

An Hour with the Editor

ENGLISH SOVEREIGNS

There is a disposition on the part of some historians to place the whole responsibility of the loss of the Thirteen Colonies upon the shoulders of George III., and to treat Lord North, who for a good part of the time during which the dissensions between the Colonies and the Mother Country were acute, was Prime Minister, more as a tool in the hands of the King than as the mouthpiece of Parliament, and many things can be advanced in support of this view. But be this as it may, George was not long in finding that he must trust his fate and that of the kingdom in the hands of a minister. That minister was William Pitt, second son of the Earl of Chatham, in some respects the most remarkable figure in English history. He was member of Parliament at twenty-one; Chancellor of the Exchequer at twenty-three; Prime Minister at twenty-four, and absolute master of the kingdom at twenty-five. When chosen by the King for the position of first minister, he confronted a hostile Commons, and in the course of the next few months was defeated on no less than sixteen divisions. Set in the promise of a dissolution whenever he deemed the time ripe for it, he met defeat after defeat with unflinching dignity. It was clear to him that the Commons did not represent public opinion and he played with defeat for the express purpose of stimulating public sentiment in his favor, and when at last he appealed to the electorate no less than one hundred and sixty of his opponents lost their seats. One of his biographers says: "He was now at twenty-five years of age the most powerful subject that England had seen for many generations. He ruled absolutely over the Cabinet, and was at once the favorite of the sovereign, parliament and the nation; and from this date the life of Pitt becomes the history of England and the world. For seventeen eventful years he held his position without a break." He resigned because of the refusal of the King to assent to Roman Catholic emancipation, but he returned to office shortly after and served for two years. It is said that his death was due to the growing power of Napoleon combined with grief of the impeachment of his closest friend, Lord Melville. He was at that time only forty-seven years of age. There is very little doubt that he hastened his own end by his devotion to his single vice, namely an inordinate love of port wine. Pitt made a persistent attempt to inaugurate parliamentary reform, but he was unsuccessful. It is difficult to say just what place in politics should be assigned to him. He was more progressive than the Whigs and in his attitude towards the Crown went almost as far as the Tories. Perhaps it may be said with truth that he represented in himself the English idea of constitutional monarchy to an unusual degree. He showed this when he insisted that Parliament had the right to supply the temporary defect in the royal authority when the King became incapacitated by insanity. In this he went further than the Whigs under the leadership of Fox were prepared to go, but he was able to carry his point against all opposition. Perhaps this act more than anything else established the supremacy of Parliament in Britain. The union or Ireland with Great Britain was one of Pitt's achievements and its result would have been far more beneficial to both countries if it had not been for the stubbornness of the King. Coupled with the union project was a plan for Roman Catholic emancipation and provision for the Roman Catholic clergy in Ireland, but to these wise measures Pitt was unable to secure the consent of George.

Parliamentary institutions were in process of solution during the reign of George. While much had been accomplished in the way of establishing a representative body, the House of Commons was far from being an expression of popular sentiment. The franchise was restricted and there were many "rotten boroughs," which sent to Parliament only such persons as the great nobles owning them chose to select. Among those who labored for reform was Edmund Burke, who pleaded for the restoration of party lines, these having been practically obliterated under Pitt. He also strove hard to promote retrenchment and economy in all lines, but unfortunately with very little effect. A resolution was passed in the House declaring that "the influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing and ought to be diminished," but it went no further. The Duke of Richmond declared in the House of Lords that annual elections under universal suffrage would furnish the only remedy for the corruption that was penetrating every department of the public service. The letters of Junius indicate the condition into which the nation was falling. Associations were formed through the kingdom for the promotion of political reform. Indeed something of the same spirit, which in the religious world found expression in the Wesleyan movement, was manifest in politics. One of the results of this agitation was the practice of reporting the debates of Parliament. The old form is yet preserved in all legislative bodies in the British Empire, and the reporters, for whom every convenience is now provided, are strictly speaking mere tolerated spectators, who can be removed from the galleries at the mere whim of any member, and the fact that they report what takes place is a breach of privilege, no matter whether the report is correct or incorrect; but from the time of the prosecution of Wilkes in 1771, down to the present day there has been no serious attempt to prevent a publication of what members of Parliament say.

