

has existed almost universally in this country through all the changes in Church, State, and Society, which have taken place. This universal and tacit respect for Order which underlay the many reform movements and never permitted the outbreak of a storm such as was witnessed abroad, has been accompanied, in most of the thoughtful minds of this country, by the tacit or openly avowed conviction that there exists a natural, moral, social, or divine order of the world. English Ethics have interested themselves in answering the questions of the nature, origin, and maintenance of this Law and Order, but they have never been, to any important extent, occupied with laying absolutely new foundations, with building afresh the edifice of State and Society, and only quite recently and tentatively with the formation of a philosophical or purely reasoned Creed. If we now contrast the conditions which surrounded thinkers in France at the end of the eighteenth century, we find that they were confronted by one of the greatest social and political experiments which history has ever witnessed. The Revolution had swept away all social and religious landmarks and changed the entire political aspect.¹ The shallow ethical theories which

¹ "That such a revolution must one day come, every observer who had compared the state of Europe with that of England had long seen to be inevitable. So far as England was concerned, the Puritan resistance of the seventeenth century had in the end succeeded in checking the general tendency of the time to religious and political despotism. Since the Revolution of 1688 freedom of conscience and the people's right to govern itself

through its representatives in Parliament had been practically established. Social equality had begun long before. Every man from the highest to the lowest was subject to, and protected by, the same law. The English aristocracy, though exercising a powerful influence on Government, were possessed of few social privileges, and hindered from forming a separate class in the nation by the legal and social tradition which