

**THE FEDERAL
GOVERNMENT
OF SWITZERLAND**

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The federal government of Switzerland by Bernard Moses

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BERNARD MOSES

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OF SWITZERLAND**

THE
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
OF
SWITZERLAND

AN ESSAY ON THE CONSTITUTION

BY

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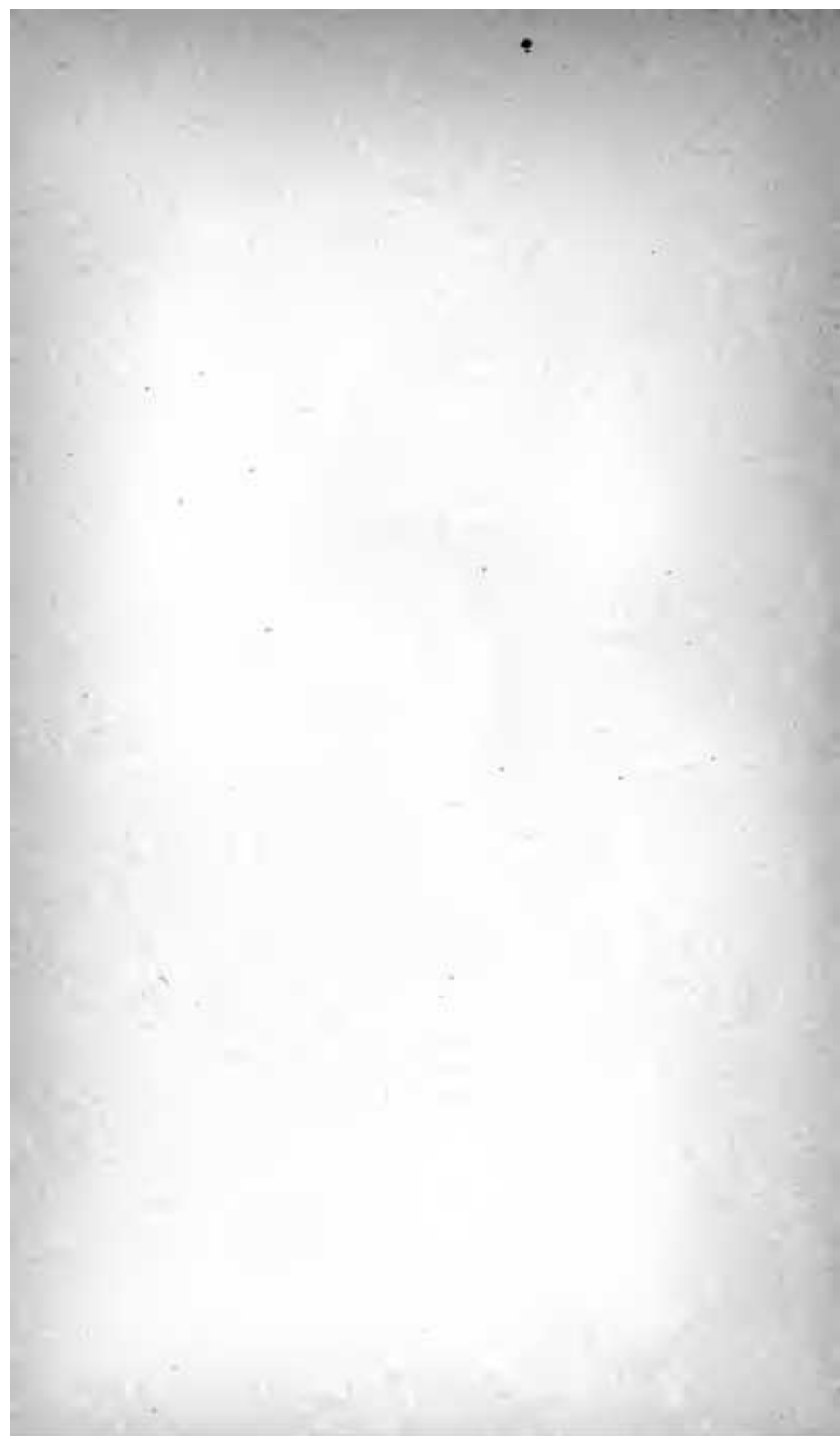
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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE territory of Switzerland is not wholly included within any natural boundaries. The canton of Schaffhausen lies north of the Rhine; on the east Graubünden is separated from Tyrol and Italy only by an arbitrary line; on the south Ticino extends beyond the Alps; and on the west there is no natural boundary coinciding with the political boundary. It is a land of marked peculiarities, the most conspicuous of which are its elevation, its broken surface, and its abundant water. Its elevation ranges from 646 feet at Lake Maggiore, to 15,217 feet on Monte Rosa. Within two degrees of latitude it embraces the climate of thirty-four degrees. It occupies a large part of the summit region of Europe, although Mont Blanc, the highest point of this region, stands without its border. Of the total area of Switzerland, 15,964 square miles, that portion of the surface which has an eleva-

tion less than 1,000 feet is about two per cent. of the whole. Between 1,000 and 2,500 feet there is an amount of the surface equal to 37 per cent. of the whole; between 2,500 and 4,000 feet, 21 per cent.; over 4,000 feet, 34 per cent.; while six per cent. of the whole surface is covered with snow-fields and glaciers. By another classification, 11,443 square miles are set down as "productive," and 4,521 square miles as "unproductive." The greater portion of the territory is embraced within two mountain masses, the Jura extending from Geneva to Schaffhausen, and the Alps occupying the southern cantons. The Jura is composed of a number of parallel ridges with intervening valleys. The Alps, on the other hand, are made up of one great ridge supported by far-reaching buttresses. The valleys which lie between these buttresses, particularly those north of the main ridge, are specially the scene of the characteristic life of the Swiss. But the most remarkable feature of this mountain region is its abundant water sources. Within a small district about the St. Gothard, arise important streams, which flow into four distinct seas. The Rhine passes first into Lake Constance, and thence into the North Sea. The Rhone rushes into the Lake of Geneva, which sends it forth purified to the Mediterranean. The Ticino, gathering on the southern slope of the Alps,

joins the Po and is carried on to the Adriatic ; while the Inn falls into an eastern valley, and then, in union with the Danube, is lost in the Black Sea. From this point of view Switzerland appears like a great reservoir, whose refreshing waters are sent to the four quarters of Europe.

The population of the territory now under the dominion of the Swiss Republic has undergone fewer changes through migration or foreign interference than that of most lands of Western civilization. It may, therefore, be contrasted with those societies which have grown up in America from English or Spanish settlements. In the one case, there has been growth from pre-historic stock without serious disturbing influences. In the other case, the societies have been formed from elements whose later environment has had little in common with their earlier surroundings, and under conditions where the force of ancient traditions has been weakened by long migration. In the one case, the isolated communities have been crowded together by the external pressure of hostile states. In the other case, the individual settlements have been drawn together by the desire to satisfy their economic wants under more favorable conditions. In the one case, liberty and equality have been fought for in the face of absolutism and aristocratic tendencies. In the other case, particularly in the British set-