An Hour with the Editor

ENGLISH SOVEREIGNS

George II. made no claim to statesmanship and was not entitled to any. He was a soldier of some skill. His personal life was not above reproach, although his irregularities were not what would be regarded as flagrant in those times. Hallam says of his reign that it was the most prosperous that England had ever known. The boundaries of the Empire were enlarged; her commerce increased and the intellectual activity of her people was fairly comparable to that of the Elizabethan Age. He came to the throne when he was 45. As Prince of Wales he proved troublesome to his father; but he took very little real interest in English politics, being chiefly absorbed in Continental affairs. He commanded the allies in the Battle of Dettingen, defeating the French in a well-fought struggle. He was the last King of England to take an active part in the prosecution of a war or to appear upon a battlefield. His reign was marked by two great events in British history: Clive brought a large part of India under the control of Britain, and Wolfe wrested Canada from the French. He died in 1760.

The commanding figure in the reign of George II., speaking politically, was William Pitt, afterwards Earl Chatham. Reference was made to him in the last preceding article. He was a man of remarkable powers of mind, and an orator of surpassing eloquence, an idealist, and a firm believer in the destiny of the British race. As an administrator he displayed exceptional vigor, and when he assumed office, he adopted an aggressive line of action. He was perhaps not the founder of the British Empire, but he did more than any other one man to make it what it is today territorially. Had his counsels prevailed, England would not have lost her American Colonies. He was not by any means a favorite with the King, who opposed his entrance into the ministry as long as he could, and when forced to give way at last, ejaculated that his minister had become king. But if George was obliged to receive Pitt, he was yet able to make things exceedingly unpleasant for him, and the result was the overthrow of the Devonshire administration, of which Pitt was a member, and for eleven weeks the country was without a government. During that period the people everywhere testified their confidence in Pitt. So many cities presented him with their freedom that one speaker wittily remarked that "it rained gold boxes." At this time the Duke of Newcastle was in control of the majority of the House of Commons, having secured its support by the most unscrupulous system of corruption ever known in Great Britain. He was, however, of no ability as an administrator, and through the intervention of Lord Chesterfield, an arrangement was made whereby Newcastle became nominally Premier, with Pitt leader of the House of Commons. Pitt at once asserted himself. Leaving the patronage wholly in the hands of Newcastle, he assumed the real headship of the ministry, and for the next four years was absolutely dictator of British policy. Goldwin Smith, describing this period of his career says:

"The House of Commons bows, almost cringes, to his personal ascendency, sustained by the oratoric fire, of which only a few flakes remain. His will is done, and all money which his vastly expensive policy demands is voted without a word. He had boasted that he alone could save the country. War was his panacea; he avowed himself a lover of honorable war. His grand aim was to humble France, strip her of her colonies, and destroy her commerce, thereby, as he and the traders of that day believed, making British commerce flourish. His policy was thus the opposite of Walpole. Of economy and finance he was alike ignorant and regardless. He was the greatest of war ministers. He had the eye to discern merit in the services and to promote it over the head of seniority and in defiance of routine. He infused his own spirit into all. It was in Hawke, when, on a stormy sea and on a dangerous coast, he replied to the sailing-master, who had warned him of the peril, 'You have done your duty in warning me; now lay me alongside the French admiral.' It was in Wolfe when he scaled the precipice of Quebec. No one, it was said, ever entered Chatham's closet without coming out of it a braver man." Of his personal character, it is said that it was a strange compound of greatness and littleness. He was intensely egotistical and wayward, while his arrogance was at times insufferable. Before the King he aped a humility that he did not feel. It used to be said of him that at a levee he bowed so low that those behind him could see his nose between his legs. His manner was intensely theatrical. He loved show, and he was at the summit of happiness when the bells were ringing throughout England because of the victories which attended British arms everywhere on sea and land.