Among the enactments of the reign of

George one of the most beneficial was the abolition of the slave trade. Years were necessary to bring about the abolition of slavery within British dominions, but the slave trade was readily disposed of. One of the chief claims of Pitt to remembrance is that he supported Wilberforce in his great anti-slavery agitation. Another important step taken at this time was the establishment of a board of control in which supervision of the conduct of the East India Company was vested. Canadians have a special interest in the events of this period, for it was then, that is to say in 1791, that a constitution was given to Canada. The debates in the House of Commons over this measure were very notable. The chief participants were Burke and Fox, whose speeches are models of parliamentary eloquence. Both these great orators dealt with the French Revolution in the course of the discussion, and parliamentary tradition has it that never did the Commons hear such masterly efforts. The story of how as a result of this discussion the long friendship of Burke and Fox was broken forever has not yet ceased to be of interest. Burke was undoubtedly the most powerful orator of his day, and it is an open question if he has ever had a rival in fiery eloquence. His style was ornate and what has been called tempestuous. His celebrated speech on the occasion of the impeachment of Warren Hastings, which lasted four days, has been described as "a tempest of eloquence and denunciation." As a writer he was no less brilliant. He had several public offices and as an administrator was capable and incorruptible. Fox was another master of the power of speech. Indeed Burke called him "the greatest debater the world ever saw," and Sir James Mackintosh styled him "the most Demosthenian orator since Demosthenes." In office he was capable and honest; but his private life was sullied by the vices of his day. Never before and never since in the history of parliaments has any body contained at the same time three such men as Pitt, Burke and Fox. The latter half of the Eighteenth Century was an age of intellectual giants, but these three men towered above all their contemporaries.

RELIGION

What is religion? The word itself comes from the Latin "religio," and this seems to have been derived from the words "re," meaning again, and "ligio," meaning a bond. In other words, religion among the Romans means a fresh tie between man and the being or beings which he regarded as superior. A vow to the gods or to a single god was an act of religion, a rebinding of the person making the vow to the divinity to whom it was addressed. It is well to keep this primary meaning of the word in mind, for the word has come to be applied in other senses. Religion in the abstract may, therefore, be defined as the recognition of human responsibility to a superior being. In this general sense all religions are essentially the same, whether professed by those who think of God as revealed in Jesus Christ or who believe in vague spirits of the air, who surround us and from whom we may at any time expect evil. The fundamental idea is one of responsibility, even if it is understood in an imperfect sense. It may not be easy, perhaps it is impossible, by pure reason alone to demonstrate that there is any actual basis for any religion; but it is not difficult to show that without religion of some kind organized society would be impossible, and the lesson of history is that as nations have become irreligious they have become weak. Indeed, nationhood is impossible without religion.

Almost every one can bear testimony from his own observation that when a man has lost his religion he is very likely to lose all sense of responsibility. Hence it is that many persons say that a so-called converted heathen is usually untrustworthy unless self-interest compels him to be otherwise. One of the most difficult of things is to lose one religion and take up another. The reason of this is, perhaps, not very obscure. What is meant may be illustrated by an anecdote. A Christian missionary was once speaking to an educated Hindu concerning Christ, and told him that the Saviour of men was an incarnation of the Deity. To this the Hindu assented, saying that there had been previous incarnations, and he could readily understand how there might be a later and higher one. The missionary protested that the Hindu should disregard all he had ever seen taught about incarnations, and accept the doctrine that there had been only one, which the Hindu refused to do, saying that if he must reject what he had been taught, he saw no reason for accepting something similar that the missionary had been taught. This is only intended as an illustration, and it is not asserted that the Hindu was right; but it serves to show that all men, who have any religion at all, are unlikely to dismiss it from consideration wholly and take up with another. Very much of what is called missionary work is a mere discussion over names. The Red Indians of America believed in a Great Spirit, called by some of them Manitou; Christian people also believe in a Great Spirit, which some of them call God. Now are not a belief in Manitou and a belief in God after all one and the same thing? If you ask a man who believes in a Supreme Being, which he knows as Manitou, to believe that Being to be a myth, and accept another called God, are you not simply asking him, in point of fact, to change the name of the Being whom he worships? If you persuade him that Manitou is a false god, how can you expect him to believe that there is another Deity? It is often said that savage

Indians are honest. The reason is that they live up to their own religion. If we try to substitute another religion for theirs, we leave them without their innate sense of responsibility. These observations do not apply to such persons as attain to a truly spiritual life, but only to those who are induced to abandon the religion which their ancestors accepted for uncounted generations, and whose obligations are a part of their life, and accept another, that, so far as they or anyone else can understand it, is simply a reassertion in other words of what they are taught is wrong.

