

An Hour with the Editor

ENGLISH SOVEREIGNS

Henry VII. was one of the ablest monarchs that ever sat upon the throne of England, and in some respects he is worthy to be compared with the greatest rulers of history. His most conspicuous weakness was his avarice, for he adopted every available means to fill his coffers, and employed his influence with the judges to secure him pecuniary advantages. Lord Bacon says that in his reign justice was administered impartially except when the King was a party. He embarked in trade in a large way, and it was his desire to amass wealth that led him to send John and Sebastian Cabot on the voyage of discovery which gave England her title to Newfoundland and Canada. He had no mind for parliamentary restraint. After the Battle of Bosworth Field he convoked Parliament, but invited thereto only a minority of the barons. This he did in order that he might have some formal sanction of his act in crowning himself on the battlefield. The statutory provision that Parliament should be called together yearly was disregarded, but for this he had abundant precedents in the reign of Edward VI., and during the latter part of his reign he came to the conclusion that he could get along very well without any assistance from what had in the reign of Henry VI. been the real governing power of the nation.

The reason of the decay of Parliament was two-fold. As was mentioned in the last preceding article of this series, the French Wars and the Wars of the Roses greatly reduced the baronage. When Henry came to the throne there were only fifty-two barons in the whole kingdom, and among these there do not appear to have been many worthy successors of the men, who had held the kings in check in days gone by. The Commons had become degenerate. Originally the strength of the Commons had lain in the borough representation; but the boroughs had passed under the control of the guilds, and the guilds were exceedingly close corporations. No longer was every citizen entitled to a voice in the affairs of the country, but in the cities, at least, only those who had served the apprenticeship prescribed by the guilds. Many of the guilds passed into the control of the more powerful barons or the crown itself, and elections in them became little more than a form. If it had not been that the knights of the shires retained something of their independence, self-government would have passed away in England. Parliament was not disposed to assert itself, and the King not requiring money for foreign wars, and having more wealth derived from the royal estates and from forfeitures, escheats and trade than he had any use for, it was not necessary for him to invoke the taxing power of the nation. There seems to have been no desire on the part of the members of Parliament to meet. Instances are told of men who were elected to the House of Commons running away to avoid going to the sessions, and being hunted down by the sheriffs with a hue and cry. The country was at peace, and that was all the people cared for. After so many years of foreign and domestic strife, the relief afforded by the firm and not oppressive rule of Henry gave profound satisfaction to the great body of the nation. Therefore Parliament ceased to be regarded as a safeguard to the national welfare, and Henry became as nearly an absolute monarch as England ever saw.

As a diplomatist he far surpassed any of his predecessors, and has been equalled by none of his successors except His Majesty Edward VII. It was his diplomacy that established the Low Countries, as they were once called, as independent of France and Germany. That Holland and Belgium are independent states is due to the policy inaugurated by him. He strengthened the nation abroad by a marriage between his oldest son Arthur and Catherine of Aragon, and, when the young prince died after a few months of married life, he was able to persuade the Pope that there were no insuperable objections to the union of the young widow with her husband's brother, afterwards Henry VIII. He sought to bring about a lasting peace with Scotland, and with that object gave his daughter Margaret in marriage to James, King of that country. When his counselors objected that by such a marriage England might pass under the sovereignty of Scotland, Henry answered: "No, the greater will draw to it the less." The result of this marriage led to the union of the crowns of the two kingdoms upon the head of James I., the founder of the Stuart line of English kings.

The time of Henry VII. was one of great mental activity. Not long before he came to the throne the art of printing from movable types had been invented, and Caxton had introduced it into England. The whole European world was in a state of expectancy. The route around the Cape to India was made known. Columbus pointed out the way to a new world. Books were multiplied, and especially books of travel, which found innumerable readers. The Bible was made available to the mass of the people. A spirit of inquiry into matters religious and scientific was abroad. The whole horizon of human observation had been widened, and Copernicus had piloted mankind through the starry heavens.