We have now reached a point in the study of the development of British institutions, when the system of Limited Monarchy was fully established. We may in subsequent articles see that attempts were made, though without much success, to restore to the Crown some of its ancient powers, just as we have seen in our own day efforts put forward in the same direction; but, while in the case of the treatment accorded to the American Colonies, these efforts were productive of injury to the nation, in the majority of cases their effect was merely temporary and unimportant. We have seen that our system of government is, in fact, the recognition of those principles, which Locke taught are fundamental in English institutions, although this recognition reached its culmination partly because the occupants of the throne, the first two Georges, neither understood English politics nor cared to exercise royal prerogatives; partly because such men as Sunderland and Newcastle were able to play upon the weakness of men with bribery and patronage; but chiefly because in William Pitt the British commonalty produced its true personification. In him were the ideals of the British people exemplified. When George II. died and his son came to the throne, he found an England unlike that over which any other sovereign had been called upon to reign.

PROCESSES OF NATURE

A little lichen grows upon a rock. It extracts from the atmosphere certain elements, and in the marvelous laboratory of its cells makes of them an acid or an alkali—all lichens do not produce the same things—which eat a little hollow in the rock. In this little hollow the rain lies a little longer than it does elsewhere, and in the process of many years it softens the stone. There the rain running over the surface of the rock, washes away the softened particles, and after years have passed there is enough of this rock-dust to form a roothold for larger plants than the lichen. They grow and their roots seek out all the little crevices in the rock, and the water follows them. As they gain in size they force the rocks apart. Then into the cracks thus made the rain falls. When winter comes, the rain freezes, and as water when frozen takes up more space than when in liquid form, the rocks are forced further asunder and split. And so the process keeps on, vegetable growth, rain and frost doing their work. Meanwhile generation after generation of plants die. While living these plants had taken carbonic acid out of the atmosphere, had liberated the oxygen and retained the carbon; and when they died the carbon became mixed with the rock-dust, also with the other elements which the plant finds somewhere. It is wonderful how plants discover what they need. Onions contain sulphur, and an experiment was once tried of growing an onion in soil in which there was no sulphur, but the onion contained this element just the same. So we do not know where plants get all the elements of which they are composed; but we do know that countless generations of plants have been getting these diverse elements from some source and leaving them with the carbon and other elements in the rock-dust to form fertile soil, such as produces in perfection food for mankind. There is nothing anything like as wonderful as the silent processes of nature that are going on around us every day.

We are apt to think of the sea as the realm of death, and doubtless it is so to some extent, but death is everywhere present on land. Men and all the myriads of animal life die. The air is poluted with noxious odors. The forests die and their decay smells rank to heaven. If this continued without relief for a prolonged period, the world would become unfit for habitation. Men and animals would die, poisoned by the vileness of the air they were compelled to breathe, and all animal and vegetable life would become converted into a seething mass of crawling rottenness. But Nature has her own methods. She sends the rain and washes the land clean; the debris is carried out to sea, and Mother Ocean in her depths undertakes to purify it all. If you think for a little you will realize that all manner of vileness must find its way to the sea, and yet there is nothing so perfectly fresh and clean as the wind that comes in over the blue water. Do not mistake the smell of the seaweed for the smell of the sea. The sea itself has no odor. The air that sweeps across it brings only purity in its bosom. There are mysteries of the sea that we cannot hope to fathom. No one has ever read the story of its depths. We do not know if the tides which affect its surface, or the currents which wind their way across its bosom, disturb the lowest depths, those great caverns where some sailor-folk say the great octopus lives, upon which the sperm whale feeds—the leviathan that old Hebrew traditions say is buried in the waters. But we do know that the sea is the great purifier, working silently day and night to keep the world fit to live in.

Did you ever think of the resistlessness of life, not of the life of men and the great creatures of the animal world, but of the tender life of vegetation? The rootlets of the ivy are slower in their process than the cannon-balls of an enemy, but they destroy more surely the castle upon which they fix themselves. A guard-like plant will pile one cell upon another, each made of the most fragile tissue, and will lift a rock that would crush the tissues into pulp if it were laid upon them. A tree will send its rootlets beneath some huge building, and in its own good time overthrow it. A wonderful thing indeed is vegetable life. Animal life is equally wonderful. Darwin was disposed to think that all soil passed at least once through the body of earth-worms, and that in these narrow chambers the rock-dust and the carbon and all the various other elements that the rain and the plants accumulated were converted into a material fit for the service of men.

