An Hour with the Editor

ENGLISH SOVEREIGNS

We have followed the development of British institutions from the time that William the Conqueror engrafted upon the Saxon polity a feudal system of his own creation. We have seen how the ancient English idea of popular supremacy made itself effective to overthrow feudalism; how by slow degrees the power of the Crown became limited. We have seen how from time to time the personal influence of the monarch was strong enough to establish a species of absolutism; how foreign wars had their beneficial effect upon the enlargement of the liberty of the common people, and how the uncertainty of the tenure by which kings held the throne made it possible for Parliament to assert a complete control of the kingdom. We have noticed how the baronage of England was far from being a support to the monarchy at all times, but was generally found alert to curb the powers of the kings. We have seen the representatives of the people make and unmake rulers, how religious strife playing its part in the formation of what is known as the British Constitution, how loyalty to the land was always stronger than loyalty to the Church, the Catholic nobles standing by a Protestant queen when the kingdom was threatened with invasion by Catholic princes, and the Protestant nobles hastening to the defence of a Catholic queen to protect her domain from attack by Protestant princes. We have seen the rules of succession set aside without hesitation and the right to the Crown made conditional. The development of parliamentary government and of ministerial responsibility has been traced and the extension of the franchise in recognition of the right of the democracy to control the state. Those who have followed this series of articles have had in review the whole process whereby British liberty has "slowly broadened down from precedent to precedent." Little remains to be said without going into greater details than ought to be attempted in a series of this nature. In 1866 Disraeli, after one of the most remarkable political somersaults on record, carried a Reform Bill through parliament establishing household suffrage, since which time there has been no measure enacted by Parliament that can be said to have had any radical constitutional effect. This measure was only an extension of that which Peel had carried through, and for advocating which Disraeli had roundly denounced him. Thus the Prime Minister, who is almost worshipped today as the type of British Conservatism, was responsible for the introduction of the most democratic measure that ever passed the British Houses of Parliament. Under his leadership the Commons had shortly before rejected a much more moderate franchise Bill. The electorate, which threatens to destroy the hereditary principle in British institutions was brought into existence by Benjamin Disraeli, and chiefly as a party expedient.

The influence of Queen Victoria upon the development of British institutions may be summed up in the statement that she regained for the Crown much of the influence which it had lost under her predecessors from the time of George I. Her Majesty was imbued with a very strong sense of her personal responsibility for the exercise of her prerogatives. Towards this end the influence of her husband the Prince Consort was exerted. There is little doubt that he inclined to the continental view of the kingly office. He died in 1861, and it can be said of him with perfect fairness, that so far as the public had any opportunity of judging, he did nothing more than endeavor to impress upon the Queen the obligation involved in her position to watch closely how the government was administered in her name. In his private capacity he set a splendid example, taking an active part in everything of a non-political nature calculated to promote the welfare of the nation. The long reign of Victoria, which is only another way of saying that the long period during which the principles of a sincere Christianity made themselves constantly felt in the determination of the policies of the United Kingdom, made possible the culmination of parliamentary supremacy.

Another feature of Her Majesty's reign was the development of the British Empire from the original colonial relation of the outlying parts of the British Dominions to the United Kingdom to its present status. This wholly unprecedented change will be dealt with at another time. For the present it may be sufficient to say that it perhaps could never have been brought about unless it had been for the fact that British people everywhere had a feeling of loyalty to the Queen, that was a factor of unknown and unmeasurable strength in the determination of the nature of the life of the Empire.

It is a pretty story that is told of the girl summoned from her slumbers at midnight by the great officers of state, to be told that she was a queen, and of how she turned to the Archbishop of Canterbury and said simply: "May I ask your Grace to pray for me?" It is a very short and simple story, but in it we find the secret of the life and reign of Victoria, who by the Grace of God, through so many fateful years represented the British people and all their traditions. It is not too much to say of her that not only in respect to her influence for good was she without a peer among her contemporaries, but that we may search history in vain for the name of a sovereign who discharged the duties of the highest office in a nation more conscientiously or with more lasting benefit to the people.

