

Hour with the Editor

ENGLISH SOVEREIGNS

We have in this series of articles traced the development of the power of Parliament to such a stage as that Fortescue, Chief Justice of the King's Bench under Henry VI., could say: "A king of England cannot of his own pleasure make any alterations in the law of the land, for the nature of his government is not only regal, but political. Had it been only regal, he would have power to make what innovations and alterations he pleased in the laws of the kingdom, impose talliages and other hardships upon the people, whether they would or not, without their consent, which sort of government the civil laws point out when they say that the prince wishes has the force of law." This development of parliamentary government under the Lancastrian kings was due largely to the fact that those sovereigns reigned by parliamentary title. Hence they were desirous of conciliating the Lords and Commons by every means in their power. Another reason was the necessities of the royal exchequer because of the constant and apparently unending demands upon it to meet the calls of the war in France. With the accession of the House of York to the Crown a change began. Edward IV. claimed the royal office by virtue of his descent, and while there was a formal ratification of his title by parliament, he took good care to give that body to understand that he proposed to rule the kingdom himself. He abandoned the practice, which had been in force under his immediate predecessors, and parliament was no longer summoned to meet annually. The war in France having ceased, and the royal treasury being full of moneys derived from the forfeiture of estates of barons and others, who had opposed his cause, there was no need to call upon the taxing power to provide means to carry on the government. Edward, when he once was fairly seated upon the throne, was almost absolute. The reign of his son and successor, Edward V., was too brief for any change to be inaugurated, and Richard III.'s tenure of the Crown was too uncertain to permit him to develop any new policies, even if he had so desired.

Among the sovereigns of England none has been as detested as Richard III. The association of his name with the murder of Edward V. and his younger brother, and the picture drawn of him by Shakespeare, have combined to give him a reputation for all that is hateful in men. But this seems to be an injustice to him. He was born in times when cruelty was common, and his education was during the Wars of the Roses, when the whole kingdom was torn with strife. We cannot judge the product of those days by the rules which we apply to men of today. It is also fair to say that no one knows with certainty what part, if any, Richard had in the murder of his nephews, which may not, in point of fact, not have been more than that of accessory after the fact. Richard had many kindly qualities. His portrait shows a man of a refined and intellectual face, and he unquestionably during his short reign exhibited many kindly qualities. "Never," said one of his contemporaries, "did Nature enclose such a mind in so frail a frame." Small in stature, somewhat deformed in shape and physically weak, he was highly courageous and resolute. On Bosworth Field he at least showed himself to be a man.

During the years of strife, which ended when Henry of Richmond took the gold-circlet from the dead body of Richard and, amid the shouts of his soldiers, placed it on his own head, as indicating that he assumed the sovereignty, while Parliament was largely shorn of its powers, the administration of the law went on as usual and the business of the country continued to expand. At a time when hostile armies were marching throughout England, the judges rode their circuits as usual, held their courts and dispensed justice after a sort. The fact that their salaries were always in arrear may not have been, and very probably was not, conducive to fair dealing, and there is more than a suspicion that the judges were at times in the pay of suitors. That this was not deemed so wrongful a thing then as it is today, is shown by the statement of Lord Bacon made years afterwards, when, accused of taking bribes, he answered that he never took money to do an injustice, the inference being that he was not averse to receiving it for a just decision. The administration of the law was hampered more by the influence of the barons than by the corruption of the judges. During the Wars of the Roses the country became divided into hostile camps. We are not to understand this conflict as one of the king against a claimant to the throne only. It had this character, but it also was largely made up of strife between great baronial houses, such, for example, as the Percies and against the Nevilles. The French war had greatly reduced the number of barons. After the battle of Agincourt, there were only fifty-two temporal peers in the kingdom, and the number was not increased until after the accession of Henry VII. Each baron was a centre of a species of state. He maintained a private army, and as in few cases was the wealth of any individual sufficient for the maintenance of a large retinue, the practice of distributing "livery" became common. By this we are to understand that a baron would adopt some special emblem, which would be worn by him immediate retainers, with whom would be associated as many persons as could be induced to unite with them, and to each person the livery was given. Thus there were banded together many groups of people, ready to