Nature seems endowed with intelligence. Why is it that wheat grown in northern latitudes produces more kernels than that grown further south? We know that in the north the chances against the survival of the life in any single kernel of wheat are much less than they would be in a more genial clime. Does the wheat know this, and does it for that reason put forth all its energies to produce many kernels so that some of them may survive? In the lands around the Equator, so favorable are the conditions for the perpetuation of vegetable life, that each seed may be expected to grow. There nature devotes herself to producing foliage and flowers, and the seeds are relatively few in number. Nothing can be more wonderful than this. It is going on around us every day, and is more of a marvel than the skill that built the Pyramids or carved the Venus de Medici.

We are surrounded with wonderful things, but as we see them every day of our lives, we do not wonder about them. There is not anything more wonderful than a piece of granite. Break a fragment of this rock apart and look at the crystals of which it is made, and try to think out how it came about that the quartz sought the quartz, the feldspar the feldspar and the mica the mica, so that each was separate from the other and all combined to produce a solid and enduring stone. We stand aghast sometimes at the triumphs of human skill, but when we come to examine into them, we find that the silent processes of nature are far more marvelous.

Some Famous Dramatists and Their Master-Pieces

(N. de Bertrand Lugrin)

LUDWIG HOLBERG

Holberg has been called "The Father of Scandinavian Literature," but he served his country in more fields than literature, for he removed the shackles of tradition which had for many years hampered her, and showed her the road to deeper knowledge and happier enlightenment in the realms of science and the arts.

For all that he died one of the most honored of Scandinavians, holding a high place in the state and with wealth at his disposal, Holberg knew what it was to suffer hardship and privation and to struggle for the bare necessities of life. But a profound sense of humor was the happiest and most fortunate gift with which kindly nature had endowed him, and this quality of being able to find a droll side to even the most tragic event helped him to pass over his sorrows lightly. Then, too, Holberg never married. This is a pity, for he might have passed on greater things than mere wealth in land or money to his posterity, but we can afford to smile at painful vicissitudes when they do not cause the suffering of those near and dear to us, and Holberg was spared the trial of having a wife and children to endure poverty with him. So all of his troubles affected him but little, and to the last day of his life his fund of good humor never failed him.

It is his humor that gives to his comedies their greatest charm. It is, in fact, their humor that has given them life. As a poet, Holberg was not a success. He did not possess the poetic instinct either of music or imagination. His verse is rich in satire and irony, and displays an abundance of deep human feeling. But these are the qualities of a prose writer, and Holberg himself realizing his deficiency as a poet, gave up all attempts at verse-making after the first few efforts.

Before giving a brief resume of his dramatic works we will glance back at the period during which Holberg lived.

He was born in 1684, at a time when the Reformation had left its impress on the literature of Scandinavia, making it for the most part theological and political, and non-productive of inspiration. Bergen in Norway was the dramatist's birthplace; he was the youngest of twelve children, and left an orphan at the age of ten. There was insufficient money to give the boy the education he desired, and after going to school in Bergen, and afterwards in Copenhagen, he returned to Norway and taught in a clergyman's family to secure the necessary funds for a university career. We are told that while working as a teacher he was often called to take the clergyman's place in the pulpit when his employer was away or ill, and that he charmed the congregation, particularly the younger portion, by the brevity of his discourses. He finally attended the University at Copenhagen and succeeded in passing his examinations very creditably.

At this time Europe was feeling the stimulus of an intellectual activity which had as its inspiration the works of such men as Descartes and Bayle, Newton and Locke, Leibnitz and Puffendorf, Spinoza and Grotius, Rabelais and Montaigne. Of these great men Holberg heard for the first time, when he made his first journey abroad. His eyes were opened to the wonderful advance in science and philosophy, and he determined to make his first journey only the beginning of a series, for the purpose of gaining further knowledge of the progress the rest of the world was making, and endeavoring so far as in him lay to carry the enlightenment home to the North.

From 1705 to 1707 Holberg spent in England at Oxford, where, among many friends made while there, he numbered Addison, whose influence some critics affirm can be readily traced in the dramatist's works. Returning to the North, he went to Copenhagen, where he determined to make his future home, and Norway never saw him again.

