

PARLIAMENT AND ORATORS OF BRITAIN.

With **SPEECHES** from

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INTRODUCTION.

The present volume aims at giving the student some knowledge of the British Constitution, the organisation of the Houses of Parliament, their magnificent building on the bank of the Thames, and the proceedings during a session. The principal part of the book treats of the most distinguished orators of Britain from Lord Chatham to Chamberlain and contains, in chronological order, characteristic specimens of their best rhetoric. As these speeches deal with matters of great political interest, they give the reader an insight into modern English history covering a period of more than a hundred years.

For the extracts and notes the following works have been used:

1. Macmillan's History Reader VI. Macmillan & Co., London.
2. *London Past and Present*. Blackie & Son, Glasgow.
3. The Times Weekly Edition. February 1904.
4. William Clarke, *Political Orations*. Walter Scott, London.
5. *Sheridan's Complete Works*. Chatto & Windus. London.
6. Trevelyan, *Selections from Macaulay*. Longmans, Green, & Co., London.
7. G. Wendt, *Borne Rule*. Weidmann. Berlin.
8. Webster's International Dictionary.
9. Chambers's Twentieth Century Dictionary
10. Chambers's Biographical Dictionary
11. Royal English History Reader VII. Nelson & Sons, London.

Every care has been taken to furnish instructive passages as well as to remove all difficulties by giving the necessary informations in the notes.

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J. K.

PART THE FIRST.

PARLIAMENT.

I. THE CONSTITUTION.

When the Saxons first came over to Britain and founded their various kingdoms, they had a council in each, called the Witenagemot, or the Assembly of the Wise Men, and when the kingdoms were united, there was a Witan, or Great Assembly, for the whole nation. From the very earliest times that we know of, there has always been a difference in rank between the people who go to make up a tribe or nation. These differences existed among the Saxons — there were the principal people, either the Wise Men or the leading soldiers; the ordinary freemen, who had land of their own; and the slaves. The great Assembly, to a certain extent, was led by the Kings. This state of things went on until the Norman Conquest, when William the Conqueror made many important changes in England; an especially important one being his alteration of the character of the Assembly.

In the first place, William brought the Feudal system into England; which means, among other things, that he took the whole of the country for his own, and gave out portions of it, in great estates, to those warriors who had helped him in the Conquest, or who promised to supply him with soldiers when he wanted them in the future. The Assembly, therefore, ceased to consist of leading men or freemen. It was now attended only by those who held their land from the King, and were called tenants-in-chief; and nobody else had any right to be present. The name, too, was altered. It was not called the Witan, but the Great Council.