take up arms at the command of the baron, and, what was worse, to combine to influence the administration of justice. So great an evil did this become that the Statute of Maintenance was enacted, which remains in force to this day, and by virtue of which it is illegal to combine to promote litigation. Yet during these turbulent and uncertain times certain institutions were being developed. Among them was trial by jury, which took the form that it now has, instead of the old Saxon form, under which the witnesses were the jury. The condition of the kingdom socially was well nigh desperate. In the Paston letters and in the writings of Sir Thomas More we are given glimpses behind the scenes, and we see whole-sale robbery carried on, the judges intimidated so that they dare not punish the guilty. We see night raids against the homes of the well-to-do; their houses burned, their cattle driven off, the fair daughters of the owners carried into captivity until they would consent to marriage to some one whose efforts to win them by fair means had failed. We see elections carried by force, and Parliament degenerating into the assembly of small armed bodies, prepared to fight at a signal from their leaders. So serious did the last named state of things become that a law was passed forbidding members of parliament to bring their arms to its meetings, a provision which they evaded by concealing stones and slung-shots about their persons. It is worthy to mention in passing that it was during this period that the qualification of voters for the election of members of the House of Commons was fixed at a figure that remained unaltered until the Reform Bill of 1832.

Among the picturesque figures of these times there was none more striking than that of the Earl of Warwick, who has been described as "The Last of the Barons." He was a man of immense wealth, his estates spread all over the kingdom, being far greater than those of the Crown. His livery was a bear and ragged staff, and it was borne by such a host of retainers that he was easily the most powerful person in the kingdom. It is told of him that in his household in London six oxen would often be roasted for breakfast. He had his own army and, what was even of greater importance in those days, his own park of artillery. It was he who dethroned Henry IV. and gave the crown to Edward IV.; later dethroning him and replacing the crown upon the head of Henry. His family name was Neville. He married a daughter of the Earl of Warwick, and after his father-in-law's death, the title was conferred upon him. He was a brilliant soldier, winning victories on land and sea, and a capable administrator. He was slain at the Battle of Barnet, when in his fifty-first year. While he was not, of course, the last of the barons in point of fact, it may be said with truth that with him perished feudalism in England.

AN ERA OF CHANGE

It has been said that mankind made more progress in the Nineteenth Century than in all the centuries preceding it. This is to state the case much too strongly, because it is not true even of our own part of the human family, and we are not well enough informed concerning the history of the remainder of mankind in all ages to be able to speak definitely about what has been accomplished in other lands and other times. What we call modern civilization dates from the Renaissance, or, say, from about the Fifteenth Century, and there is unquestionably a greater difference between the way we live and the way our forefathers lived in the year 1800 than there was between their manner of life and that of the better class of people a thousand years before. We can hardly compare our habits of life and our conveniences with those enjoyed by the Romans under the Empire, because the difference is so great. But we must not suppose that those who preceded us were laggards in advancement. The difference between them and us was in kind rather than in degree. In their own way they had gone as far along and perhaps farther than we have gone in our way. The distinction between our progress and theirs seems to consist chiefly in the fact that we have solved more of the secrets of nature and have learned to turn them to our advantage. We shall consider in a short series of articles some of the changes that have marked the past hundred years, but before doing so some of the things peculiar to the past may be mentioned.

Until about 174 B. C. the Romans had very little idea of cookery, in fact one may say practically none at all. Their food consisted almost exclusively of a kind of porridge and raw vegetables. It was only after the Asiatic wars had given them some idea of the delicacies of the table that they paid the least attention to their food, except to see that they had sufficient to support life. But the change was revolutionary. From being simple livers they became the most extravagant people of whom we have any record. The menu of a banquet given in the time of Caesar contains twenty items, not including wines, all of them except two being of fish-shell fish or various kinds of meat. No vegetables appear on it; but pastry and bread are included. Nero once entertained eight guests. The walls of the room were inlaid for the occasion with mother-of-pearl and ivory. The table was of cedar and bore cups of gold, silver and amber. Garlanded with roses were provided for each guest. The dishes were very rare, the viands being brought from all parts of the Empire. The two most

conspicuous among them were probably never repeated. One was composed of nightingales' tongues and the other of the brains of peacocks and flamingoes. Eighty varieties of wine were served. When we think of the luxury and extravagance that devised such a repast, when we reflect that the chief use the Emperor Vitellius found for his army was to have it hunt far and wide for the rarest game to grace his table, and that the fleet was employed chiefly in securing fish for his use, we see how very difficult it is to compare Roman civilization with our own.

