

question, that of the foundation, government, and constitution of society, has been treated in the most radical manner in France, where the existing historical foundations were most profoundly shaken, and where thinking minds were naturally invited to give their attention to the work of re-constitution and re-organisation.

21.
Constitution
of Society
treated in
France.

Before the great Revolution French thinkers had attacked both the social and the economic problem in an independent and original manner, but the fact that the edifice of the State was shaken in its very groundwork through the great cataclysm made it necessary to attend more to the work of laying new foundations or restoring the old ones than to the internal economic arrangements of the structure. The Revolution did not materially shake the foundations of society in this country. The Constitution was sufficiently broad and elastic to weather the storm; also sufficiently liberal to allow of internal adjustments. Peace at home combined with enterprise abroad had enabled industry and commerce to develop in a degree quite unparalleled in any other country of the modern world. Great Britain had taken the leading position, which had before that time been occupied by other nations, but lost through internal or external warfare. The conditions, therefore, existed here for a patient study of the problem of the peaceful Work of Society: the economic problem.

22.
Economic
problem in
Britain.

And, lastly, if we look to Germany, we find that the numerous existing states into which it was divided were neither so fundamentally shaken as was the case in France, nor did peaceful conditions and constitutional government exist together as they did in England.