyes on the ruins they had left, whilst the current swept them backwards to the gulf."—(Beve's Translation, Preface xxii.) The consequence of so doing, he added, to France had been that democratic revolutions had been effected only in the material parts of society, with no concomitant change in laws, ideas, customs, and manners. He did not see that this very fact upset his theory so far as it connected a change in social condition with a necessary change of government. The apparent democratic revolutions in France have not affected the fundamental principle of its constitution in the least. The people do not govern themselves the more; but the old government governs more in their name. Hereditary Monarchy, endorsed by universal suffrage, but still checked by a semi-suppressed yet influential Aristocracy, remains. M. Chevalier, in his recent work on Mexico, says, "We are now witnessing the dissolvent power of