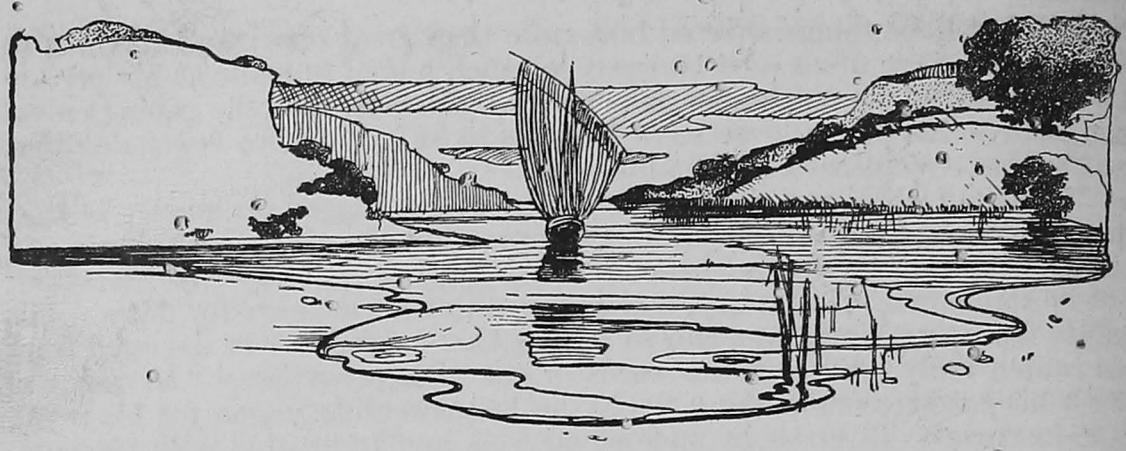

CHAPTER XIV

THE REIGN OF GEORGE II

[1727–1760 A.D.]

George II was the last foreigner by birth who has held the English throne; he was a monarch almost as foreign in his tastes and interests as in his nativity. Yet there was an openness and honesty about his personal dealings which gained his subjects' respect. He was blind to the charms of what, in his German accent, he called bainting and boetry, but he was unambitious; he remained true to the principles under which he succeeded to the crown; he did not trick nor quibble; and was more useful and infinitely more safe, in those days of loose political morality and unprincipled selfishness, than if he had had greater abilities with more unscrupulous desires. — WHITE.[1]

GEORGE II was born in 1683, and had married in 1705 Princess Caroline of Anspach, by whom he had four daughters and two sons; Frederick, Prince of Wales, born in 1707, and William, duke of Cumberland, in 1721. His parts were not so good as his father's, but, on the other hand, he had much less reserve and shyness, and he possessed another inestimable advantage over him — he could speak English fluently, though not without a foreign accent. His diminutive person, pinched features, and frequent starts of passion, were not favourable to the royal dignity, and his mind still less. He had scarcely one kingly quality, except personal courage and justice. The former he had highly signalised at the battle of Oudenarde as a volunteer, and was destined to display again as sovereign at Dettingen; and even in peace he was so fond of the army, and of military details, that his nickname among the jacobites was the Captain. A love of justice was apparent in all the natural movements of his mind. But avarice, that most unprincely of all passions, sat enshrined in the inmost recesses of his bosom. Its twitches were shown on all occasions. His purse was often in his hands, not to give from it, but to feel, and count over. "Soon after his first arrival in England," Walpole tells us, "Mrs. —— one of the bedchamber women, with whom he was in love, seeing him count his money over very often, said to him, 'Sir, I can bear it no longer; if you count your money once more I will leave the room.'" An extreme minuteness and precision in keeping his private accounts saved him a little money, and lost him a great deal of time. "He has often told me himself," says Lord Chester-

[1727 A.D.]

field, "that little things affected him more than great ones; and this was so true, that I have often seen him put so much out of humour at his private levee, by a mistake or blunder of a *valet de chambre*, that the gaping crowd admitted to his public levee have from his looks and silence concluded that he had just received some dreadful news.

"He troubled himself little about religion, but jogged on quietly in that in which he had been bred, without scruples, doubts, zeal, or inquiry." Of acquired knowledge he had little, professing great contempt for literature; but he sometimes read history, and had an excellent memory for dates. His habits were very temperate, and so regular that he scarce ever deviated from his beaten daily track: in the words of one of his courtiers,[d] "he seems to think his having done a thing to-day an unanswerable reason for his doing it to-morrow." Business he understood well, and transacted with pleasure. Like his father, he was far too Hanoverian in his politics, nor wholly free from the influence of mistresses. But his reign of thirty-three years deserves this praise — that it never once invaded the rights of the nation, nor harshly enforced the prerogatives of the crown; that its last period was illumined by the glories of Wolfe and of Chatham; and that it left the dynasty secure, the constitution unimpaired, and the people prosperous.

Queen Caroline had been handsome in her youth, and to the last retained great expression in her countenance, and sweetness in her smile. Her character was without a blemish, and her conduct always marked by judgment and good sense. During the violent quarrels between her husband and his father, she had behaved so prudently that she equally retained the affection of the first and the esteem of the latter. With the nation also she was more popular than any other member of her family, till George III. Her manner most happily combined the royal dignity with female grace, and her conversation was agreeable in all its varieties, from mimicry and repartee up to metaphysics. In fact, her only faults were those of a Philaminte or a Belise. She was fond of talking on all learned subjects, and understood something of a few. Her toilet was a strange medley; prayers, and sometimes a sermon, were read; tattle and gossip succeeded; metaphysics found a place; the head-dress was not forgotten; divines stood grouped with courtiers, and philosophers with ladies! On the table, perhaps, lay heaped together, the newest ode by Stephen Duck upon her beauty, her last letter from Leibnitz upon free will, and the most high-wrought panegyric of Doctor Clarke, on her "inimitable sweetness of temper," "impartial love of truth," and "very particular and uncommon degree of knowledge, even on matters of the most abstract speculation." So great was the influence of Queen Caroline over her husband, that neither in the church nor in the state were any appointments made without her having at least some share in them, and during ten years she may be said to have governed England. But she was one of those "who if she rules him, never shows she rules." Her power was felt, not displayed. She had the art of instilling ideas into the king's mind, which after a time he found there, and believed to be his own.

THE ACCESSION OF GEORGE II (1727 A.D.)

The despatch from Lord Townshend, announcing the king's death, reached London on the 14th of June. Walpole immediately hastened to the palace of Richmond, where he was told that the prince, according to his usual custom, had retired to bed for an afternoon slumber. His highness (so we may call him for the last time) being awakened, at Walpole's desire, started up and

made his appearance half-dressed. Walpole knelt down and kissed his hand; but the king was at first incredulous, nor convinced of the truth, until Townshend's letter was produced. The minister then inquired whom his majesty would be pleased to appoint to draw up the necessary declaration to the privy council, fully hoping that the choice would fall upon himself. "Compton," answered the king, shortly, and Walpole withdrew in the deepest disappointment.

GEORGE II
(1683–1760)

Sir Spencer Compton, the second surviving son of the earl of Northampton, was chosen speaker in 1715, and a Knight of the Bath, on the revival of that order. He and Lord Scarborough had been the chief favourites of the king as prince of Wales. He was respectable in his private, regular in his public, character. In the speaker's chair, where form rather than substance is required, he had fulfilled his duty well, but the seals of office were too heavy for his hands. So little acquainted was he with real business that when Walpole conveyed to him the king's commands he avowed his ignorance, and begged Walpole to draw up the declaration for him. Sir Robert willingly complied, and the declaration which he wrote was carried by Compton to the king.[b]

WALPOLE CONTINUES IN POWER

The king when prince had taken offence at some expressions used by Walpole and had declared that he would never employ him, and that minister now regarded his dismissal as certain. George had actually fixed on Sir Spencer Compton for his prime minister, and his obstinacy was well known; yet after all Walpole retained his post and held it for many years. For this he was indebted to the queen, who knew his abilities; she recollected that the late king had said to her that Walpole could "convert stones into gold"; Walpole also engaged to obtain from the commons an augmentation of £130,000 to the civil list, and a jointure of £100,000 a year for the queen; and as Compton candidly avowed his own incompetency for the situation, the king gave up his purpose. The ministry therefore remained unchanged, and Walpole, when the new parliament met, performed his engagements to the king and queen. He continued to be the moving power of government for a space of nearly fifteen years, during which period England enjoyed tranquillity. Cardinal Fleury, who governed France, was a decided lover of peace and steadily attached to the English alliance; so that though Hanover

[1733 A.D.]

was the means of engaging England in the mazes of German politics, there was no war till towards the close of Walpole's administration, when hostilities broke out with Spain.

The ministerial majority in the house of commons was considerable; but there was a strong opposition composed of three sections. These were the discontented whigs headed by William Pulteney, a man of high character and great abilities; the tories, about one hundred and ten in number, chiefly country gentlemen, led by Sir William Wyndham; and the jacobites, who counted fifty, under the consistent and honest Shippen. The principal supporters of the minister were his brother Horace Walpole, Lord Hervey, Henry Pelham (brother to the duke of Newcastle), Sir William Yonge, and Mr. Winnington. In *The Craftsman*, a periodical conducted by Bolingbroke, aided by Pulteney, the opposition had a powerful organ of offence.

Various attacks were made on the ministry on the subjects of the standing army (the great bugbear of the age) and the subsidies paid to some of the petty sovereigns of Germany; but they were always repelled by numbers if not by arguments. On the subject of pensions the minister felt his position less tenable, and he found it necessary to vary his tactics. From the Restoration, when it first became permanent, the house of commons had always contained a large portion of venality within its walls. Direct bribes in hard cash were the first and simplest course, and this continued long to prevail; pensions, which are of a similar nature, gradually came into operation.

It was against the system of pensions that the opposition now directed its efforts. There were already acts incapacitating the holders of them from sitting in the house of commons; but they had proved useless, as the government would not tell who had pensions, and the amount of secret-service money was considerable. Mr. Sandys therefore brought a bill (1730), by which every member was to swear that he did not hold a pension, and that in case of his accepting one he would make it known to the house within fourteen days. This the king called a "villainous bill"; but Walpole would not incur the odium of opposing it, and it passed the commons by a majority of ten. But, as he expected, it was thrown out in the lords, and its fate was similar whenever it was brought in again.

Shortly after the rejection of the pension bill a partial change took place in the ministry. Lord Townshend and Walpole, though brothers-in-law, had been for some time at variance on questions of foreign and domestic policy; their tempers were opposite; the former being frank, haughty, and impetuous; the latter, cool, calm, and pliant. They have, not unaptly, been compared to Mark Antony and Augustus, Lady Townshend being their Octavia. But she was now dead; and Townshend, finding his influence inferior to that of Walpole, gave in his resignation. He retired to his paternal seat of Rainham in Norfolk, where he devoted himself to agriculture, and abandoned politics so completely that he never even revisited the capital. The two secretaries now were the duke of Newcastle, and Stanhope, lately created Earl of Harrington.

THE EXCISE BILL (1733 A.D.)

Sir Robert Walpole far outwent his contemporaries in the knowledge of the true principles of finance and trade; and having had ample information of the ruinous extent to which the practice of smuggling had been carried in consequence of the defective state of the laws of the customs, he formed a grand scheme for abolishing the land-tax, preventing fraud, increasing the

revenue, simplifying the taxes and collecting them at the least possible expense. This was what was called the "excise scheme," of which Dean Tucker, a most competent judge, asserts that the effect would have been to make "the whole island one general free port, and a magazine and common storehouse for all nations."[e]

The excise duties, first levied in the civil wars, and continued, but curtailed at the Restoration, had been progressively increased during the stormy reigns of William and Anne. The chief articles subject to them were malt, salt, and the distilleries: their average yearly proceeds rose, under William, to nearly one million; under Anne, to nearly two millions. No additional excise was laid on during the whole reign of George I, except a small duty on wrought plate by Stanhope. From the progress of consumption, however, they had come in 1733 to produce about £3,200,000. But, meanwhile, the frauds and abuses in other parts of the revenue had become so great, and so repeatedly forced upon the consideration of Walpole, as to turn his thoughts to the whole subject, and induce him to frame a comprehensive measure upon it.

Early intelligence reached the opposition that some such plan was brewing, and they took care to poison and prepossess the public mind against it even before it was known. When the sinking fund was discussed, Pulteney pathetically cried, "But, Sir, there is another thing, a very terrible affair impending! A monstrous project! yea, more monstrous than has ever yet been represented! It is such a project as has struck terror into the minds of most gentlemen within this house, and of all men without doors! I mean, Sir, that monster the excise! That plan of arbitrary power which is expected to be laid before this house in the present session!" The sensible advice of Mr. Pelham, to wait till the plan was disclosed, and not "to enter into debates about what we know nothing of," was utterly unheeded; and while the secrecy of the plan did not suspend the censures of the opposition, it enabled them to spread throughout the country the most unfounded and alarming rumours respecting it. A general excise is coming! was the cry; a tax on all articles of consumption; a burden to grind the country to powder; a plot to overthrow the ancient constitution, and establish in its place a baleful tyranny! *The Craftsman* had scarcely words enough to express his terror and resentment; and his eloquent voice found a ready echo in the bosoms of the people. For the excise duties, partly from their burden and partly from their invidious mode of collection, were most highly unpopular. They were considered oppressive, and contrary to the spirit of the constitution — called sometimes the cause and sometimes the consequence of bad government; and these feelings, which had arisen long before the scheme of Walpole, continued long after it. Perhaps the strongest proof of them is displayed by the invectives of so great a writer as Doctor Johnson, in so grave a work as his *Dictionary*. In the first edition, published in 1755, the word "excise" is explained as "a hateful tax levied upon commodities, and adjudged, not by common judges of property, but by wretches hired by those to whom excise is paid!"

Thus the public mind being highly sensitive, and easily excited upon the subject, and Walpole, as usual, paying little attention to the power of the press, there was a general ferment against the new scheme, even while its true nature and object remained entirely unknown. Many constituent bodies, — amongst them the citizens of London — held meetings and sent instructions to their members, entreating them to vote against every extension of the excise laws, in any form or on any pretence whatsoever. It was under these unfavourable circumstances, and after several preliminary skirmishes, that

[1733 A.D.]

Sir Robert, on the 14th of March, disclosed his design in a temperate and masterly speech. He first complained of the common slander, that he had intended to propose a general excise. "I do most unequivocally assert," said he, "that no such scheme ever entered my head, or, for what I know, the head of any man I am acquainted with. My thoughts have been confined solely to the duties on wine and tobacco; and it was the frequent advices I had of the shameful frauds committed in these two branches, and the complaints of the merchants themselves, that turned my attention to a remedy for this growing evil. I shall, for the present, confine myself entirely to the tobacco trade."

He next proceeded to detail the various frauds on the revenue in this trade — frauds so frequent and so complicated, that while the gross produce of the tax was on an average £750,000, the net produce was only £160,000. The remedy he proposed was, stating it briefly, to bring the tobacco duty under the laws of excise, and to effect some improvements in the latter. The same might afterwards be applied to the similar case of the wine duty; and thus would the revenue be increased, at the same time that the fair dealer was protected. A system of warehousing for re-exportation, if desired, was likewise to be instituted, "which will tend," said the minister, "to make London a free port, and, by consequence, the market of the world." By the increase in the revenue the land-tax would no longer be required, and might be altogether abolished. "And this," added Walpole, "is the scheme which has been represented in so dreadful and terrible a light — this the monster, the many-headed monster, which was to devour the people, and commit such ravages over the whole nation!"

To the country gentleman, the abolition of the land-tax was clearly a great boon. To the merchant importer, the turning of the duties on importation into duties on consumption was undoubtedly no less a benefit. The working classes were not at all concerned in the question, since the retailers already sold tobacco at the rate of duty paid. Thus, then, unless we are prepared to say, with Sir William Wyndham, that "in all countries, excises of every kind are looked on as badges of slavery," we shall rather join some of the ablest writers on finance of later times in approving the main principles and objects of Walpole's scheme.

Far different was the language of the opposition of the day. In answer to the complaint of previous misinterpretation, Sir John Barnard declared it "such a scheme as cannot, even by malice itself, be represented to be worse than it really is!" Pulteney assailed it with raillery. "It puts me in mind of Sir Ephraim Mammon in *The Alchemist:* he was promised the philosopher's stone, by which he was to get mountains of gold, and everything else he could desire, but all ended at last in some little charm for curing the itch!" The eloquence of Wyndham was more solemn: he thundered against corrupt motives and impending tyranny, and evoked the shades of Empson and Dudley, those two unworthy favourites of old time. "But what," he added, "was their fate? They had the misfortune to outlive their master, and his son, as soon as he came to the throne, took off both their heads!" — no obscure allusion to Frederick, Prince of Wales, who was then present under the gallery.

