

An Hour with the Editor

ENGLISH SOVEREIGNS

England has had few English kings since the days when Harold lost the crown on the well-fought field of Senlac. There have been Normans, Angevins and Scots upon the throne, but few individuals, who could claim to be English. The Tudors came more nearly to this classification than most of the others, but in their case there was a strong strain of Welsh blood. George I. was a German. His grandfather was a Stuart, and had very few English names in his lineage. George was so much of a German that he was unable to speak or understand English, a seeming disqualification for his position, but, as we shall see by and by, a very valuable factor in the evolution of the principles of the British Constitution as we have them today. There can be no doubt that he was flattered by the offer of the British Crown in pursuance of the provisions of the Act of Settlement. The diplomacy and military genius of William III. and Marlborough had combined to place England in the very forefront of European nations, and to wear the crown of such a kingdom might well appeal even to a man of so unambitious a temperament as George; and yet it is easy to believe that if he consulted his own honest wishes he would much have preferred to live and rule in his duchy of Hanover. He knew the conditions existing there, and was very much of a law unto himself. He did not know what he would have to face in the Island Kingdom, whose institutions he understood as little as their language. The tendency towards popular government was something which the Continental rulers could not understand, and with which they were not in sympathy; and it is to be assumed that George knew the history of the people over whom he was called upon to reign. Here was a people, who scoffed at the idea that kings reigned by divine right, who cut off the head of one sovereign, and managed to get along without another until they saw fit to recall that another sovereign; had invited another to accept the crown and had regulated the succession in a manner to suit themselves and in utter disregard of the principles, which every European ruler regarded as vital. Over such a people he was invited to reign at the very moment when another was claiming the crown by right of descent, and a powerful party seemed to be forming in the kingdom to assert his rights. We seem forced to the conclusion that George, while in no sense a brilliant man, had a great deal of courage and a great deal of sound commonsense, or he would never have accepted the crown with all the possibilities implied in that acceptance. Fortunately for him, Queen Anne died suddenly, although not unexpectedly. She was taken away before Bolingbroke, who was intriguing for the return of the Stuarts could perfect his plans, and the Whig leaders were very prompt in proclaiming the Hanoverian entitle to the kingly office. Fortune had "bantered" Bolingbroke, to use his own term, and he fled from the kingdom. George was obliged from very necessity to leave the affairs of the kingdom in the hands of his ministers. His First Lord of the Treasury was Lord Townshend, with whom was associated Robert Walpole. A Tory reaction drove this ministry from power, but only for a time, and when the Whigs came back into office, the positions of these two leaders were reversed. As Walpole said, "The firm was Townshend and Walpole; it has become Walpole and Townshend." Walpole held office for thirty-six years, and he may be said to have been the first person to hold the position which we now know as Premier. Townshend did not quite attain to that eminence, although he very nearly approached it. To understand what is meant by this, it must be explained that the sovereigns had been in the habit of selecting their own ministers without consultation with anyone except they might so desire. Hence it came about that, while the First Lord of the Treasury was usually one chosen because he could command the confidence of the majority of the House of Commons, the other ministers were generally persons whom the King personally wished to advance, and they were often not in political sympathy with the First Lord. George, knowing very little about the details of English politics, was quite content to leave the selection of a ministry in the hands of Townshend, and this, a concession made for the convenience of the King, was insisted upon by Walpole, when he came to form a ministry, as a matter of right, and thus was established the principle in force in British countries today, by virtue of which the sovereign or his representative selects the First Minister, and the latter selects his colleagues. In the United Kingdom the First Minister's official designation is the First Lord of the Treasury; he is called either Prime Minister or Premier simply for convenience. In the overseas Dominions the title of First Lord of the Treasury is not employed. The office, no matter by what title it is called, has no legal status, in other words the Premier is not the head of any department of the government by virtue of his holding such a position, but he is the head of the government as a whole, the representative in a special manner of the crown.

