

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

English Life Since 1780: A Glimpse: Society and Politics in England

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Philippine Studies vol. 13, no. 4 (1965): 884–886

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Fri June 30 13:30:20 2008

of cattle to San Luis Potosi and Mexico City makes a very interesting and enlightening chapter on travel in those times.

In his bibliography, Mr. Harris mentions many a book about the period and about the history of land tenure in Mexico, and several about the war between the United States and Mexico in 1847. It is, however, quite extraordinary that one of the most enlightening about that war, written by an officer in the Mexican army, none other than a Sánchez Navarro, is not included. *La Guerra de Texas* was published by a direct descendant of the Sánchez Navarros, Don Carlos Sánchez Navarro, Marqués de Monte Hermoso, who died recently and was one of the most cultured historians of modern Mexico. A curious study that should be undertaken in connection with such a work as Mr. Harris' book would be a history of the families that used to own the latifundio of Mexico. What became of them after the breaking up of the great landholdings, that opened the doors of progress to Mexico? Many of them, we might notice, changed their wealth in land for wealth in culture. A typical case of that change was Carlos Sánchez Navarro, grandson of Don Carlos Sánchez Navarro, the last owner of the immense latifundio of Patos.

RAFAEL BERNAL

ENGLISH LIFE SINCE 1780: A GLIMPSE

SOCIETY AND POLITICS IN ENGLAND: 1780-1960. A Selection of Readings and Comments. Edited by J. F. C. Harrison. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1965. xiv, 482 pp.

This book is a collection of 110 readings from contemporary writers (contemporary, that is, with the events they describe) illustrating the development of the political, economic and social life of England in the last 200 years. It is intended primarily for students, to be read in conjunction with a standard historical work; and the editor stresses that the extracts "are not to be considered substitutes for but rather introductions to the original works." But the very existence of this book is a temptation not to make the greater effort to master the originals; and as such, it could be dangerous to anyone making a serious detailed study of the period. But to the more cursory student of English history, or to the ordinary reader with some knowledge of the events of the period, this book can give a vivid and often entertaining picture of the way English life has changed since 1780.

The extracts have been purposely selected to concentrate on domestic issues. External trade, empire-building, wars, and foreign

relations generally have rightly been excluded—whatever their influence, their inclusion would have made it impossible to limit the book to one volume. Developments in religion, education and labour relations have properly been included. The editing is very skillful, so that combined extracts from a single work are dovetailed together most successfully. Whenever possible, as in the shorter manifestoes, the complete text is given. Each reading is prefaced by short notes on the author and his work, and there are longer introductory passages to each group of readings which set the scene and fill in gaps with admirable brevity, accuracy and general lack of bias.

The book falls into two unequal parts. The first 90 years (1780 to 1870) are spread over almost 70 readings; the remaining 90 (1870 to 1960) are crammed into 40. As a result, the first part moves at a more leisurely pace, with greater attention to detail. The two chief developments are brought out very clearly: the industrial revolution, accompanied by wide agrarian changes and intense urban growth; and the extension of voting rights through the first and second Reform Bills and the rise of the middle class. The readings convey very well the increasing confidence of the 19th century as the middle class acquired and enjoyed its new wealth and power. Possibly too much space is devoted to the early textile industries at the very start of the industrial revolution at the expense of later achievements; and the concentration on the franchise perhaps obscures other political developments. Also it is surprising that, with so much attention to the growth of Methodism and other protestant movements, nothing is said of Catholic emancipation. The passages of description or even from bare Parliamentary reports are often the most effective, such as No. 28 on the Peterloo massacre and No. 36 on child labour, in contrast to the rather dreary political reasoning of William Paley (Nos. 20 and 24). But even Paley serves as useful comparison with the more lively arguments of Bagehot (No. 58) and Ruskin (No. 68), to show how methods of reasoning changed as the century went on.

The second part of the book, which has the much more difficult task of following trends right up to the present day, is far less satisfactory. Less than two-fifths of the extracts are allotted for this second 90 years, despite the growing intricacy of English life in all its aspects. The result is inevitably cramped and sketchy. The selection seems less purposeful: Nos. 85-88 and 100 deal with essentially irrelevant external issues, and Nos. 94 and 96 give superficial accounts of political disputes without probing to underlying causes. For the last two groups the arrangement is no longer by subject but baldly chronological. There is too much material from government and party sources without the balance of independent writers. Full attention is given to the emergence of the socialist movement, and

the creation, through its influence on public policy, of the 'welfare state' in which the government assumes the responsibility for meeting the essential rights of every citizen. This detailed and sympathetic account is of particular value for American and Philippine readers—both perhaps prone to shy away from socialism. But the result is that almost half of the readings in this part are from socialist writers or official Labour Party publications, which crowd out other topics. Other political developments are left shadowy in comparison. There is little to illustrate the gradual achievement of affluence by the working class, matching in many ways the 19th Century rise of the middle class. Finally, the two most crucial aspects of the post-war scene are only lightly touched on: the economic difficulties caused by the conflicting needs to maintain full employment, prevent inflation, balance external trade and keep the pound stable as an international currency; and the shifting of class barriers brought about by the redistribution of wealth and universal education. Passages on these, perhaps from Andrew Shonfield "British Economic Policy since the War" and Richard Hoggart "The Uses of Literacy" (both in Pelicans) would be useful and revealing.

In brief, this book tells the story of England from 1780 to 1960 in a vivid and readily intelligible manner. Despite crowding and some lack of balance towards the end, it is a valuable work in its entirety.

NICHOLAS BAYNE

A HISTORY OF THE THEOLOGY OF MARRIAGE

THE THEOLOGY OF MARRIAGE. By Joseph E. Kerns, S.J. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964, xiv, 302 pp.

Among the many titles coming off the press today on the subject of marriage, the study of Fr. Kerns holds a unique place. It could be more aptly captioned, *A History of the Theology of Marriage*, for that is what it is. Eschewing the philosophical *a priori* approach so characteristic of many treatises on the subject, the author chose to follow the more favored historico-theological method of modern scholarship. The result is an informative and stimulating kaleidoscope of the experience of the people of God in the marital state, and how this has affected their relationship with God, and we may also remark, how their relationship with God has affected their understanding of the experience of marriage. For both aspects of the question are pertinent and appear interwoven throughout the course of this study.