Of the late King it is unnecessary to say more than that he added to the prestige of the royal office. He was able during his short reign to demonstrate to the people of the British Empire that the undefined and indefinable powers of a king, even under such democratic conditions as prevail in the United Kingdom are real powers. He strengthened the monarchy in the estimation of the people, showing that while under the constitution the King can do no wrong, he can within the limits of that exceedingly elastic fabric do a vast amount of right.

THE OPPORTUNITY OF THE CHURCH

Let it be supposed that a person, who had never heard of the New Testament, should in mature years obtain and read the Four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. What would be the chief impression produced upon his mind by his reading? When the people of Christendom read these books, they do so with the preconceived ideas in their minds that result from their education. They are taught from childhood certain things, that is if they receive any religious instruction at all, or they gain in later years certain ideas and impressions concerning Jesus Christ, and they inevitably read the account of His life and of the transactions of the Apostles in quite a different spirit from what they would if they never saw nor heard of the New Testament until it was handed to them for perusal. Does it not seem altogether probable that what would most impress such a reader would be the miraculous phase of the story? Let us try and get ourselves into the position of such a reader. He does not know that there is a great religious system built up on the Gospels as a foundation. He does not know that generations of scholars have discussed the simple narrative and offered various explanations of various parts of it. To him it is simply as if some one had dug it out of the remains of some ruined city. He reads it with no other object than to find out what it contains, not to seek guidance for his conduct, or comfort in sorrow, or to strengthen his religious faith.

Having read the book, he sits down, let us suppose, to review it. He would say, probably, that it was a series of somewhat scrappy biographies of a young Jew of mysterious birth, who for a few years wandered through his native country preaching to the people on the importance of right living and founding a small sect, which at one time seemed likely to become very powerful; that he was charged with some not very well defined offence and executed; that some of his followers believed that he rose form the grave, and influenced by his teachings and impressed with the miraculous fact of his resurrection, had gone out to continue the work that he had begun; that both he and they had claimed to possess a power by which they were able to accomplish things not possible through what were commonly understood to be the regular processes of nature; and that they relied upon this ability as a proof of the divine character of the spirit by which they claimed to work. The reviewer would probably say that, if the miraculous aspects of the narrative were omitted from it, what remained would simply be a code of ethics of a very high character, but not materially different in substance from the teachings of the great moral leaders of men who had lived in other times and countries. Standing by itself and stripped of everything of a miraculous nature, there is nothing in the story of the Crucifixion to differentiate it from the death of very many martyrs.

When we regard the matter in this light, and there are many thousands of people living today in Christendom to whom the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles are almost as unfamiliar as they would be to our supposed reviewer, the inevitable conclusion seems to be that what distinguishes these writings from all other writings is the story of the miracles, from the turning of the water into wine at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee, to the curing by Paul of the father of the Governor of Malta, including the crowning miracle of the Resurrection. The person who reads these accounts and believes them can hardly fail to reach the conclusion that there is a power, influence, agency, or call it what you will, whereby what are generally regarded as the ordinary courses of nature can be suspended or altered or made subject to human will. In other words, he would be bound to admit that there is what may in one sense be called a supernatural power available to such persons as qualify themselves for its exercise. There cannot, as a matter of fact, be anything that is absolutely supernatural. Our views of what is natural are limited by our common experience. To the very ignorant anything out of the usual course is supernatural, and it may be said with much truth that centuries of scientific investigation and practical experiment have only widened the realm of the natural and pushed back a little further the boundary of the supernatural. To many people living within the last half century, and perhaps to many who are living now, the presence of fossil remains of animals in the rocks seemed supernatural. Indeed when Geology first became popular, there were teachers who claimed the fossils to be inventions of the devil in order that men might be induced not to believe the story of the Creation as recorded in the Book of Genesis. The common phenomena of hypnotism were once regarded as supernatural. At one time all the major phenomena of the Universe, such as eclipses, the appearance of comets, earthquakes, thunder, lightning, and so on, were regarded as supernatural, and by no inconsiderable number of people they are so regarded now. Sickness is regarded as natural; the cure of sickness by chemical or mechanical means is regarded as natural; even the medical world, properly slow to accept new things, is beginning to concede that the cure of sickness by suggestion may be natural, provided the suggestion is accompanied by certain "natural" remedies and exerted by a man with a diploma. Possibly the majority of mankind may one day reach a stage when the cure of a disease by mental process will be regarded as just as natural as its cure by a dose of calomel.