Among the domestic matters affecting England, which marked this reign, a statute providing that persons should not be held to have been guilty of treason because they obeyed and supported the person who for the time being occupied the throne, no matter by what title, tended to create a feeling of security. The Statute of Laborers was an attempt to regulate the labor question, which, among other things, provided a maximum wage beyond which no laborer should be entitled to demand

anything. It was well intended, for at the time England was overrun by idle vagabonds, and something was necessary to prevent disorder. The legislation in the course of time proved to be a sad error, for it drew in its train a great amount of poverty. Sir Thomas More suggested that the way to solve the problem of the unemployed was to establish woolen manufactories, a policy which was carried into effect, but not until after its pro-poser had passed off the scene of action. Another important provision was the restriction of the right of asylum, which had grown to be a great abuse. By virtue of this custom criminals could take refuge in monasteries and other sanctuaries and thus escape the officers of the law. The restriction of the Benefit of Clergy was also a notable reform. Benefit of Clergy meant originally that a person in holy orders was exempt from the operation of the Common Law if charged with a crime, and was entitled to be tried by an ecclesiastical court. This right was so extended that it included every one who could read and write. At one time it applied to all offences, but in the course of time it became the custom to enact that the punishment for certain of the graver crimes should be death "without benefit of clergy." The first restrictions were put upon this custom in the reign of Henry VI., but it was further restricted in the reign of Henry VII. The practice was finally abolished until the reign of George IV. as respected commoners and as respected peers until the early part of the reign of Victoria. Bacon said of Henry that he was a model of kingcraft; that his laws were "deep and not vulgar; not made upon the spur of a particular occasion for the present, but out of providence for the future, to make the estate of his people still more happy, after the manner of the legislators in ancient and heroic times."

Henry died in 1509, when he was fifty-three years of age. He was a victim of consumption, which seems to have seized upon him suddenly, as he was just before his death engaged in seeking a wife with a handsome dowry, his first wife having died a short time before. He was of an uneven disposition. As a rule he was not cruel, but several grave acts of cruelty can be laid to his charge. He was formally religious, and seems to have been a good husband and a kind father. He had soldierly qualities and yet no love for war. England was undoubtedly much the better for his twenty-four years of rule.

AN ERA OF CHANGE

Among the lines of human interest along which the most conspicuous changes have taken place since the beginning of the Nineteenth Century, transportation deserves perhaps the first place, not only because of what has been achieved during that period, but because of the relative progress as compared with what has been accomplished in all the previous centuries. It is difficult to realize that there are men now living who were born before the railway locomotive and the steam boat. Not many, perhaps, antedate the latter, but many are older than the former.

The people of the civilized world were in the year 1800 not very much in advance in matters of transportation of the people of the year 1000. It is surprising how slowly transportation facilities were developed. On land practically nothing was accomplished in thousands of years, but on the contrary the fact that great monoliths were carried long distances in Egypt and Western Asia in early days suggests that there must have been a retrogression in this respect. Something was achieved in the matter of water transportation, but even in this line progress was very slow. Not very much information is available concerning navigation in the days before the Christian Era; but we know that the vessels that sailed in the Mediterranean were dependent upon oars for propelling power. If sails were used it was only in an auxiliary way, and neither the construction of the hulls nor the knowledge possessed by these mariners of the art of navigation made it possible to make much use of such appliances. Absence of any guide for ships when out of sight of land made it impossible to make voyages under conditions where sails could be used to advantage. We know practically nothing of the ships that were in use during the Dark Ages. The Norsemen also depended largely upon oars, although they were accustomed to have a square sail forward, and with this, assisted by the rowers, they crossed the northern Atlantic and traversed a considerable part of the eastern coast of America. It is impossible to overestimate the skill and courage of the Norse mariners, who were so fearless that they would set out upon a stormy ocean, trusting to the stars for guidance and chiefly to their own right arms for motive power. The vessels which carried the invading force of William the Conqueror across the Straits of Dover were such insignificant craft that one of our smallest tugs could have sunk them one by one by ramming them. During the reign of John a very considerable impetus was given to shipbuilding, and some vessels of considerable size were constructed, but they were only an exaggeration of the old-time galleys. Navigation languished until the knowledge of the Mariner's Compass was brought from China, when ships were built for deep-sea sailing and were dependent almost wholly upon sails. They were usually unwieldy craft, with high poops and forecastles and built on such lines and equipped with such a sail-plan that they were not of much use except to go before the wind. Some large ships were constructed on this plan, Spain taking the lead. Smaller ships were designed principally, if the truth must be