The world needs Christianity, not as a substitute for other religions, but as an addition to them. The defect in all other systems of religion is not that they do not recognize a Divine Being, call Him by whatsoever name they may, nor that they do not have good codes of ethics, but that they do not teach the possibility of a spiritual life. The point where Christianity differs from all other religions is not that it teaches that God became incarnate, for we find that idea almost everywhere, although at times it is exhibited in grotesque forms; it is not that it has the Ten Commandments, for these are not of Christian origin, nor were the principles laid down in them confined to any particular people. The essential distinction between all other religions and Christianity consists in the fact that the latter is based upon regeneration, or, in other words, that a spiritual birth is possible. It is thus the highest type of religion. What are the consequences of the possession or absence of this spiritual life is foreign to the point now being considered, which is that all religions, strictly observed, would lead to the development of what may be called morality, or, in other words, the right conduct of men towards each other. Christianity teaches that there may be something more than this, that is, a spiritual life, not in another world, but in this one.

Speaking purely from the standpoint of temporal things, any religion is better than none, and without religion human society and human progress would be impossible. Irreligion is sapping the vitality of civilization, for irreligion is only another name for irresponsibility. Religion furnishes a standard of action, a ground upon which appeal can be made to that sense of right and wrong which is essential to human welfare. Religion is one of the natural qualities of mankind, for there is no race of beings, however degraded, that does not recognize some authority, power or influence external to men. The only really irreligious people are found in civilized lands. Irreligion is the outcome of materialism; it is a denial of spiritual force.

EARLY CANADIAN HISTORY

In an anonymous pamphlet dated 1770, entitled "The Beginning, Progress and Conclusion of the Late War," there is a concise account of the early history of the Maritime Provinces of Canada, which, further condensed, might be useful to persons desirous of knowing something of the early days of the Dominion. As a rule the people of Canada do not pay sufficient attention to the history of their own country, and a truly popular account of it has yet to be written. The pamphlet tells us that the dominion of England over Newfoundland and what now forms the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward's Island was asserted in 1483, when "the sovereign dominion over the Island of Newfoundland, with that part of the continent first called Acadia, thence Acadia and Acadie, and afterwards Nova Scotia, was by solemn proceedings notorious to other European princes, confirmed and established in the crown of England." He is probably not right in his derivation of the name Acadia, the correct pronunciation of which is as though it were spelt Cadjeah. An idea seems to prevail that this pronunciation, which is that of the French people of the Maritime Provinces, is a broadening of a French word that ought to be pronounced as Acadie would be, if it were French; but the word is not French at all, but Indian, and it means had-dock, a fish that is exceedingly common in the Bay of Fundy. We find the same word in Passamaquoddy, Petticodiac, and some other names. But reverting to this historical story, we are told that in 1584 the French invaded and took possession of Acadia until they were ousted by the government of Virginia.

In 1620 James I. asserted his right of sovereignty by granting all that part of America "extending in breadth from the 40th to the 48th degree of north latitude inclusive, and extending from sea to sea, with the islands and seas adjoining to the council established at Plymouth for planting and governing New England." This implies that King James claimed the whole breadth of the continent. He excluded from this grant "a small part lying southeast of Anticosti." In the following year King James curtailed the scope of this grant, and gave to Sir William Alexander all that is now known as the Maritime Provinces, and declared that it was "to be called in all future times Nova Scotia in America and to be held for the crown of Scotland." In 1625 King Charles confirmed this grant and "to promote the settlement of a colony created 150 baronets, to which their aids were appointed, without due application to this service." Sir William Alexander established a settlement at Port Royal, and that baronet gave permission to Claude de la Tour and his son Charles to build a strong fort upon St. John's River, called Fort La Tour. These things had hardly been accomplished when King Charles, on his marriage, ceded the whole country to France. Two years after war broke out with France, and the region was retaken by England, and Sir William Alexander again entered into possession,

