

Two Speeches sent to President Oswald
January 1965 (Mrs. F. L. Adams) ?

The Norman Conquest and its relations to Civil & Religious Liberty

On the 14th of Oct. 1066 was fought the battle of Hastings one of the great battles which have changed the whole course of the world's history. Its consequences are still felt not only in England but among all the nations, whether independent like our own or dependencies like Canada and Australia, ~~where~~ ^{whence} which owe their origin to England. And its effects are not confined to them but ^{are felt} _{in} by all who have been brought within the sphere of the relationship which Great Britain and the Great Republic sustain to Universal Civilization.

Harold whom William of Normandy defeated on the field of Senlac was not of the royal line of Cerdic and Egbert. He succeeded the Confessor not by virtue of royal appointment nor by of royal descent, but being the most powerful noble in England as well as the most popular was elected by the witea-gemot to the exclusion alike of ~~Edgar Atheling~~ ^{whose claims the latter ignored} grand-nephew of the Confessor, and William of Normandy his second cousin ^{twice} and appointee by will, though claim by descent he had none.

On the accession of ^{Harold} ~~Harold~~ William determined to fight for the Crown left him by his Cousin Edward the Confessor and summoned Harold to acknowledge him as his lawful sovereign. He gathered from his own Norman Barons and their retainers as well as from France, Flanders and the German Empire an Army formidable alike from its ~~numbers~~ discipline and courage and numbering 60,000 men. Harold at the time of the threatened invasion from Normandy was called to meet one only less formidable in the North led by his renegade brother Tostig and the renowned Harold Godwinson of Norway. There he defeated with immense slaughter at Stamford Bridge in Yorkshire

September 23rd and hurried south to meet the Norman who had
~~been~~ meanwhile landed on the shores of Sussex, His brothers
Guth and Leofwine endeavored to dissuade him from giving
battle and advised him to protract the war by harassing the
enemy, ~~destroying~~ despoiling the Country and cutting off supplies,
But his impetuous spirit, stimulated by his late success in the
North would brook no delay, the field of Senlac was fought,
all day the battle raged and Saxon and Norman grappled in
deadly conflict with battle axes and spears, North could advance
North was forced to yield till William gaining flight drew his
less way way antagonists from his entrenchments, then turning ^{round} ~~back~~ the
down down with his Cavalry or forced them back ^{behind} into their ~~fold~~
palisades where they died sword in hand, the ^{Saxon} ~~English~~ army was
~~exterminated~~ not vanquished and England lay at the feet of
the Conqueror, William was crowned in Westminster Abbey on
the Christmas following and became the first of a line of
Sovereigns whose descendants still fill the throne of Great Britain
More than two centuries elapsed before the Saxon and the Norman
were ^{joined} fused into one, the vanquished nobles were ^{dispossessed} ~~dispossessed~~ of the
lands which became the domains of the ^{Barons} ~~Barons~~ who accompanied
William to the English shores, the Saxon fiefdoms and points were
^{divided} ~~dispossessed~~ from their sees and benefices to make way for
Norman Bishops and Monks, for some time justice was
administered in the foreign ^{language} ~~language~~ and Englishmen found
themselves aliens in the land of their birth, but by ^{degrees} ~~degrees~~
the Saxon tongue in the struggle for existence ~~retained~~ held the
contested field, Saxon laws ~~remained~~ maintained their footing and
in process of time conquerors and conquered ^{spoke but} ~~used~~ one speech, the

