



John William Draper

History of the  
intellectual  
Development  
of Europe

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# **History of the Intellectual Development of Europe**

**Complete Edition (Vol. 1&2)**

e-artnow, 2021

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EAN 4064066387655



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# CHAPTER I.

## ON THE GOVERNMENT OF NATURE BY LAW.

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I INTEND, in this work, to consider in what manner the advancement of Europe in civilization has taken place, to ascertain how far its progress has been fortuitous, and how far determined by primordial law.

*The subject proposed.*

Does the procession of nations in time, like the erratic phantasm of a dream, go forward without reason or order? or, is there a predetermined, a solemn march, in which all

must join, ever moving, ever resistlessly advancing, encountering and enduring an inevitable succession of events?

In a philosophical examination of the intellectual and political history of nations, an answer to these questions is to be found. But how difficult it is to master the mass of facts necessary to be collected, to handle so great an accumulation, to place it in the clearest point of view; how difficult it is to select correctly the representative men, to produce them in the proper scenes, and to conduct successfully so grand and complicated a drama as that of European life! Though in one sense the subject offers itself as a scientific problem, and in that manner alone I have to deal with it; in another it swells into a noble epic—the life of humanity, its warfare and repose, its object and its end.

Man is the archetype of society. Individual development is the model of social progress.

Some have asserted that human affairs are altogether determined by the voluntary action of men, some that the Providence of God directs us in every step, some that all events are fixed by Destiny. It is for us to ascertain how far each of these affirmations is true.

The life of individual man is of a mixed nature. In part he submits to the free-will impulses of himself and others, in part he is under the inexorable dominion of law. He insensibly changes his estimate of the relative power of each of these influences as he passes through successive stages. In the confidence of youth he imagines that very much is under his control, in

the disappointment of old age very little. As time wears on, and the delusions of early imagination vanish away, he learns to correct his sanguine views, and prescribes a narrower boundary for the things he expects to obtain. The realities of life undeceive him at last, and there steals over the evening of his days an unwelcome conviction of the vanity of human hopes. The things he has secured are not the things he expected. He sees that a Supreme Power has been using him for unknown ends, that he was brought into the world without his own knowledge, and is departing from it against his own will.

Whoever has made the physical and intellectual history of individual man his study, *It foreshadows social life.* will be prepared to admit in what a surprising manner it foreshadows social history. The equilibrium and movement of humanity are altogether physiological phenomena. Yet not without hesitation may such an opinion be frankly avowed, since it is offensive to the pride, and to many of the prejudices and interests of our age. An author who has been disposed to devote many years to the labour of illustrating this topic, has need of the earnest support of all who prize the truth; and, considering the extent and profundity of his subject, his work, at the best, must be very imperfect, requiring all the forbearance, and even the generosity of criticism.

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In the intellectual infancy of a savage state, *First opinions of savage life.* Man transfers to Nature his conceptions of himself, and, considering that every thing he does is determined by his own pleasure, regards all passing



events as depending on the arbitrary volition of a superior but invisible power. He gives to the world a constitution like his own. His tendency is necessarily to superstition. Whatever is strange, or powerful, or vast, impresses his imagination with dread. Such objects are only the outward manifestations of an indwelling spirit, and therefore worthy of his veneration.

After Reason, aided by Experience, has led him forth from these delusions as respects surrounding things, he still clings to his original ideas as respects objects far removed. In the distance and irresistible motions of the stars he finds arguments for the supernatural, and gives to each of those shining bodies an abiding and controlling genius. The mental phase through which he is passing permits him to believe in the exercise of planetary influences on himself.

But as reason led him forth from fetichism, *Fetichism* so in due time it again leads him forth from *displaced by star-worship.* star-worship. Perhaps not without regret does he abandon the mythological forms he has created; for, long after he has ascertained that the planets are nothing more than shining points, without any perceptible influence on him, he still venerates the genii once supposed to vivify them, perhaps even he exalts them into immortal gods.