During the debate, the doors were beset by immense multitudes, all clamorous against the new measure, and convened partly, perhaps, by the efforts of the opposition, but still more by their own belief that some dreadful evil was designed them. To this concourse Sir Robert referred in his reply: "Gentlemen may give them what name they think fit; it may be said that

they came hither as humble supplicants, but I know whom the law calls 'sturdy beggars,'" — a most unguarded expression! For though the minister meant it only to denote their fierce and formidable clamours, yet it was ever afterwards flung in his teeth as though he had wished to insult the poverty of the people and debar their right of petition; and the phrase immediately became the war-whoop of the opponents to the bill.

At two o'clock in the morning, and after thirteen hours' debate, the house divided, and the numbers were found to be, for the measure 265, against it 205 — a victory, indeed, for the minister, but a large and most alarming increase of the usual minority against him. As Sir Robert went out to his carriage some of the "sturdy beggars," highly exasperated, seized him by the cloak, and might have done him some injury, had not Mr. Pelham interposed. Two days afterwards, on reporting the resolutions carried in committee, the debate was resumed with fresh vigour on the part of the opposition. However, the resolutions were carried by the same majority as before. Several other debates and divisions ensued before the bill came to a second reading, but the majority in these gradually dwindled from sixty to sixteen.

During this time, also, the popular ferment grew higher and higher. Petitions poured in from several large towns. The common council of London indited the most violent of all, under the guidance of Alderman Barber, a noted jacobite, who had been Swift's and Bolingbroke's printer, and was now lord mayor. The instructions sent by different places to their representatives to oppose the bill were collected and published together, so as to stir and diffuse the flame; and the minister was pelted by innumerable other pamphlets; various in talent but all equal in virulence. "The public," says a contemporary, *f* "was so heated with papers and pamphlets, that matters rose next to a rebellion."

The storm thus thickening around the court, Queen Caroline applied in great anxiety to Lord Scarborough, as to the king's personal friend, for his advice. His answer was, that the bill must be relinquished. "I will answer for my regiment," he added, "against the Pretender, but not against the opposers of the excise." Tears came into the queen's eyes. "Then," said she, "we must drop it!" Sir Robert, on his part, summoned a meeting of his friends in the house of commons, and requested their opinion. The general sentiment amongst them was still to persevere. It was urged that all taxes were obnoxious, and that there would be an end of supplies if mobs were to control the legislature in the manner of raising them. Sir Robert, having heard every one first, declared how conscious he felt of having meant well; but that, in the present inflamed temper of the people, the act could not be carried into execution without an armed force; and that he would never be the minister to enforce taxes at the expense of blood.

The voice of moderation having thus prevailed, when on the 11th of April there came on the order of the day for the second reading, Walpole rose, and moved that it should be postponed for two months; and thus the whole measure was dropped. The opposition were scarcely satisfied with this hard-won victory, and wished to reject the bill with the brand of their aversion upon it; but the general sense of the house was so evidently against the suggestion, that it was not pressed, nor even openly proposed. Throughout England, however, the news was hailed with unmixed pleasure, and celebrated with national rejoicings. The Monument was illuminated in London; bonfires without number blazed through the country; the minister was in many places burnt in effigy amidst loud acclamations of the mob; any of his friends that came in their way were roughly handled; and cockades were eagerly

[1734 A.D.]

assumed with the inscription, "Liberty, property, and no excise!". But amidst the general joy their ill-humour against the minister gradually evaporated, or rather spent itself by its own force; and their loyalty was immediately afterwards confirmed and quickened by the welcome intelligence that the princess Anne, the king's eldest daughter, was espoused to the young prince of Orange. Walpole congratulated himself on this new turn given to the public feeling, and determined to run no risk of stirring it once more against him. It was indeed his favourite maxim at all times, as his son assures us, *Quieta ne moveas* (Let sleeping dogs lie) — a maxim bad under a bad constitution, but surely good under a good one; a maxim to be shunned at Milan, to be followed in London. When, in the next session, Pulteney insinuated that the excise scheme was to be revived, "As to the wicked scheme," said Walpole, "as the honourable gentleman was pleased to call it, which he would persuade us is not yet laid aside, I, for my own part, can assure this house I am not so mad as ever again to engage in anything that looks like an excise, though, in my own private opinion, I still think it was a scheme that would have tended very much to the interests of the nation." It is very remarkable, however, that, after his time, some of the least popular clauses of the excise scheme were enacted, and that there was no renewal of clamour, because there was a change of title. So little do things weigh with the multitude, and names so much![b]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The last session of the parliament chosen in 1727 was opened by the king on the 17th of January, 1734. The policy of a government anxious to maintain neutrality whilst other nations were at war, and at the same time to make it understood that a strong desire for peace was no symptom of national weakness, was never more emphatically expressed than in the words which Walpole put into the mouth of George II. A new quarrel had broken out in Europe upon the death, in 1733, of Augustus II, king of Poland. Austria and Russia advocated the succession of his son. France supported the election of Stanislaus, who had been king before Augustus. The war assumed a more general character, and revived some of the old disputes between France, Spain, and Austria. An army of French, Spaniards, and Sardinians overran Austria. Lombardy, Naples, and Sicily were invaded by Don Carlos, duke of Parma, the son of the queen of Spain; and the Austrians being unable to resist, he was crowned king of Naples and Sicily as Charles III. On the Rhine the war was conducted by Prince Eugene, still vigorous, against Marshal Berwick. The son of James II was killed at the siege of Philipsburg. The companion in arms of Marlborough held his ground in this campaign, and died two years after.

The great merit of Sir Robert Walpole, in resolutely maintaining the policy of neutrality, may be better appreciated from the circumstance that the king and queen were opposed to his pacific views. George used daily to tell his minister that it was with the sword alone he desired to keep the balance of Europe. He could not bear the thought of growing old in peace, and rusting in the cabinet, whilst other princes were busied in war, and shining in the field. The observant vice-chamberlain says that the queen, with all her good sense, was as unmanageable as the king. "Wherever the interest of Germany and the honour of the empire were concerned, her thoughts and reasonings were often as German and imperial as if England had been out of the question". The perseverance of Walpole had its reward. He

was odious at Vienna; but before the end of the summer of 1734, George said to his minister, "I have followed your advice, Walpole, in keeping quiet, contrary often to my own opinion and sometimes I have thought contrary even to my honour, but I am convinced you advised me well." The king had discovered that overtures of friendship from all parties had been the result of the pacific policy of his minister; that as a possible mediator he was of more importance than as a rash belligerent.

Walpole continuing firm in maintaining the neutrality of England, in conjunction with the states general, the emperor sent an emissary to London, to intrigue with some members of the opposition against the prime minister. Sir Robert detected the Austrian agent, and the abbé Strickland, bishop of Namur, was obliged to depart, although he had been graciously received at court. The pacific minister had an argument for the king and queen, which sounds like insular selfishness, but which insular common sense will always applaud: "There are fifty thousand men slain this year in Europe, and not one Englishman." Under the mediation of England and Holland, peace was concluded in 1735. By this pacification, France added Lorraine to her territory.

WALPOLE VERSUS BOLINGBROKE

The repeal of the Septennial Act was the great domestic question of this session. The party that advocated a return to triennial parliaments would possess the superior popularity in the coming elections. No doubt many who now opposed the government upon this measure would be open to the charge of inconsistency; for "whig patriots," especially Pulteney, had supported the Septennial Act of 1716. Bolingbroke, the arch enemy of Walpole, was at hand to combat every scruple of conscience, and induce the listeners to his sophistries to believe that political tergiversation was a virtue. The prime minister must be struck down, and for that purpose any weapon was lawful. In the debate upon this constitutional question, Sir William Wyndham, the great tory chief, made an attack upon Walpole, which Walpole treated as the inspiration of Bolingbroke. Over the parliamentary bitterness of adverse factions oblivion mercifully spreads her veil in most cases. But in this case, the portrait of Walpole drawn by Wyndham, and the portrait of Bolingbroke drawn by Walpole, are masterpieces of invective, which take us into the very heart of those days when the right honourable member in the blue ribbon had to endure the taunts of his adversaries with rare equanimity, or to turn upon them like a noble animal at bay, as he did upon this memorable occasion.

The session was closed on the 16th of April, and on the 18th the parliament was dissolved. The boldness with which Walpole had stood up against attack had produced a sensible effect upon his adversaries. To Walpole's philippic against Bolingbroke has been attributed the resolution of that most able but dangerous man to leave England and English politics. This view is perhaps overstrained. But he was a disappointed intriguer. He retired to France. "My part is over," he said, "and he who remains on the stage after his part is over deserves to be hissed off."

THE GIN ACT (1736 A.D.)

The first session of the new parliament, which met in January, 1735, was prolonged only till May. The king announced his determination to visit his

[1736 A.D.]

dominions in Germany, and the queen was appointed regent. George was sorely tempted to engage in the war by an offer of the command of the imperial army on the Rhine. Walpole had foreseen such a possible flattery of the king's military ambition; and had prepared him to say, that he could not appear at the head of an army as king of England, and not have an Englishman to fight under him. The summer passed without any important military operations. On the 22nd of October the king returned from Hanover — according to Lord Hervey in very bad temper, and dissatisfied with everything English. His majesty had left a lady in Hanover, Madame Walmoden, to whom he wrote by every post. Soon after his return the preliminaries of a general peace were signed at Vienna. Europe would be at rest again for four years. "The happy turn which the affairs of Europe had taken" was announced at the opening of parliament in January, 1736. The tranquillity of England and Scotland was seriously disturbed in this season of foreign pacification.

On the 20th of February a petition against the excessive use of spirituous liquors was presented to the house of commons from the justices of peace for Middlesex. The drinking of Geneva, it was alleged, had excessively increased amongst the people of inferior rank; the constant and excessive use of distilled spirituous liquors had already destroyed thousands, and rendered great numbers of others unfit for labour, debauching their morals, and driving them into every vice. Upon the motion of Sir Joseph Jekyll, it was proposed to lay a tax of twenty shillings a gallon upon gin, and to require that every retailer should take out an annual licence costing £50. Walpole gave no distinct support to this measure, nor did he oppose it. He saw that a greatly reduced consumption of spirituous liquors would affect the revenue; that a high duty would produce less than a low duty; and he therefore proposed that £70,000 which had been appropriated to the civil list from the smaller duties on spirits should be guaranteed, if the prohibitory rate were adopted. Pulteney opposed the bill altogether, upon the principle that he had heard of sumptuary laws by which certain sorts of apparel had been forbidden to persons of inferior rank; but that he had never before heard of a sumptuary law by which any sort of victuals or drink were forbidden to be made use of by persons of a low degree. Yet the magnitude of the evil certainly warranted some strong legislative measure. It was stated that there were twenty thousand houses for retailing spirituous liquors. Sudden deaths from excessive gin-drinking were continually reported in the newspapers. The extent of this vice was too obvious to allow the arguments against the impossibility of preventing evasion of the duties to have much weight. Compliance with the statute was to be enforced by the machinery of the common informer. So the bill was passed, and was to come into operation after the 29th of September.

On that day the signs of the liquor-shops were put in mourning. Hooting mobs assembled round the dens where they could no longer get "drunk for a penny and dead-drunk for twopence." The last rag was pawned to carry off a cheap quart or gallon of the beloved liquor. As was foreseen, the act was evaded. Hawkers sold a coloured mixture in the streets, and pretended chemists opened shops for the sale of "cholick-water." Fond playful names, such as Tom Row, Make Shift, the Ladies' Delight, the Baulk, attracted customers to the old haunts. Informers were rolled in the mud, or pumped upon, or thrown into the Thames. Gin riots were constantly taking place, for several years. "The Fall of Bob" was the theme of ballad and broadside, which connected the minister with "Desolation, or the Fall of Gin." The

impossibility of preventing by prohibitory duties the sale of a commodity in large request was strikingly exemplified in this gin struggle. It became necessary in 1743, when the consumption of gin had positively increased, to reduce the excessive duty. A ludicrous example of one of the abortive attempts at minute legislation is exhibited in a rejected clause of the act of 1736. In the wish to protect the sugar colonies by encouraging the consumption of rum, it was proposed to exempt punch houses from the operation of the Gin Act, provided the agreeable liquor so retailed was made of one-third spirit and two-thirds water, at the least, so mixed in the presence of the buyer. If the liquor were stronger than what sailors call "two-water grog," the tippler might pay for his bowl by laying an information.

THE PORTEOUS TRAGEDY IN EDINBURGH (1736 A.D.)

The Porteous tragedy of Edinburgh in 1736 has become the property of romance. One writer appears to think that the function of the historian has been superseded by that of the novelist. But "the real events," "the true facts," have a significance which the writer of fiction does not always care to dwell upon. They strikingly illustrate the condition of society. They are essentially connected with the history of public events which preceded them, and of public events which came after. They illustrate the policy of the government and the temper of the governed. We cannot pass them over or deal with them slightingly. They form the subject of very important parliamentary proceedings in 1737, which are necessary to the proper understanding of the relations between England and Scotland. An impartial review in this as in most other cases, is as much to be aimed at as a picturesque narrative.

Smuggling in England had long been carried on to an enormous extent. The seafaring population were accustomed to look upon many gainful adventures as lawful and innocent which we now regard as criminal. The slave trade, with all its odious cruelties, was a regular mercantile undertaking. Buccaneering in the South Seas was a just assertion of the rights of the British flag. The contraband trade in brandy, tea, and tobacco, was a laudable endeavour to sell their countrymen goods at a cheap rate bought in a fair market. But the principle of smuggling was not recognised as a national benefit. The merchant was opposed to it. The wealthy consumer had conscientious scruples against encouraging it. In Scotland the nation, with the exception of a few flourishing trading communities, abetted smuggling, and regarded smugglers as useful members of society. In a report attributed to Duncan Forbes, it is said, "The smuggler was the favourite. His prohibited or high-duty goods were run ashore by the boats of whatever part of the coast he came near. When ashore, they were guarded by the country from the custom-house officer. If seized, they were rescued; and if any seizure was returned, and tried, the juries seldom failed to find for the defendant. Mr. Burton[n] points out the difference in the circumstances of England and Scotland which made the principle of equality of taxation odious; and emphatically says, "For more than half a century after the union, English fiscal burdens were as unbearable to the Scots as they would be to the Norwegians at the present day."

The small seaports on the coast of Fife were more remarkable than any other districts of the wide and ill-defended seaboard of Scotland, as the haunts of the most daring bands of systematic smugglers. Two such persons, named Wilson and Robertson, having had some goods seized by the officers of revenue, entered with two associates the custom-house of Pittenweem,

THE PORTEOUS MOB

(From the painting by James Drummond, in the National Gallery, Edinburgh)

[1736 A.D.]

and, when the collector fled, carried off a large sum of money. Wilson and Robertson were apprehended, were tried, and were sentenced to death. Mr. Lyndsay related that Wilson maintained, to the last moment, that he was unjustly condemned. "He admitted," to one of the reverend ministers of Edinburgh, "that he had taken money from a collector of the revenue by violence; that he did it because he knew no other way of coming at it; that the officers of the revenue had by their practice taught him this was lawful, for they had often seized and carried off his goods by violence; and so long as they had goods of greater value in their hands than all the money he took from them, they were still in his debt, and he had done no wrong." There can be no doubt that the mob of Edinburgh, and many above the mob, took the same view of Wilson's offence; and held the same opinion about revenue laws.

