

*The English Radicals, an Historical Sketch.* By C. P. ROYLANCE KENT. (London and New York: Longmans, Green and Co. 1899. Pp. xii, 451.)

MR. KENT dates the beginning of Radicalism in England at 1769, and carries his sketch of the development of the Radical party down to the Reform Act of 1832, and to the beginning of the new Radicalism—the Radicalism which as he clearly shows has so little in common with the Radicalism of which, in the last three decades of the eighteenth century, Wilkes and Horne Tooke, Priestley, Jebb, and Paine were the foremost exponents.

The introductory pages of Mr. Kent's book are a little unfortunate in that they give the impression that he had fixed a certain year as that in which Radicalism first began to be a force in English political life, and had then pushed forward his research with but little regard for the political history of England prior to the interesting and eventful period with which he is concerned. With the enormous mass of literature of the period between 1769 and 1832, and especially with that from 1769 to 1832, he shows a most thorough acquaintance, and has turned the sources available to scholarly account. It is hardly possible to name a memoir or a volume of letters covering the period between the American Revolution and the Corn Law movement on which Mr. Kent has not drawn. About the only conspicuous omission from his authorities is Mrs. Grote's *Life of Sir William Molesworth*. That book was privately printed; and soon after it was distributed, the friends of Sir William Molesworth made great efforts to possess themselves of all the copies, and with so much success that it was not until about 1896 that a copy found its way into the British Museum Library. A reading of this biography would have helped Mr. Kent to a better estimate of Molesworth's place in the Radical party as it existed from 1832 to 1840, and he would have learned that Molesworth became a Radical not from any appreciation of Radical principles or Radical aims, but to revenge himself for social rebuffs.

Mr. Kent does not cite either Hansard's *Parliamentary History* or Hansard's *Parliamentary Debates* among his authorities. Familiarity with Hansard's *Parliamentary History* might have made him a little more exact in dealing with Lord John Russell's bills for parliamentary reform between 1819 and 1822; and might have altered his estimate of English journalism in the early years of this century. He asserts that at this period parliamentary reporting was very poorly done. Hansard's *Parliamentary History* was compiled from the newspaper reports of this period; and twenty or thirty years before the imprisonment of Burdett and John Gale Jones in 1819, men in public life famous as letter-writers, who usually wrote fully to their correspondents, excused themselves from writing of Parliament because the newspaper reporters were then giving all there was to be told of the proceedings at Westminster. Parliamentary reports were not nearly as full as they are today; but the reports which appeared

in the *Morning Chronicle* for instance, during the many years when Perry was editor, could not be described as being poorly done.

There are several statements in Mr. Kent's introductory pages which warrant the impression that while he read forward with all possible care and diligence from the time when the Radicals came on the scene, he took small account and made but a limited research into the parliamentary history of England prior to that time. He states that before the Revolution of 1688 the Crown despised the House of Commons, and disdained to buy its votes by bribery and corruption. There never was a time from the period when the House of Commons controlled supplies when it was neglected or despised by the Crown. Had the Crown despised the House of Commons it would never have interfered in elections as it did for a century and a half previous to the Revolution. George III. is described by Mr. Kent as "an excellent country gentleman." He was much more than a country gentleman. He was one of the best political organizers of the eighteenth century. He was one of the shrewdest and most able bosses who ever sought to control the House of Commons; and unlikeable as a boss may be either in this country or under the old parliamentary system of England, it has to be said of George III. that he was an eminently successful boss; and to be a successful boss demands unflagging industry, and abilities not usually to be found in an excellent country gentleman. With the mass of material now accessible for forming a judgment of George III., there is little excuse for repeating the long outworn story that he was "only an excellent country gentleman who had been called by fate to rule an empire."

Again, Mr. Kent makes the statement that the efforts of the earliest Radicals were directed not against the House of Lords nor even primarily against the Crown, but against the House of Commons. It was the power unconstitutionally exercised by the Crown over the House of Commons which made the agitation for parliamentary reform general about the time of the American Revolution, and by no one was the nature of this movement better understood than by the King himself. Boss-like he opposed the uprooting of any corruption which would have lessened in the least degree the control he exercised over the House of Commons, whether it was the abolition of redundant and useless offices; the constitutional method of bestowing the Chiltern Hundreds; the removal of the determination of controverted election cases from recklessly and notoriously partisan tribunals to Grenville Committees; or the movement for the general reform of the electoral system. Mr. Kent furthermore overlooks the part which the American Revolution had in originating the movement for economy and parliamentary reform. Radicalism of the period later than Wilkes's conflict with the House of Commons and the controversy over the publication of parliamentary debates centered about these two movements; and the direct influence of the American Revolution in the origin of both these agitations cannot be ignored in a history of Radicalism.

When Mr. Kent settles down to his special period nothing but praise can be meted out to the style in which the book is written; to its arrange-

ment; and to the way in which he has handled the vast amount of material which he had at his command. He divides the century and a quarter covered by his survey into three divisions. The first period is from 1761 to 1789, from the beginning of the reign of George III. to the French Revolution. The second is from the French Revolution to the Reform Act of 1832; and the third from the first reformed Parliament to the Reform Acts of 1884 and 1885.