Philosophically speaking, he is exchanging by ascending degrees his primitive doctrine of arbitrary volition for the doctrine of law. As the fall of a stone, the flowing of a river, the movement of a shadow, the rustling of a leaf, have been traced to physical causes, to like causes at last are traced the revolutions of the stars. In events and scenes continually increasing in greatness and grandeur, he is

detecting the dominion of law. The goblins, and genii, and gods who successively extorted his fear and veneration, who determined events by their fitful passions or whims, are at last displaced by the noble conception of one Almighty Being, who rules the universe according to reason, and therefore according to law. *The idea of government by law.*

In this manner the doctrine of government by law is extended, until at last it embraces all natural events. It was thus that, hardly two centuries ago, that doctrine gathered immense force from the discovery of Newton that Kepler's laws, under which the movements of the planetary bodies are executed, issue as a mathematical necessity from a very simple material condition, and that the complicated motions of the solar system cannot be other than they are. Few of those who read in the beautiful geometry of the 'Principia' the demonstration of this fact, saw the imposing philosophical consequences which must inevitably follow this scientific discovery. And now the investigation of the aspect of the skies in past ages, and all predictions of its future, rest essentially upon the principle that no arbitrary volition ever intervenes, the gigantic mechanism moving impassively in accordance with a mathematical law. *Its application to the solar system.*

And so upon the earth, the more perfectly we understand the causes of present events, the more plainly are they seen to be the consequences of physical conditions, and therefore the results of law. To allude to one example out of many that might be considered, the winds, how proverbially *And to terrestrial events.*

inconstant, who can tell whence they come or whither they go! If any thing bears the fitful character of arbitrary volition, surely it is these. But we deceive ourselves in imagining that atmospheric events are fortuitous. Where shall a line be drawn between that eternal trade-wind, which, originating in well-understood physical causes, sweeps, like the breath of Destiny, slowly, and solemnly, and everlastingly over the Pacific Ocean, and the variable gusts into which it degenerates in more northerly and southerly regions—gusts which seem to come without any cause, and to pass away without leaving any trace? In what latitude is it that the domain of the physical ends, and that of the supernatural begins?

All mundane events are the results of the operation of law. Every movement in the skies or upon the earth proclaims to us that the universe is under government.

But if we admit that this is the case, from the mote that floats in the sunbeam to multiple stars revolving round each other, are we willing to carry our principles to their consequences, and recognise a like operation of law among living as among lifeless things, in the organic as well as the inorganic world? What testimony does physiology offer on this point?

Physiology, in its progress, has passed *And to the organic world.* through the same phases as physics. Living beings have been considered as beyond the power of external influences, and, conspicuously among them, Man has been affirmed to be independent of the forces that rule the world in which he lives. Besides that immaterial principle, the soul, which distinguishes him from all his

animated companions, and makes him a moral and responsible being, he has been feigned, like them, to possess another immaterial principle, the vital agent, which, in a way of its own, carries forward all the various operations in his economy.

But when it was discovered that the heart *Especially to man.* of man is constructed upon the recognised rules of hydraulics, and with its great tubes is furnished with common mechanical contrivances, valves; when it was discovered that the eye has been arranged on the most refined principles of optics, its cornea, and humours, and lens properly converging the rays to form an image—its iris, like the diaphragm of a telescope or microscope, shutting out stray light, and also regulating the quantity admitted; when it was discovered that the ear is furnished with the means of dealing with the three characteristics of sound—its tympanum for intensity, its cochlea for pitch, its semicircular canals for quality; when it was seen that the air brought into the great air-passages by the descent of the diaphragm, calling into play atmospheric pressure, is conveyed upon physical principles into the ultimate cells of the lungs, and thence into the blood, producing chemical changes throughout the system, disengaging heat, and permitting all the functions of organic life to go on; when these facts and very many others of a like kind were brought into prominence by modern physiology, it obviously became necessary to admit that animated beings do not constitute the exception once supposed, and that organic operations are the result of physical agencies.

If thus, in the recesses of the individual economy, these natural agents bear sway, must they not operate in the social economy too?