The attempt of Wilson and Robertson to escape from the Tolbooth of Edinburgh, when Wilson, a bulky man, stuck fast in the iron bars of his cell, is as well known as any of the adventures of Jack Sheppard. His generous effort to save his comrade after the condemned sermon in the Tolbooth church, has redeemed his memory from the ignominy of the common malefactor. Surrounded by four keepers, Wilson held two with his hands and a third with his teeth, whilst Robertson knocked down the fourth and escaped. This heroism made Wilson's own fate certain. He was executed on the 14th of April; whilst the populace looked on with stern compassion. No attempt at rescue was made, for the place of execution was not only surrounded by the city guard, but by a detachment of the Welsh fusiliers. After the body was taken down, a rush was made to seize it from the hangman. The populace then attacked the city guard, who were under the command of John Porteous, their captain. Porteous was a man of strong passions, very often brought into conflict with the blackguards of the city, and now in peculiarly ill temper from his dignity being interfered with by the unusual presence of a military force, called to assist in keeping the peace. He is said to have fired himself; he certainly ordered his gendarmerie to fire upon the people. Several persons were killed or wounded. The fusiliers also fired; but in firing above the heads of the mob, they hit several who were lookers-on from the adjacent windows. Porteous was brought to trial in July, before the high court of justiciary, on a charge of murder, for having caused the death of citizens without authority from the civil magistrate. He was convicted, and sentenced to capital punishment; but his conduct being considered by the council of regency in London as an act of self defence, he was reprieved by the English secretary of state. His execution had been fixed by the authorities of Edinburgh for the 8th of September. The news of the reprieve produced a sensation that foreboded mischief.

The 8th of September fell on a Wednesday. A report had gone forth that some tumult would take place on that day, when the populace, being disappointed of a legal sacrifice to their revenge, would attempt some daring act against Porteous. This was deemed a foolish story; but the lord provost of Edinburgh took some precautions to resist any outrage on that Wednesday. Porteous himself had no fears. A Scottish clergyman, Mr. Yates, had preached in the Tolbooth church, Porteous being present, on Sunday the 5th; and he afterwards saw Porteous, and told him of the report, and advised him to be cautious about admitting persons to his room. Porteous slighted his information; and said, were he once at liberty, he was so little apprehensive of the people that he would not fear to walk at the Cross of Edinburgh with only his cane in his hand as usual. The Tolbooth of the Scottish capital,

like most other places of confinement, had its feasts for those who could pay, and its starvation for those who were destitute. On the evening of Tuesday, the 7th of September, Porteous was surrounded by a jolly party, draining the punch-bowl in toasting the speedy liberation of their friend. There was another remarkable festal assembly in Edinburgh that night. Mr. Lind, captain of the city guard, deposed that, "being informed that the mob was gathering, he went to Clark's tavern, where the provost was drinking with Mr. Bur, and other officers of his majesty's ship the *Dreadnought*, then stationed in the road of Leith; and upon acquainting him with the danger, the provost desired him to go immediately back, and draw out his men, and that he would instantly follow him, and put himself at the head of the guard to face the mob."

The mob was quicker than the provost or his captain. They had disarmed the guard; had taken possession of the guard-house; and were arming themselves with muskets, halberds, and Lochaber axes, which they there found. Edinburgh had suddenly fallen into the complete possession of a lawless multitude. The multitude went about their work with a calm resolution which was long attributed to an organisation proceeding from leaders much above the ordinary directors of mobs. No point was neglected. Magistrates rushed out to ring the alarm bell; the tower in which the bell hung was in the possession of the insurgents. Onward they marched, in numbers rapidly increasing, to the Tolbooth. Here they made a solemn demand that Captain John Porteous should be delivered up to them. Being refused, as they expected, they proceeded to batter the outer gate. Crowbars and sledge hammers were employed in vain. Fire accomplished what bodily strength could not effect. The rioters rushed to the apartment of the unhappy man. He was concealed in the chimney; but they dragged him down, and bade him prepare for death. Struggling ineffectually, he was carried to the Grass-market, the usual place of execution. He was carried on men's hands, as two boys carry a third, by grasping each other's wrists. This stern multitude went on in silence, the glare of torches lighting up their lowering brows and the pallid features of their victim. Near the spot where the gallows had stood on which Wilson was hanged, a pole projected from a dyer's shop. A rope was fastened round the neck of Porteous. He was not hanged quickly. There was a terrible scene of butchery. The organisers of this daring act were never discovered, after the most rigid investigation.

The Porteous outrage took place whilst Queen Caroline was regent in the absence of the king. She felt it as an insult to her authority, and the ministry were inclined to visit the apparent neglect of the magistracy of Edinburgh with serious humiliation. A bill was brought in for disabling the lord provost from ever holding office, and for imprisoning him; for abolishing the town guard of Edinburgh; for taking away the gates of the Netherbow-port. The Scottish peers, and the Scottish members of the commons, fired up at this supposed assault upon the national honour. In the course of the parliamentary inquiry the Scottish judges were summoned to give evidence upon some legal points. It was contended by the duke of Argyll and other peers that these judges ought to sit on the Woolsack as do the English judges, when their presence is wanted in the house of peers. There was no precedence for such a course, and the Scottish judges were required to stand at the bar. Scotland was outraged by this distinction. The debate in both houses upon the proposed measures of pains and penalties assumed the character of a national controversy. "Unequal dealing," "partial procedure," "oppression to be resisted," and an independent nation "forced back into a

[1737 A.D.]

state of enmity,'" were expressions which showed the danger to which this affair was tending.

Walpole hinted that when the bill was committed he should not object to amendments founded on reason and equity. When it finally went to the lords, it merely disqualified the lord provost from holding office, and imposed a fine upon the city of Edinburgh of £2,000, for the benefit of the widow of Porteous. Burton[n] has remarked that "no one can read these debates without seeing reasons why the conduct of Scotland was so different from that of England in the insurrection which broke out eight years afterwards." Although the modified statute upon the Porteous riot could scarcely be a reasonable cause for national irritation, a supplementary measure produced a violent opposition from the Presbyterian clergy. It was enacted that they should read from their pulpits, once a month, a proclamation for discovering the murderers of Captain Porteous. This was held to be an Erastian measure, interfering with the spiritual authority of the kirk. That proclamation also contained the offensive words, "the lords spiritual in parliament assembled." This was held to be a recognition of that church government which Scotland had rejected. At this period there was a schism amongst the Scottish clergy, and this measure had not a healing tendency. Some read the proclamation; some refused to do so. Compliance with the order of the government was held to be faithlessness to the church.[k]

DISSENSIONS IN THE ROYAL FAMILY

The principal hopes of the opposition in 1737 rested on Frederick, Prince of Wales, whose secret encouragement had now ripened into open support. His disagreements with his father were by no means of recent date. Even whilst he remained at Hanover, and whilst his father, as prince of Wales, had gone to England, they were near enough to bicker. His own wishes were strongly fixed on an alliance with the princess royal of Prussia, the same who afterwards became Margravine of Bareith, and who, in her memoirs, has left us a strange and probably exaggerated portrait of all her own relations. The marriage was earnestly desired by the queen of Prussia, and, indeed, by the chief members of both families; but the brutal temper of the king, who used to beat his daughter, and who wished to behead his son, and the personal antipathy[1] between him and his cousin George II, finally broke off the negotiations. Prince Frederick, in as much despair as a lover can be who has never seen his mistress, sent from Hanover one La Motte as his agent, to assure the queen of Prussia that he was determined, in spite of his father, still to conclude the marriage, and that he would set off in disguise for Berlin to execute his purpose. But the queen, in an overflowing transport of delight, could not refrain from imparting the good news to the English envoy at her court. He, as was his duty, gave timely notice to his own; the rash project was prevented; and the headstrong prince was summoned to England, where he arrived, to the great joy of the nation, in 1728.

For some years after his arrival, the prince remained tranquil; but, as he became familiar with the English language and customs, and conscious of his own importance, he entered more and more into cabals against his parents. His character was weak, yet stubborn; with generous impulses, and not without accomplishments; but vain, fond of flattery, and easily led by flatterers. Even after his marriage, and whilst devoted to his wife, he thought it incum-

[1 "The terrible Frederick William, satirically styled George II, 'My brother the comedian.'" — AUBREY.o]

bent upon him to affect the character of a man of intrigue: this reputation, and not beauty, appears to have been his aim; and his principle favourite, Lady Middlesex, is described as "very short, very plain, and very yellow, and full of Greek and Latin!"[b] He professed a love of literature; and his home was a resort for such men of talent as Pulteney, Chesterfield, Wyndham, Carteret, Cobham, and Bolingbroke. In fact, the time came when nearly all the wit and genius were ranged on the side of opposition.

The marriage of Frederick, in April, 1736, to Augusta of Saxe-Gotha, a princess of beauty and excellent judgment, did not, as was hoped, restore union to the royal family. Immediately afterward the prince began to complain unceasingly of the narrowness of his income; and, urged on by unwise advisers, he applied to Parliament to increase his annual allowance from £50,000 to £100,000. He even had the indelicacy to make promises to peers and commoners of what he would do for them when he came to the throne, if they would support him now; but, despite all his efforts, he was unable to accomplish his object.

At last one of the most extraordinary events in the private annals of royal houses separated the king and his son for years. At the time the prince and princess of Wales were residing with the king and queen at Hampton Court, the princess being far advanced in pregnancy. On the evening of Sunday, the 31st of July, the princess was taken ill; but the prince out of hostility to his father, insisted that his wife should not be confined at Hampton Court, and against all remonstrances, caused her to be transferred to Saint James', where she gave birth to a girl within an hour of her arrival. A correspondence ensued between George II and his rash son; the outcome of which was that, although the prince confessed his fault, the king ordered him to leave St. James' with all his family. Frederick did so, and took up his residence at Norfolk House.

DEATH OF QUEEN CAROLINE (1737 A.D.)

In the midst of these unseemly exhibitions, Queen Caroline who had long been afflicted with a dangerous complaint, was on the 9th of November taken dangerously ill. The prince of Wales expressed great desire to see his mother, but she refused consent. It was soon found that the disease had progressed too far to allow hope. On the 14th Sir Robert Walpole arrived from Houghton, and was conducted by the king to her majesty's bedside. Realising that her end was near, the queen pathetically recommended the king, her children, and the kingdom to the minister's care.

As the news that the queen was expected to die spread abroad there were many who expected that her death would mean the fall of Walpole, and Sir Robert himself seems to have shared this opinion. Lord Hervey[d] relates a curious conversation which occurred at this time between the great minister and himself. "Oh, my lord," said Sir Robert, "if this woman should die, what a scene of confusion will here be! I defy the ablest person in the kingdom to foresee what will be the consequence of this great event." Lord Hervey replied that the king would grieve for his wife a fortnight, forget her in a month, have two or three women with whom he would pass most of his time, and that Walpole would be more influential than ever. As Hervey predicted, the hopes of Walpole's enemies and the minister's own fears proved groundless.

The queen died on Sunday night, the 20th of November.[a] The king, with all his silliness about mistresses — a silliness which he avowed even to

[1737 A.D.]

his dying wife in well-known words indicative of the loose morality of the period — loved and respected Caroline; and the grief he showed for her, being universally known, made him for some time more popular and better spoken of than he had been before this incident. Truly does Carlyle say, "There is something stoically tragic in the history of Caroline with her flighty, vapouring little king: Seldom had foolish husband so wise a wife." [k]

THE RISE OF METHODISM

Far more important in its ultimate effects upon humankind than quarrels in the royal family or the death of the queen was a movement which was to awaken the religious spirit in England from the lethargic condition into which it had fallen. The movement originated in the meetings during the years 1729 to 1735 of a number of earnestly inclined Oxford students who were anxious to attain a deeper religious life. Chief among the members of this society were John and Charles Wesley and George Whitefield; the first two the sons of the episcopal rector of Epworth, and the last the son of an inn-keeper in Gloucestershire. The society and its members were much ridiculed by some of the other students; and, probably because the word "method," a favourite of their mother's, was much used by the Wesleys, the members of the society were called in derision "Methodists."

In 1735 the two Wesleys went out to the newly established colony of Georgia; but in 1738 John Wesley, after a somewhat stormy experience in the colony, returned to England, whither his brother had already preceded him. In the colony and in England John Wesley fell under Moravian influences, and shortly after his return he adopted the Moravian doctrine of "justification by faith." The society was then reconstituted, on the basis of a church within a church; a strict rule of life was adopted by the leaders; weekly confession of sins to one another, and weekly communion being among their practices. The leaders, all of whom were ordained ministers of the Church of England, became itinerant preachers, who held it to be their chief duty to preach repentance to sinners. By their earnestness and enthusiasm they quickly succeeded in arousing a passionate enthusiasm, but by their extemporaneous preaching, extravagant gestures, and stern denunciation of the idleness of the clergy, they also roused an almost equally passionate hostility, as a result of which most of the pulpits were closed against them. Circumstances thus compelled them by degrees to take steps in the direction of an independent organisation; in 1739 they began to create Methodist chapels, and in the same year they inaugurated the custom of field-preaching.

Despite all opposition, their following increased with wonderful rapidity. Their success was partly due to the fact that they made their appeals in large part to the poor and the illiterate, to whom they preached in the most impassioned manner an emotional religion which carried everything before it. But it was also due in perhaps equal measure to the remarkable ability of the leaders, particularly the Wesleys and Whitefield. Charles Wesley became the poet of the movement, and his hymns, many of which are in use to-day, were a powerful factor in melting the hearts of the people. Whitefield was a man of wonderful oratorical abilities, and, as a popular preacher, has rarely if ever been equalled in England. Possessing a voice so powerful that he could be heard distinctly in the open air by 30,000 people, a master of gestures faultless in beauty and propriety, he was equally capable of reducing to tears vast crowds of the half-savage colliers of Kingswood or of the rude colonists of America, or of fascinating the most refined

audiences in London. Many of the foremost men of the time, including the historian Hume and the statesman Bolingbroke, have left testimonials of their admiration of his wonderful effectiveness. "I happened," says Benjamin Franklin, "to attend one of his sermons, in the course of which I perceived he intended to finish with a collection, and I silently resolved he should get nothing from me. I had in my pocket a handful of copper money, three or four silver dollars, and five pistoles in gold. As he proceeded I began to soften, and concluded to give the copper. Another stroke of his oratory made me ashamed of that and determined me to give the silver; and he finished so admirably that I emptied my pocket wholly into the collector's dish, gold and all." On another occasion, in illustrating the peril of sinners, Whitefield portrayed a blind beggar drawing gradually nearer and nearer to the verge of a dizzy precipice, and so realistic did he make his description that when he reached the catastrophe, Lord Chesterfield, who formed one of the audience, was so carried away that he involuntarily exclaimed: "Good God, he's gone." John Wesley was neither so good a hymn writer as his brother, nor so eloquent a preacher as Whitefield; but he combined the earnestness of a religious enthusiast with talents for organization and management, and was the real leader of the movement.

John Wesley never acknowledged himself a non-conformist, and in the year of his death, 1791, he wrote, "I live and die a member of the Church of England, and no one who regards my judgment or advice will ever separate from it." But facts were too strong for him. He had already gone so far as to bestow orders, and a few years after his death the Methodist ministers began to administer the sacraments; as time went on the position of the Methodists as a separate religious body became clearly defined.

Not least important among the results of the movement was the growth within the Church of England of a considerable body, which, while holding aloof from the Methodists, nevertheless adopted many of their principles and practices. These persons, including John Newton, Hannah More, the poet Cowper, and many others, became known as the "Evangelical Party," and were active in furthering almost all the great philanthropic and religious works which marked the closing years of the 18th century.[a]

THE SPANISH WAR

The state of internal and external tranquillity which Walpole made it his task to maintain was not allowed to continue. For many years the merchants had been making complaints of the injuries done to English trade in the West Indies by the right of search for contraband goods exercised by the Spanish *guarda-costas*, or guardships, and the cruel treatment experienced by English mariners; in other words, that the Spanish government, whether wisely or not, exercised its undoubted rights, and that attempts were made to suppress the extensive smuggling trade which they carried on with the Spanish colonies. The opposition, glad of an occasion to embarrass the minister, joined heartily in the cry; papers were moved for, witnesses were examined before the house, and resolutions were passed. "The fable of Jenkins' ears," as Burke calls it, was of great service. This was a Scottish master of a ship, who said that seven years before he was taken by a Spaniard, who, beside treating him with great cruelty in other respects, cut off one of his ears and bade him carry it to his king, whom he would serve in the same way if he was there. When asked how he had acted on this occasion, Jenkins replied, "I recommended my soul to God and my cause to my country."

The story produced such an effect that Pulteney declared that the very name of Jenkins would raise volunteers. Jenkins always carried his ear about him wrapt in cotton. Some, however, said he had lost it on a very different occasion. Various attempts were made by Walpole to settle the Spanish matter by negotiation; at length (1739), rather than part with his power which he loved too much, he resolved to act contrary to his better judgment, and yield to the public will. War was therefore declared against Spain, an event which filled the nation with joy and exultation.