told, to enable venturesome gentlemen to prey upon the richly laden galleons. The discovery of the sea route to India and of the New World gave an impetus to shipbuilding, although it did not very greatly improve the type of vessels in use. It was difficult to induce mariners to abandon the high bows and sterns, although they made the ships almost unmanageable in adverse weather, but the requirements of naval warfare then accomplished what commerce could not achieve. The frigate was the result. The frigate was a two-decked ship built for speed. It took the place now occupied by the cruiser. Pictures of the line-of-battleships in Nelson's time show vessels with three and sometimes more decks. The seamanship necessary to handle such craft must have been of a high character. Speed does not appear to have been regarded as a very essential thing in ships in those days, except in the case of frigates. The frigates located the enemy; the line-of-battle then advanced and good tactics consisted in laying your ship alongside that of the enemy and pounding him to pieces, muzzle to muzzle, while the boarders climbed over the bulwarks. A modern tug-boat, armed with almost any kind of a modern gun, could have sunk all the ships engaged at Trafalgar without herself being once struck.

The greatest impetus given to shipbuilding arose from the expanding commerce between America and Europe. The packet ships of the early part of the Nineteenth Century were a vast improvement upon anything that preceded them. They were constructed largely for the purpose of carrying passengers and were built on such lines as enabled them to make fairly good speed. Improvements in the sail-plan made them to some extent independent of the direction of the wind, and they were built with a lower freeboard than the galleons, so that they could be more easily handled. The packets could be counted upon to make 9 miles an hour under favorable conditions. But this, though a great improvement upon the best that had been accomplished previously, was not sufficient to meet the new requirements of commerce. A large trade had opened with China and India, and ship-owners demanded that the quickest possible voyages should be made. There being no means of communicating between distant countries except by ships, the profit on a voyage might depend upon the speed with which it was made. A belated tea ship might arrive to find an overstocked market, while the first to arrive might find a ready sale. Competition demanded faster sailers. A clipper ship was a thing of beauty. Her graceful lines, her great spread of canvas, her general appearance was far in advance of anything that had ever been seen upon the sea, and their speed was fifty per cent. and more greater than that of the packets and fully double that of the best ships of the Eighteenth Century. Fourteen days from New York to Liverpool was not an uncommon passage, and one of the clippers made the voyage from New York to San Francisco in seventy days. A clipper ship, with every yard of canvas she could carry spread to catch the wind, was probably the most glorious creation of human hands. The stories of the voyages of the clippers were many and of intense interest, and the fame of the best of them was world-wide. It is worthy of mention that the Marco Polo, probably the fastest sailer that was ever built, was a St. John ship. She made many trans-Atlantic voyages and carried out to Australia one of the first, if not the first, party of voluntary colonists. An important development in sailing craft was the schooner. It was an invention of a New England shipbuilder. When the first vessel of the kind was launched, she ran down the ways with such speed and skimmed over the water with such grace that a bystander exclaimed: "See her scoon," soon being the local word used to express the skipping of a flat stone on the water. On hearing this her builder exclaimed: "A schooner let her be," and thus the name became incorporated into the language. This was in 1713, but schooners did not reach their most useful form until the year 1840, when the number of masts was increased and the style of rigging was improved. The application of steam to ships arrested the development of sailing craft. This was wholly an achievement of the Nineteenth Century, and it will be treated in a separate article. Ships of today are built after the lines of the clippers as a general rule, and they are quite as good sailers, but the necessity of speed is not felt to be as great as it was before the utilization of steam. With the introduction of steam and the application of machinery in the construction of ships much of the shipbuilding art has perished. By this it is not meant that just as good ships are not built now as ever, but only that with the progress of events the old type of shipbuilder has passed away. Among handicraftsmen they had no superiors. They knew more of the quality of timber and how it could be used to the best advantage than any of their predecessors or successors. Steam and machinery have robbed navigation and shipbuilding of nearly all of its romance. We have made great progress during the past half century, but it has been at the expense of some things that brought out the best there was in men.

EVIDENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

A prominent Jewish rabbi, discussing a proposition advanced by some modern scholars, that Jesus of Nazareth was not a Jew by descent, says that He was undoubtedly a Jew by education, but he adds that His nationality is a matter of indifference, because the great thing to be considered at this time is not

what Jesus was, but what Christianity is. It may be admitted, for the sake of argument, he says in substance, that there never was such a person as the Jesus of the Gospels, but this does not dispose of Christianity. This seems to mean that Christianity is capable of standing by itself, without any support from the story of Jesus Himself. To this many persons will at once object. They will say that without the miraculous birth, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, Christianity would be impossible; but perhaps this may not be the case. May there not be in Christianity sufficient for the salvation of mankind without incorporating into it the personality of its Founder? The observation of the rabbi referred to suggests that it may, perhaps, be timely for the Christian Church to change its method of presenting its fundamental truths. The course pursued for nineteen centuries has been to demand, first of all, belief in Christ personally, and not simply in Him as representative of the Divine Spirit, but as one miraculously born, capable of accomplishing miraculous things, a personal sacrifice to atone for man's transgression and the subject of a miraculous resurrection. When these things have been admitted and the theological explanations of them have been accepted, the individual is supposed to be in a position to accept Christianity. Now there is no use in denying that very many people find it impossible to accept these things, because they dispute the sufficiency of the evidence offered in support of them, seeing that they are so contrary to all ordinary human experience. But no one can deny that there is such a thing as Christianity. It is in evidence on every side. It is working for the betterment of humanity as nothing else is. It is a tremendous force for the advancement of the world. How would it do for the Church to reverse its ordinary process of reasoning and rely in the first place upon what Christianity is, and from that argue back to its divine origin? The scientific process of inquiry is to deduce theory from accepted facts. The mediaeval process was to start out with the theory and make the facts square with it by interposing mystery, if necessary. Science has abandoned that process, and the result has been amazing progress. May it not be possible that a similar change in religious teaching might produce a similar result?

Where do we see the best development of human nature? Is it not where we find the best expression of the principles of Christianity? It does not necessarily follow that this expression shall be accompanied with the acceptance of any particular form of belief. What are the qualities which go to produce the best men and women? Let us ascertain these, and let the effort be to impress the value of these qualities upon others. Let us rest the case of Christianity upon what Christianity has accomplished, and not upon statements of events, the happening of which can be disputed, at least with some show of probability. From Christianity Christ is inferable as of necessity. If this process of demonstration is followed, it is no longer necessary to ask the acceptance of a mystery as the foundation of a belief in Christ, but He is seen to be the inevitable result of reasoning from effect back to cause. There is no difficulty in tracing Christianity back historically to Paul. So clear is this that by many persons Paul is regarded as the author of the faith; but when we get back to Paul and study his teachings, we find it necessary to postulate something more, and the Christ of the Gospels alone meets the requirements of the case. In the Twentieth Century we are in a different position from that occupied by the people of the First Century who heard from the lips of Jesus Himself the doctrine of Divine Love. We do not need to see the water turned into wine, or the loaves and fishes increased in number. We do not even need to see some modern Lazarus raised from the dead, nor be shown the vacant sepulchre wherein He was laid. We have a great and widespread factor for the regeneration of humanity at work among us, and we call it Christianity. This calls for no proof, any more than the stars call for proof. They are in their places in the depth of space, and Christianity is in its place in the lives of men. Let this tremendous fact be preached more to the people, and let us have less of human efforts to expound the depths of the Divine Mind.

A Century of Fiction

XXX.
(N. de Bertrand Lapin)

Henry James
This writer has been styled "the subtlest of American novelists," and for that reason alone we can understand why he has not become so popular as some of his less worthy contemporaries. Mr. James is first and foremost an artist, and secondly a thoroughly conscientious artist, qualities which make it impossible for him to sacrifice his ideals in order to please the public taste, no matter what amount of notoriety or pecuniary benefit such a course would bring him. This is essentially an age of hurry and we have learned to take our amusements, that is, most of us have done so, with as little thought or trouble as possible. Novel-reading is, to most of us, a relaxation, a mental relaxation, and if we are required to use our mind's a little in order to fathom a story-teller's idea, we get more or less annoyed about it. Of course there is an exemplary minority who believe we should do nothing unthinkingly, and it is a minority