Up to the reign of George it was the custom of the sovereigns to preside at meetings of the Privy Council, and take what part they wished in its deliberations. At the beginning of his reign, George followed this practice, but he very soon grew tired of listening to debates that he did not understand, and of attempting to decide upon lines of policy which he was unable to grasp, except by the unsatisfactory process of interpretation into German, and so he soon ceased to attend the meetings of the Council, and the practice was adopted of sub-

mitting to him a minute of the decision arrived at for his signature, a practice in force today and deemed a vital feature of our system of government, although it was adopted two hundred years ago simply because there was a king on the throne, who understood neither English politics nor English speech. These circumstances were highly favorable for the development of parliamentary, or, as we say in this country, responsible government. George was the more willing to permit his ministers to manage their own way, because he was chiefly interested in the affairs of Hanover, and so long as the policy pursued in England was such as tended to the security of that duchy, he was quite content not to interfere. The English people were reconciled to this new conception of the Constitution, because Walpole's policy was one of peace, and he did not propose that English blood should be shed in Continental wars. "Twenty thousand men have been killed in battle this year," he said, "and not an Englishman among them." This prolonged peace was favorable to the development of British commerce and British industry, and the effect was seen on the appreciation of the rental value of real property. Thus, almost undiscovered by themselves, the people of Great Britain, for Scotland had now begun to take her due share in the government of the kingdom, were working out new principles of government and establishing the principle that "the King reigns, but does not govern."

Walpole, who contributed so much to the welfare of the nation, was a man of a strange combination of qualities. He was in no sense a brilliant statesman, achieving his ends by dogged resolution rather than skill. He was a forceful speaker, but lacking in polish. His manners were rough, not to say uncouth. He was as careless of the amenities of social life as Oliver Cromwell, but he lacked the rigid Puritanism of the Great Protector. Indeed, he was a man of whose private life the least said the better. Towards the close of his career he was greatly harassed by the desertion of the younger Whigs, "the boys," as he used to call them, who, under the leadership of that "terrible cornet of horse," William Pitt, were insisting that there were political ideals for which men should strive. Walpole was not personally corrupt, but he condoned corruption in others. When told by Pitt that public men should rise above dishonorable methods, he replied: "You think so now, my boy; but you will soon be older and wiser." Walpole was neither worse nor better than his times, and much as there was in his life that will not bear the light of day, he played a highly important part at a highly critical hour in determining the nature of the British Constitution.

METHODISM

The following description of the founding of Methodism is from Green's "History of the English People." It will be read with great interest at the present time:

"The stir showed itself markedly in a religious revival, which dates from the later years of Walpole's ministry, and which began in a small knot of Oxford students, whose revolt against the religious deadness of their time expressed itself in ascetic observances, in enthusiastic devotion, and a methodical regularity of life which gained them the nickname 'Methodists.' Three figures detached themselves from the group as soon as, on its transfer to London in 1728, it attracted public attention by the fervor and even extravagance of its piety; and each found his special work in the task to which the instinct of the new movement led it from the first, that of carrying religion and morality to the vast masses of population which lay concentrated in the towns or around the mines and collieries of Cornwall and the North. Whitfield, a servitor of Pembroke College, was above all the preacher of the revival. Speech was governing English politics; and the religious power of speech was shown when a dread of enthusiasm closed against the new apostles the pulpits of the Established Church, and forced them to preach in the fields. Their voice was soon heard in the wildest and most barbarous corners of the land, among the bleak moors of Northumberland, or in the dens of London, or in the long galleries, where, in the pauses of his labor, the Cornish miner listens to the sobbing of the sea. Whitfield's preaching was such as England had never heard before, theatrical, extravagant, often commonplace, but hushing all criticism by its intense reality, its earnestness of belief, its deep, tremulous sympathy with the sin and sorrow of manhood. It was no common enthusiast who could wring gold from the close-fisted Franklin and admiration from the fastidious Horace Walpole, or who could look down from the top of a green knoll at Kingswood on twenty thousand colliers, grimy from the Bristol coal-pits, and see as he preached the tears 'making white channels down their bleached cheeks.'"

"On the rough and ignorant masses to whom they spoke the effect of Whitfield and his fellow-Methodists was mighty, both for good and ill. Their preaching stirred a passionate hatred in their opponents. Their lives were often in danger, they were mobbed, they were ducked, they were stoned, they were smothered with filth. But the enthusiasm they aroused was equally passionate. Women fell down in convulsions; strong men were smitten suddenly to the earth; the preacher was interrupted by bursts of hysteric laughter or of hysteric sobbing. All the phenomena of strong spiritual excitement, so familiar now, but at that time strange and unknown, followed on their sermons; and the terrible sense of a conviction of sin, a new dread of hell, a new hope of heaven—took forms at once grotesque and sublime. Charles Wesley, a Christ Church student, came to add sweetness to their sudden

and startling light. He was the 'sweet singer' of the movement. His hymns expressed the fiery conviction of its converts in lines so chaste and beautiful, that its more extravagant features disappeared. The wild throes of hysteric enthusiasm passed into a passion for hymn-singing, and a new musical impulse was aroused in the people, which gradually changed the face of public devotion throughout England."