the noble language of Chaucer and Shakespeare of Bacon and Arden
of Long fellow and Tronson, and were judge by but one code
of Laws. the laws of Ina and Alfred of Edward, ^{and William}, the
jurisprudence of Littleton and Blackstone of ~~Strong~~ ^{Story} and Kent.
The basis of the English tongue is today not Norman but Saxon
and the basis of British and American ~~law~~ jurisprudence not
the Roman Code but the Common Law. But while in the
~~language & law~~ ^{language & law} ~~was~~
strongly for existence the elder held its ground ~~it~~ ^{it} largely
~~and~~ ^{and} ~~Constitution~~ ^{Constitution} ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~modified~~ ^{modified} by the ~~foreign~~ ^{foreign} influences. The stream remained the same
but was ~~turned~~ ^{turned} into a new channel, the most important of
these modifying influences and the only ones to which we can now
add - at least were two, the altered relations of the Church and
the introduction of Heredotian and the Law of Primogeniture,
Since the introduction of the Benedictines by St Dunstan in the reign
of Edgar 100 years before the conquest the English Church had been
in close ~~dependent~~ dependance upon the See of Rome. The Pope
Gregory Pontiff Alexander II with the view of ending its dependance
still more complete espoused the cause of William ~~and~~ pronounced
Herald a perjured usurper and blessed the expedition before it
left the shores of Normandy. Some years after the coronation
Gregory VII - Hildebrand - summoned him to do fealty for
the realm of England. William returned a peremptory refusal, none
of his ancestors had done fealty for their dominions and he would
give up no old right. Hildebrand knew the man with whom
he had to deal and pressed him no farther. The independent
spirit of the Normans supported by their insular position steadily
resisted the encroachments of the Papal See and developed the
opposition to the pretensions ~~to~~ of the Roman church which found
expression ⁱⁿ the free spirit of enquiry of Wicliffe and the open
~~condemnation~~ ^{condemnation} of Papal abuses by the Lollards. Suppressed for a time by

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the Lancastrians the spirit of resistance thus evoked passed beyond sea where it found expression through John Huss and Jerome of Prague and finally blazed forth in the Reformation led by Luther and Calvin Knox and Zwingli, to such a source was the great Reformation due, ~~the establishing~~ the ~~assertion~~ ^{assertion} of the right of private judgment, the emancipation of the human intellect from ~~some~~ ^{servile} submission to dogma, and the inauguration of the splendid era of literature science and art which will make these centuries forever glorious.

The feudal system introduced into England by the Conqueror differed in many respects from that which obtained on the Continent.

Domesday book completed the year before his death, shows that with scarcely an exception all the great Saxon Proprietors had been dispossessed of their lands. These were given to the knights and Barons who accompanied him from Normandy. On the ~~Continent~~ the Chief Barons held directly from the sovereign ~~the same~~ All who held lands in England whether ~~whether~~ Barons in chief or lesser Barons swore fealty to the King. On the Continent only the Chief Barons swore fealty to the sovereign while the lesser ones swore fealty to those from whom they immediately held.

But the most important in its consequences was the law of primogeniture. On the Continent where division of estates and the law of inheritance were regulated only by the feeling or caprice of the possessor, all the ~~the~~ heirs male inherited the rank and title of the deceased, the consequence was in time the multiplication of an impoverished nobility whose estates were

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inadequate to the support of this rank, the more they increased the smaller the estates upon which they depended for support became and the greater burdens in rent were laid upon the non-proprietary cultivators, the nobility ^{became in successive generations} ~~was~~ poorer and poorer, and the peasantry more abjectly dependent. There was no middle class to bridge of over the gulf between the noble and the serf. In England on the other hand, only the eldest son inherited the titles and estates of his ancestors. The younger sons through Lords by Courtesy were in reality only gentlemen, these last formed the nucleus of the great middle class in England, ~~this~~ ^{which} ~~was~~ recruited in successive ages from the nobility and from those who rose out of the ranks of the Poor Peasantry ^{more or numerous} in the course of time formed a class far greater, ~~than the~~ ^{upper class} nobility ~~in numbers~~ and richer than the peasantry lower. The great Barons in time limited by extorted concessions the royal prerogative, But the ~~concessions~~ Constitutions of Clarendon and the Magna Charta of Runnymeade though obtained by the nobles could not be ~~kept~~ kept in their exclusive possession, what the Barons obtained from Henry and John, the middle class ~~were~~ wrong from the Barons, and what the middle classes wrested from the Barons ^{has} ~~was~~ in these later years been conceded to those whom the reform Bills of 1832 and 1867 brought within their pale. English political society from the time of the Conqueror consisted of a series of successive strata - lower middle and higher which shaded off into each other without ^{any} abrupt transitions. Continental political society of only a higher and a lower with no intermediate gradation to bridge the chasm which became wider every ~~age~~ century. The ^{improved} recognition of Constitutionalism in the great rebellion

and the Revolution of 17 1688 ⁴ ~~was~~ ^{were} the fruits of the former,
the wars of the League and the French Revolution with all
its atrocities, the Thirty-years war and the Continental upheavals
consequent upon the volcanic outbreak of 1789 ^{were} ~~the~~ the fruits
of the latter. In the former Parliamentary government, Habeas
Corpus, Trial by Jury, ^{Freedom of the Press} and Municipal freedom. In the
latter Centralized despotic ~~Beau~~ Bureaucracy, a
muzzled Press, Habeas Corpus and Trial by Jury unknown,
In the former the few existing for the many in the latter
the many for the few.