to which, without question, we all should belong. But modern life will not permit many of us to follow our ideas and best conceptions as closely as we would like to do, and hence, unfairly, the most profound of our novelists do not receive there just reward from an unappreciative public. However, Henry James has achieved not a small degree of fame, and his ablest critics accord him all the praise which is most justly due him. Not only have his novels met with success, but his numerous books on travel are read by many; while of his essays and criticisms an authority states: "There are few more stimulating guides to thought, few more sincere and just appreciations, than can be found among his essays; for Mr. James is a man whose education in life has come largely through books. He is especially happy in his descriptions of the French masters who have influenced him—Turgeneff, Merimee, De Maupassant, and others—as well as some Englishmen with whom he is in sympathy, notably Du Maurier. A very subtle artist writing about the works of other artists, he has made such interesting essays that some careful readers put him even higher as a critic than as a novelist. In both kinds of work he has taught the same lesson—the love of the artistic, perfect finish—which has been carried out by him at least as far as by any other American prose writer."

Mr. James was born in 1843 in New York city, his artistic temperament displayed itself even in childhood. He loved to surround himself with lovely harmonious things, and long before he was able to read, his chief delight was looking at pictures and telling himself stories about them. At eleven years old he went to Italy and to England where he remained for six years, seeing all the old memory-haunted romantic places, his beauty-loving soul revelling in the thousand different aspects of ever-beautiful nature which the different parts of the countries presented to him, becoming intimate with art museums and picture galleries, in short cultivating his taste as far as possible for art and culture of every kind. Returning home to Newport he spent six years with his family in an atmosphere that was always congenial and inspiring. His father, Henry James, was an able moralist, an eloquent writer and conversationalist. His brother William was a deep student of psychology, in fact the whole family was a distinctly intellectual one, and the home influence always stimulating.

While Henry was still in his teens he began his story-writing. And his first stories had very little to recommend them as frank family opinion told him. He kept stubbornly on, however, and finally convinced even these exacting critics that he had a large share of talent and any amount of conscientiousness and determination. He kept up his literary pursuits while he was attending the Harvard Law School, and began to establish a reputation for himself as a contributor to current publications. Since 1869 he has lived principally abroad, his home being in London, though he is a frequent visitor to Paris, and his beloved Italy. His life has always been a very quiet one, devoted to study and art. Taking it on the whole his works have continued to improve since he began to write which is almost the highest praise that can be afforded a novelist. Of his character we can fairly judge from his books. His first novel "Watch and Ward" showed little brilliancy or skill and gave no promise of better things to come. His next story "Roderick Hudson" was meritoriously successful, and since then, all that he has written has been well worth while. In his later stories we miss the simplicity and fun of the earlier ones. Some of his books have been dramatized and he has written a few plays.

The Princess Casamassima

This is a story of the east side of London, and has for its hero, Hyacinth Robinson, an illegitimate child of a certain immoral nobleman who nevertheless passes on to his son the best of the family traits and characteristics. Hyacinth meets and falls in love with the beautiful Princess Casamassima who is working in the slums of London, and who is separated from her husband. Hyacinth has been reared by a poor dressmaker and has spent nearly all his life in the east end, where certain associations have developed in him strong socialistic tendencies. The story is in reality a study of socialistic questions with a strong love interest to brighten it.

The Bostonians

This novel concerns itself with the very modern question of woman suffrage. The champion of the cause of female emancipation is a Boston woman, Olive Chancellor, whom Mr. James satirizes very unmercifully. This woman thinks the whole masculine race a creation of "monsters and tyrants" and tries to impress her female following with the same ideas. Verena Tarrant is a more attractive character, she is a beautiful girl, the daughter of a mesmerist healer, and is used by Olive Chancellor to further her own designs. The story is very droll in places, but rather over-cynical.

The English language is full of subtle meaning and unexpected turns. Not long ago a man asked an acquaintance a number of questions about his business.

"How many people work in your office?" he inquired.

"Oh," said the other, carelessly, "about two-thirds of them."