

English Historical Documents, under the general editorship of David C. Douglas. Volume I, *C. 500-1042*, edited by Dorothy Whitelock (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955, pp. xxiv, 867, \$12.80); Volume II, *1042-1189*, edited by David C. Douglas and George W. Greenaway (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953, pp. xxiv, 1014, \$12.80); Volume VIII, *1660-1714*, edited by Andrew Browning (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953, pp. xxix, 966, \$12.80); Volume IX, *American Colonial Documents to 1776*, edited by Merrill Jensen (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955, pp. xxiv, 888, \$12.80).

During the past few years British historians have been engaged in a publishing project "to make generally accessible a wide selection of the fundamental sources of English history." Under the general editorship of David C. Douglas, *English Historical Documents* will cover in thirteen volumes the years from Anglo-Saxon times down to the beginning of World War I. The four volumes under review are the only ones that have already been published. In setting forth the aim of the series, the general editor notes that there has been a tremendous accumulation of primary historical materials over the past fifty years in many scattered periodicals and volumes. Oftentimes the student and the non-specialist scholar have had difficulty in obtaining these authorities. There is need, therefore, for a large-scale series that will bring together in one place a "comprehensive corpus of evidence" relating to specific historical periods.

The large scope of the series (the four volumes thus far published range from 867 to 1014 pages) makes it possible to print the documents in full wherever it is feasible to do so. In this respect the series differs from traditional source books which often contain only brief extracts of key documents. Another basic feature is the sketching of the main outlines of the period covered by each volume in a general introduction and the inclusion of shorter introductions for particular groups of documents. One of the very useful features of the series is the inclusion of selected annotated bibliographies which accompany the introductions.

In the case of Volumes I and II the editorial tasks have been particularly demanding. This is true because numerous Anglo-Saxon, Latin, or Old French texts, normally incom-

prehensible to many readers because of the language barrier, have been given fresh and authoritative translations. For example, approximately two hundred pages of Volume I have been allotted to the translations by editor Dorothy Whitelock of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation*. In Volume II, which is mainly concerned with the causes and consequences of the Norman Conquest, similar extensive translations of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, as well as the Domesday Book, are provided. In addition, a forty-page pictorial representation of the Bayeux tapestry has been wisely included in this volume. Such heavy reliance as this upon a few lengthy contemporary accounts, supplemented by many shorter documents, distinguishes Volumes I and II from Volumes VIII and IX. No such preponderance of any one document is apparent in Volume VIII, edited by Andrew Browning and covering the later Stuart period. This is perhaps an indication of the greater number and richer variety of materials which have become available to scholars in the early modern period.

The Browning volume deals primarily with Restoration institutions: the monarchy, Parliament, and the church as well as the revolutionary settlement following 1688. The great variety of historical materials, plus the age's penchant for character sketching, make it possible to present some leading personalities as they were viewed by their contemporaries such as Gilbert Burnet, John Dryden, John Evelyn, and Samuel Pepys. Quite properly, a rather lengthy section is devoted to public finance, for this was the fundamental dilemma which plagued the Stuarts throughout the century and allowed disaffected religious elements to make known their grievances in Parliament. Another section on trade and plantations conspicuously avoids documents referring to the American colonies except for a few parliamentary statutes such as the Navigation Act of 1660. The reason behind this editorial decision was to eliminate duplication, for this volume is one of three (the other two being the forthcoming Volumes VII, 1603-1660, and X, 1714-1783) which will chronologically parallel the one volume in the series solely devoted to American colonial development from Jamestown to the Declaration of Independence.

Volume IX, *American Colonial Documents to 1776*, edited by the project's lone American historian, Merrill Jensen,

will be of particular interest to teachers and students of the American colonial period. Apart from the introductions and bibliographies, the book is divided into eight major sections which tend to stress political and economic factors more than social and intellectual forces. They are (1) the foundation of the English colonies, (2) the evolution of colonial governments, (3) the economic development, (4) population and labor, (5) religion and education, (6) expansion and social discontent, (7) British colonial policies and the growth of colonial opposition, 1763-1773, and (8) the coming of the War for American Independence, 1773-1776. The documents themselves, 179 in number, are arranged chronologically under topical sub-sections of each of the eight major sections. This organizational principle is on the whole quite satisfactory and consistently followed. However, the editor decided to subsume under other unrelated topics the various plans for colonial union which occurred at widely divergent times. For example, the Galloway Plan of Union (1774) is adequately treated under "The First Continental Congress" and the Dominion of New England (1688) under "British Policy and Colonial Government." This organization may account for the omission in the volume of two plans for colonial union: the New England Confederation (1643) and the Albany Plan of Union (1754).

Inevitably, this volume will be compared with existing collections of colonial material such as the relevant pages of Henry S. Commager's *Documents in American History*, Samuel E. Morison's *Sources and Documents Illustrating the American Revolution, 1764-1788*, and such specialized collections as Miller and Johnson, *The Puritans*. Most of the important documents in the Commager book have been included in the Jensen volume except for the Quebec Act of 1774. Although the Morison collection contains only about one-half as much material as Jensen's for the period 1763-1776, nevertheless the former contains excerpts from some important pamphlet material which the latter does not. Some of these tracts, among the finest examples of colonial political thought, are the *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies*, James Otis' *The Rights of the Colonies Asserted and Proved*, and James Wilson's *Considerations on the Nature and Extent of the Legislative Authority of the British Parliament*. The

Morison volume, then, remains useful as a supplement to this new book. This is even more true of the Miller and Johnson volume on Puritanism. Professor Jensen does include a very brief extract from Roger Williams' *The Bloudy Tenent, of Persecution*, which is a unique and important contribution to early American political thought. However, it is not at all representative of the federal covenant theology of New England Puritanism, of which there is no representative selection. And yet to have included all of these omissions would have meant editing another volume.

A large number of the documents printed in the Jensen volume have been published in historical collections before. In most cases the editor has chosen to reprint these texts rather than obtain microfilms of the originals. Certainly, in the case of some manuscripts, there would be little point in repeating, for example, the recent fine editing by Julian Boyd of the Declaration of Independence or Morison's *Of Plymouth Plantation 1620-1647* by William Bradford. Yet some of the printed documents, both pamphlet literature and official papers, were edited many years ago—a few, more than a hundred years ago—and by much less distinguished editors. On the other hand, a small portion of the material, primarily dealing with the economic development of the colonies, has been taken directly from the manuscript collections of the Public Record Office and Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Included in these documents are about twenty pages of statistical tables on colonial commerce.

No two historians, of course, can agree on the same documents to be included in a work of such magnitude as this one. Some would put more stress on relations with the Indians; others would omit trade statistics. In the main, however, most of the important documents are included, and this volume will be indispensable for the colonial historian. Indeed, the whole series, when it is finally completed, will be, despite its high cost, a distinct contribution to English and American historical studies if only because of the convenience of having the important documents assembled in one place.

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