Has the great shadeless desert nothing to do with the habits of the nomade tribes who pitch their tents upon it—the fertile plain no connection with flocks and pastoral life—the mountain fastnesses with the courage that has so often defended them—the sea with habits of adventure? Indeed, do not all our expectations of the stability of social institutions rest upon our belief in the stability of surrounding physical conditions? From the time of Bodin, who nearly three hundred years ago published his work 'De Republica,' these principles have been well recognized: that the laws of Nature cannot be subordinated to the will of Man, and that government must be adapted to climate. It was these things which led him to the conclusion that force is best resorted to for northern nations, reason for the middle, and superstition for the southern.

In the month of March the sun crosses the equator, dispensing his rays more abundantly over our northern hemisphere. Following in his train, a wave of verdure expands towards the pole. The luxuriance is in proportion to the local brilliancy. The animal world is also affected. Pressed forward, or solicited onward by the warmth, the birds of passage commence their annual migration, keeping pace with the developing vegetation beneath. As summer declines, this orderly advance of light and life is followed by an orderly retreat, and in its turn the southern hemisphere presents

*In social as well  
as individual  
life.*

*Effects of the  
seasons on  
animals and  
plants.*

the same glorious phenomenon. Once every year the life of the earth pulsates; now there is an abounding vitality, now a desolation. But what is the cause of all this? It is only mechanical. The earth's axis of rotation is inclined to the plane of her orbit of revolution round the sun.

Let that wonderful phenomenon and its explanation be a lesson to us; let it profoundly impress us with the importance of physical agents and physical laws. They intervene in the life and death of man personally and socially. External events become interwoven in our constitution; their periodicities create periodicities in us. Day and night are incorporated in our waking and sleeping; summer and winter compel us to exhibit cycles in our life.

They who have paid attention to the subject have long ago ascertained that the possibility of human existence on the earth depends on conditions altogether of a material kind. Since it is only within a narrow range of temperature that life can be maintained, it is needful that our planet should be at a definite mean distance from the source of light and heat, the sun; and that the form of her orbit should be so little eccentric as to approach closely to a circle. If her mass were larger or less than it is, the weight of all living and lifeless things on her surface would no longer be the same; but absolute weight is one of the primary elements of organic construction. A change in the time of her diurnal rotation, as affecting the length of the day and night, must at once be followed by a corresponding modification of the periodicities of the nervous system of animals; a change in her orbital translation round the sun, as determining the duration of

*Individual  
existence  
depends on  
physical  
conditions.*



the year, would, in like manner, give rise to a marked effect. If the year were shorter, we should live faster and die sooner.

In the present economy of our globe, natural agents are relied upon as the means of regulation and of government. Through heat, the distribution and arrangement of the vegetable tribes are accomplished; through their mutual relations with the atmospheric air, plants and animals are interbalanced, and neither permitted to obtain a superiority. Considering the magnitude of this condition, and its necessity to general life, it might seem worthy of incessant Divine intervention, yet it is in fact accomplished automatically.

Of past organic history the same remark may be made. The condensation of carbon from the air, and its inclusion in the strata, constitute the chief epoch in the organic life of the earth, giving a possibility for the appearance of the hot-blooded and more intellectual animal tribes. That great event was occasioned by the influence of the rays of the sun. And as such influences have thus been connected with the appearance of organisms, so likewise have they been concerned in the removal. Of the myriads of species which have become extinct, doubtless every one has passed away through the advent of material conditions incompatible with its continuance. Even now, a fall of half-a-dozen degrees in the mean temperature of any latitude would occasion the vanishing of the forms of warmer climates, and the advent of those of the colder. An

*Animal and vegetable life interbalanced by material conditions.*

*And also appearances and extinctions determined.*

obscuration of the rays of the sun for a few years would compel a redistribution of plants and animals all over the earth; many would totally disappear, and everywhere new comers would be seen.

The permanence of organic forms is altogether dependent on the invariability of the material conditions under which they live. Any variation therein, no matter how insignificant it might be, would be forthwith followed by a corresponding variation in the form. The present invariability of the world of organization is the direct consequence of the physical equilibrium, and so it will continue as long as the mean temperature, the annual supply of light, the composition of the air, the distribution of water, oceanic and atmospheric currents, and other such agencies remain unaltered; but if any one of these, or of a hundred other incidents that might be mentioned, should suffer modification, in an instant the fanciful doctrine of the immutability of species would be brought to its true value. The organic world appears to be in repose, because natural influences have reached an equilibrium. A marble may remain for ever motionless upon a level table; but let the surface be a little inclined, and the marble will quickly run off. What should we say of him, who, contemplating it in its state of rest, asserted that it was impossible for it ever to move?