There followed some years spent in travel and teaching. For a brief time, none too brief, according to Holberg, for it was an unpaid position, and he was sadly in need of funds, he filled the chair of philosophy at the University of Copenhagen. Foreign countries calling to him again, he set forth on his travels, and after two years returne dhome, where many months were passed in actual want, while he worked feverishly at political and historical treatises, for which he was very inadequately paid. When again a chair was offered him at the University, and with it a salary, he was delighted to accept, and filled the position so much to the satisfaction of everyone, that it was recognized that the School could not do without his services, and he was moved to a higher and again to a still higher place.

Frederick IV. was very fond of the theatre, but the class of plays put on the boards did not suit the taste of His Majesty in the least; they were sadly lacking in originality and wit, and it was suggested to Holberg that he essay to write a comedy. Holberg's response was to write five comedies, which were immediately staged and hailed with delight by all theatre-goers. These five were followed by twenty-eight others, and among them all, though they were written within a period of five years, it would be impossible to choose one more perfect than the rest in technical finish, wealth of humor, and charm of invention.

All sorts of themes were treated by Holberg, from the romances of the Trojan war, to the problems of his own times. And each play was an almost perfect production. He deserved the fame which immediately came to him, and which has known little diminution for over two hundred years.

Besides his comedies, the composition of which, after all, took up but a brief time in his life, he has written excellent historical matter, ethical treatises, romances and philosophical essays.

He died in 1754, Baron Holberg, the title having been conferred on him some time during the last ten years of his life. His estate he bequeathed for the endowment of a college in connection with the University which he had served so long and honorably.

As an example of the drollery of his poetry, the following extract is given. It is impossible to give any fair idea of his dramas in a short epitome of them.

In the poem, Peter Paars, the hero, is wrecked upon the Island of Anholt, and the following passage is descriptive of the isle and its inhabitants:

Anholt's the island's name, in answer he did say,
And daily for sea-farers the islanders do pray,
That they may come to shore. And answer oft is given,
For hither storm-tossed ships quite frequently are driven.
Good people are they now, although I fear 'tis true
That they in former days were but a sorry crew.
A very aged man, once guest of mine, I knew,
Who told me of a priest who lived here long ago—
His name I do not give, it need not mentioned be—
Who for a child baptised a daler charged as fee;
And when 'twas asked of him upon what grounds and why
He made this double charge, he boldly did reply;
"Two marks am I allowed for each child I baptise,
And two for burial. Now rarely 'tis one dies
Of sickness in his bed, for hanged are nearly all,
And thus my rightful dues I get, or not at all."
Of yore their lives were evil, as we from this may tell—
It little touches me, for here I do not dwell—
But now we see that better they grow from day to day,
For Christian lives they lead, and shipwrecks are their stay.

Needless to say, the Anholters were enraged at this poem, particularly this extract. One man went so far as to petition that it be burned by the hangman.