Before ^{our} ~~the~~ war of Independence the History of Britain and
the development of Constitutional government ^{are} ~~is~~ ours also.
Upon Magna Charta and the Bill of rights we found
our charters of freedom, Shakespeare & Bacon Arden
and Locke are ours by a common inheritance.

All the characteristics of Englishmen before ^{our} ~~the~~ Revolution and
we possess in an eminent degree, The ^{British} ~~people~~ ^{nations} who speak
the English tongue ~~are in the~~ lead civilization, They possess
the fire and ~~clan~~ ^{and heroic endurance} of the Celt, the patient pains-taking industry
of the German and the indomitable courage and resolute energy
of the Norman, Such a happy combination exists in no
other people. These are the people Britain and America
who are destined to rule the world, and from the
Norman conquest by Duke William do they derive the
grand principles of civil and religious liberty to which
they owe their greatness.

Late Speaker of the Commons

The death of Sir John Evelyn Disson Viscount Ossington, which occurred in England on the 6th inst. will occasion deep and wide spread regret. He had presided with eminent ability and distinction in over the British House of Commons as Speaker for nearly fifteen years and had until his retirement in 1872 served the Country, most of the time in the Commons, since 1824 when he first entered Parliament. Though by no means what might be called a brilliant man, he was ^{solid} ^{solid} honest and safe. His classical education obtained ^{at the most illustrious and considered of the most famous} Colleges which make up the Corporation called the University of Oxford, his diligent habits of study after he graduated as B. A. in 1823, and his thorough acquaintance with the notions of Parliamentary procedure made him one of the best Speakers the House had. His knowledge of mankind was increased by the somewhat protracted tour which he made with Lord Stanley afterwards the famous Earl Derby ^{through} the ^{various} ^{parts} ^{of} the ^{United} ^{States} ^{and} ^{the} ^{Canada} in 1824. There are not living men in Kentucky who remember with pleasure the elegant culture and graceful courtesy of this noble Aristocratic Temporale during the brief days they remained in Parliament on our own State. On his return home he was promoted by the Ministry of the young and gifted Canning to a seat at the Admiralty Board. During the fierce struggles which accompanied the agitation for Catholic Emancipation he acted a prominent part - uniformly supporting the views who advocated concession of Catholic Claims. Upon the death of the Canning by several succeeding Administrations, preferred the independence which freedom from the cause of office gave him as an independent member of Parliament. In 1830 he was elected member for Hastings and in 1831 after the death of Mr. Huskisson he was offered his Constituency, he was elected accordingly for Liverpool, but being returned two parliaments and was elected for North Nottingham in 1837. On the retirement of Mr. Shaw Lefevre who had served as Speaker for 18 years, and who was now transferred to the Upper House as Lord Bunsley, Mr. Disson was unanimously chosen Speaker of the Commons in 1857 and again in the Parliaments which met in 1859, 1866 and 1868. After an unintermitted service as Speaker for 15 years he resigned ^{which he refused but accepted} on February 8th 1872 and was ^{compensated} ^{with} a pension of £4000, and a seat in the House of Lords with the title of Viscount Ossington. His Lordship died in the 73rd year of his age respected by all who knew him. There was no man within the four seas better acquainted with Parliamentary Procedure than he. Scarcely a decision was now proposed to the House and we do not remember that any of his rulings failed to be sustained. This accounts for the list in ^{domed} ^{by} ^{one} ^{of} ^{the} ^{great} ^{occupants} ^{of} ^{the} ^{Speaker} ^{Chair} ^{the} ^{long} ^{list} ^{of} ^{qualifications} ^{mentioned} ^{by} ^{one} ^{of} ^{the} ^{great} ^{occupants} ^{of} ^{the} ^{Speaker} ^{Chair} in the above time. "A Speaker" said he "ought to be a big man big and comely, stately and well spoken, his voice great, his carriage majestic, and his pen plentiful and heavy". This was said when the Speaker's revenue was mainly derived from fees and when the Compliments ^{to} ^{the} ^{Speaker} ^{were} ^{by} ^{no} ^{means} ^{small}. On one occasion in the reign of William of Orange Sir John Trevor Speaker of the House had a bribe of £1000 traced to him and had to induce the Annulation of putting a motion before the House for his own expulsion. It is no wonder that he ^{was} ^{withdrew} ^{immediately} ^{after} ^{on} ^{the} ^{motion} ^{of} ^{the} ^{House} ^{and} ^{was} ^{replaced} ^{by} ^a ^{salary} ^{of} ^{£5000} ^{per} ^{annum} ^{and} ^a ^{pension} ^{on} ^{retirement} ^{if} ^{he} ^{chose} ^{to} ^{accept} ^{it}.