They who can see no difference between the race-horse and the Shetland pony, the bantam and the Shanghai fowl, the greyhound and the poodle dog, who altogether deny that impressions can be made on species, and see in the

*Permanence of organisms due to immobility of external conditions.*

long succession of extinct forms, the ancient existence of which they must acknowledge, the evidences of a continuous and creative intervention, forget that mundane effects observe definite sequences, event following event in the necessity of the case, and thus constituting a chain, each link of which hangs on a preceding, and holds a succeeding one. Physical influences thus following one another, and bearing to each other the inter-relation of cause and effect, stand in their totality to the whole organic world as causes, it representing the effect, and the order of succession existing among them is perpetuated or embodied in it. Thus, in those ancient times to which we have referred, the sunlight acting on the leaves of plants disturbed the chemical constitution of the atmosphere, gave rise to the accumulation of a more energetic element therein, diminished the mechanical pressure, and changed the rate of evaporation from the sea, a series of events following one another so necessarily that we foresee their order, and, in their turn, making an impression on the vegetable and animal economy. The natural influences, thus varying in an orderly way, controlled botanical events, and made them change correspondingly. The orderly procedure of the one must be imitated in the orderly procedure of the other. And the same holds good in the animal kingdom; the recognized variation in the material conditions is copied in the organic effects, in vigour of motion, energy of life, intellectual power.

*Orderly  
sequence of  
conditions is  
followed by  
orderly organic  
changes.*

When, therefore, we notice such orderly successions, we must not at once assign them to a direct intervention, the issue of wise predeterminations of a voluntary agent; we must first satisfy ourselves how far they are dependent on mundane or material conditions, occurring in a definite and necessary series, ever bearing in mind the important principle that an orderly sequence of inorganic events necessarily involves an orderly and corresponding progression of organic life.

To this doctrine of the control of physical agencies over organic forms I acknowledge no exception, not even in the case of man. The varied aspects he presents in different countries are the necessary consequences of those influences.

*Universal control of physical agents over organisms.*

He who advocates the doctrine of the unity of the human race is plainly forced to the admission of the absolute control of such agents over the organization of man, since the originally-created type has been brought to exhibit very different aspects in different parts of the world, apparently in accordance with the climate and other purely material circumstances. To those circumstances it is scarcely necessary to add manner of life, for that itself arises from them. The doctrine of unity demands as its essential postulate an admission of the paramount control of physical agents over the human aspect and organization, else how could it be that, proceeding from the same stock, all shades of complexion in the skin, and variety in the form of the skull, should have arisen? Experience assures us that these are changes assumed only by slow degrees, and not with abruptness; they come as a cumulative effect. They plainly enforce the doctrine that national type is not to be regarded as a definite or final thing, a seeming immobility in this particular being due to the attainment of a correspondence with the conditions to which the type is exposed. Let those conditions be changed, and it begins forthwith to change too. I repeat it, therefore, that he who receives the doctrine

*The case of man.*

of the unity of the human race, must also accept, in view of the present state of humanity on various parts of the surface of our planet, its necessary postulate, the complete control of physical agents, whether natural, or arising artificially from the arts of civilization and the secular progress of nations toward a correspondence with the conditions to which they are exposed.

To the same conclusion also must he be brought who advocates the origin of different races from different centres. It comes to the same thing, whichever of those doctrines we adopt. Each brings us to the admission of the transitory nature of typical forms, to their transmutations and extinctions.