Admiral Vernon, a brave but presumptuous and self-sufficient officer, who commanded in the West Indies, with a squadron of six ships of war took, plundered, and destroyed Porto Bello (November 21st). His success having given a false idea of his abilities, he was selected to command an expedition on a large scale against Carthagena, having on board a body of land-forces under General Wentworth. It however proved a total failure.

A squadron, under Commodore Anson, was sent to sea in September, 1740, in order to attack the Spaniards in the Pacific Ocean. The history of this celebrated voyage cannot be given here in detail. We need only notice the dreadful ravages committed by the scurvy; the furious tempest encountered in the straits of Le Maire, in which the *Wager* was wrecked, and the *Pearl* and the *Severn* forced to return to Rio Janeiro. After a short stay at the island of Juan Fernandez to recover his men, Anson, with his two remaining ships, the *Centurion* and *Gloucester*, proceeded along the coast of Peru capturing the Spanish traders, and he took and burned the town of Paita. To capture the galleons from Manila, he sailed with the *Centurion* alone (being obliged to burn the *Gloucester*) across the Pacific. He stopped to refresh his crew at the isle of Tinian, and then proceeded to Canton in China. He afterwards captured a galleon immensely rich, and returned to England by the Cape of Good Hope, being the first Englishman who had circumnavigated the globe since the time of Drake. He arrived on the 15th of June, 1744, after an absence of nearly four years.

RETIREMENT OF WALPOLE (1742 A.D.)

The success of this war was not agreeable to the wishes of those who had urged it on. British trade suffered from the Spanish privateers, and the French gave symptoms of an intention to share in the contest. The blame of course was thrown on the minister, and the opposition now resolved to make a strenuous effort for his overthrow. Sandys moved (February 13th, 1741), after a long speech, for an address to his majesty to remove him from his presence and councils forever; Pulteney exerted all his eloquence in favour of the motion; but the minister was supported not only by his own friends but by several of the tories who regarded the motion as tending to an inquisitorial system, and Shippen left the house at the head of thirty-four of his adherents. After an able reply from Walpole, it was negatived by a large majority; the same was the fate of a similar motion in the lords.

A dissolution succeeded. Walpole is said to have relaxed in his usual exertions on these occasions, while all branches of the opposition made the utmost efforts: even the pretender wrote, directing his adherents to labour strenuously against the obnoxious minister. There was also a schism in the cabinet, many of his colleagues being his secret foes. In the new parliament the proceedings on contested elections showed the minister that his power was gone; and when that of Chippenham was decided against him (February 3rd, 1742), he declared to the successful candidate that he would never again

sit in that house. An adjournment followed; Walpole was created Earl of Orford (9th), and two days after he resigned. The king accepted his resignation with tears, and never ceased to repose confidence in him. An attempt made by a secret committee of the commons for an inquiry into his conduct, for the purpose of fixing on him a charge of corruption and peculation, failed.

STANHOPE'S ESTIMATE OF WALPOLE

The character of a statesman so reckless in opposition, but so eminent in office, deserves the most attentive consideration, and affords the best clue to the history of England for more than twenty years. During his life he was loaded with unmerited censures; since his death he has sometimes received exaggerated praise. Amidst the showers of invective which his enemies have poured, amidst the clouds of incense which his flatterers have raised, the true lineaments of his mind are dimly and doubtfully seen.

The talents of Walpole were eminently practical, and fit for the conduct of great affairs. He was always steady, and therefore usually successful in his schemes. His views of policy were generally most acute, and his knowledge of finance profound. No fanciful theory, no love of abstract principles, ever warped his judgment; even the most trying circumstances could very seldom ruffle his good humour; and calm himself, he worked upon the passions of others. So closely had he studied all the weak points of human nature — so skilfully were his address and management adapted to them, that he scarcely ever failed, either in public or in private, to gain upon his hearers. There have certainly been many more eloquent orators, but never, I believe, a more dexterous debater. He would not willingly leave even the least part of his subject untouched. He knew that weak minds seldom yield to a single argument, even to the strongest, but are more easily overpowered by a number, of whatever kind. Always catching and always following the disposition of the house — knowing exactly when to press, and when to recede — able at pleasure to unfold the most intricate details, or to involve in specious reasoning the grossest fallacies — he, in the long run, prevailed over spirits far more lofty and soaring.

We are assured, however, that the powers of debate were not those to which he entirely or principally trusted for the management of the house of commons. The indignant clamour of his contemporaries — the eloquent voice of a Wyndham — the magic pen of a Bolingbroke — have denounced in glowing terms the patron and parent of parliamentary corruption. Beneath the flowers of their rhetoric, and the venom of their party rancour, there is no doubt a foundation of truth. But the more equal tribunal of posterity has discovered no small excuse for him in the political turpitude even of many who thus arraigned him — in the general lowness and baseness of his age — in the fact, that so many of the representatives of the people were on sale, and ready, if not bought by Walpole, to be bid for by the jacobites. The more the private letters of this period come to light the more is this truth apparent. What shall we say, for example, when we find the great-grandson and representative of Hampden, and himself a distinguished statesman, having the effrontery to threaten in writing, as he does in a letter to Lady Suffolk, July 30th, 1727, that, unless he can obtain a pension from the reigning family, he will "very soon take service in some other family" — meaning the Pretender's? Are we really justified in speaking as if public men had been all disposed to be virtuous and incorruptible during Walpole's government, and were turned from the paths of honour by the address of that wily tempter?

[1742 A.D.]

Besides, are not these charges against Walpole marked by extreme exaggeration, even on the testimony of his enemies themselves? At the fall of Walpole a select committee was appointed to inquire into his public conduct during the last ten years, and out of its twenty-one members, that committee comprised no less than nineteen of his bitterest enemies. The minister then stood forsaken and alone — there was no court favour at his back — no patronage or lucre in his hands; much popularity to gain, and no danger to run by assailing him. Yet, even under such favourable circumstances, what did this ten years' siege upon his character, this political Troy, really bring forth at last? What facts does the report allege in support of its avowed hostility? An attempt upon the virtue of the mayor of Weymouth! The promise of a place in the revenue to a returning officer! The atrocity of dismissing some excise officers who had voted against the government candidate! Vague surmises from the large amount of secret service money! Now if Walpole had in real truth been the corrupter of his age; if he had prostituted public honours or public rewards in the cause of corruption; if fraudulent contracts, undue influence at elections, and bribed members of parliament, were matters of every-day occurrence — if, in short, only one-tenth part of the outcry against Walpole was well founded, how is it possible that powerful and rancorous opponents should be able to find only so few, imperfect, and meagre proofs to hurl against him? No defence on the part of Walpole's friends is half so strong and convincing as this failure of his enemies.

ROBERT WALPOLE
(1676–1745)

The administration of Walpole was prudently and beneficially directed to the maintenance of peace abroad, to the preservation of quiet, and the progress of prosperity at home. It may, however, be doubted whether, in his domestic policy, he was not too fond of palliatives, and applied himself merely to silence complaints, instead of redressing wrongs. It is also to be observed, that though he loved peace much, he loved his own power more. He kept the country from hostilities so long as he could do so with safety to himself; but when the alternative lay between a foolish war and a new administration, he never hesitated in deciding for the former. Office was, indeed, his natural element; when excluded from it, he was, as we have seen, most turbulent and restless; he crept back to it, through a peculiarly humbling coalition, and even at the end, Speaker Onslow assures us that he "went very unwillingly out of his power."

The knowledge of Walpole was very limited, and he patronised literature as little as he understood it. "In general," says his son, "he loved neither reading nor writing." "How I envy you!" he exclaimed to Fox, whom he found one day, after his fall, reading in the library at Houghton. His splendid success in life, notwithstanding his want of learning, may tend to show what is too commonly forgotten in modern plans of education — that it is of far more importance to have the mind well disciplined than richly stored — strong

rather than full. Walpole was, however, fond of perusing and quoting Horace, to whom, in his private character, he might, perhaps, not unaptly be compared. He was good-tempered, joyous, and sensual, with an elegant taste for the arts; a warm friend, an indulgent master, and a boon companion. We are told of him, that whenever he received a packet of letters, the one from his gamekeeper was usually the first which he opened. He had an easy and flowing wit, but too commonly indulged it to the utmost limits of coarseness; and Savage who had seen him familiarly at Lord Tyrconnel's, used to say of him that the whole range of his mind was from obscenity to politics, and from politics to obscenity. In his private expenses, he was not only liberal, but lavish; and it must be acknowledged that the magnificence of his buildings, the extent of his purchases, and the profusion of his entertainments at Houghton, gave his enemies no small handle for invective.

It would be unjust to Walpole to conclude his character without alluding to his mildness and placability towards his political opponents. The system under which contending statesmen used to raise up rival scaffolds, and hunt down one another even to the death, ended during his administration; although I must own that I think no small part of the praise belongs to the personal clemency and kindliness of George I and George II. On the whole [concludes Stanhope] Walpole appears to me to have been a man of many useful and some great qualities; who faithfully served his country, but who never forgot his own family; and who rose partly by the frailties of others, as well as by merits of his own. With every allowance for the "evil days and evil tongues" amongst which his lot had fallen, it is impossible not to own that his character wants something of moral elevation. Name him in the same sentence with a Chatham, and who will not feel the contrast? The mind of Chatham bears the lineaments of a higher nature; and the very sound of his name carries with it something lofty and august. Of Walpole, on the other hand, the defects — nay, perhaps, even the merits — have in them something low and common. No enthusiasm was ever felt for his person; none was ever kindled by his memory. No man ever inquired where his remains are laid, or went to pay a homage of reverence at his tomb. Between him and Chatham there is the same difference as between success and glory![b]

WALPOLE'S SUCCESSORS

The fall of Walpole was followed by a shifting of some of the officers of government. The people looked on, and saw that nothing else was changed. They had joined the cry of a parliamentary faction to hunt down one man. They looked in vain for any bettering of their domestic condition — for any signal display of national greatness. Some violent demagogues had talked of the scaffold for the minister who had governed the nation without bloodshed or proscription, at a period when a less firm hand would have encouraged the jacobites, and a less merciful hand would have hunted them into desperation. The mob carried about his effigy. "Satan" and "Bob" figured together in caricatures. The excitement was soon over. Walpole's ascendancy was the real keystone of the opposition arch, itself composed of very loose materials. The keystone was displaced, and the arch fell to pieces. Some of the opposition got places, others got none. The only change which could be popularly understood was, that an apparent reconciliation took place between the king and the prince of Wales. The prince went to court; and the king asked

[1742–1743 A.D.]

his royal highness after the health of the princess. The duke of Argyll desired to form a coalition ministry — what was then first termed "a broad bottom." The plan would not succeed; and the duke retired in disgust. The king would have nothing to say to the tories.

Lord Carteret was the only member of the cabinet who possessed high ability. Pitt was not called to office. His exclusion was no doubt owing to the personal dislike of the king. Neither had Chesterfield or Lyttleton places. Carteret was a favourite of George and of his son. He was a general favourite, from his wit, his accomplishments, his gay humour. But he was a very indifferent substitute for the keen and painstaking Walpole, who, like all really great men, did not despise petty things, or think it beneath him to attend to the small details of public affairs. Carteret was satisfied to lead the king, by entering into his majesty's aspirations to hold the scales of European policy, and to command armies. He was asked by the chief justice to make an appointment to some office. "What is it to me," exclaimed the dashing minister, "who is a judge and who is a bishop? It is my business to make kings and emperors, and to maintain the balance of Europe." The balance was to be held by taking sixteen thousand Hanoverian troops into English pay.

ENGLAND AND THE WAR OF THE AUSTRIAN SUCCESSION

When the king opened the session on the 16th of November, 1742, and mentioned "sixteen thousand of my electoral troops," as sent to the Low Countries, "with the Hessians in the British pay," it was felt that England was getting mixed up with Hanover in a way that Walpole would have scarcely dared to attempt. A grant of £657,000 was proposed by the secretary of war, to defray the cost of these troops. Then the national jealousy of foreign mercenaries, which the genius of William III was unable to stand up against, burst forth in contemptuous disregard of the king's relations with his hereditary state. Sir John St. Aubyn said that undoubtedly his majesty had a most passionate love for his native country — a passion which arises from virtue. "I wish that those who have the honour to be of his councils would imitate his royal example, and show a passion for their native country too; that they would faithfully stand forth and say, that as king of this country, whatever interests may interfere with it, this country is to be his first, his principal care; that in the Act of Settlement this is an express condition." Pitt was even bolder: "It is now too apparent that this great, this powerful, this formidable kingdom, is considered only as a province to a despicable electorate." The ministers commanded a majority. But such invectives went deep into the heart of the nation. It must be borne in mind that England was really not engaged in war with France, though she was paying troops to fight against the cause which France supported. She sent auxiliaries to the house of Austria, and these auxiliaries would necessarily come into conflict with the auxiliaries which France sent against the house of Austria. The absurdity of the situation was well expressed by Horace Walpole: "We have the name of war with Spain without the thing, and war with France without the name."

When Walpole fell, and England was at war with Spain and France — when the pacific French minister, Cardinal Fleury, was succeeded by the more energetic and more wily Cardinal Tencin — the vulnerable point in the position of the house of Brunswick was to be hit. In 1743 a great invasion was projected from France. Charles Edward was urged to leave Rome and

repair to Paris. He was nominally to command an army of veterans assembled at Dunkirk, having the great Marshal Saxe to lead the troops which were to drive the elector of Hanover from his usurped throne. The expedition sailed at the beginning of 1744 from Dunkirk. A great storm destroyed or scattered the fleet of transports; and Sir John Norris, who was ready for a fight in the Channel, was content to pick up a few dismantled vessels. Marshal Saxe went to take the command of an army in the Low Countries; and Charles Edward secluded himself at Gravelines, till a more favourable occasion should arise, when he should emerge from his obscurity as regent of Great Britain and Ireland.

When the king prorogued the parliament on the 21st of April, 1743, he announced that, at the requisition of the queen of Hungary, he had ordered his army, in conjunction with the Austrian troops, to pass the Rhine. His majesty immediately departed for Germany. The British troops in Flanders, under the command of the earl of Stair, had marched towards the Rhine in February. They were joined by the sixteen thousand Hanoverians in the pay of England; and by some Austrian regiments, commanded by the duke of Aremberg. In May the army had crossed the Rhine, and had taken up a station at Hochst, near Frankfort. Stair was waiting for Hanoverians and Hessians to add to his numbers; for the French marshal de Noailles, with an army of sixty thousand men, was within a few leagues of the British general's position. Stair made an imprudent movement, by which he was cut off from his supplies at Hanau. King George reached the army on the 19th of June, accompanied by his second son, the duke of Cumberland. The forty thousand men were reduced to thirty-seven thousand; they were on short rations, and the horses without forage. Their position was an unfavourable one near the village of Dettingen; the French general was at hand with a superior force. It was absolutely necessary that the allies should return to their magazines at Hanau.

On the 27th of June, before sunrise, they had commenced their march from Aschaffenburg towards Dettingen. They were ignorant of the exact position of the French, fancying their principal force was towards Aschaffenburg, in their rear. In this belief the king took the command of the rear-guard, as the post of danger. A large body of French were in their front, to contest the passage of the allies through the defile of Dettingen. George immediately rode from the rear to form his army in order of battle, with the almost desperate resolution of forcing the strong French lines. The brave little man was surrounded by dangers. As he marched from Aschaffenburg the French entered the place with twelve thousand men. Behind and before was the enemy, in most formidable numbers, shutting him up in a narrow valley. Grammont, the nephew of Noailles — eager to engage, in the temporary absence of his uncle, who had ridden off to bring up additional force — rushed forward from a formidable position covered by a morass, to charge with his cavalry. George dismounted, drew his sword, and put himself at the head of the right of his British and Hanoverians, exclaiming: "Now, boys, now for the honour of England; fire, and behave bravely, and the French will soon run."[1] The infantry thus led on did behave bravely, and did make the French soon run. The duke of Cumberland, who commanded the left, displayed the same courage as his father. The battle of Dettingen afforded no display for high military skill on the part of the British commanders. They had desperately to fight their way out of a difficulty; and they had troops

[1 "The battle of Dettingen," says Aubrey, "was the last battle in which a king of England personally took part."]