In the first period the exponents of Radicalism were Wilkes and his associates of the City of London; Horne Tooke, Mrs. Macaulay, Jebb, Price, Priestley, and Cartwright; and in this period the aim of Radicalism was popular control of the House of Commons. During this period it was a middle-class movement, in the hands of a few outspoken and daring men. There was then very little public speaking. The orator was not yet prominent among the radicals; and the master minds of the first period of Radicalism were pre-eminently pamphleteers. In the second period Paine, Godwin, Hardy, Thelwall, Holcroft, Bentham, James Mill, Ricardo, Grote, Burdett, Hume, Place, Cobbett and Hunt were the foremost Radicals; and Radicalism still concerned itself with electoral reform and economy. In this period it was a more popular force than from 1761 to 1789; and it was during this period that the Radicals dissociated themselves from the Whigs. The third division of Mr. Kent's study, from 1832 to 1885, covers the period when the political England of the nineteenth century may be said to have been in making. In this period the leaders of Radicalism were John Stuart Mill, Roebuck, Attwood, Lambton, afterwards Lord Durham, Sir. J. C. Hobhouse, and T. S. Duncombe; Feargus O'Connor, James Bronterre O'Brien, Ernest Jones, Thomas Cooper, and William Lovett of the Chartist movement; and Cobden, Bright, Gibson, Villiers, Stansfeld, and Potter, of the Corn Law movement and of the Manchester school.

Mr. Kent gives brief but vivid pictures of all the prominent men of the three periods of Radicalism, and from their writings or speeches brings out what each stood for in the particular phase of the Radical movement in which he had a part. He brings out with admirable clearness the altering character of the movement; and shows also how from the time of Wilkes the locality of the strongholds of Radicalism changed. The City of London was its stronghold in the time of Wilkes. Later on when Burdett was so much to the fore, and Place was so continuously active, Westminster was the stronghold of Radicalism. In the closing years of the long agitation for Parliamentary Reform the centre was shifted to Birmingham; and finally it moved to Manchester, which may not inaptly be described as the last home of the Radicalism with the history of which Mr. Kent's book is concerned.

It is not possible to credit Mr. Kent with entire accuracy of statement, even in the period to which his study has been most closely devoted. At page 159 he writes of Fox as a member of the Society of Friends of the People. Fox was never of the Society. At page 192 he states that at the time Bentham was writing, serious books were little read

in the United States. He gives no authority for this statement, which is not in keeping with the comparatively large importations and the frequent reprinting of books covering the field of political science, which marked the intellectual life of this country from the Revolution until well on towards the middle years of this century. At page 311 Mr. Kent states that Lord John Russell moved his resolution that corrupt boroughs be disfranchised and that the great towns and counties should be more fully represented in the same year, 1819, in which Sir Francis Burdett unsuccessfully moved for an enquiry into the state of representation. In 1819 Lord John Russell introduced his bill for the disfranchisement of Grampond; but it was not until 1822 that he laid his larger proposals before the House of Commons. Again at page 430 Mr. Kent states that "the Compensation for Accidents Act" was passed in 1896. The Workmen's Compensation Act was passed in 1897.

Mr. Kent is at his best in reproducing the spirit and color of the literature of the Radical movement; and his survey of this field, and his excellent presentation of the position of the several schools of Radicalism, and of the individual positions and opinions of the foremost exponents of these schools, would alone make his book of great value. There was a distinct place for the history Mr. Kent has written. The only books hitherto published treating of the history of the Radical party were Harris's *The Radical Party in Parliament*, and Daly's *The Dawn of Radicalism*. Neither of these covers the entire field. Mr. Kent's *English Radicals* does. It covers the movement in and out of Parliament; its literature; its journalism and its agitations; and it covers it in a way that cannot fail to be helpful and satisfactory to students of English party history since the middle years of the eighteenth century.

*How England Saved Europe.* The Story of the Great War, 1793-1815. By W. H. FITCHETT, B.A., LL.D. Vols. II., III. and IV. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1900. Pp. viii, 326; ix, 419; viii, 435.)

IN these volumes Dr. Fitchett brings to a close his work on the English wars in the period of the French Revolution and of Napoleon. Volume II. deals professedly with the naval operations from 1801 to 1808. It opens with Bonaparte's flight from Egypt to France and his establishment in the Consulate in 1799, but the narrative in the second, third and fourth chapters turns aside to English military operations on the Continent and in Egypt from 1799 to 1801. The relevant portion of the fifth chapter is largely a repetition of the first. The sixth summarizes the European situation in 1800. In the seventh chapter the reader first reaches the real topic of the volume in the Baltic operations against the Armed Neutrality. Apparently this unhappy arrangement is due in part to what has been a fruitful source of other defects in this work: with his history of the war the author, unconsciously perhaps, has attempted to combine a biography of Napoleon. The result is neither a