Variations in the aspect of men are best *Human variations.* seen when an examination is made of nations arranged in a northerly and southerly direction; the result is such as would ensue to an emigrant passing slowly along a meridional track; but the case would be quite different if the movement were along a parallel of latitude. In this latter direction the variations of climate are far less marked, and depend much more on geographical than on astronomical causes. In emigrations of this kind there is never that rapid change of aspect, complexion, and intellectual power which must occur in the other. Thus, though the mean temperature of Europe increases from Poland to France, chiefly through the influence of the great Atlantic current transferring heat from the Gulf of Mexico and tropical ocean, that rise is far less than would be encountered on passing through the same distance to the south. By the arts of civilization man can much more easily avoid the difficulties



arising from variations along a parallel of latitude than those upon a meridian, for the simple reason that in that case those variations are less.

But it is not only complexion, development *Their political* of the brain, and, therefore, intellectual power, *result.* which are thus affected. With difference of climate there must be differences of manners and customs, that is, differences in the modes of civilization. These are facts which deserve our most serious attention, since such differences are inevitably connected with political results. If homogeneousness be an element of strength, an empire that lies east and west must be more powerful than one that lies north and south. I cannot but think that this was no inconsiderable cause of the greatness and permanence of Rome and that it lightened the task of the emperors, often hard enough, in government. There is a natural tendency to homogeneousness in the east and west direction, a tendency to diversity and antagonism in the north and south, and hence it is that government under the latter circumstances will always demand the highest grade of statesmanship.

The transitional forms which an animal type *Nature of* is capable of producing on a passage north *transitional* and south are much more numerous than *forms.* those it can produce on a passage east and west. These, though they are truly transitional as respects the type from which they have proceeded, are permanent as regards the locality in which they occur, being, in fact, the incarnation of its physical influences. As long, therefore, as those influences remain without change the form that has been

produced will last without any alteration. For such a permanent form in the case of man we may adopt the designation of an ethnical element.

An ethnical element is therefore necessarily of a dependent nature; its durability arises from its perfect correspondence with its environment. Whatever can affect that correspondence will touch its life.

*Conditions of change in an ethnical element.*

Such considerations carry us from individual man to groups of men or nations. There is a progress for races of men as well marked as the progress of one man. There are thoughts and actions appertaining to specific periods in the one case as in the other. Without difficulty we affirm of a given act that it appertains to a given period. We recognize the noisy sports of boyhood, the business application of maturity, the feeble garrulity of old age. We express our surprise when we witness actions unsuitable to the epoch of life. As it is in this respect in the individual, so it is in the nation. The march of individual existence shadows forth the march of race-existence, being, indeed, its representative on a little scale.

*Progress of nations like that of individuals.*

Groups of men, or nations, are disturbed by the same accidents, or complete the same cycle as the individual. Some scarcely pass beyond infancy, some are destroyed on a sudden, some die of mere old age. In this confusion of events, it might seem altogether hopeless to disentangle the law which is guiding them all, and demonstrate it clearly. Of such groups, each may exhibit, at

*Communities, like families, exhibit members in different stages of advance.*

the same moment, an advance to a different stage, just as we see in the same family the young, the middle-aged, the old. It is thus that Europe shows in its different parts societies in very different states—here the restless civilization of France and England, there the contentment and inferiority of Lapland. This commingling might seem to render it difficult to ascertain the true movement of the whole continent, and still more so for distant and successive periods of time. In each nation, moreover, the contemporaneously different classes, the educated and illiterate, the idle and industrious, the rich and poor, the intelligent and superstitious, represent different contemporaneous stages of advancement. One may have made a great progress, another scarcely have advanced at all. How shall we ascertain the real state of the case? Which of these classes shall we regard as the truest and most perfect type?

Though difficult, this ascertainment is not impossible. The problem is to be dealt with in the same manner that we should estimate a family in which there are persons of every condition from infancy to old age. Each member of it tends to pursue a definite course, though some, cut off in an untimely manner, may not complete it. One may be enfeebled by accident, another by disease; but each, if his past and present circumstances be fully considered, will illustrate the nature of the general movement that all are making. To demonstrate that movement most satisfactorily, certain members of such a family suit our purpose better than others, because they more closely represent its type, or have advanced farthest in their career.