[1743–1744 A.D.]

upon whose bravery and steadiness they could confidently rely. The battle was not over till four in the afternoon, but the victory was complete on the part of the allies. The French could offer no resistance to the retreat to Hanau, which again gave the half-starved British, Hanoverians, and Austrians the command of abundant supplies. At Hanau they were joined by their reinforcements, and an invasion of France was even talked of. It was wise in King George not to be flushed with his triumph, and to resist the advice of Stair to attempt some perilous adventure. It was complained that the king did not listen to the counsels of his English officers, but had Hanoverian partialities. Stair, the duke of Marlborough, and others, resigned their commissions. The success of the allies in the campaign was completed with the expulsion of the French armies from Germany by the forces under Prince Charles of Lorraine. The king was received in England with an enthusiasm which he had never before excited. But the complaints of Lord Stair, and others, revived the old cry of Hanoverian influence. The Hanoverian White Horse, in cocked hat and jack-boots, riding the feeble British Lion, was the subject of a popular caricature.

In August, 1743, whilst the king was on the Continent, Henry Pelham, brother of the duke of Newcastle, had been appointed first lord of the treasury. Walpole had identified this office with the position of a prime minister; but Carteret, the secretary of state, who had accompanied George in his campaign, had really controlled the cabinet. Carteret was now the great object of attack from the opposition. He was the Hanoverian minister — the wicked minister. Succeeding to some of the power of Walpole, he had inherited no inconsiderable portion of the odium which attached to every servant of a king who, unfortunately, had other interests to promote than that of the country which had called his family to the throne. The violent tone of the parliamentary debates led foreigners to believe, as they always believe under such circumstances, that Great Britain was torn to pieces by internal dissensions, and that the time was ripe for dynastic changes, if not for invasion and conquest. It was this belief which suggested the abortive attempt of 1744, which we have briefly noticed. The instant that the country really appeared in danger, the most eloquent opponents of the administration — the most indignant declaimers against Hanoverian partialities — those who would have disbanded every foreign soldier, without any substitute for national defence — raised a voice in parliament for the defence of the nation and the throne, which, as in many similar instances, made foreigners wonder at the inconsistencies of representative assemblies. On the 20th of March, 1744, France declared war against England. There was an end of that anomalous state of things, in which two great states were fighting against each other, not as principals, but as auxiliaries of other governments. The English declaration of war was issued on the 31st of March.

The continental war of 1744 was chiefly marked by the sudden movement of the king of Prussia against the Austrians. He overran Bohemia; but evacuated it before the end of the year. The king of England, very much against his will, was restrained by the general voice of his council, with the exception of Carteret, now Earl Granville, from leaving England. The difference of opinion on these Hanoverian questions soon made it impossible that the ministry could hold together. Pelham had succeeded Walpole in his command of the house of commons. Granville had the king with him. It was clear which party would triumph. The king was obliged to part with his favourite — a man far more able than those who insisted on his dismissal, but whose very ability was more dangerous than their mediocrity. The duke

of Newcastle and his brother desired a coalition of parties. They wanted old jacobites, like Sir Hinde Cotton, to be associated with young patriots, like Chesterfield and Pitt. The greatest member of the opposition refused to take an office inferior to that of secretary of state. But Pitt did not oppose the new government. At the risk of that charge of inconsistency which feeble statesmen always dread, he supported a grant for the continuance of the army in Flanders — a measure which he had before opposed.

The earl of Chesterfield, before he entered upon the appointment he had accepted as lord-lieutenant of Ireland, went upon a mission to the Hague, to concert military operations with the Dutch government. The great object to be obtained was, that the duke of Cumberland should be appointed commander-in-chief of the confederate army. Before the campaign of 1745 was opened, the emperor Charles VII died at Munich. His son, the new elector of Bavaria, withdrew his claim to the Austrian succession, and separated his troops from the army of the French. Maria Theresa restored her conquests in Bavaria. In March, 1745, Lord Orford died. The evils which he had for many years averted by his pacific policy were coming thick upon his country.

The campaign of 1745 in Flanders was long memorable for such a display of the qualities of the British soldier as have often made the purely military nations of Europe look on with wonder. As often, in the long interval between the days of Marlborough and of Wellington, have they equally wondered at the incapacity of those commanders under whom these qualities were displayed.[k] On the 11th of May, 1745, a battle of more importance was fought between the French and allied armies of English and Dutch at Fontenoy. The duke of Cumberland, the king's younger son, was in command, and was opposed to the king of France and the dauphin, who followed the advice of the famous Marshal Saxe. Prodigies of valour can do no good unless they are directed to practical objects. The march of that column of Englishmen across a rough plain, in face of a great army and commanded on both the flanks by infantry and artillery, filling up their ranks as the men fell, and keeping step as regularly as on parade — onward, onward — till the French princes were ordered to retire — till the marshal despaired of the battle — till all chance seemed gone of stopping that great avalanche of bayonet and sword that made so terrible an advance — this march is commemorated by French historians themselves as one of the greatest feats of arms on record. But the heroism was useless. Their Dutch auxiliaries took shamefully to flight at the very crisis of the engagement. A cannonade was opened on their front, and tore through the whole length of the column. They turned, but did not flee. With the same imperturbable steadiness they reversed their march, and the retreat of the whole army was conducted with such order that it lost all the obloquy of defeat. It was magnificent, but it was not war.

THE YOUNG PRETENDER IN SCOTLAND (1745–1746 A.D.)

Events thickened as the contest went on. The visit of George to Germany, and his threat of invading France, were returned by a visit from the pretender — no longer the stubborn James III, who had been so nearly crowned at Scone, but his gay and graceful son, the chevalier de St. George, well known to us in legend and ballad as the winner of every heart, and the "darling Charley" of a repentant nation. But the "young chevalier" is depicted in the soberer hues of history as a weak and selfish adventurer, who never comprehended the generosity of the high-souled supporters of his

[1745 A.D.]

cause, and who, in the words of one of his gallant adherents, when the day of trial came, "knew neither how to fight like a man nor to die like a gentleman." We can only remark that all the sad songs and beautiful laments which have gathered round this crazy expedition were never heard of till all chances of its success had disappeared. While it was going on, there was a little alarm at first, and afterwards a great deal of contempt, but it was left for the peaceful times of thirty years after the event to clothe with romance and poetry the attempt of a few savages and a few fanatics to overthrow a rapidly spreading civilisation and a religion of progress and improvement. Let us enjoy the jacobite ballads, and rejoice in the defeat of the jacobite cause.

The course of the rebellion was run within the year. Landing in July in the north of Scotland, with seven companions, of whom the majority were Irish, the prince was joined, though slowly and with a foreknowledge of their fate, by several Highland chiefs, who summoned their clans to aid. Their clans came to aid with the same alacrity with which they would have come to resist; for the laird's will was their only law. Clanronald, M'Donald, and, finally, Cameron of Lochiel, were great names to utter to Highland ears, and the march began. In August the royal standard was hoisted, and fifteen hundred of the Gaël gathered round it, and prepared for a rush on the fertile lowlands. There were very few troops to oppose them. Of the three thousand constituting the garrison of all Scotland, not above a half could be collected, under Sir John Cope — one of those wretched pedants from whom England has suffered so much — who would rather be defeated by rule than successful by original measures. The burden of the ballads, with reference to this hero of pigtail and pipe-clay, turns constantly on his want of watchfulness; and insulting inquiries are made whether he is asleep or awake. It makes very little difference whether a Sir John Cope's eyes are open or shut. Perth opened its gates on the 3rd of September. Edinburgh was entered on the 17th, and something like royalty began to hedge the prince when he dwelt in Holyrood, and held a levee in the capital. On the 21st was the battle of Pinkey, where the same impetuous rush of the wild men of the hills which had carried the victory of Killiecrankie, astonished the mechanical mind of Cope, who expected to be attacked in a regular and gentlemanly manner, and sent him, with horse, foot, and marines, in headlong flight before it.

Charles Edward had defeated the king's troops, and was now a potentate carrying on war. For a month he limited his exertions to assemblies and feasts in Edinburgh, watching the castle, which still held out against him, and then marched forward, and crossed the border on the 8th of November. Carlisle yielded, after a brief resistance, and the advance continued. Those five or six thousand Scotsmen, ill armed and not very decently apparelled, went forward from town to town in the populous Cumberland and industrious Yorkshire, wondering at all they saw, and expecting every moment to be met by troops. But they were neither met by troops nor joined by friends. They were neglected, and began to despair. They saw noble houses, and cultivated fields, and foreign gardens, and many other things they had never seen before, and were so impressed with awe that they only robbed larders and hen-roosts. Meantime, parties of ladies and gentlemen of the towns near the road hired post-chaises and drove across to see the Highlanders go by, as if they had been a caravan of wild animals. Soldiers were gathering from abroad; the relics of the glorious column of Fontenoy came over with the duke of Cumberland; the archbishop of York mounted his horse as a prince of the church; newspapers roused the people to defend their Protestant

freedom, and resist a nominee of the French king, who had promised him twelve thousand men. So when the poor mountaineers from Kinloch Moidart had got all the way up to Derby, and found that the panic had passed away, that old George was courageous as at Dettingen, and pooh-poohed the whole business as a farce, the leaders differed, quarrelled, and fought, and Charles Edward, finding no enemy to oppose him, no multitudes to assist him, lost confidence in his followers and himself, and gave orders for retreat (December 6th).

Battles of Falkirk and Culloden

He got back to Carlisle, and left a garrison to protect his rear. Cumberland came thundering in pursuit, and took the garrison prisoners, earning the detested name of the Butcher by his cruelty to the misguided men. Onward the prince proceeded through Dumfries, which he put to ransom; Glasgow, where he raised a forced contribution; and, finally, to Stirling, where he counted his forces, and found he had nine thousand men. General Cope had a fitting rival in General Hawley, who commanded the king's troops at Falkirk (January 18th, 1746). The same faults were committed with the same result. The Highland rush discomposed the martinet, and in twenty minutes half of each army considered itself defeated. Hawley persisted longest in this erroneous belief, and retired to Edinburgh, and Charles Edward believed himself every inch a king once more.

But the Butcher was on his track. By the time Cumberland got to Aberdeen, the prince was at Inverness, for all hope of England or Scotland was at an end. Enough if he could effect his escape, and get his followers to defend him to the last. This they resolved to do and, after a mad attempt to surprise the enemy at Nairn, waited, grim and terrible, on the dark moor that stretches near the town of Inverness.

On the 16th of April, 1746, at the battle of Culloden, weary expectation came to an end. Trained soldiers from the Flemish wars, well fed, well clothed, and well officered, were now opposed to the wasted, hungry battalions of the Gaël, who scarcely recognised their chiefs in their military characters, and were broken down with the fatigues they had undergone. Courage, of course, was there, and desperate effort and generous devotion to the cause they had adopted; but these were of no avail against unflinching bayonets, heavy charges of horse, and a battery of artillery well served. In an hour all was confusion and dismay. The Highlanders, once broken, never could form again. The prince fled with his chief officers, and the infuriated English knocked out the brains of the wounded as they lay on the field, or dragged prisoners into the open air, and shot them by the dozen at a time. The pitiless executions of that sanguinary son of George II brought more weakness to the Hanoverian cause than a defeat would have done. By the Scots it was looked on as brutal hard-heartedness towards their own countrymen, for after all Donald was a Scotsman too; and by the English as a cowardly revenge for the alarm he had suffered. Hated, therefore, by both nations as a revengeful tyrant, the duke of Cumberland, while in England, retired from public life.

Escape of Charles; Prosecution of his Adherents

Charles Edward got safely off at last after a series of surprising and delightful adventures, which, even without the colouring given them by party spirit,

[1746 A.D.]

revealed such truthfulness in the Celtic character, and such devotion and purity in the heroic maidens, like Flora Macdonald, who aided his escape, that they are read like a chapter of romance.[l]

For some time he and his followers resided in a singular retreat, called the Cage, on the side of Mount Benalder; it was concealed by a close thicket, and half-suspended in the air. At this place Charles received intelligence that two French vessels, sent out expressly for his deliverance, under the direction of Colonel Warren of Dillon's regiment and with that officer on board, had anchored in Lochnanuagh. Immediately setting off for that place, but travelling only by night, he embarked on the 20th of September, attended by Lochiel, Colonel Roy Stuart, and about one hundred other persons, who had gathered at the news. It was the very same spot where Charles had landed fourteen months before, but how changed since that time, both his fate and his feelings! With what different emotions must he have gazed upon those desolate mountains, when stepping from his ship in the ardour of hope and coming victory; and now, when he saw them fade away in the blue distance, and bade them an everlasting farewell! Rapidly did his vessel bear him from the Scottish shores; concealed by a fog, he sailed through the midst of the English fleet; and he safely landed at the little port of Roscoff, near Morlaix, on the 29th of September.

The Scottish prisoners were removed for trial to England, lest their own countrymen should show them partiality or pity. At one time there were no less than 385 crowded together at Carlisle; of these, however, the common men were permitted to cast lots, one in twenty to be tried and hanged, the rest to be transported. There was no difficulty in obtaining proofs against individuals who had so openly appeared in arms. Amongst the earliest sufferers were Colonel Townley and eight other officers or privates of the Manchester regiment, who were hanged on Kennington Common near London. Other executions took place at York, at Brampton, and at Penrith; in all there were nearly eighty. The barbarous ceremony of disembowelling, mangling, and casting the hearts into a fire was not omitted, nor did it fail — such is the vulgar appetite for the horrible! — to draw forth exulting shouts from the spectators. Differing as the sufferers did in age, in rank, and temper, they yet, with scarcely an exception, agreed in their behaviour on the scaffold; all dying with firmness and courage, asserting the justice of their cause, and praying for the exiled family. Amongst these numerous condemnations the one perhaps of all others most open to exception was that of Charles Radcliffe, brother of the earl of Derwentwater, beheaded in 1716. Charles Radcliffe had then avoided a like fate by breaking from prison; he had lately been captured on board a French vessel bound for Scotland, with supplies for the insurgents; and he was now, after a long confinement, put to death upon his former sentence, which had slumbered for thirty years.

The noblemen who appeared for trial before their peers in July, 1746, were the earls of Cromarty and Kilmarnock, and Lord Balmerino. The two earls pleaded guilty, expressing the deepest remorse for their conduct, while Balmerino endeavoured to avail himself of a flaw in the indictment, as not having been at Carlisle on the day it set forth; but this being overruled, he declared that he would give their lordships no further trouble. On being brought up to receive sentence, both Cromarty and Kilmarnock earnestly sued for mercy. "My own fate," said Cromarty, "is the least part of my sufferings. But, my lords, I have involved an affectionate wife, with an unborn infant as parties of my guilt to share its penalties. I have involved my eldest son, whose youth and regard for his parents hurried him down the

stream of rebellion. I have involved also eight innocent children, who must feel their parent's punishment before they know his guilt. Let the silent eloquence of their grief and tears supply my want of persuasion!" Kilmarnock urged, in extenuation of his own offence, the excellent principles he had instilled into his heir, "having my eldest son in the duke's army fighting for the liberties of his country at Culloden, where his unhappy father was in arms to destroy them!" But no acknowledgment of error, no application for mercy could be wrung from the haughty soul of Balmerino. In compassion chiefly to Lady Cromarty, who was far advanced in pregnancy, a pardon was granted to her husband, but the two others were ordered for execution on Tower Hill on the 18th of August. Kilmarnock met his fate with sufficient steadiness combined with penitence, owning to the last the heinousness of his rebellion. His companion in misfortune, on the contrary, as a frank resolute soldier, persevered and gloried in his principles. When at the gate of the Tower and on their way to the scaffold, the officers had ended the words of form with the usual prayer "God save King George!" Kilmarnock devoutly sighed "Amen"; but Balmerino stood up and replied in a loud voice, "God save King James!" And as he laid his head on the block he said: "If I had a thousand lives, I would lay them all down here in the same cause!"

