

**A GUIDE TO
MODERN ENGLISH
HISTORY, PART I**

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A guide to modern English history, Part I by William Cory

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WILLIAM CORY

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BY
Johnson
WILLIAM A. CORY

PART I.

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1880

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THIS book has grown out of an attempt made some years ago to give some account of English politics to a foreign guest who was at the time reading English history for an examination at one of the Inns of Court: this guest was not a Christian nor an European. It has been found inconvenient to adhere to the plan of adapting statements to so remote a mind. But it has seemed good nevertheless to try to explain many terms which in ordinary books are assumed to be understood; for not only do intelligent Frenchmen, such as the writers in the '*Revue des deux Mondes*,' make a great many mistakes about English things, but also amongst English gentlefolks and educated voters there is but little knowledge about the meaning of terms employed in political writings.



A GUIDE
TO THE
MODERN HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

I.

THE year 1815 makes an epoch for the students of politics. It is convenient for them to start from this point, because it is here that they see, what they cannot find farther back in chronology, a complete settlement of rights and limits made for all Europe and its dependencies by the chief nations. The Europeans were forced by long and painful experience to mark the close of the wars which had begun in 1792, by a treaty, or, more precisely, by a set of treaties more comprehensive and better calculated for permanence than any former treaties.

In 1792 there had been one nation thoroughly in earnest about war; this was the French people, asserting its right to be a Republic. Some years after this republican people had proved untrue to itself and unreasonably obedient to a soldier, the hateful tyranny of its master grew to such excess that it made all other monarchies, even the worst, comparatively acceptable; and by the stress of invasion the two kindred peoples of the Spanish Peninsula,

Spain and Portugal, were beaten and warmed into hearty combativeness. The same provocation drove the great hordes of Russia into wholesome patriotism. And then a fourth people, greater than these three, but divided and bound, was at last able to combine, though imperfectly, and to avenge itself on the French oppressor. This fourth people was the German. There were two great German States, Prussia and Austria. Prussia then held in subjection a portion of an alien country, Poland, and Austria then led and eclipsed the ancient and robust nation of Hungary. Except Portugal, there was not one of these nations which had not at one time or another served the French tyrant as an accomplice.

There was besides Portugal one European State which had never been brought so low. This was the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, which was called by diplomatists Angleterre, and is generally denoted by the name which corresponds to Angleterre, England.

England, finally severed from France, or from provinces of France, in the middle of the fifteenth century, had early in the sixteenth incorporated with itself the people of its oldest mountains, the people of Wales. In the sixteenth, and in the early part of the seventeenth century, it had mastered and partially colonised the adjacent island of Ireland; had much more recently, at a time of sore need, treated this dependency almost as a foreign ally, and at the beginning of our century had, by an Act of Union, apparently completed its incorporation. With the northern part