So in a family of many nations, some are more mature, some less advanced, some die in early life, some are worn out by extreme old age; all show special peculiarities. There are distinctions among kinsmen, whether we consider them intellectually or corporeally. Every one, nevertheless, illustrates in his own degree the march that all are making, but some do it more, some less completely. The leading, the intellectual class, is hence always the true representative of a state. It has passed step by step through the lower stages, and has made the greatest advance.

*The intellectual class the true representative of a community.*

In an individual, life is maintained only by the production and destruction of organic particles, no portion of the system being in a state of immobility, but each displaying incessant change. Death is, therefore, necessarily the condition of life, and the more energetic the function of a part—or, if we compare different animals with one another—the more active the mode of existence, correspondingly, the greater the waste and the more numerous the deaths of the interstitial constituents.

*Interstitial change and death the condition of individual life.*

To the death of particles in the individual answers the death of persons in the nation, of which they are the integral constituents. In both cases, in a period of time quite inconsiderable, a total change is accomplished without the entire system, which is the sum of these separate parts, losing its identity. Each particle or each person comes into existence, discharges an appropriate duty, and then passes away, perhaps unnoticed. The production, continuance, and

*Particles in the individual answer to persons in the state.*

death of an organic molecule in the person answers to the production, continuance, and death of a person in the nation. Nutrition and decay in one case are equivalent to well-being and transformation in the other.

In the same manner that the individual is liable to changes through the action of external agencies, and offers no resistance thereto, nor any indication of the possession of a physiological inertia, but submits at once to any impression, so likewise it is with aggregates of men constituting nations. A national type pursues its way physically and intellectually through changes and developments answering to those of the individual, and being represented by Infancy, Childhood, Youth, Manhood, Old Age, and Death respectively.

But this orderly process may be disturbed exteriorly or interiorly. If from its original seats a whole nation were transposed to some new abode, in which the climate, the seasons, the aspect of nature were altogether different, it would appear spontaneously in all its parts to commence a movement to come into harmony with the new conditions—a movement of a secular nature, and implying the consumption of many generations for its accomplishment. During such a period of transmutation there would, of course, be an increased waste of life, a risk, indeed, of total disappearance or national death; but the change once completed, the requisite correspondence once attained, things would go forward again in an orderly manner on the basis of the new modification that had been assumed. When the change to

be accomplished is very profound, involving extensive anatomical alterations not merely in the appearance of the skin, but even in the structure of the skull, long periods of time are undoubtedly required, and many generations of individuals are consumed.

Or, by interior disturbance, particularly by *And through blood admixture,* with more rapidity may a national type be affected, the result plainly depending on the extent to which admixture has taken place. This is a disturbance capable of mathematical computation. If the blood admixture be only of limited amount, and transient in its application, its effect will sensibly disappear in no very great period of time, though never, perhaps, in absolute reality. This accords with the observation of philosophical historians, who agree in the conclusion that a small tribe intermingling with a larger one will only disturb it in a temporary manner, and, after the course of a few years, the effect will cease to be perceptible. Nevertheless, the influence must really continue much longer than is outwardly apparent; and the result is the same as when, in a liquid, a drop of some other kind is placed, and additional quantities of the first liquid then successively added. Though it might have been possible at first to detect the adulteration without trouble, it becomes every moment less and less possible to do so, and before long it cannot be done at all. But the drop is as much present at last as it was at first: it is merely masked; its properties overpowered.

Considering in this manner the contamination of a numerous nation, a trifling amount of foreign blood



admixture would appear to be indelible, and the disturbance, at any moment, capable of computation by the ascertained degree of dilution that has taken place. But it must not be forgotten that there is another agency at work, energetically tending to bring about homogeneity: it is the influence of external physical conditions. The intrusive adulterating element possesses in itself no physiological inertia, but as quickly as may be is brought into correspondence with the new circumstances to which it is exposed, herein running in the same course as the element with which it had mingled had itself antecedently gone over.

National homogeneity is thus obviously secured by the operation of two distinct agencies: the first, gradual but inevitable dilution; the second, motion to come into harmony with the external natural state. The two conspire in their effects.

