

without political functions. The people in town-meeting direct the policy of the small commonwealth, pass appropriations, and vote internal improvements. We have here our nearest approach to complete democracy. In this parliament every voter has a voice. Moreover, no villages are incorporated; and the varied concerns of the village, with its higher organization, give to the statutes of the small town-commonwealths of New England a much wider range than in those states where the village manages its own affairs independently of the town in general.

In Virginia, whose system has been extended throughout the South, the county is the only local administrative division. Both the Virginia county and the New England town were the direct outgrowths of the parish, to which the American immigrants had been accustomed in England. But in the South, population, owing to the large size of the tobacco, rice, or cotton plantations, was not dense enough to permit of any smaller division than the county. The large number of indentured servants and transported criminals, the progenitors of the "poor-white trash" of the Southern states, and later the growth of slavery, still further developed aristocratic tendencies in the South. The system of Massachusetts was democratic in form; that of Virginia, aristocratic. In Massachusetts, the voters in town-meeting formed the local parliament; in Virginia, the local legislature was appointed by the governor. As the commissioners were always men of the greatest wealth and influence in the community, the system, while republican in form, was essentially aristocratic. The power over local affairs was concentrated in the hands of a few.

To the reasons already mentioned for the wide divergence between the local governments of Massachusetts or Connecticut and those of Virginia, may be added another, most important of all, viz.: the different religious and political ideas that the Puritans and the Virginia colonists brought from England; and it is to be noted that the system of local government adopted in the South did not differ materially from that which then existed in England. It was the departure of Massachusetts from the English model that pro-