The last of the martyrs, as their own party chose to call them, was Lord Lovat. Not having appeared in arms, nor committed any overt act of treason, this grey-haired hypocrite could not be so readily convicted as the bolder and better men who had walked before him to the scaffold. But a king's evidence was obtained in John Murray of Broughton, lately Prince Charles' secretary, who now consented to purchase safety for himself by betraying the secrets and hazarding the lives of his former friends. It was he who revealed to the government the whole train and tissue of the jacobite conspiracy since 1740, although, as the law requires two witnesses in charges of treason, it was not possible to proceed further against the duke of Beaufort, Sir Watkin Wynn, or other English jacobites; nor indeed did the government show any wish for their impeachment. In the case of Lovat, however, his own letters to the chevalier were produced by Murray, other conclusive documents and some corroborating evidence from his clansmen were also brought forward, and his guilt was thus established in the clearest and most legal manner. His trial, which did not commence until March, 1747, continued during several days. Lovat's own behaviour was a strange compound of meanness, levity, and courage — sometimes writing to the duke of Cumberland for mercy, and pleading how he had carried his royal highness in his arms, when a child, about the parks of Kensington and Hampton Court; sometimes striving by chicanery to perplex or rebut the proofs against him; sometimes indulging in ridiculous jests. "I did not think it possible," says Horace Walpole, "to feel so little as I did at so melancholy a spectacle, but tyranny and villany wound up by buffoonery took off all edge of compassion." When after his sentence he was taken from the bar, he cried, "Farewell, my lords, we shall never all again meet in the same place!" Like Balmerino and Kilmarnock, he was beheaded on Tower Hill; and he died with great composure and intrepidity, attended by a Roman Catholic priest, and repeating on the scaffold the noble line of Horace, *dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*. But in truth no man was less strongly imbued with that sentiment — except perhaps its writer!

A few weeks afterwards, there happily passed an Act of Indemnity, granting a pardon to all persons who had committed treason, but clogged

[1747 A.D.]
with about eighty exceptions. By other legislative measures passed, with little opposition, the Disarming Act, the abolition of heritable jurisdictions, and the prohibition of the Highland garb, it was sought to precipitate the fall of feudal power, and to subdue the spirit of the vanquished mountaineers.[b]

PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS; THE RISE OF PITT

The interval between the suppression of the Scottish Rebellion, in 1746, and the conclusion of the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1748, is perhaps as little interesting in its details as any period of English history. Nor are there many exciting events to give spirit to a narrative of the remaining six years of that administration which was broken up by the death of Mr. Pelham in 1754. Opinion became torpid after the excitement of the rebellion had passed away. Jacobitism slunk to its hiding-places. Patriotism looked out for pensions and sinecures. Party contests had nearly subsided into personal struggles for place and power, which those who are curious as to such mysterious affairs may drowsily meditate upon in the sober narrative of Coxe,[g] or laugh over in the sarcastic anecdotes of Walpole. During the agony of the rebellion, immediately after the defeat at Falkirk — at a time when it might be supposed that English statesmen would have cast away their petty ambitions — there came what is termed a ministerial crisis. Lord Granville (Carteret), although out of office, had the confidence of the king; whilst the duke of Newcastle, and his brother, Mr. Pelham, his majesty's chief ministers, were not favourites with him. They resolved to try their strength. They demanded office for Mr. Pitt, rather from their fear of him than from their love.

The king refused to give a place to one who had so bitterly thwarted his Hanoverian partialities. The Pelhams and the whole body of their whig followers resigned. Granville became minister — for forty-eight hours; for he could command no parliamentary support. The Pelhams returned triumphantly to power, upon their own terms; giving Pitt an office, but one which would not necessarily bring him into personal intercourse with the king. After this victory the Pelhams had little to fear even from the dislike or the coldness of their sovereign. The cabinet had little to dread but jealousies and dissensions amongst its members. It continued its temporising course through eight years of a monopoly of the real authority of the state. Opposition was hushed. The great parliamentary orators, Pitt, Fox, Murray, were propitiated into silence by office, and bided their time for power. The bitter opponents of Walpole and Carteret were no longer "the boys." Pitt professed to have cast away some of the extreme opinions of his nonage. "Never," says a reviewer of the Pelham administration, "was the tempestuous sea of parliament lulled into a profounder calm."

The appointment under the Pelhams of William Pitt to an office, however secondary, is an event of historical importance. The king refused to nominate him secretary at war — a post in which his energy might have produced some more decided successes than were obtained previous to the peace of 1748 by the supine Pelhams. Pitt was first appointed vice-treasurer of Ireland, and within a few months was promoted to be paymaster-general. The character of Pitt, who, without wealth or high birth, had made himself the marked man of his time, was now developed in a way that must have been somewhat incomprehensible to the greedy aspirants for the emoluments of place. He received his salary; he disdained to pocket more than his salary. The paymaster-general used to retain a hundred thousand pounds as a bal-

ance in his own hands, which he invested in government securities, for his private benefit; the public thus paying interest upon their own money to their own salaried servant. Pitt sent every balance, as it accrued, to the Bank of England, to be available for its proper purposes. The indirect modes in which ministers of state grew rich, through other means than the legal receipts of their highly paid offices, received another illustration from the self-denial of this extraordinary paymaster. When a subsidy was advanced to a foreign power, it had been customary for the itching palm of office to demand half per cent. as its honorarium. Pitt astonished the king of Sardinia by sending him without deduction the sum which parliament had voted; and he raised his majesty's astonishment still higher when he refused a present as a compliment to his integrity. Pitt was a poor man; but he had higher aspirations than the *auri sacra fames* of a venal age. His pride, which betrayed him into many errors, saved him from the degradation of the meanest of passions. Amidst their general contempt for the government, the people came to know that there was one man who professed some regard for public virtue.

END OF THE AUSTRIAN WAR; THE PEACE OF AIX-LA-CHAPELLE

When the British troops, and foreign troops in the pay of Great Britain, had been withdrawn from the Low Countries to put down rebellion and defend British shores, the successes of the French were rapid and decisive. All the Austrian Netherlands submitted to their arms. On the other hand, the French were driven out of Italy by the Austrians and Sardinians. The year 1746 offered no prospect of a speedy termination of the war. In 1747 the maritime power of the country was signally asserted. Admiral Anson, on the 3rd of May, captured, sunk, or destroyed the French fleet off Cape Finisterre. The fleet thus annihilated had for its principal object to attempt the recovery of Cape Breton, which had been taken from the French in 1745. Commodore Fox, on the 16th of June, took forty French ships, richly laden from the West Indies. Admiral Hawke, on the 14th of October, defeated a French fleet off Belle-Île. England had acquired full confidence in the might of her naval arm. Her Channel fleet had rendered invasion almost impossible during the troubles of 1745. She had bold and skilful admirals. She had hardy seamen, confident in their national superiority if they were well commanded. The land operations of 1747 were of a different character.

The political importance of Holland had for some years been frittered away by an imbecile government. The republic was losing its ancient place amongst the European nations. Its thriving cities appeared likely, in the apparent decay of the old warlike spirit, to become the prey of the same enemy that had been driven back by the energy of William of Orange. Upon the death of that prince, the office of hereditary stadholder had been merged in that of grand pensionary. Louis XV in 1747 sent an army of twenty thousand men to invade Brabant. The hearts of the Dutch people were roused as in 1672; and they sought the same means of deliverance as at that period. Prince William of Nassau was proclaimed stadholder; and to him were entrusted the means of national defence. This young man had succeeded, as captain-general and lord high admiral, to the powers held by William III; but the popular acclamation could not evoke in him those qualities which made his great predecessor the saviour of his country. He was the son-in-law of George II. The favourite son of George and the husband of his daughter were to command the allied forces of British and Dutch.

[1747–1748 A.D.]

"Our two young heroes agree but little," wrote Mr. Pelham. "Our own is open, frank, resolute, and perhaps hasty; the other assuming, pedantic, ratiocinating, and tenacious." On the 2nd of July, at Lauffeld, near Maestricht, the "two young heroes," with an Austrian army commanded by Marshal Bathiany, were to encounter the French headed by Marshal Saxe. The duke of Cumberland, with his British, fought with desperation. "His royal highness' valour has shone extremely," says Walpole, "at the expense of his judgment. His prowess is so well established that it grows time for him to exert other qualities of a general." The prince of Nassau, with his Dutch, got out of the fight as soon as possible. The Austrian marshal never moved from his intrenched position. There was a terrible slaughter of the British and the French. Sir John Ligonier, who had commanded the English cavalry, was taken prisoner. Louis XV, who was present at the battle, hinted to this general, who first came to England as a French Protestant refugee, that it would be better to think of peace than to witness the destruction of so many brave men. Marshal Saxe talked confidentially with the prisoner upon the same subject. The war still went on unfavourably for the allies, Bergen-op-Zoom having surrendered to the French in September. Louis expressed sentiments of moderation; and finally Ligonier was sent by the French king to the duke of Cumberland, to intimate his desire that they should meet, and agree upon terms of peace. The English ministry did not believe that the duke was exactly fitted for a negotiator; and, much to his father's annoyance, sent the earl of Sandwich to watch over him. But it was many months before peace was accomplished. The "two young heroes" wanted more fighting. George II wanted to obtain some paltry advantage for his beloved Hanover which might be won by another campaign.

A congress was opened at Aix-la-Chapelle in March, 1748; even while the war of British, Dutch, and Austrians against the French was going on in Flanders. In April it became pretty clear that Cumberland, always ready to fight, was no match for De Saxe, who fought only when he saw his advantage in fighting. The French marshal had so conducted his operations that for Cumberland to hazard another battle before Maestricht would have been a rashness too great for an English ministry to sanction. The pacific members of the cabinet outvoted the warlike; and Mr. Pelham wrote to Lord Sandwich that, as it was impossible to check the progress of the French army, or to reconcile the discordant pretensions of the allies, the king resolved to accept the conditions of peace proposed by France, without having the concurrence of the other powers. The preliminaries were signed by the plenipotentiaries of England, Holland, and France, at the end of April.

The king, in his speech on opening the session of the new parliament in November, 1747, had announced that overtures of pacification had been made by France. He looked back to the origin of the war: "By the advice of my parliament I entered into the war against Spain, to vindicate and secure the trade and commerce of my subjects." The bells were ringing in October, 1739, upon the declaration of hostilities against Spain. They were ringing in April, 1748, upon the conclusion of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, by which not a single point was gained for which England had been fighting with Spain and France for eight years. The peace was such as a nation makes when it is weary of blood-shedding; when its government can no longer trust to the repetition of the parrot words, "just and necessary war." All conquests, in all parts of the world, that had been made by any of the powers engaged in the war, were to be restored. The English grumbled about the restitution of Cape Breton. They grumbled more, that the right of search claimed by

Spain off her American coasts should have been left precisely in its former position — a constant source of violence and animosity. One point was gained, which George and his ministers not unnaturally held of importance. The pretender and his descendants were to be renounced. Charles Edward was to be expelled from France. The French government intimated its intention to behave compassionately to the young prince who had dared and endured so much for his family. They proposed to establish him at Fribourg, with an adequate pension, and the honours that attached to the empty title of prince of Wales. The young man, with characteristic obstinacy, refused to quit Paris. He was entreated; he was threatened; but he defied what he termed the orders of the house of Hanover. He was at last arrested as he was going to the opera; imprisoned for a few days at Vincennes; and then turned loose on the frontier of Savoy.

The termination of the war was publicly celebrated as if it had been the glorious result of sagacious counsels and military bravery. On the 27th of April, 1749, there was an unequalled display of fireworks in the Green Park. Handel composed a grand overture of warlike instruments. An Italian artist designed a temple, a hundred and fourteen feet high, with statues and pictures — heathen gods and cardinal virtues; Neptune drawn by sea-horses; Mars drawn by three lions. The king was recorded in Latin inscriptions as having given peace to Europe, secured the faith of treaties, restored and enlarged commerce. Britannia joined hands with France and Spain, in renewed concord and for mutual benefit. The people were pleased, and cared little for caricatures in which the fireworks were called "the grand whim for posterity to laugh at." But the shouts of the multitude were not echoed in parliament. Mr. Pelham, who carried political candour somewhat beyond the point of prudence, spoke of the necessity for this peace in a tone which indicated very much of that prostration of national spirit of which there were too many evidences at this particular period. In a speech on the 5th of February, 1750, in reply to a motion of Lord Egmont on the article of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle respecting Dunkirk, Mr. Pelham, as head of the administration, said that the wonder was that England could have obtained such good terms as she did; that another campaign would have made the French masters of the Dutch provinces; that if the Dutch had joined France "in alliance against this country, we should not long have preserved our superiority at sea, the loss of which would soon have put an end to our sitting here, to debate about the demolition of Dunkirk, or any other point relating to the honour or interest of Great Britain."

THE REFORM OF THE CALENDAR (1751 A.D.)

The parliament which had commenced its sittings in November, 1747, was continued through its full septennial period until April, 1754. This tenth parliament of Great Britain holds an honourable place in history for two measures of permanent utility — the reform of the calendar, and the Marriage Act. The reform of the calendar, in 1751, is a measure of which no one can be more sensible of the advantage than he who has to write the annals of his country. The change which Pope Gregory XIII had introduced in 1582 had gradually been adopted by all European states except England, Russia, and Sweden. Thus, in reading a French historian, we not only find an event bearing date ten or eleven days in advance of the date of an English narrative, but the year is made to begin from the 1st of January in the foreign annalist instead of the 25th of March, as in the English. To prevent mistakes arising

DR. JOHNSON IN THE ANTE-ROOM OF LORD CHESTERFIELD

(From the painting by E. M. Ward, R.A., in the Tate Gallery)

[1751 A.D.]
out of this confusion requires perpetual vigilance in the historical writer. To attempt to reconcile these discrepancies in all cases would be needless; and most annalists are generally content to take the dates as they find them. The energy of Lord Chesterfield — a man of great and various ability, who had filled high offices, but in 1751 had retired from ministerial business — carried this reform through, with the learned aid of Lord Macclesfield, who was afterwards president of the Royal Society. The commencement of the year on the 1st of January was not calculated to disturb any popular prejudice; for the 25th of February, 1751, on which day the bill was introduced into the house of lords, was ordinarily written 25th February, 1750–51. But the necessity for another change was thus indicated by Lord Macclesfield: "The same day which, in each month, is with us the first, is called the twelfth day of the month throughout almost all the other parts of Europe; and in like manner, through all the other days of the month, we are just eleven days behind them." To make the legal year correspond in all future time with the solar year, was the result of scientific calculations, the rationale of which is now generally understood. It was necessary also to make a change in the calendar as to the time of finding Easter. There were many minor regulations essential to be provided for in consequence of the great change. The payments of rents, annuities, and salaries for public service were not to be accelerated; and thus the 5th of July, the 10th of October, the 5th of January, and the 5th of April, long held their place as rent days; and the dividends upon stock are still paid at those periods.

It may be supposed that such a reform, however valuable, would not be made without some popular discontent. The timid Newcastle told Chesterfield that he hated new-fangled things — that he had better not meddle with matters so long established. The witty earl was wiser. He made a speech of which he has given a most ingenuous account in a letter to his son: "I consulted the ablest lawyers and the most skilful astronomers, and we cooked up a bill for that purpose. But then my difficulty began. I was to bring in this bill, which was necessarily composed of law-jargon and astronomical calculations, to both which I am an utter stranger. However, it was absolutely necessary to make the house of lords think that I knew something of the matter; and also make them believe that they knew something of it themselves, which they do not. For my own part, I could just as soon have talked Celtic or Slavonian to them, as astronomy, and they would have understood me full as well; so I resolved to do better than speak to the purpose, and to please instead of informing them." The peers were amused by Chesterfield; the thinking part of the nation were convinced by Macclesfield, who published his speech. Hogarth has immortalised the vulgar opposition to the reform of the calendar in his picture of *An Election Feast*, in which the popular prejudices are flattered by the whig candidate in his banner inscribed with "Give us our eleven days."

DEATH OF THE PRINCE OF WALES (1751 A.D.)

In 1751 an event occurred which, for some time, disturbed all the calculations of the scheming politicians of this intriguing age. Frederick, prince of Wales, died after a short illness on the 20th of March. Leicester house, his town abode, had long been the central point of opposition to the government. We have seen how far the unhappy estrangement of the prince from his parents was carried before the death of Queen Caroline. Years had passed over, and yet the animosities between the reigning king and the heir-apparent were never

subdued. In 1751 George II, although a hale man, was in his sixty-eighth year. The worshippers of the rising sun grew bolder in their devotion. Bubb Doddington, the treasurer of the navy, resigned his office in March, 1749, having received a message from the prince that the principal direction of his royal highness' affairs should be put in the skilful intriguer's hands. He saw the prince at Kew, and was told that "what he could not do for me in his present situation must be made up to me in futurity." The prince further said "that he thought a peerage, with the management of the house of lords, and the seals of secretary of state for the southern provinces, would be a proper station for me, if I approved of it." Such was the mode in which England was to be governed by favoritism, had she endured the misfortune of a King Frederick I.

THE JEW BILL; THE MARRIAGE ACT (1753 A.D.)