If our supposed reviewer of the Gospels and the Acts were to take up the history of the institution founded by the Apostles, he could not fail to be impressed by the fact that what seemed to those who followed Jesus and the Apostles to be the most natural things in the world, to be things to be done under the ordinary daily circumstances of life, soon came to be regarded as supernatural. A recent writer on church union, that is the union of all the churches of Christendom, says that the greatest obstacle to that step is the Church itself. He is a Roman Catholic, and when he employs the word Church he means the organization of which the Pope is the head. Possibly his criticism might be extended more widely. May it not be that the Church, using the term to signify the whole body of mankind, that professes to believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ, has lost its power because it has not striven to possess those powers, which we are told in Mark's Gospel "shall follow them that believe?"

Formal Christianity has proved a failure to a very large extent. There is going up from all Christendom a cry, What shall we do to be saved? The common name for this cry is unrest. It is making the foundation of social and national structures tremble, as the walls of Jericho trembled when smitten by the shouts of the people of Israel. The opportunity of the Church seems to be at hand. The spiritual forces with which the story of the Gospels and the Acts seems instinct, as the trees of the forest seem instinct with a life that adorns them with verdure each succeeding spring, must yet be available. To borrow a simile from the sea, the Christian Church is working with one propeller only and is being driven in a circle. It is time to send the steam into both engines, set both propellers moving and call for full speed ahead.

THE EARTH

V.

Two bodies, free to move, exhibit a tendency to move towards each other. Of course no bodies are absolutely free to move. If we suspend a ball from a string, it is apparently free to move sideways, but it is, in point of fact, held in position by the force of gravitation, which must be overcome before the ball can be moved. A very slight effort may overcome it. In like manner a perfectly smooth glass ball resting upon a horizontal glass table having a perfectly smooth surface, is not absolutely free to move. Freedom of motion is therefore only relative, and in estimating the attraction of bodies for each other the attraction of other bodies must be taken into account. It was from a knowledge of this fact that astronomers were able to tell where the planet Neptune was to be found before any one had seen it. Knowing the irregularities in the orbit of Uranus, astronomers looked for the disturbing element, which they knew must be a body attracting Uranus out of the orbit in which it was held by the Sun, and so the position of the unknown planet was calculated. Neptune was discovered by men who had never seen it and who probably never did see it. They told the men with telescopes where it was, and there it was found. The Sun and Moon constantly exert a pulling force upon the Earth, and the effect is felt chiefly by those parts of the Earth that are most readily moved. There can hardly be any doubt that the atmosphere feels it to a very considerable extent, but we have no means of measuring atmospheric tides, if they occur. Its effect upon the water is more marked. Recently it has been suggested that its effect upon the solid surface is appreciable, although it is very minute. The actual elevation of water in the open ocean because of the tides is small. It is not more than a foot or so, and its proportion to the diameter of the earth is about as 1 to 25,000,000. It would be impossible to construct a sphere on the surface of which the tides could be shown in their proper proportion. The height of the tide depends upon the conformation of the land. Thus off the coast of Portugal a rise of two feet is reckoned as exceptional, whereas in the funnel-like Bay of Fundy, a rise of thirty, forty, and even as high as sixty feet are not uncommon.

A scientific definition of the tides is that they are the result of an effort on the part of the water of the ocean to establish an equilibrium. If the Earth and Moon were fixed in space, the water would be heaped up a little directly under the Moon and remain there, thus defying the law of nature that water will always find its level. But the Moon revolves around the Earth and the Earth revolves around its own axis, and therefore the heaping up of the water goes on continuously around the whole circumference of our planet. But the tides are supposed to be not altogether due to the Moon, it being held that the Sun has its share in the work. Nor is the action of the Moon confined only to the water on the side of the Earth next to that upon which the Moon is at the time, for there is a corresponding tide on the opposite side of the Earth. Thus it is said the Moon pulls the water away from the Earth on one side and the Earth away from the water on the other. Spring tides are those which occur when the axis of the Sun and Moon are in the same or nearly the same straight line. Neap tides occur when these axes are at right angles to each other. Under normal conditions a spring tide bears the same relation to the neap tide as 13 does to 5.

