

PHASES OF PARTY

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Phases of Party by Charles Harcourt Chambers

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CHARLES HARCOURT CHAMBERS

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BY

CHARLES HARCOURT CHAMBERS, M.A.

'For if words are not things, they are living powers, by which the things of most importance to mankind are actuated, combined, and humanized.'

COLBRIDGE, *Aids to Reflection*, Pref. p. xi.

SECOND EDITION.



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PREFACE

TO

THE SECOND EDITION.

THIS SKETCH of the changes of Party was written immediately after the election of the present Parliament in the Spring of 1869. It was at once attacked with considerable virulence by the so-called 'advanced liberal' papers, and the writer was informed that he was utterly blind to all that was passing about him.

The effect of what has taken place in the last three years has been to confirm the view he has taken of the stability of Constitutionalism in England and Europe, and the lasting nature of the political philosophy of the Whig writers on history and of their influence upon the world.

At home we have a far larger number of

declared constitutional Liberals than before, while the weakness and powerlessness of the Republicans have been repeatedly made plain; abroad we have seen the principle of constitutional monarchy triumph in Spain following in the steps of Italy; in France, though matters are still somewhat chaotic, the moderate party have been restored to life, and are taking a part in public affairs from which they have been entirely excluded for nearly a century. The rallying of the old nobility and gentry of France around her in her adversity has gone far towards restoring the country to a healthy condition, by introducing elements eliminated in 1792; and but for the unhappy split in the succession to the throne we might before this have seen a constitutional monarchy established there.

The great part taken by the German Princes in the war, and the reality of their position at the head of the social system, combined with their strong respect for law and right and constituted authority of all

kinds, has had a great moral effect upon the world, contrasted as it has been with much that was contemptible among their opponents.

There, no doubt, has been and still is in combination with these changes, apparently adverse to the popular principle, a desire on the part of the dynastic and priestly parties (that is, the old foreign Tory party) to show that these things are in their favour—hence the prophecies of the Ultramontanes of the restoration of the papacy, and their strenuous efforts in Germany, Ireland, and elsewhere, to restore mediæval ideas of the supremacy of the Roman See; but, in truth, the connection of the Count de Chambord with the ultramontane party has prevented the possibility of his coming to the throne, and any king who comes to a European throne must, in these days, be as much and more free from priestly domination and despotic ideas than William III.

It is this element of true constitutional

liberty, in modern Monarchism, which makes the ultramontane Roman Catholics dwell so constantly in their sermons and speeches upon the dangers of modern Liberalism, as if the only way out of Communism was the despotic principle; and they sometimes dwell with so much gusto upon the possibilities of popular and Communistic violence, that one might almost imagine that they preferred it to the state of things described above.*

The proclamation of the infallibility dogma, which at such a juncture looks like the catching at a straw of a drowning man, or else is an illustration of the Roman proverb, 'Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat,' has occasioned a split in the Roman body which has thrown the ultramontane section into greater prominence, but this prominence is a sign, taken with its violence of action, of weakness rather than of power. More and

* Jesuitism and Radicalism are two several marks of the same destroying spirit, but the former poisons the very germ—misusing the name of God.—*Bunsen to J. Schnor von Carolsfeld, Life*, ii. 149.

more of the supporters of the See are becoming drawn away by the Lutheran principle of freedom of thought founded upon free discussion of religious ideas. I have in one of the Appendices* given Ancillon's view, which appears to be the correct one, of the real revolution caused by Luther, reflected back in these days from England to Southern Europe. The change was one of the world of ideas alone. In social matters, law, order, sacredness of property, and just gradations of rank, due to worth and talent, are all maintained, because these are all naturally the result of an undogmatic and untheological reverence for the laws of God.

The abuse of the Divine name to support by sacerdotal terrorism a system of power in a body of spiritual rulers, backed up by the authority of the secular arm, is made impossible, owing to the growth of this intellectual liberty; and this is what Bunsen meant by the advent of a second Reformation—biblical, not

* Appendix II.