We must therefore no longer regard nations or groups of men as offering a permanent picture. Human affairs must be looked upon as in continuous movement, not wandering in an arbitrary manner here and there, but proceeding in a perfectly definite course. Whatever may be the present state, it is altogether transient. All systems of civil life are therefore necessarily ephemeral. Time brings new external conditions; the manner of thought is modified; with thought, action. Institutions of all kinds must hence participate in this fleeting nature, and, though they may have allied themselves to political power, and gathered therefrom the means of coercion, their permanency is but little improved

*Secular variations of nations.*

*Their institutions must correspondingly change.*

thereby; for, sooner or later, the population on whom they have been imposed, following the external variations, spontaneously outgrows them, and their ruin, though it may have been delayed, is none the less certain. For the permanency of any such system it is essentially necessary that it should include within its own organization a law of change, and not of change only, but change in the right direction—the direction in which the society interested is about to pass. It is in an oversight of this last essential condition that we find an explanation of the failure of so many such institutions. Too commonly do we believe that the affairs of men are determined by a spontaneous action or free will; we keep that overpowering influence which really controls them in the background. In individual life we also accept a like deception, living in the belief that every thing we do is determined by the volition of ourselves or of those around us; nor is it until the close of our days that we discern how great is the illusion, and that we have been swimming—playing and struggling—in a stream which, in spite of all our voluntary motions, has silently and resistlessly borne us to a predetermined shore.

In the foregoing pages I have been tracing analogies between the life of individuals and that of nations. There is yet one point more.

Nations, like individuals, die. Their birth *The death of nations.* presents an ethnical element; their death, which is the most solemn event that we can contemplate, may arise from interior or from external causes. Empires are only sand-hills in the hour-glass of Time; they crumble spontaneously away by the process of their own growth.

A nation, like a man, hides from itself the contemplation of its final day. It occupies itself with expedients for prolonging its present state. It frames laws and constitutions under the delusion that they will last, forgetting that the condition of life is change. Very able modern statesmen consider it to be the grand object of their art to keep things as they are, or rather as they were. But the human race is not at rest; and bands with which, for a moment, it may be restrained, break all the more violently the longer they hold. No man can stop the march of destiny.

Time, to the nation as to the individual, is nothing absolute; its duration depends on the rate of thought and feeling. For the same reason that to the child the year is actually longer than to the adult, the life of a nation may be said to be no longer than the life of a person, considering the manner in which its affairs are moving. There is a variable velocity of existence, though the lapses of time may be equable.

The origin, existence, and death of nations depend thus on physical influences, which are themselves the result of immutable laws. Nations are only transitional forms of humanity. They must undergo obliteration as do the transitional forms offered by the animal series. There is no more an immortality for them than there is an immobility for an embryo in any one of the manifold forms passed through in its progress of development.

The life of a nation thus flows in a regular sequence, determined by invariable law, and

*There is nothing absolute in time.*

*Nations are only transitional forms.*

*Their course is ever advancing,*

hence, in estimating different nations, we must *never retrograde.* not be deceived by the casual aspect they present. The philosophical comparison is made by considering their entire manner of career or cycle of progress, and not their momentary or transitory state. Though they may encounter disaster, their absolute course can never be retrograde; it is always onward, even if tending to dissolution. It is as with the individual, who is equally advancing in infancy, in maturity, in old age. Pascal was more than justified in his assertion that "the entire succession of men, through the whole course of ages, must be regarded as one man, always living and incessantly learning." In both cases, the manner of advance, though it may sometimes be unexpected, can never be abrupt. At each stage events and ideas emerge which not only necessarily owe their origin to preceding events and ideas, but extend far into the future and influence it. *Variable* As these are crowded together, or occur more *rapidity* of widely apart, national life, like individual, *national life.* shows a variable rapidity, depending upon the intensity of thought and action. But, no matter how great that energy may be, or with what rapidity modifications may take place—since events are emerging as consequences of preceding events, and ideas from preceding ideas—in the midst of the most violent intellectual oscillations, a discerning observer will never fail to detect that there exists a law of continuous variation of human opinions.

In the examination of the progress of *Plan of this* Europe on which we now enter, it is, of course, *work.* to intellectual phenomena that we must, for the most part,