What are commonly referred to as tidal waves have really nothing at all to do with the tides. They arise from some other cause. The famous Java earthquake sent a tidal wave rolling all the way across the Pacific Ocean. Other tidal waves accompanied by severe storms are on record. They seem to be due to the wind, although it is possible that there may be other causes for them. The great Saxby Gale, as it was called, which occurred in the early 70's of the last century, was accompanied by an unprecedented tide, so far as the records of the Bay of Fundy were concerned. This seems to have been simply an increase of the ordinary high tide. The phenomenon was called the Saxby Gale because it was predicted by Lieutenant Saxby of the United States navy, who said the position of the planets, the Sun and the Moon would cause an unusually heavy meteorological disturbance on a certain day. The disturbance came true to time, but, though very severe, was not as widespread as was anticipated. The terrific tidal wave which in September, 1900, destroyed 6,000 lives and over $17,000,000 worth of property in Galveston, Texas, was doubtless caused by the heaping up of water by the wind.

Strictly speaking, tides are confined to the ocean and bodies of water directly connected with it. There is, however, a slight tide in the eastern part of the Mediterranean and in Lake Superior. The daily retardation of the tides is fifty minutes. Not infrequently there are prophecies of tidal waves which are said to be fraught with disaster to all persons living near the sea. A few years ago many persons in Victoria were on the lookout for one of these waves, but when we remember that a tidal wave proper, as it is commonly called, is due wholly to some accidental circumstance, such as an earthquake, or volcanic eruption, it is evident that its coming cannot be foretold. It is not impossible that certain planetary conjunctions might cause an exceptionally high tide, but any difference between such a tide and one of normal proportions would not under any circumstances be so great as to cause any serious damage except to low-lying places at the head of an arm of the sea into which the tide would have free entrance.

The Romans about the time of Julius Caesar were familiar with tidal phenomena, although their opportunities of observing them were not very good. They knew very little about any seas except the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. The latter is tideless, and the former nearly so, although there are some places around its shore where the spring tides reach a height of six feet. No effort seems to have been made to explain the tides until the time of Sir Isaac Newton, who attributed them to the attraction of the moon. Later observers have accepted his theory almost without any change.

Some Famous Dramatists and Their Master Pieces

(N. de Bertrand Lugrin)

PROSPER JOLYOT CREBILLON

This famous tragic poet was born Crebillon and took the name De Crebillon from his father's estate. He was born near Dijon, in France, in 1674, and, like many another of the world's great dramatists, took up the study of law in the first place, intending to follow the same profession as his father, who had held office in the magistracy of the province of Burgundy.

De Crebillon, though admitted to the bar, spent his leisure time in the study of the French tragic poets, and showed such an ability for excellent criticism, that the magistrate in whose office he worked encouraged him to undertake a tragedy of his own. Delighted with the advice given, Crebillon immediately started to work upon a play, choosing a noble theme, "Le Mort des Enfants de Brute." The drama, however, was not successful. The king's troupe of players would have nothing to do with it, and no publisher would consent to print it.

Nothing daunted, Crebillon essayed once more, and produced the tragedy "Idominee." This play was enacted and met with a hearty reception, and emboldened and inspired by success, Crebillon wrote a drama which immediately brought him fame. This was "Atree et Thyeste," and his "Elektra," which followed, the subject of which has formed the theme of great tragedies since the time of Sophocles, was no less of a success than "Idominee. "Rhadamiste et Zenobie," which next saw the light of publicity, is undoubtedly his masterpiece. It formed, we are told, part of the repertoire of the Comedie Francais for more than a hundred years.

With this latter play Crebillon's fame and fortune reached their zenith. His later works for some reason found scant favor, until the production of "Catilina," which he wrote when past seventy, and "Le Triumvirat," composed in his eightieth year.

Crebillon held several offices of state, and was elected to the academy in 1731, but for the most part he enjoyed few of the luxuries of life, and from time to time, especially during late middle life, experienced actual poverty. It is said that for fifteen years he lived in one of the most miserable quarters of Paris, his sole friends, the homeless dogs and cats with whom he divided his scanty fare. To a large extent Crebillon's lack of friends of his own kind was his own fault; he antagonized many of his colleagues who would otherwise have remained loyal to him, by his severe criticism of their works when he held the office of royal censor. Voltaire was among his enemies, and this man's influence alone, working against him, must have been severely felt.