"But it was his elder brother, John Wesley, who embodied in himself not this or that side of the new movement, but the movement itself. Even at Oxford, where he resided as a fellow of Lincoln, he had been looked upon as a fellow of the group of Methodists, and after his return from a quixotic mission to the Indians of Georgia, he again took the lead of the little society, which had removed in the interval to London. In power as a preacher he stood next to Whitfield; as a hymn-writer he stood second to his brother Charles. But while combining in some degree the excellences of either, he possessed qualifications in which both were utterly deficient; an indefatigable industry, a cool judgment, a command over others, a faculty of organizing, a singular union of patience and moderation with an imperious ambition which marked him as a ruler of men. He had besides a learning and skill in writing which no other of the Methodists possessed; he was older than any of his colleagues at the start of the movement, and he outlived them all. His life indeed almost covers the century. He was born in 1703 and lived on till 1791, and the Methodist body, had passed through every phase of its history before he sank into the grave at the age of eighty-eight. It would have been impossible for Wesley to have wielded the power he did had he not started the follies and extravagance as well as the enthusiasm of his disciples. Throughout his life his asceticism was that of a monk. At times he lived on bread only, and he often slept on the bare boards. He lived in a world of wonders and divine interpositions. It was a miracle if the rain stopped and allowed him to set forth on a journey. It was a judgment of heaven if a hailstorm burst over a town which had been deaf to his preaching. 'One day,' he tells us, 'when he was tired and his horse fell lame, I thought, cannot God heal either man or beast my any means or without any? Immediately my headache ceased and my horse's lameness in the same instant.' With a still more childish fanaticism he guided his conduct, whether in ordinary events or in the great crises of his life, by drawing lots or watching the particular texts at which his Bible opened."

"But with all this extravagance and superstition, Wesley's mind was essentially practical, orderly, and conservative. No man ever stood at the head of a great revolution whose temper was so anti-revolutionary. In his earlier days the bishops had been forced to rebuke him for the narrowness and intolerance of his Churchmanship. When Whitfield began his sermons in the fields, Wesley 'could not at first reconcile himself to that strange way.' He condemned and fought against the admission of laymen as preachers till he found himself left with none but laymen to preach. To the last he clung passionately to the Church of England, and looked on the body he had formed as but a lay society in full communion with it. He broke with the Moravians, who had been the earliest friends of the new movement, when they endangered its safe conduct by their contempt of religious forms. He broke with Whitfield when the great preacher plunged into an extravagant Calvinism. But the same practical temper of mind which led him to reject what was unmeasured, and to be the last to adopt what was new, enabled him at once to grasp and organize the novelities he adopted. He became himself the most unwearied of field preachers, and his journal for half a century is little more than a record of fresh journeys and fresh sermons. When once driven to employ lay helpers in his ministry, he made their work a new and attractive feature in his system. His earlier asceticism only lingered in a dread of social enjoyments and an aversion from the gay and sumptuous side of life, which links the Methodist movement with that of the Puritans. As the fervor of his superstition died down into the calm of age, his cool, commonsense discouraged in his followers the enthusiastic outbursts which marked the opening of the revival. His powers were bent to the building up of a great religious society, which might give to the new enthusiasm a lasting and practical form. The Methodists were grouped into classes, gathered in love-feasts, purified by the expulsion of unworthy members, and furnished with an alternation of settled ministers and wandering preachers; while the whole body was placed under the absolute government of a conference of ministers. But so long as he lived, the direction of the new religious society remained with Wesley alone. 'If by arbitrary power,' he replied, with charming simplicity, to objectors 'you mean a power which I exercise simply without any colleagues therein, this is certainly true, but I see no hurt in it.'"