Food and table manners are useful indications of the civilization of a people. Here is a bill of fare served to the Emperor Charles V. by the city of Halle about the year 1540. "Raisins in malt flour; fried eggs; pancakes; steamed carrots; fried slices of bread; porridge; a patty; pea-soup with eggs; codfish boiled in butter; carp; fried fish with bitter oranges; sweet pike; almonds; maize in almond's milk; fried fish and olives; cakes; pears and confetti." Here is a Sunday dinner prepared by the Seymour family at the time Henry VIII came to marry Jane of that ilk: "Six oxen; 2 muttons; 12 meals; 5 cygnets; 21 great capons; 7 good capons; 10 Kentish capons; 2 dozen and 6 coarse capons; 70 pullets; 91 chickens; 38 quails; 9 mews; 6 greys; 2 shields of brawn; 7 swans; 2 cranes; 2 storks; 3 pheasants; 40 partridges; 2 peachicks; 21 snipes; besides larks and other birds." Four hundred people sat down to this repast and it will be noticed that vegetables and fruit had no place in it.

From cooking and dining the transition to stoves is easy, and investigation shows that the first stove was made in Alsace as late as the year 1400 and that cooking stoves were invented only in the beginning of the last century. Before that time cooking was done in closed vessels placed either over or in front of the coals of an open fire, or by means of roasting-jacks, tin ovens and similar expedients. Nearly fifty years of experimenting was necessary to produce a stove that was really useful and reliable for cooking. Now we can cook by gas or electricity if we are so minded.

While speaking of this phase of the subject let us go back to the reign of Edward IV. and repeat an account given by a Nuremberger, who visited London and was permitted to see the Queen dine. She sat on a golden stool alone at her table, her mother and the King's sisters standing below her, when she spoke to them they knelt down and remained kneeling until she took a drink of water, which was the signal for them to rise. All her ladies knelt while she ate, and also did the lords in waiting, and as the dinner generally lasted three hours, their discomfort can be imagined. After dinner there was dancing, but the Queen did not take part in it. She remained seated, while her mother knelt before her.

In these days and before them, the hall of the house or castle was the principal part of it. In the hall the whole household gathered, and here the meals were eaten; generally at a long table at which sat the head of the establishment and all his household, visitors and others who might chance to be present. In this custom we find the origin of what is known as precedence, the original significance of which was the order in which those present sat at dinner, from which it was extended to other occasions. Here also we find the origin of some other things. We speak of a drawing-room. "Withdrawing-room" was the term originally, it being the place to which the ladies of the household retired when they wished to be free from the mixed company. In the withdrawing room they were accustomed to receive their honored guests, whence we get the term now used in connection with royalty, which holds a drawing-room as a state ceremony. The parlor, or parlour, was a room off the hall devoted to private conversation. We speak of "my lady's chamber," thereby preserving the memory of the old fashion when the ladies of the house had their private sleeping apartments, the men being content to rest upon the floor of the hall. In the King's Kitchen as late as the reign of Henry VII. the servants slept upon the floor.

These few glimpses into the past may serve to stimulate the imagination a little to an appreciation of the conditions of modern life, but they also serve to show that in many particulars we have fallen away from what were once regarded as standards of luxury and breeding. Perhaps the greatest of all changes, which the last hundred years has witnessed, has been in the relation of the several classes of society towards each other. A hundred years ago most men doubted if such a thing as a sane democracy was possible. The horrors of the French Revolution were fresh in everyone's mind and only a few thinkers believed that liberty would not always degenerate into license. Since 1800 we have changed not only in our manner of living but also in our estimates of men.