only to convey the whole in 1730 to Claude de la Tour and his son Charles, excepting Port Royal, the whole to be held under the crown of Scotland. Two years later Charles restored the region to France, and it remained the possession of the king of that country until 1764, when Oliver Cromwell retook it. In 1767 Charles II. gave the country back to France, the transfer being completed in 1769, when the French territory was declared to extend as far west as the Penobscot river. So things continued until 1769, when the Massachusetts Colony "with a proper naval and land force commanded by Sir William Phipps reduced Port Royal and all Nova Scotia or Acadia to the obedience of King William and Queen Mary"; but seven years after, by the Treaty of Ryswick the country was handed back again to France. In 1710 "General Nicholson with forces sent from England, assisted by others, raised by the Massachusetts Colony, reduced all Nova Scotia or Acadia to the obedience of Queen Anne." At the Peace of Utrecht in 1713, the French King yielded up all his claims to the country. The French ministers immediately began negotiations which resulted in the cession to France of Cape Breton and certain fishing rights in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the privilege of drying fish on the shore of Newfoundland. "The French afterwards improved their fishing trade with so great diligence that it maintained them 27,000 men and produced them yearly fish and oil to the amount of a million sterling or thereabouts, besides the benefits of other trades depending upon the fisheries, the fishermen in course becoming seamen; and to increase this nursery as far as possible, the whole was put and kept under the wisest regulations, surpassing the provisions of the English, whose whole cod fishery, including that of New England, employed at the same time but half that number of men." The following, which is said to be from the pen "of a gentleman extremely well qualified for this service," is of interest to the people of British Columbia, in view of the importance of our coast fisheries: "That all nations are powerful at sea in proportion to their concern in the fishing trade is an ancient maxim; and it is submitted to the intelligent to declare how far the French fleets employed in our late wars were manned by seamen raised out of that fishery, which of right belonged to the English, and how far continued possession of the whole would have profited them in point of naval strength and commerce; after observing that in common political calculation, it has been supposed to exceed in value to a maritime power all the treasures of Mexico and Peru.

To Be Continued

Some Famous Dramatists and Their Master-Pieces

(N. de Bertrand Lagny)

HEINRICH VON KLEIST

This, greatest of German dramatists achieved few honors during his lifetime. After his death his fame became widespread, his memory glorified, his works the admiration of Europe. Had only a small tithe of this posthumous fame attended his life, it had not gone out so sadly after so brief a duration.

Von Kleist was a patriot, bound up heart and soul in the welfare of his country. He was an idealist moreover, and with the idealist's highly-strung, intensely sensitive temperament. Had he lived a little longer he might have seen his country free from French domination, but he believed that an implacable fate had ordained the downfall of Prussia, and that it would be many years before she would resume her onetime prestige.

From earliest childhood Von Kleist had experienced little but sorrow and disappointment. He was of noble birth, but his family had become impoverished and they were forced to much self-sacrifice, and to endure privation in order to keep up what they considered the necessary appearances. Only two careers were open to Von Kleist, either an official or a military one. He chose of the two evils to enter the army, and began his studies with that end in view, though he had none of the traits of the born soldier, and discipline and duty were alike irksome to him. When he was eleven years of age his father and mother died, and the sensitive child, robbed of the love and companionship which were so essential to his happiness, was given over to the care of comparative strangers. At sixteen he entered the Guards, and served in the Rhine campaign. Though he left the army some years later, and took up the study of law, his heart was with those at the front, who were fighting for the honor of the country he so dearly loved, and when the terrible result of the Battle of Jena was known to him, he was prostrated with grief. It was this national misfortune that cost him his own position in the civil service, so that his source of livelihood was taken from him. Then followed the ignominious peace, which to Von Kleist's mind was worse than defeat in war; he had been working hard at his plays, only to meet with continued failure; he was in love with a married woman. Every way he turned despair seemed to face him. He determined on taking his own life. The woman, Henriette Vogel, who seems to have been of a temperament very similar to his own, had begged to be allowed to die with him. The two went to Potsdam together, and it was while there that the double tragedy took place. Von

Kleist first shot the woman and afterwards killed himself.