Crebillon lived to be nearly ninety, and the last years of his life saw him reinstated in the king's favor and enjoying to some extent a return of his onetime popularity. He possessed a remarkably strong constitution and was distinguished by his handsome face and dignified bearing at all times. He died in 1762.

"Rhadamiste et Zenobie"

This drama is founded on the old Greek legend related in Tacitus. Zenobie is the beautiful daughter of the king of Armenia, and has married Rhadamiste, king of Iberia, her cousin. Rhadamiste, desiring to extend his dominions, gives secret orders that his wife's father shall be put to death, whereupon he assumes possession of Armenia. The people, however, rise in insurrection against him, and to save his life, Rhadamist is forced to fly. Zenobie, ill and suffering, is overcome after they have been but a few hours on their journey, and, induced to do so by her pitiful entreaties, Rhadamist pierces her with his sword and throws her body into the river. But Zenobie does not die. She is rescued from the water by some passing peasants and is carried to the palace of King Tiridates, who orders her wounds to be dressed, and when she finally recovers, accords her all the honor due a queen.

By and bye Rhadamist, whom all have thought dead, comes to the court of Tiridates, and finds his wife, alive, more beautiful than ever, and in love with his brother, Prince Arsames. When she meets her husband Zenobie is cruelly shocked. The pleadings of Rhadamiste finally win her back to him, and the romance ends happily.

Rhadamiste entreats Zenobie to kill him for his crime:

"Spare not my blood,
Dear object of my love, be just; deprive me
Of such a bliss as seeing thee again.
(Falls at her feet.)
Must I, to urge thee, clasp thy very knees?
Remember what the prince, and whose the blood,
That sealed me as thy spouse. All, even thy love,
Demands that I should perish. To leave crime
Unpunished is to share the culprit's guilt.
Strike—but remember in my wildest fury
Never wast thou cast down from thy high place
Within my heart; remember, if repentance
Could stand for innocence, I need no longer
Rouse thee to hatred, move thee to revenge.
Aye, and remember, too, despite the rage
Which well I know must swell within thy soul,
My greatest passion was my love for thee."

And after Zenobie has forgiven him, and expressed a desire to return to his arms, he speaks as follows:

"O thou, dear wife, forgive me
My fatal love, forgive me those suspicions
Which my whole heart abhors. The more unworthy
Thy inhuman spouse, the less should thy displeasure
Visit his unjust fears. O dear Zenobia!
Give me thy heart and hand again, and deign
To follow me this day to fair Armenia.
Caesar hath o'er that province made me monarch;
Come, and behold me henceforth blot my crimes
From thy remembrance with a list of virtues.
Come! Here is Hiero, a faithful subject,
Whose zeal we trust to cover o'er our flight.
Soon as the night has veiled the staring sky
Assured that thou shalt see my face again,
Come and await me in this place. Farewell!
Let us not linger till a barbarous foe,
When Heaven has reunited us, shall part us
Again forever. O ye gods, who gave her
Back to my arms in answer to my longing,
Deign, deign to give to me a heart deserving your goodness.

LITERAL

"What is your last name, my boy?" asked the teacher of the new pupil, a frightened looking youngster of some half dozen years.

"Tommy."

"Tommy what?"

"Tommy Tompkins."

"Then Tompkins is your last name," turning to his record book.

"No, sir," came the reply, with the air of one accustomed to render literalness to inquiring elders. "I don't think so, sir. Tompkins was my name already when I was born, and aunty says they didn't give me the other for a whole month afterward."—Youth's Companion.

THE CORRECT ANSWER

The late Professor Sophocles, of Harvard, was a short but finely built man, with bushy, snow-white hair and beard, olive complexion, and pearcing black eyes, and looked like some venerable Arab sheik. Reserved and shy in manner, he was yet full of genial humor. Once, in the class-room, he asked a student, "What was done with the bodies of the Greeks who were killed at Marathon?" "They were buried, sir." "Next!" "Why, they—they were burned." Next!" "I—I don't know, professor." "Right. Nobody knows."—Literary Digest.