A FUTURE LIFE

Down in the bottom of the sea there are many strange creatures. They are adapted to their environment. There they live out their lives, be those lives long or short; there they perform whatever may be their destiny in the order of creation. Now let us suppose that these creatures are endowed with sufficient intelligence to enable them to speculate upon matters in general that come within the scope of their observations, and let us also suppose that it has been suggested to them that there is life that is not in the depths of ocean; that there are creatures which live wholly on land and die if they are kept beneath the water; that

these creatures are not content with the coverings that nature has provided them, but make others wherewith to protect themselves from cold and heat; that these strange beings make many things and have invented artificial necessities; that they associate themselves into communities with systems of government; that they keep certain of their numbers always ready to do the fighting for the community, and so on. It seems very likely that those, who told such things to the deep-sea creatures, would be laughed to scorn or treated in whatever way those creatures might have of exhibiting incredulity or contempt. Yet this would not alter the fact that men do live on the land and would die in the water, and that they have evolved all the things which go to make up our complex civilization. If refusal to believe a thing, when indulged in by a deep-sea creature, would not make the thing non-existent, why should disbelief on the part of a man render anything non-existent? Point one, therefore, is that the fact that you may not believe in a future life does not prove that there is no such life.

Point one is obvious, but point two may not seem quite so much so, although it will be found to be so on a little consideration. It is that it is no argument against a future life to say that we cannot understand how such a life can be. Doubtless none of us can form any idea of what individual existence may be after the process which we call death. Our friend is alive today. He is full of hope and energy. His thoughts sway the destinies of men; his love sheds happiness among all who know him; his words of hope and encouragement stimulate to good works all who hear them. Something, trifling in itself, happens and he dies. What has become of that which swayed men, of that which shed abroad its gentle influence, of that which incited men to noble action? Was it not superior to the trifling thing which stopped the heart of the man from beating? You cast your eyes around and you see no place where his personality can have gone. The telescope reveals no place in the Universe where it can be hiding. You cannot imagine conditions under which it may exist. Possibly you may feel its presence; tens of thousands of people have had that experience; but you hesitate to believe in its being real, because your reason cannot explain how a personality can exist apart from the body, and how it can have being separate from what is material and subject to the chemical processes, which form what we call life. The wisest men in all ages have realized the difficulty of appreciating such an existence, much more so the difficulty of explaining it. But is it not easier to believe in such an existence than it is to accept the idea that the personality of men ends when the breath leaves the body? The universal belief of the human race in a future existence does not prove such an existence any more than universal disbelief in it would make such an existence impossible. But there is more behind the thought of a future life than mere belief in it. Mankind is not without other evidence of it. Moreover, there remains the great fact of human personality, the extinction of which must be supposed, if there is no future life, and extinction is something foreign to creation. We know of nothing else that is which is destroyed absolutely. Why, then, should we think that prima facie we must assume that our personalities do not survive the incident of death? The impossibility of devising a geography of another world may be conceded. The old theologians tried to do so, only to make a failure of it that did much to discredit the doctrine of a future life. We may not be able to explain how the personality exists apart from the body, although this ought not to influence our views, for we cannot explain how it exists in association with the body. The future life is a mystery, but so also is the present life. Possibly by and bye our life here may seem to us as strange as the life of the deep-sea creatures now seems to us.

A Century of Fiction

XXIX.

(N. de Barraud Lugem)

A writer may have talent, ability, brilliancy and wit sufficient to ensure his works a great amount of popularity among his contemporaries, and incidentally to bring to him from his publishers pecuniary results little short of great wealth; while a following generation will almost have forgotten the name of the writer, and will find little or nothing to interest them in the novels that were erstwhile considered so meritorious. Time is the test of genius, perhaps the only true test, and, in order to stand that test, besides possessing the qualities above mentioned, there must be sound scholarship as a beginning. For one to produce anything that can be classed as good literature, the writer must have the essentials of a literary education, else the work will not be sound. It may be prettily written, possess harmony and a certain purity of diction; it may have the merit of wit, or of impressiveness of style; it may have a certain power of inspiration; but it will not endure unless it is built as the good house is built, on the sure foundation. And scholarship implies more than is at first, perhaps, inferred from the word. A scholar loves his work for the work's sake; he rejoices in a result only when it is as near as he can make it to perfection; nothing short of the best will ever satisfy him, and that best is, because his study and his effort never cease, a constantly more perfected best. How