FIRST THINGS IN AMERICA

Delaware settled 1627.
Pilgrims landed 1620.
Charleston settled 1670.
Erie Canal opened 1825.
Savannah founded 1732.
New Jersey settled 1624.
First overland mail 1848.
First bankrupt act 1800.
Rhode Island settled 1636.
Pennsylvania settled 1681.
Settlement of Boston 1630.
New Orleans founded 1717.
First sleeping-car 1836-1837.
Yale College founded 1700.
North Carolina settled 1650.
Pacific Railway opened 1869.
New Hampshire settled 1623.
Settlement of Maryland 1634.
First settlement in Ohia 1788.
First Quakers in America 1656.
Settlement of Connecticut 1633.
First Pullman palace-cars 1834.
National banks established 1863.
Washington chosen capital 1792.
First American gold coined 1792.
Federal Constitution adopted 1789.
First settlement in Kentucky 1773.
Fifteenth amendment passed 1869.
New York taken by the Dutch 1673.
Phonograph invented by Edison 1877.
First daily weather-charts issued 1872.
First marine insurance in America 1721.
William Penn purchased Delaware 1682.
Declaration of Independence July 4, 1776.
First almanac published in the United States 1639.
First permanent settlement in Maine 1628.
Alaska acquired from Russia, June 20, 1866.
West Point Military Academy founded 1802.
First Ericsson monitor fought March 9, 1862.
First paper-mill in the United States 1794.
First nail-cutting machine, New York, 1714.
First stereotyping in the United States 1813.
Edison's mimeograph patented August 8, 1876.
First slaves brought to Jamestown, Virginia, 1619.
Kerosene first used for illuminating 1826.
Ann Hutchinson preached in Massachusetts 1635.
Natural gas discovered near Pittsburg 1878.
First American cardinal appointed September 30, 1875.
First cable-railway opened, San Francisco, 1873.
Elias Howe, jr., patented sewing-machine 1846.
First practical steamboat by Robert Fulton 1807.
First elevated street-railway, New York, 1877-1878.
Colony of New York restored to the English 1674.
First telegraph message sent on the Atlantic cable 1858.
First volunteer fire company in the United States 1736.
Battle of Lexington, first blood of the Revolution, 1775.
First life insurance in America, in Philadelphia, 1812.
First electrocution in the State of New York 1890.
First American theatre built, in Philadelphia, 1759.
United States Naval Academy opened at Annapolis 1845.
First newspaper printed in the United States, Boston, 1690.
Charles Goodyear secured patents for vulcanizing rubber 1844.
First matches manufactured by machinery, Roxbury, Massachusetts, 1850.
Pennsylvania Hospital, first established in the United States, 1751.
First cut used in a newspaper advertisement, in New York ,1787.
First gold discovered in California, January 19, 1848, by James W. Marshall.
American flag first used at Cambridge by Washington, January 1, 1776.
Oliver Evans, of Philadelphia, patented the first steam-carriage 1787 (State patent).
First newspaper advertising agent began business in America 1846.
First practical typewriter invented by C. L. Sholes, Wisconsin, 1868.
Abraham Lincoln proclaimed the freedom of the slaves, January 1, 1863.

FROM THE FEMINIST'S SCRAP BOOK

Women's hearts beat faster than those of men.

Twelve ladies are British peeresses in their own right.

On the 1st of January, 1909, there were 6,071 women and 5,275 children in the United Kingdom receiving outdoor medical relief.

An English proverb is: "There is but one good mother-in-law, and she is dead"; the German proverb is: "There is no good mother-in-law but she that wears a green gown," and another is, "The best mother-in-law is she on whose gown the geese feed."

Conventional marriages are not in favor in proverbial wisdom, an old adage saying:

Wedlock, without love, they say
Is but a lock without a key.

The best advice is: "Go down the ladder when thou marriest a wife; go up when thou choosest a friend." Another proverb is, "Marry above your match and you get a master"; and they say in France, "Who taketh a wife for her dower turns his back on freedom."

In regard to taking a wife's counsel, one proverb says, "Take your wife's first advice, not her second," the reason assigned being that "Women are wise off-hand and fools on reflection."

A Russian proverb tells us that the wife ought to be treated with respect, for, "She is not a guitar, which having done playing with, the husband hangs on the wall."

An Eastern proverb says, "Beat a bullock every other furrow and a wife every other day."

A Chinese proverb says that, "A young wife should be in her house but a shadow and an echo."

In regard to old maids, the Russians have a curious custom. When a girl becomes of uncertain age, she disappears for a couple of years in Paris or London, or possibly some place down in the country, and then she returns as a widow. It is not considered good form to inquire into details, but the result is that there are no Russian old maids in good society.

A Bengal proverb says: "A clever woman is not old, though aged, but has the sweet sap of wit in her."

Here are a few other scattering sentiments from high sources:

"A light wife doth make a heavy husband."
—Shakespeare.

"A pretty woman's worth some pains to see.—Browning.

"Friend, beware of fair maidens! When their tenderness begins, our servitude is near."
—Victor Hugo.

HER PREFERENCE

"I endeavor not to make any distinctions as to my servants," says the new mistress. "My rule is to treat each of them as one of the family."

"Yes, mum," replied the new girl, "but if it's all the same to you I'd rather be treated with respect."