The opposition to the measure known as the Jew Bill, and the ultimate fate of this attempt to render some justice to an industrious and thriving portion of the community, is one of the many proofs of the difficulty which attends a government when it is more enlightened than the people it governs. A bill was introduced in the commons, in the session of 1753, "which enabled all Jews to prefer bills of naturalisation in parliament, without receiving the sacrament." It was not a sweeping bill for the naturalisation of the whole body of Jews at once. The clamour which arose against this measure was not more illiberal than the arguments by which it was opposed in parliament. "If the Jews should come," said the city member, Sir John Barnard, "to be possessed of a great share of the land of the kingdom, how are we sure that Christianity will continue to be the fashionable religion?" But the worthy merchant delivered a sentiment which would come more nearly home to his fellow citizens: to put Jews, or any other foreigners, upon an equal footing with natives, would be only to take the bread out of the mouths of their own people, without adding anything to the national commerce. To naturalise Jews, said another member, was to rob Christians of their birthright. To allow Jews, said another, to purchase and hold land estates, was to give the lie to all the prophecies of the New Testament: they are to remain without any fixed habitation until they acknowledge Christ to be the Messiah. The bill was passed in the commons by a majority of forty-one. In the lords it was also carried, and received the support of many bishops. The prelates who had thus the courage to advocate this truly Christian measure were libelled by pamphlets and hooted by mobs.

The Marriage Act of 1753 was almost as unpopular as the Act for Jewish Naturalisation. The bill introduced by the chancellor, Lord Hardwicke, required that a marriage should be preceded by the publication of banns in a parish church, and that the marriage should be there celebrated; that a licence might be granted for a marriage to take place also in a parish church, but with the consent of parent or guardian if granted to a minor, or minors; that special licences might, as previously, be granted by the archbishop of a diocese. The proposed measure passed the peers; but in the commons it was resisted with a violence which is amusing to look back upon. Mr. Fox, who had clandestinely married the daughter of the duke of Richmond, was amongst the most strenuous of its opponents. It was carried, however, by a large majority. Goldsmith,[p] who published his *History of England* in 1771, sums up, with much gravity, his belief in the injurious consequences to society which this measure had produced: "The poor, by being prevented from

[1753–1754 A.D.]

making alliances with the rich, have left wealth to flow in its ancient channel and thus to accumulate, contrary to the interests of the state. It has been found to impede marriage, by clogging it with unnecessary ceremonies. Some have affirmed that lewdness and debauchery have become more frequent since the enactment of this law; and it is believed that the numbers of the people are upon the decline." Goldsmith had no foundation for his assertion that the law had been found to impede marriage. "The number of marriages before the act of 1753 is not known. Since the act came into operation the registers of marriage have been preserved in England, and show an increase from 50,972 in the year 1756, to 63,310 in 1764."

One thriving occupation was seriously damaged by the new Marriage Act; and we do not find that any compensation was voted to the sufferers. Mr. Robert Nugent, one of the parliamentary orators against the act, said, "How fond our people are of private marriages, and of saving a little money, we may be convinced of by the multitude of marriages at Keith's chapel, compared with the number at any parish church." The reverend Alexander Keith originally officiated in May Fair; but being excommunicated, and committed to the Fleet, he continued to carry on the old trade by the agency of curates. According to Mr. Nugent, "at Keith's chapel there have been six thousand married in a year." Keith published a pamphlet during the progress of the bill, in which he said that the pure design of the measure was to suppress his chapel — a very worthy design, however Mr. Nugent might approve of the celerity and cheapness of Keith's ceremonials. May Fair was the fashionable "marriage shop"; but the Fleet prison had the advantage of being open to the humblest seekers of conjugal happiness. Keith generously records of this rival establishment, "I have often heard a Fleet parson say that many have come to be married when they have had but half-a-crown in their pockets and sixpence to buy a pot of beer, and for which they have pawned some of their clothes." The motto which worthy Mr. Keith affixed to his pamphlet was "Happy is the wooing that is not long a-doing"; and he avers that of the many thousands he had married the generality had been acquainted not more than a week, some only a day, or half a day.

The Marriage Act of 1753 has been justly regarded as the great step in the improvement of the conjugal relations of the people of England, high and low. Marriage was to become a solemn contract, in every case; not to be rushed upon without deliberation; not to be ratified without witnesses and public record. Like every other improvement in manners, the social tendency had preceded the legislative action to some limited extent; and then the legal reform hastened on the social amelioration. To the great change in the family relations of this country, of which the Marriage Act was an exponent as well as a cause, has been attributed the wondrous growth of the population in the ensuing century.

NEWCASTLE, FOX, AND PITT

The prime minister, Mr. Pelham, died on the 6th of March, 1754. Horace Walpole, who underrates the public services of this statesman, has this tribute to his moderation and disinterestedness: "Let it be remembered that, though he first taught or experienced universal servility in Englishmen, yet he lived without abusing his power, and died poor." The king clearly saw what a hubbub of conflicting ambitions would result from the necessity of a new cast of characters for the political drama. "I shall now have no more peace," exclaimed the old man. The duke of Newcastle achieved the great

object of his ambition, in succeeding his brother as the head of the treasury. If experience could give a politician claims to be the ruler of a great nation, and moreover of a nation very difficult to manage, Newcastle had claims above most men. He had been secretary of state in 1724, under Sir Robert Walpole. Carteret had kept him in the same office, though he despised him. His thirst for power was insatiable. He impaired his estate to maintain and extend his parliamentary influence; and thus, whoever was turned out, Newcastle always kept in. Jealous of every man of ability to whom it was necessary to intrust some share of authority, he was always in terror that his subalterns might be called to command, although ever professing his anxiety for their promotion. Always seeking the doubtful support of "troops of friends," he never offended any man by a plain "No," and was often "under the same engagements to at least ten competitors," as Lord Waldegrave affirms. But he was in many respects incompetent to manage any public business that required resolution and steadiness; and his ignorance was so manifested in his flighty and inconsistent talk that what looks like a joke in Smollett's novel has been received as a reliable fact. He had heard that thirty thousand French had marched to Cape Breton. Where did they get transports? was asked. "Transports," cried he, "I tell you they marched by land." "By land to the island of Cape Breton!" "What! is Cape Breton an island?" It was pointed out in the map; and the delighted minister, hugging his informant, ejaculated, "Egad! I'll go directly, and tell the king that Cape Breton is an island."

In the house of lords, the duke's performances are thus described by a just and impartial observer: "Hear him speak in parliament, his manner is ungraceful, his language barbarous, his reasoning inconclusive. At the same time, he labours through all the confusion of a debate without the least distrust of his own abilities; fights boldly in the dark; never gives up the cause; nor is he ever at a loss either for words or argument." He has had many successors in this line; but at that period the house of commons required to be managed by a different species of oratory. Three of the great masters of eloquence were in that house — Pitt, Fox, and Murray. Newcastle offered the seals of secretary of state, with the lead of the commons, to Mr. Fox. The offer was fully justified by the ability and the experience of this gentleman, who started in public life — "a needy political adventurer," as he has been called — "at a time when the standard of integrity amongst statesmen was low."

This adherent of Sir Robert Walpole would not shrink from any participation in the corruption which gave ascendancy to the duke of Newcastle. Fox desired to be actively engaged in working the parliamentary system. As secretary of war, he had no seat in the cabinet; no responsibility beyond the routine duties of his office. The prospect of a place which would give him real power raised all the ambition of Fox; who, says Lord Hardwicke, "within a few hours of Mr. Pelham's death, had made strong advances to the duke of Newcastle and myself." But there was a hitch in the completion of the arrangement proposed by Newcastle, which is singularly indicative of the political degradation of those times. Fox agreed to accept the secretaryship and the management of the house of commons. He very reluctantly gave up the disposal of the secret service money, but he stipulated that he was to know how the bribes were disposed of. The next day, Newcastle receded from this condition. How am I to understand, said Fox, how to talk to members of parliament, when some have received "gratifications," and others not? His brother, said Newcastle, had never disclosed these things, nor

[1754 A.D.]

would he. How, asked Fox, are the ministerial boroughs to be filled up? That is all settled, said the duke. Fox rejected the secretaryship; and Newcastle had to look out for a more pliant tool.

The prime minister and the lord chancellor appear now to have turned their thoughts to Mr. Pitt. There are apologetical letters to him from these great personages, obscurely intimating the difficulties which they had encountered in their abortive endeavours to add his strength to their party. Sir Thomas Robinson, a dull diplomatist, was appointed to the office which Fox had rejected. Pitt was indignant. The humiliation of his proud spirit may be read in this passage of a letter to Lord Hardwicke: "The weight of irremoveable royal displeasure is a load too great to move under; it must crush any man; it has sunk and broke me. I succumb; and wish for nothing but a decent and innocent retreat, wherein I may no longer, by continuing in the public stream of promotion, forever stick fast aground, and afford to the world the ridiculous spectacle of being passed by every boat that navigates the same river." Pitt found his consolations in a happy marriage with Lady Hester Grenville, a sister of Earl Temple. The calm of the domestic life of this eminent man presents a refreshing contrast to the agitations of his public career. Whenever we have glimpses of him in his country retreat at Hayes, we see him in the full enjoyment of as much tranquil pleasure as his infirm health would allow — exercising his taste in improving his little property; reading; educating his children; an exemplary husband and father in a dissipated age. Of those wonderful powers which gave him, without vanity, the right to claim the highest position amongst public men, his contemporaries were fully aware. We cannot judge, as they could, of that eloquence of which the admiration may appear to us overcharged, when we regard the fragmentary state in which it has come down to us. His faults were patent to all the world. They have been much paraded of late years — his haughtiness, his intractability, his self-assertion. But after a century and a half has passed, and all the petty men and paltry interests of the first William Pitt's time are hastening to oblivion, his grand figure stands out — a giant amongst pigmies. In the words of Frederick of Prussia, England had at length brought forth a man.

The Newcastle ministry, formed out of very fragile materials, had some months of respite from parliamentary opposition. The septennial term of parliament was nearly out when Mr. Pelham died. It was dissolved within a month of his decease. The new parliament met on the 14th of November. Pitt and Fox continued in their subordinate offices — Pitt as paymaster, Fox as secretary of war. But they each writhed under the arrangements by which Robinson had taken the management of the house of commons. "The duke might as well send his jack-boot to lead us," said Pitt to Fox. They could not decently obstruct public business, but they might attack persons. The feeble leader of the commons had an uneasy time between these two malcontents. "They have already mumbled poor Sir Thomas Robinson cruelly," writes Walpole on the 1st of December. But about this time a scene was acted which startled the house of commons out of its habitual slumber. An election petition is presented, which the younger Mr. Delaval ridicules; and the house is in fits of laughter about a complaint of bribery and corruption. Pitt is sitting in the gallery. He rushes down, and instantly rises to speak. "Do members laugh on such a subject as bribery? Do we try within the house to diminish our own dignity, when such attacks are made upon it from without?" "At his first two periods," says Fox, "he brought the house to a silence and attention that you might have heard a pin drop." He called upon the

speaker to extend a saving hand to raise the character of the house. "He called on all to assist, or else we should only sit to register the arbitrary edicts of one too powerful a subject." Newcastle was as much terrified by "this thunderbolt thrown in a sky so long serene," as the audience of Pitt were confounded. The minister contrived, by giving Fox a seat in the cabinet, to detach him from his concert with Pitt. Pitt felt the desertion; and told Fox that "they were upon different lines." It appears that the devotion of Fox to the will of the duke of Cumberland, "whose soldier Mr. Pitt was not," was an additional cause for this separation of their political action. Newcastle had silenced one of his formidable opponents. The other gave him no trouble for the rest of the session.

BORDER WARFARE IN AMERICA (1754 A.D.)

Events were maturing at this period which rendered it essentially important that England should have a firm and capable government. On the 25th of March, 1755, the king sent a message to both houses, to acquaint them that "the present situation of affairs makes it necessary to augment his forces by sea and land; and to take such other measures as may best tend to preserve the general peace of Europe, and to secure the just rights and possessions of his crown in America." The danger to America was from France, with whose colonists there had been perpetual disputes as to boundaries and alleged rights, from the period of the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle.

The possession of Canada by France was a perpetual source of disquiet to the British colonists of New England, and of Virginia and Pennsylvania. The French Canadian settlers had penetrated to the Ohio, and had there built a fort which they named Duquesne. On the Ohio, the Virginians had also a fort called Block's Town. The settlement of Virginia, at this period, extended about two hundred miles from the seacoast, and spread over about one third of the state, according to its present limits. Its population was about two hundred thousand, of whom more than a fourth were slaves. The territory then unoccupied by the descendants of the colonists of the reign of James I was the hunting-ground of Indians; and the Virginians upon the Ohio were traders in skins. The French, also, were seeking a participation in that commerce which quickly perishes, as the extension of civilisation creates more profitable industries. The old families of Virginia were engaged in far more lucrative and less adventurous occupations than in exchanges with the Indians. They were cultivating tobacco upon every estate. Their tobacco fields were the Potosi of the first settlers of North America. Tobacco was their sole article of export. It brought them all the comforts and luxuries which England and Scotland could supply. It was the general measure of value, and the principal currency. Public officers, ministers of the church, had their salaries paid at so many annual pounds of tobacco. In 1758 the colony exported seventy thousand hogsheads of the precious weed, equivalent to seventy millions of pounds. The price was ten times higher than the present rate. Virginia was thriving. Her planters lived luxuriously on their estates, surrounded by their slaves, and affecting the aristocratic habits of grand old English families, from which many of them claimed to have sprung. Hospitable they were to profusion. In such a state of society was George Washington born; who, in 1754, then a young man of twenty-two, was fighting for the integrity of the colonial territory against the aggressions of the French. At the age of nineteen, he became an adjutant-general, having the rank of major, and taking the direction of one of the military districts into which the

[1754–1755 A.D.]

province of Virginia was divided, for the purpose of resisting the encroachments of the French and the depredations of the Indians. These divisions were reduced to four, in 1752, and the young major had the command of the northern division. In the capacity of commissioner, in 1753, he went into the territory occupied by the French, to negotiate with their commander. He had no success in his diplomacy; but he brought back with him a plan of the fort which the French had constructed in the neighbourhood of Lake Erie. He had been employed, when at the age of sixteen, as a public surveyor, and in the wild district of the Alleghanies had acquired that practical mode of viewing large tracts of country which was of essential importance to him in his future great career. In 1754, under the command of an English officer, Colonel Fry, he was sent to occupy the British posts of the Ohio, in the presence of a French force. He defeated a detachment of the enemy, but was finally compelled to capitulate to superior numbers, who surrounded his intrenched fort. He was allowed to retreat with his men, with what are termed military honours. The feuds of the two nations were the subject of official discussions in Paris; but it was clear that this sort of half-warfare in America could not long endure.

In January, 1755, although no formal declarations of hostilities had taken place, General Braddock, with a body of English troops, was sent to the succour of the colonists in Virginia. His campaign was a most unfortunate one. Braddock was a commander of the old routine cast, who fancied that well-dressed and well-equipped soldiers, who could go through all the manœuvres of the Prussian drill, were sure to be victorious over any number of irregular troops. He marched against the French fort on the Ohio, taking Washington with him, although he despised the American militia and their officers. What the Highlanders were to Cope and Hawley, the Indians were to Braddock. In a valley between two woods, within ten miles of Fort Duquesne — utterly neglecting all precautions against surprise — the English general fell into an ambuscade of Indians. A few French only encountered him; but the unerring marksmen of the woods picked off his officers; and Braddock himself, fighting with desperate courage, was mortally wounded. Half his troops fled in confusion, abandoning their artillery. The other half were killed or wounded; and the terrible Indian scalping-knife left few to tell the tale of this fatal reverse.

NAVAL ENGAGEMENTS; GEORGE VISITS HANOVER

Whilst British and French were fighting in the waste regions of North America, their ships were engaged in the Atlantic. Admiral Boscawen, with eleven ships of the line, had been sent to watch a French expedition that had sailed from Brest. Off Newfoundland the squadrons met in a fog. Captain Howe, having received a signal to engage, took two of the French vessels. The others got into Louisbourg, the fortified harbour of Cape Breton. In the autumn of 1755, Sir Edward Hawke, upon a sudden resolve of the government, made some captures of French merchantmen in the Channel. Of the regency — for the king had gone to Hanover — some were inclined for immediate hostilities, and some for delaying them. The time had passed for any sudden and decisive blow; whilst the ministers were trembling at their own responsibility, afraid to declare war, and not taking sincere and active measures to preserve peace.

