

partial success of the radicals between 1776 and 1779, and also the conservative reaction, beginning about 1779, and having its counterpart in other colonies, which was the prelude to the establishment of the Federal Constitution and the Federalist régime under Washington and Adams. From this point of view, the Revolution was the beginning of the democratization of American politics and society, a movement which is inseparably associated with the names of Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln, and—shall we say Bryan, Roosevelt, or Wilson? Perhaps with all three.

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*The Press-Gang Afloat and Ashore.* By J. R. HUTCHINSON.  
New York, E. P. Dutton and Company, 1914.—vii, 349 pp.

It is too much to expect that we shall ever have from one pen an adequate history of social England in the eighteenth century—one of the most dismal centuries that the common people of England ever endured. But in the last few years there has been accumulating a small library of books, based on first-hand or other authoritative sources, which reveal eighteenth-century English life in all its drabness. Among these books, Mr. J. R. Hutchinson's *The Press-Gang Afloat and Ashore* will take a foremost place. It is a contribution rather to the social history of England than to the history of the British navy. Only incidentally or allusively is there any mention of the achievements of the navy; and there is nowhere in Mr. Hutchinson's pages a discussion of British naval policies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Mr. Hutchinson's sole concern is the system by which the fleet was manned. He traces the pressing of men to a time as early as the reign of King John, and carries the history of the press-gang down to 1833, when a system which he describes as "conscription in its most cruel form," was finally abandoned in favor of the less expensive and more effective system of voluntary enlistment.

The system was at its worst between 1740 and the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815; and it is of this period that Mr. Hutchinson writes with most detail. Every man who had "used the sea," unless he had a protection, or was too old, or was otherwise incapacitated, was liable to be pressed. He might be taken either when the merchant vessel in which he was serving was nearing her home port or after he had reached port. But in the long run, when the press was hot, and the press-gangs off the coast and on shore were alert and relentless in pur-

suit, he was certain to be seized as the King's chattel, sent to Spithead or the Nore, and from these receiving ports transferred for an indefinite period to a ship of the royal navy.

The lot of the English seafaring man in the eighteenth century, either in the hands of the press-gang, or after he had been assigned to a ship of the fleet, was infinitely worse than that of a slave on a southern plantation at the same period. It is inconceivable that such an anti-social system of manning the fleet—a system based on rank injustice and cruelty and leaving so much social wreckage in its train—could have survived the reform of the representative system in 1832 or the extension of the newspaper press that followed the first reform of the House of Commons. Even as early as the reign of George II the law officers of the Crown frequently counseled the Admiralty that it was not expedient to take into the law courts cases in which responsible men resisted impressment.

The right of search grew out of the press-gang methods of manning the fleet; and in the eighteenth century, as Mr. Hutchinson shows, no men were keener to enforce this right than naval commanders, who saw in it a certain prospect of strengthening their crews. Forged protections were common as long as the system survived; and after the American Revolution of 1776–1783, American protections were a fruitful source of trouble to the Admiralty, because of the ease with which they were forged in New York.

No class of protections, was so generally forged, so extensively bought and sold as the American. Practically every British seaman who made the run to an American port took the precaution during his sojourn in that land of liberty, to provide himself with spurious papers against his return to England, where he hoped by means of them to checkmate the press-gang.

The material on which Mr. Hutchinson has drawn is the statutes, the state papers, and for the eighteenth century, the admiralty archives, regulating officers' reports, captains' letters and admirals' despatches. While drawing less than perhaps he might have done on local newspapers of the last twenty-five years of the eighteenth century and the first ten years of the nineteenth, Mr. Hutchinson has made excellent use of the admiralty papers, and chiefly from them he has produced a remarkably informing contribution to English eighteenth-century social history.

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*The Influence of King Edward, and Essays on Other Subjects.*

By VISCOUNT ESHER. London, John Murray, 1915.—261 pp.

Eight review articles and an address before the United Service Institution are included in Viscount Esher's *The Influence of King Edward and Other Essays*. Several of the articles have lost interest in consequence of developments since they were written, and especially of developments resulting from the war. Permanent interest, however, attaches to the study of the character of King Edward VII, an essay which extends to nearly fifty pages. Its most distinctive feature is the sketch of the education of King Edward and of the environment in which his early life as Prince of Wales was passed. Viscount Esher, who had peculiarly good opportunities of becoming thoroughly acquainted with the late King, concedes that he was never a great reader; but shows that he was—what was quite as serviceable for a king—a great observer. In describing the King's influence as a constitutional sovereign, Viscount Esher recalls the fact that the British constitution withholds power from the sovereign; "but," he adds, "it clothes him with an influence, which in the hand of King Edward was highly potent; and, although exercised in a quite different fashion, was as powerful as that which was exercised throughout her long and glorious reign by Queen Victoria."

King Edward's methods were in direct contrast to those of Queen Victoria. In the Queen's long reign, the whole of the state business, with which she was so largely identified, was carried on by correspondence, and the Queen seldom saw her ministers. King Edward, on the other hand, was always accessible to his ministers; and far more than half the business transacted by the King was done orally in personal interviews. He enjoyed putting questions to his ministers. He liked also to state his own views, not in a formal document, but face to face with those whom the matter concerned; and Viscount Esher is confident that in saving time and minimizing friction this method was superior to that of the previous reign.

The address that Viscount Esher gave before the United Service Institution, March 20, 1912, was on the functions and potentialities of the Committee of Imperial Defence. The interest of this paper has been increased rather than diminished by the war, as it contains a fairly complete history of the committee; and from Viscount Esher's examination of its organization and work, it is possible to form an idea of the state of the preparedness of the British Empire in 1912. At that time, in addition to the consideration of the more obvious naval and military