The sorrows of his own life are largely reflected in his works, and in them also one can easily trace the fatalistic tendency of his philosophy. All of his characters are involved in their tragic situations through no fault of their own. But though most of his dramas are far from joy-inspiring, the heroes and heroines portrayed are of so noble a type, their aims and purposes so lofty, their courage always so high, and yet with it all are men and women so robustly and lovably human, that to follow them in their life-stories, is to produce an incentive in the reader to think great thoughts and, so far as in him lies, to do great things.

The following extract is taken from a criticism by Charles H. Genuing:

"In 'Kitty of Heilbronn' it is love, represented as an irresistible possession of the soul, that takes the form of fate. Not cruelty nor insult can shake Kathchen in her childlike devotion. So in the wonderland of 'Panthessia,' in which the whole genius of Kleist is revealed, the heroine is relentlessly impelled to kill the man she loves, for the Queen of the Amazons may not know love; then, by no act of violence, but by a supreme effort of will, she joins her lover in death. In the 'Prince of Homburg' fate takes the form of military discipline and obedience. The prince secures his spiritual triumph by recognizing at last the justice of the death sentence and by urging its execution. It was the failure of this play to obtain a hearing that put the last bitter drop in the poet's cup of sorrow. This and the 'Hermann's Battle' were not published until after Kleist's death, and they are his greatest works. The 'Battle of Hermann' is the embodiment of exuberant joy at the thought that now all other considerations may be laid aside, and that pitiless vengeance may at last be enacted. Kleist firmly believed in the ultimate overthrow of French domination, and he symbolized his belief in the splendid figure of the old Teutonic hero, who threw off the Roman yoke. This is the most joyous note that Kleist ever struck. In all else the tragedy of his own life throw its shadow upon his works. Nothing in his external circumstances served to assist him in the attainment of his true ambition. Only one of his plays ever received as much as a respectful hearing during his lifetime; and for fifty years he lay in a forgotten grave.

"Slowly Kleist had gone the place which he is destined to occupy in German literature, to which the aged Wieland long ago assigned him—beside Goethe, whom he revered, and Schiller, whom he revolted. As in the case of Byron, the imagination cannot refrain from the futile inquiry: 'What might he not have achieved had he lived past the crisis?' With the dawn of a happier time, Kleist's genius might, so far at least as the drama is concerned, have made good his audacious boast that he would one day tear the laurels from Goethe's brow."

A mistake was inadvertently made some two weeks ago in the article on Victor Hugo, when the date of Napoleon Bonaparte's death was given as 1840. This was in reality the date of the funeral of the great soldier after his body had been given back to France by England. Napoleon died in 1821. The correspondent is thanked for drawing our attention to this error, and for her very interesting letter.

A DIFFICULT PROBLEM

The Census Taker—"Your name, mum?"
"I don't know."
"Beg pardon, mum?"
"I've been divorced. At present my name is Mrs. Jones in this state. In several states it is Miss Smith, my maiden name, and in three states it is Mrs. Brown, my first husband's name."
"This your residence, mum?"
"I eat and sleep here, but I have a trunk in a neighboring state, where I am getting a divorce from my present husband."
"Then you're married at present?"
"I'm married in Texas, New York, Massachusetts; divorced in South Dakota, Missouri, Alaska, Oklahoma and California; a bigamist in three other states, and a single woman in eight others."—San Francisco Town Talk.

INCORRIGIBLE

He asked so many questions that day that he finally wore out his mother's patience.
"Robert," she cried, "if you ask me another thing I shall put you to bed without your supper!"

Robert promptly asked another and was packed off to roost. Later his mother repented. After all, asking questions was the only way he could acquire knowledge; so she tip-toed upstairs, knelt beside Robert's bed, and told him she was sorry.

"Now, dear," she said, "if you want to ask me one more question before you go to sleep, ask it now and I will try to answer."

Robert thought for a moment, then said: "Mother, how far can a cat spit?"

THE VALUE OF NEW FRIENDS

If a man does not make new acquaintances as he advances through life, he will soon find himself left alone. A man should keep his friendship in constant repair.—Dr. Samuel Johnson.

Is that beast better, that hath two or three mountains to graze on, than a little bee that feeds on dew or manna, and lives upon what falls every morning from the storehouse of heaven, clouds, and Providence?—Jeremy Taylor.

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