

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE history of England for eight or nine centuries is the story of the struggle of man to be free. One after another the powers over life and liberty have been broken, at last real democracy has been achieved, and thirty million votes each possess an equal value and an equal power to direct the affairs of the commonwealth. The first and natural tendency, in this new situation, is to use the new found power to oppress and suppress, for all through the ages most power has been used that way. Just as a newly appointed policeman is naturally anxious to lock up his first man, so a newly founded democracy is over-anxious to make its presence in the world obvious and evident.

In the age-long advocacy of the vote, virtues have been attributed to it which it does not possess, and evils which have nothing to do with it have been blamed on its absence. But as with the policeman so with the democratic power, age and experience will teach the wisdom of waiting round the corner or on the other side of the street, until there is at least a reasonable probability that the interposition of authority may be useful, and is more likely to reduce than to increase the commotion or the trouble.

From the days of primitive tyrants to the days of civilised autocrats, the individual man has been the bond slave of the State. Can it therefore be wondered at, that having become the master of the