"The great body which he thus founded numbered a hundred thousand persons at his death, and now counts its numbers in England and America by millions. But the Methodists themselves were the least result of the Methodist revival. Its action upon the Church broke the lethargy of the clergy; and the 'Evangelical' movement, which found representatives like Newton or Cecil within the pale of the Establishment, made the fox-hunting parson and the absentee rector at last impossible. In Wesley's day the English clergy were the poorest and most lifeless in the world. In our day, no body of religious ministers surpasses them in piety, in philanthropic energy or in popular regard. In the nation at large appeared a new moral enthusiasm, which, rigid

and pedantic as it often seemed, was still healthy in its social tone and whose power was seen in the disappearance of the profligacy which had disgraced the upper classes, and the foulness which had infested literature ever since the Restoration. A new philanthropy reformed our prisons, infused clemency and wisdom into our penal laws, abolished the slave trade, and gave the first impulse to popular education."

Some Famous Dramatists and Their Master-Pieces

(N. de Bertrand Legren)

VICTOR HUGO

(Continued)

Not all of Hugo's plays were as successful as "Hernani," nor did they deserve to be. His themes were not always of an inspiring nature, though his poetry was matchless in the music of its rhythm and its magical power of description. Some of his plays make very gruesome reading, and we cannot wonder that they came under the ban of the censor; but Hugo nearly invariably had historical episodes as a foundation for his plays, and felt that in order to convey a powerful moral lesson and to convince the people of error, past and present, no literary weapon was too sharp. This was his excuse for many of his dramatic works, which proved too revolting for the stage. For instance, a play like "Torquemada" shocks us to the innermost fibres of our being. It is cruelty itself. But Hugo lived and wrote this particular drama over fifty years ago, when religious differences, were very strongly marked, and Protestantism and Catholicism apparently forever irreconcilable. No such terrible conditions will probably ever exist again as ruled in France a few decades ago, when men and women and children were tortured and murdered for the reason of their faith, but in just what measure Hugo's writings are responsible for a happier order of things it is impossible to say. A bad disease needs a drastic remedy.

Passing over the novels and lesser plays which he wrote during the next ten or fifteen years, we come to his best dramatic works outside of "Hernani." These are "Ruy Blas" and "Les Burgraves." "Ruy Blas" is a semi-historical Spanish play, and the hero in a lackey who loves his queen. Ruy Blas is of noble character, though ignobly born, and he rises to the highest position in the state, and proves himself so worthy a suitor that the queen returns his love. Don Caesar de Bazan, a nobleman disguised as a beggar, is an enemy to the queen and seeks to compromise her in such a way that her good name and fame shall be ruined. Ruy Blas intervenes in time and saves his sovereign lady, who rewards him with her love, though their marriage never takes place, for Ruy Blas dies for the sake of his devotion. The scene for "Les Burgraves" is laid in Germany, the time the Middle Ages. It is a wonderful play, of intricate plot, and grandly conceived characters. The poetry is beautiful throughout, the climaxes incredibly powerful, but it has never been a success as a play, though as a poem it is widely read and greatly admired. Someone has suggested that it might be utilized with magnificent effect as the foundation for an opera. It concerns itself with the quarrels and raids of the robber barons, and contains the beautiful love-story of Othert and Regina.

In 1840, the great soldier whom Hugo loved with a devotion almost akin to worship, died, and England gave his body back to France. Hugo grieved as all of Napoleon's followers grieved, but his sorrow was as nothing compared to a domestic affliction which came upon the poet shortly after, when his oldest daughter, Leopoldine, married but a few months, was drowned with her husband in the Seine. After this catastrophe the poet was never quite the same again. Until a great grief comes home to us, we feel a certain sense of security from evil, which, after the first blow falls, never returns to us again. So it was with Hugo. From this time on we miss the irresponsible, joyous note in some of his sweetest love passages. In order to deaden his grief somewhat, Hugo threw himself into politics. He was made a peer of France by Louis Philippe, and after the latter's death and the establishment of the Republic, he was elected a member of the National Assembly.

He took a stand with the advanced Republicans against Louis Bonaparte, and risked his life in the defence of the rights of the people. So fearless was he, so fiery his eloquence, that when the Constitutionalists were defeated, he was forced to go into exile, which he did, swearing not to return to France until that country was once more free from tyranny.

Of Hugo's political works we will not speak, only to say that they were many, and the greatest among them the pamphlet entitled, "Napoleon the Little" (Louis Napoleon), "every page of which reads as though his pen had been dipped in incandescent lava," and the "Chastisements," which followed it, and is a commentary on the former. These two works came under the censor's ban and were forbidden to be circulated in France, though nearly every loyal Frenchman made it a point to procure copies of them.