Though still technically called Speaker there are few who know the origin of the term. Its origin as of that of the functionary who bears it may be traced to the principle of Natural Selection. The House of Commons whose existence may be dated from Simon de Montfort was originally a crowd of men summoned from different parts of the Country to bargain with the King about Supplies and obtain Concessions and redress of grievances as a quid pro quo for the money voted for the King's necessities. There required a spokesman who should drive as hard a bargain as possible, give as little and obtain as much as possible. A glib tongue, adroit and smooth in manner covering up a good deal of moral courage and inflexibility of purpose were the necessary qualifications for the post, but infrequently one of danger in the presence of self-willed and arbitrary monarchs. If large sums were obtained it was generally in consideration of redress of grievances and not infrequently hard words were spoken both by the sovereign and the Mouth-piece - Speaker - of the Commons. The Commons of course chose their own Speaker, but it was natural that they should choose one personally agreeable to the sovereign, hence the custom, now an established precedent of presenting the Speaker when elected to the sovereign for approval. We remember only one occasion on which the sovereign set aside the choice of the Commons. When Parliament assembled in 1679 the King Charles II desired the choice to fall on Sir Thomas Bessier, but the Commons elected Seymour the Speaker of the last Parliament a man personally obnoxious to the sovereign during the former Parliament he had presented articles of impeachment against the Earl of Clarendon father in law of the Duke of York afterwards James II and brother of the King. Accordingly when presented Seymour was rejected, both Bessier and Seymour were withdrawn and Gregory chosen instead. ^{was}

As the House of Commons rose into importance the original duty of the Speaker, which was, as may be gathered from what we have said something analogous to that of foreman of a jury, has been merged in those of presiding over the deliberations of the House. The Speaker has now no chance to speak except to decide points of order and day who has the floor. He has seldom to address the sovereign, seldom to present the thanks of the House to eminent persons for distinguished service and seldom to make an offering at the bar. There is a tradition that in the days when Speakers spoke one inflicted a two hours speech on Queen Elizabeth and another a speech of four hours on King James the "Butcher Solomon". If the Speaker is necessarily absent the House of Commons adjourns. This is done on the ground that a uniformity of ruling is required that the continuity of precedent be not broken. If the Speaker ship were put in Commission uniformity of decision would be endangered. Colonial Ministers may come and go during a sitting of the House, members may be second but the Speaker must sit on. Speaker Andrew once sat in the Chair for 17 hours.

Great deference is shown him, and an invitation to dine with the Speaker is deemed in honor only to one to dine with the sovereign. The House can not do business with less than 40 members, but the Speaker is not allowed to take notice that less than 40 are present unless a member calls his attention to it. Not more of twenty members left can he move on adjournment of the House, and it is said that actually on one occasion he was dissented without a formal motion for adjournment and had with him some one came to his relief seat. This reminds us of the mortuary force of Customs in Rome when the removal of the flag from Janiculum would put a stop to all legislative proceedings in the Capitol and bring the whole machinery of government to a stand still. It cannot inflict punishment on a member but he is entitled to "name" and offending member, which done, the person named will be put out by the Sergeant-at-Arms unless he withdraws. Members rise when he enters the House, bow when they pass the Chair, and take off their hats when they meet him. When the House adjourns the cry "who goes home" is supposed to be common in court of members who attend him to his home. These and many more quaint old Customs still survive and carry no date in English history hundreds of years.