many of our modern authors can we say possess the gift of scholarship? For it is a gift, though a gift that can either be killed or cultivated as the writer is a less or a greater man. How many times have we met with a case like the following? An author will produce one or two really creditable books that can be described only by adjectives of the highest superlative quality, books which at once have brought him fame and fortune; after a certain interval these books will be followed by a motley collection of stories or verses or sketches that have little or nothing to recommend them, beyond a certain glibness in the narrating, and which the author passes along to the public, which buys them simply for the name of the writer. Any man or woman who trades on his popularity to ensure the success of a work which he knows to be inferior, is not only far short of a genius or a scholar; he has not even a proper sense of moral or intellectual responsibility. So, in order to judge just how great an artist a literary aspirant may be, there are many things to be considered, and it is difficult to form a fair estimate of contemporary writers. Even the most conservative of us are influenced by what the Germans designate as the "Zeit-geist," or Spirit of the times, and if a writer by his familiarity with a certain people or certain new countries or certain phases of social or political life can write graphically of those things, though his words have little or no meaning beyond the surface, even the most conservative of us must come more or less under his spell for the time being. Given time, we can form a fairer estimate of his work than we could in the first flush of mutual sympathy. So when we attempt a criticism of such modern novelists as Rudyard Kipling, Marie Corelli, Henryk Ibsen, Hall Caine, Conan Doyle, and scores of others, there are all these things to bear in mind. There is no question at all about the exceptional talents of all the above-named writers; no question at all about the engrossing interest of most of their books; no question at all but that some of them are infinitely superior to some of the others.

Rudyard Kipling has had a larger reading public than almost any other of our modern novelists. Whether or not he deserves this, and whether or not the public is definitely better for the influence of his books is a question that each reader must himself decide. Kipling has a certain power of stirring up the sentiments, especially the sentiment of patriotism, that is little short of genius. But the Zeit-geist has especially favored this writer. During the last ten or fifteen years, especially prior to and during the war in South Africa, all English-speaking people were ready to respond with enthusiasm to any call upon them for an exhibition of loyalty. Kipling knew well how to arouse the patriotic sentiments, doubtless because he was so deeply inspired with the quality he wished to inspire. Then his life had given him an insight into the most interesting phases of many vital questions, and the stress of events set him deservedly in the forefront of the literary field. He helped England to hold her own, he helped her to win her battles, no less than the bravest and most skillful of her generals, and we all honor him for it. But times have changed. Kipling still writes, he still has his hosts of friends and ardent admirers; he is earning large sums for his works, and publishers will accept anything and everything from his pen, irrespective of merit. To many of us there is no question at all about the lack of literary merit in most of his later works. He produced a book of short stories recently which read as if they might have been written while the author was in his teens and had not begun his literary education. Other of his books have been no less failures according to the judgment of some of us, though they find a ready sale, and much praise from some critics. There is no doubt that if the patriotism of the country should be called upon again, Kipling would write something that would inspire us all, but in the meantime he very often fails even to amuse.

No Room for Doubt

"I observed," said Senator Carter, of Montana, when speaking of his postal savings bank bill, "a sign on a small restaurant near the Capital that illustrates the point I am trying to make of the absolute necessity for clear statement in this bill. We must state things exactly as they are, without recourse to speculation or to what might happen."

"This restaurant advertised a dinner, but not in the loose way many other restaurants advertise dinner as between certain hours, whether there would be enough dinner to last between those hours or not."

"No, Mr. President. The man who runs that restaurant has a proper knowledge of his responsibilities and of the exact use of the language. He advertised: 'Chicken pie, twenty-five cents; from 12:30 until gone.'"—Boston Herald.

Economy Balked

Among the millionaires who tried to economize when the hard times of 1907 hit the very rich was Myron T. Herrick, lawyer, financier and once governor of Ohio.

On a trip to Florida he had been induced to join a fashionable fishing club, and when he looked over his opportunities for retrenchment he considered a fishing club a thousand miles from his home a luxury he could forego. So he sent a polite resignation. In a few days it came back to him and inscribed over the letter in bold red ink was: "You can't resign. We need the dues."—Utica Globe.

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