In a little book of poems called "L'Annee Terrible," Hugo recorded the impressions of the bitterest year of his life, the year 1871, when the insurrection of the Commune broke out in Paris, and Hugo, who, re-elected to the National Assembly, had striven with all his powers to bring about a reconciliation between the opposing factions, was once more com-

pelled to seek refuge on foreign soil. During this year also his son Charles died, dropping dead in the street of heart disease.

By this time the great poet was seventy years of age, and, in spite of trouble and sorrow and ceaseless mental activity, his superb intellectual powers showed no signs of decay. During the fourteen years longer which he lived, he produced ten more volumes, among them a book of the most exquisite poems on childhood that have ever been written. It is called, "The Art of Grandfatherhood." Hugo's children one by one had been taken from him by death, all except his daughter Adele, who had lost her reason; but his grandchildren surrounded him in his old age, and upon them he lavished his great heart's wealth of affection, and then he dedicated this volume of poems, that has been styled "a glorification of childhood."

In 1881 Hugo was eighty years of age. There was peace once more in his beloved France, and he was surrounded by countless friends. He held one of the highest positions in the state, that of Senator, and his birthday was observed as a holiday all over the country. Four years later he died, mourned sincerely by all his countrymen and by his readers and admirers the world over.

Ma Fille, va Prier

Come, child, to prayer, the busy day is done,
A golden star gleams through the dusk of night;
The hills are trembling in the rising mist,
The rumbling wain looms dim upon the sight;
All things wend home to rest; the roadside trees
Shake off their dust, stirred by the evening breeze.

At eve the babes with angels converse hold,
While we to our strange pleasures vend our way.
Each with its little face upraised to heaven
With folded hands, barefoot, kneels down to pray;
At selfsame hour with selfsame words they call
On God, the common Father of them all.

And then they sleep, and golden dreams anon,
Born as the busy day's last murmurs die,
In swarms tumultuous flitting through the gloom,
Their breathing lips and golden locks descry;
And as the bees o'er bright flowers joyous roam,
Around their curtained cradles clustering come.

O prayer of childhood, simple, innocent;
O happy slumbers, peaceful, pure and light;
O happy worship, ever gay with smiles,
Meet prelude to the harmonies of night;
As birds beneath the wing unfold their head,
Nestled in prayer, the infant seeks its bed.

To prayer, my child, and O be thy first prayer
For her who many nights with anxious care
Rocked thy first cradle; who took thy infant soul

From heaven and gave it to the world; then rise
With love, still drank herself the gall of life,
And left for thy young lips the honeyed bowl.

And then—I need it more—then pray for me.
For she is gentle, artless, true like thee;
She has a guileless heart, brow placid, still;
Pity she has for all, envy for none;
Gentle and wise, she patiently lives on;
And she endures, nor knows who does the ill.

There's nothing here below which does not find
Its rendency. O'er plains the rivers wind,
And reach the sea; the bee, by instinct driven,
Finds out the honeyed flowers; the eagle flies.
To seek the sun; the vulture where death lies;
The swallow to the spring; the prayer to heaven.

FATAL DELAY

Sir William Crookes, the eminent scientist, who has been appointed a member of the Order of Merit, was one of the earliest amateur photographers. He experimented with the camera as far back as 1855, and was always saying to his wife, "Sit." She used to reply, "It sounds like a hen." Sir William is rather fond of telling the following story as illustrating the "instantaneous" knowledge needed in the profession of medicine. The professor of a certain medical college cited a hypothetical case on one occasion, and asked a student how much of a certain medicine should be administered to the sufferer. "A tablespoonful," answered the young man. In about a minute, however, he raised his hand and said, "Professor, I would like to change my answer to that question." The doctor took out his watch. "My young friend," he remarked, "your patient has been dead forty seconds."—Tit-Bits.

LET US SMILE

The thing that does the farthest toward making life worth while,
That costs the least and does the most is just a pleasant smile.
The smile that bubbles from a heart that loves its fellow men
Will drive away the cloud of gloom and coax the sun again.
It's full of worth and goodness, too, with manly kindness bent—
It's worth a million dollars and doesn't cost a cent.

—From a Mystic Shrine Pamphlet.