

Parliament and Privy Council is shown to have been perpetually active—another manifestation of organic unity, however imperfect it may have been. Even when the leaders and representatives of the nation were in an overwhelming majority descendants of planters, Cromwellians, Williamites, they resented measures that overrode the nation. After reading that the Parliament of the eighteenth century exhibited every fault that a parliament could have, one may smile at the apologetic reflection (p. 377), "Still, with all its faults, it was an *Irish* Parliament of a kind". A poor thing, sir, but mine own!

The claim advanced in the preface that the authors have striven to be impartial is amply sustained. They have shunned the rhetorical. A leader who failed is not, therefore, denounced as a traitor or incompetent. When foreign influences have contributed any benefit, or English statesmen have made any honest endeavor to contribute to Irish welfare, the good is liberally acknowledged. The long story of misgovernment is told so temperately that, compared for instance to the denunciations of Gladstone or Macaulay, this presentation of the case frequently reads like a plea in mitigation of sentence. The evidence is submitted, and facts left to speak for themselves.

One important element of the work remains to be noticed. This is the synopsis, in chronological order, of the history of Irish literature. In each period the state of literary culture and education, the writings which are still extant or which are known to us only through later writers, their value, whether historical or purely literary, receive attention, in order to show that this living current, beginning in the remote past and at times dwindling to feeble dimensions, has nevertheless run continuously down to its vigorous expansion in the present day.

The work may be said to close with the end of the nineteenth century, although there is a final chapter in which the events of the present century, up to 1920, are chronicled without comment. In the preface, the parts for which the joint authors are respectively responsible are indicated. While the title sets forth correctly the nature of the book, as a history of the Irish people, many will regret that the other word is also apt: it is short. Enlarged to a scale that would give fuller scope for detail in the treatment, the work would become a lasting treasure for the historical student.

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*Acts of the Privy Council of England, 1613-1614.* [Master of the Rolls.] (London: H. M. Stationery Office. 1921. Pp. ix, 741. £1. 1s.)

THE decision of the Record Commissioners to continue the publication of the *Acts of the Privy Council* for the reigns of James and Charles is of greater importance to students of constitutional and administrative history than many will realize who have not already read some consider-

able portion of the unpublished part. Somewhat extensive researches in the administrative and legal records and in the correspondence of the period from 1580 to 1620, in private as in the usual manuscript repositories, have established to my thinking that the important formative decade, the truly significant shift in emphasis from the administrative system of Elizabeth to that of the Stuarts, was the years from 1601 to 1611 or possibly 1612—the very period for which the Privy Council Register was burned in the fire at “the Banqueting howse” in 1618. To the least informed and to the most casual inspection, the contents of the Privy Council Register published in this volume differ in character from the last years of Elizabeth. The change is too great to be fortuitous, too sweeping to be the result of anything but design, had we no other materials from which to establish the extent and character of the administrative reforms of those eventful years. But the change in 1613–1614 has taken place; the reforms are over; the new regime is already established and is not yet in the making or further to be transformed. This the correspondence and State Papers establish and the letters of the Privy Council and the fragment of a transcript (if such it be) in the Additional MS. 11402 confirm. The records of the administrative courts, the High Commission, the Council of Wales (as it is invariably written at this time), the Council of the North, the Court of Requests further demonstrate this fact. A great and sweeping change in the working of the entire administrative system took place between 1601 and 1613 of which from the records of the Privy Council there is now no account to be had.

The volume now published gives an accurate idea of the general type of material to be found in the Register for about a decade, after which (1624) the Register becomes still more formal. On the whole, the economic policy of the Privy Council came more and more to be executed (as was already true in 1608 during the great famine) by formal action recorded by correspondence in the Register, and the bulk of such material is much larger than under Elizabeth and grows to a still greater volume under Charles. The quasi-legal functions of the Privy Council were in 1605 otherwise provided for, in a fashion too complicated to be here described, and a considerable body of actions and correspondence disappear therefore from the Register and do not later reappear. On the whole, the methods intended for dealing with such crises as Essex's Rebellion are no longer entered in the Register, other provision than direct Council action having already been made. While it is demonstrable from a vast bulk of material that the Privy Council was not a factor less important in administration than under Elizabeth, the nature and character of its functions no longer appear in the Register itself to any such extent as under Elizabeth, and under Charles seem to be still less elaborately reported.

The Register itself, no less than the correspondence, shows that under Elizabeth, and certainly under James, the “Minute in the Council Chest” was itself an essential part of the Council records, which were also held

to include correspondence of various kinds. This is also clear from the correspondence at Hatfield House. All these papers seem to have been burned for the entire Elizabethan and Stuart period in 1618. What we have therefore in the Council Register is only a portion of the records which the Council kept; for historians the earlier part is more closely allied to the development of the administrative system than the part now to be published, though not as entirely trustworthy a guide as some have thought it nor as complete as it seems even after careful perusal. For all that, the Register is an invaluable and indispensable record for all students.

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*Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*, September 1st, 1680–December 31st, 1681, preserved in the Public Record Office. Edited by F. H. BLACKBURN DANIELL, M.A., Late Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. (London: H. M. Stationery Office. 1921. Pp. lx, 805. 25s.)

DOCUMENTS calendared in the Domestic Series of the Calendar of State Papers are bound to be of a somewhat miscellaneous character, more so than is the case with the documents in the Colonial Series, but there is usually a sufficient number relating to some outstanding event of the period to give a certain unity to the collection. In the volume now issued for the years 1680–1681, though it contains echoes of the Popish Plot of 1679 and warnings of another popish plot in Ireland to come, the chief interest centres in the Presbyterian Plot, the “sham plot” as many contemporaries called it, for which Stephen College suffered death and in which every effort was made to implicate the Earl of Shaftesbury and others. The whole story is very involved and difficult to disentangle, and I am not sure that the present volume does very much in clearing up the situation, but it does throw light on the hysteria of the time and the ease with which men of either party accepted at its face value the evidence of witnesses. One is amazed at the prodigious number of this particular brand of gentry, who made it a profession to bear false witness against their neighbors and who were willing, apparently on any provocation, to turn about and charge with subornation those in whose interest they had thus perjured themselves. One of these was Bryan Haines, whom Pepys in 1668 called “the incomparable dancer of the King’s house”, who testified against both College and Shaftesbury and would have testified against anybody rather than starve (p. 418), and who became so notorious that his ill-repute spread to the colonies from Massachusetts Bay to Maryland. He certainly swore like a stout sinner, as Christopher Rousby wrote of him. One understands better the contemporary situation in the colonies, after breathing for a while the atmosphere of England during the years from 1679 to 1689. For that