After the session had been terminated in April, 1755, the king, in opposition to a strong parliamentary feeling, had set out for Germany. He had left

the regency to take care of the great national interests of Britain, whilst he looked after the usual means of fencing round his own Hanover by subsidising auxiliary powers. He was now in dread of Prussia; and to counteract the growing strength of Frederick II, Russia was to receive a subsidy as well as the elector of Hesse, and smaller potentates. "A factory was opened at Herrenhausen, where every prince that could muster and clothe a regiment might traffic with it to advantage." With the elector of Hesse, the king, without the approval of his ministers at home, signed a contract for a large annual payment by England, with an additional stipulation for paying levy money for every Hessian soldier.

SINGLE-SPEECH HAMILTON; PITT'S INFLUENCE

The parliament met on the 13th of November. The king announced the increase of the naval and land forces, and mentioned the treaties he had concluded with Russia and Hesse. In the address of each house especial reference was made to Hanover. The address of the commons said, "We think ourselves bound in justice and gratitude to assist his majesty against insults and attacks that may be made upon any of his majesty's dominions, though not belonging to the crown of Great Britain." An amendment to omit such a pledge was moved in the lords by Earl Temple, Pitt's brother-in-law. A similar amendment was proposed in the commons. These were of course rejected; but they gave occasion to two remarkable orations. William Gerard Hamilton, a young member, made his maiden speech in favour of the original address — that one harangue, antithetical and familiar, argumentative and declamatory, which handed him down to after times as Single-speech Hamilton. Pitt made a speech on that famous battle night, of which no fragment remains to us but one which has been preserved by Walpole. The younger Pitt said he would prefer the recovery of a speech of Lord Bolingbroke to the restoration of the lost books of Livy or Tacitus. The contemporary accounts of his father's speeches would almost induce a similar wish, even if the recovery were confined to this effort of the 13th of November.

Walpole in a letter of the 15th of November to Conway, after rapturously noticing Hamilton's success, says, "You will ask what could be beyond this? Nothing, but what was beyond what ever was, and that was Pitt. He spoke at past one, for an hour and thirty-five minutes. There was more humour, wit, vivacity, finer language, more boldness, in short more astonishing perfections, than even you, who are used to him, can conceive." In a letter of the following day to Bentley, Walpole gives the fragments which, with similar detached passages of various other speeches, enable us to form some idea of the lustre which a rich imagination gave to Pitt's eloquence. "The most admired passage was a comparison he drew of the two parts of the new administration." By the new administration Walpole means the coalition between Fox and Newcastle. "It is," said Pitt, "as the conflux of the Rhone and the Saône, which I remember to have seen at Lyons, the latter a gentle, feeble, languid stream, languid but not deep; the other a boisterous and overbearing torrent. But they join at last, and long may they continue united, to the comfort of each other, and to the glory, honour, and happiness of this nation." The next morning Fox received the seals of secretary of state, as the reward for his support of the ministerial address. Pitt, on the 20th of November, was dismissed from his office of paymaster; and Legge and George Grenville were also superseded.

In a fortnight after his dismissal from office, Pitt, from his place in par-

[1756 A.D.]

liament, sent forth a voice, whose echoes would be heard throughout the land. The nation was dreading a French invasion — sullenly trembling at the possible consequences of an assault upon the capital, and without confidence in the government to which the public defence was intrusted. Pitt seconded the motion of the secretary of war, for an army of thirty-four thousand men, being an increase of fifteen thousand. He had wanted even a larger increase in the previous year. The king's speech of the preceding session had lulled the nation into a fallacious dream of repose. "He wanted to call this country out of that enervate state, that twenty thousand men from France could shake it. The maxims of our government were degenerated, not our natives."

There can be little doubt that the nation required to be roused from its lethargy. Happily there was a man capable of rousing it. Pitt, in his speech of the 5th of December, had expressed his earnest wish to "see that breed restored, which under our old principles had carried our glory so high." The king, on the 23rd of March, announced the probability of an invasion, and informed the houses that he had made a requisition for a body of Hessian troops, in pursuance of the treaty recently concluded. Both houses acknowledged with gratitude his majesty's care for the national defence.

On the 29th of March, Mr. Fox moved, "that a humble address be presented to his majesty, that, for the more effectual defence of this island, and for the better security of the religion and liberties of his subjects, against the threatened attacks by a foreign enemy, he would be graciously pleased to order twelve battalions of his electoral troops, together with the usual detachment of artillery, to be forthwith brought into this kingdom." The address was voted by the large ministerial majority; but not without strong dissatisfaction. "That state alone," exclaimed Pitt, "is a sovereign state, which stands by its own strength, not by the help of another country." The Hanoverians and Hessians came, and were encamped in various parts of the kingdom.

THE LOSS OF MINORCA (1756 A.D.)

For half a century Great Britain had held possession of the island of Minorca, which General Stanhope and Admiral Leake had conquered during the palmy time of the War of the Succession. Port-Mahon, the best harbour of the Mediterranean, was thought a more important British possession even than Gibraltar. The English ministers had received intimation very early in the spring of 1756 that a formidable expedition was in preparation at Toulon, not provisioned for a long voyage. They shut their eyes to the exposed state of the island that lay within a few days' sail from the shores of Provence. The defence of Port-Mahon was intrusted to a small garrison, commanded by an aged and infirm general. The government was at last alarmed. They dispatched Admiral Byng (son of Lord Torrington, the Admiral Byng of Queen Anne's time), with ten ships, from Spithead, on the 7th of April. On the 10th of April, the French fleet, of twelve ships of the line, sailed from Toulon, with transports, having sixteen thousand troops on board. They were off the coast of Minorca on the 18th, and began to disembark at the port of Ciudadella. The only chance of defence against such an armament was in the strong castle of St. Philip. General Blakeney got together between two and three thousand troops, the officers of the English regiments being, for the most part, absent; and he prepared for resistance. The natural and artificial strength of the fortress prevented the French from proceeding in the siege without much cautious delay.

On the 19th of May, Admiral Byng's fleet, having been joined by two more men-of-war, arrived within view of St. Philip, whilst the batteries of the French were carrying on their fire against the fort, where the flag of England was still flying. Byng, who had touched at Gibraltar, had written home to explain that he could obtain no necessaries at that station; that the place was so neglected that he was unable to clean the foul ships with which he had sailed from England; and that if he had been sent earlier he might have been able to prevent the landing of the French in Minorca, whereas it was now very doubtful whether any good could arise from an attempt to reinforce the garrison. This was something like an anticipation of failure, with an indication of the neglect which made success difficult. On the 21st of May, De la Galissonnière, the French admiral, bore down upon the British fleet. Byng did not engage with that alacrity which the naval traditions of our country point out as the first duty of an admiral, even with a doubtful advantage.

Rear-Admiral West, on the contrary, with his portion of the squadron, had attacked with impetuosity, and had driven some of the French vessels out of their line of battle. Byng was scarcely engaged, except at the beginning of the action, when his own ship, being damaged in the rigging, became for a short time unmanageable. He hesitated about advancing, for fear of breaking his line. De la Galissonnière leisurely retired. Byng called a council of war; represented that he was inferior to the enemy in number of men and weight of metal, and proposed to return to Gibraltar. The council agreed to the proposal. The admiral sent home his dispatches; and on the 16th of June Sir Edward Hawke and Admiral Saunders were ordered to supersede Byng and his second in command. The unfortunate admiral was taken home under arrest; and was committed as a prisoner to an apartment in Greenwich Hospital. Admiral West was received with favour at St. James'.

After a defence as resolute as it was possible to make against an overwhelming force, St. Philip was surrendered, after an assault on the 27th of June headed by the duke de Richelieu. The garrison marched out with the honours of war, and were conveyed to Gibraltar. A tempest of popular fury had arisen, such as had rarely been witnessed in England. The news of Byng's return to Gibraltar, without having attempted to relieve the garrison in St. Philip, first came to London through the French admiral's dispatch to his government. "It is necessary," says Walpole, "to be well acquainted with the disposition of a free, proud, fickle, and violent people, before one can conceive the indignation occasioned by this intelligence." But when Byng's own dispatch came, in which he assumed the triumphant tone of a man who had done his duty, his effigy was burned in all the great towns. Every ballad singer had a ditty in which he was execrated. When he arrived at Portsmouth he was saved with difficulty from being torn to pieces by the mob. A chapbook related "a Rueful Story, by a Broken-hearted Sailor." A coarse print exhibited Byng hanging in chains. A medal was struck, having a figure of the admiral, with the inscription, "Was Minorca sold for French gold?" Addresses went up to the throne from London, and from almost every county and city, calling for inquiry and signal punishment. To the addresses of the city the king was made to pledge his royal word that he would save no delinquent from justice. Newcastle, "with a volubility of timorous folly, when a deputation from the city had made representations to him against the admiral blurted out, 'Oh! indeed he shall be tried immediately — he shall be hanged directly.'" The fate of the unhappy man was not determined until the spring of the following year.

HANOVER AND PRUSSIA

In closing the session of parliament on the 27th of May, the king announced that the injuries his subjects had sustained from the French having been followed by the invasion of Minorca, which had been guaranteed to the British crown by all the great powers of Europe, he had formally declared war against France. Important changes had taken place since, in the previous summer, the king had negotiated for a subsidy to Russia, to protect his Hanoverian possessions against the probable attacks of Prussia. George II and Frederick II were not exactly fitted for any cordial friendship. They had been fighting on opposite sides for eight years in the War of the Austrian Succession. George took the side of Maria Theresa, and — to use the words of Carlyle — "needed to begin by assuring his parliament and newspapers, profoundly dark on the matter, that Frederick was a robber and villain for taking the other side." Frederick cared little for what parliaments or newspapers might say of him. Perhaps to those who have followed his last historian in tracing the origin of the claims upon Silesia, he may be thought to have had justice upon his side — that sort of justice which encourages sovereigns to imperil the happiness of millions for the assertion of personal rights.

The War of the Succession came to an end, and Frederick got Silesia guaranteed to him. Beyond the public differences of George and Frederick, the Prussian king had indulged his unhappy talent of sarcasm; and his sharp sayings about his Britannic majesty were not easily to be forgiven. But the time was come when they became politically necessary to each other. A treaty was concluded at Westminster, on the 16th of January, 1756, by which the king of Great Britain and the king of Prussia, fearing that the peace of Europe might be disturbed in consequence of the disputes in America, entered upon a convention of neutrality, by which they were each bound not to suffer any foreign troops to enter Germany, and their several dominions were reciprocally guaranteed. The scheme of subsidising Russia was thus renounced. Some old money differences were at the same time adjusted. This treaty was not submitted to parliament till the close of 1756. In the mean time the terrible contest known as the Seven Years' War had commenced.

On the 4th of June, 1756, George, prince of Wales, completed his eighteenth year — the period determined by the Regency Act as that of his majority in case his grandfather had been dead. The king wished to give the prince a separate establishment, with an allowance of £40,000 a year, thus removing him from the control of the princess dowager. The young prince entreated the king not to separate him from his mother, although he was deeply grateful for the proposed royal bounty. They were both anxious that Lord Bute should be groom of the stole in the new household. Lord Waldegrave relates that he was present at a cabinet council, for the consideration of this appointment; when the chancellor, Lord Hardwicke, said he would not give credit to some very extraordinary reports; but that many sober and respectable persons would think it indecent. The court scandal, which Walpole dwells upon with peculiar gusto, continued some time after Prince George came to the throne, and was one of the misfortunes of the early part of his reign. Bute, in spite of the "extraordinary reports" — which are now held by most unprejudiced inquirers to have had their origin in party virulence and vulgar credulity — was appointed to the office in the household, very reluctantly on the part of the king. In this influential position, the favourite of the heir apparent, he had considerable participation in the politics of the time. One curious example of the mode in which Lord Bute kept the future before the

view of great parliamentary leaders may be seen in a passage of a letter to Mr. Pitt, during that first short time of his power, which we shall have presently to notice: "I am certain the firm support and countenance of him who is some day to reap the fruits of my friend's unwearied endeavours for the public safety would make him perfectly easy under the frowns of prejudiced, deluded, fluctuating men."

Mr. Fox had held the seals of secretary of state about ten months, during which period a heavy burden of obloquy had to be borne by the ministry. In October, 1756, he resigned his office. He probably was justified in abandoning his colleagues to the approaching censures of parliament in regard to measures of which he had been allowed no direction. The popular indignation about the loss of Minorca was taking a new direction. In September, "the whole city of Westminster was disturbed by the song of a hundred ballad-singers, the burden of which was, 'to the block with Newcastle, and the yard-arm with Byng.'" In October, "Poor Byng is the phrase in every mouth, and then comes the hackneyed simile of the scapegoat." The resignation of the secretary of state was a sudden blow to Newcastle, "who meant that Fox should have continued in a responsible office; with a double portion of dangers and abuse, but without any share of power." The prime minister was left without any support in the house of commons. Murray, the attorney-general, insisted upon being appointed lord chief justice, a vacancy having occurred by the death of Sir Dudley Ryder. Newcastle offered the great lawyer the choice of sinecures of fabulous amount — a pension — any terms, if he would remain in the house of commons. Murray was immoveable, and, to the enduring advantage of the nation, became chief justice and Lord Mansfeld. Pitt stood alone, without a rival — "no orator to oppose him, who had courage even to look him in the face."

PITT AS WAR MINISTER

Newcastle, in his extremity, induced the king to consent that an overture should be made to the awful commoner. Pitt refused to treat, saying that "a plain man, unpractised in the policy of the court, could never be the associate of so experienced a minister." The unhappy duke went about imploring this nobleman and that commoner to take the seals. "No man would stand in the gap," says Waldegrave. At last Newcastle himself resigned. "Perfidy, after thirty years, had an intermission," writes Walpole. Lord Hardwicke, the learned and able chancellor, who desired retirement, followed his old friend. A coalition was proposed between Fox and Pitt, which Pitt refused to agree to. At last, in November, the duke of Devonshire was appointed first commissioner of the treasury; Pitt, secretary of state; his brother-in-law, Temple, at the head of the admiralty; Legge, chancellor of the exchequer.

On the 2nd of December the parliament was opened with a speech from the throne, "which," says Lord Waldegrave, "by its style and substance, appeared to be the work of a new speech-maker." Never was a vital change of policy more boldly indicated. It declared that the succour and preservation of America "demand resolutions of vigour and dispatch." That, for a firm defence at home, "a national militia may in time become one good resource." "Relying with pleasure on the spirit and zeal of my people," said the king, "the body of my electoral troops, which I ordered hither at the desire of my parliament, I have directed to return to my dominions in Germany." Finally, his majesty said, "Unprosperous events of war in the

[1756 A.D.]

Mediterranean have drawn from my subjects signal proofs how dearly they tender my honour and that of my crown." To recommend a militia, which his majesty had always ridiculed; to trust to the British people for the defence of their country, instead of trusting to the Hessians and Hanoverians; to call uncourtly addresses and popular clamour signal proofs of affection — these were indeed evidences of a new speech-maker. "The king," says Waldegrave, "in common conversation made a frank declaration of his real sentiments." A spurious speech had been circulated in town and country. This production was burned by the common hangman, and the printer was ordered to be prosecuted. George, who sometimes displayed a quaint sarcastic humour, "hoped the man's punishment would be of the mildest sort, because he had read both speeches, and, as far as he understood either of them, he liked the spurious speech better than his own."

The electoral troops were sent home. A Militia Bill was now passed, although a similar bill had been rejected in the previous session. Under this act thirty-two thousand men were to be called out in England and Wales. The measure was received with popular approbation, until it began to interfere with individual ease and freedom. The Protestant dissenters in London and the provinces remonstrated against the possible insertion of a clause in the bill that the militia might be exercised on Sundays; but the notion, although it did not appear to excite any displeasure amongst the clergy of the established church, was very wisely given up. Reinforcements were sent to the earl of Loudoun, who now commanded in America. The regular army had been increased to forty-five thousand men; and Pitt, at this time, adopted the politic suggestion made by Duncan Forbes in 1738 that the Highlanders should be enlisted in the service of the state, instead of being prompted to disaffection by needy chiefs. Two Highland regiments were raised, the command of one being given to Simon Fraser, son of Lord Lovat; of the other to Archibald Montgomery, brother of Lord Eglington. Twenty years afterwards, in one of his great speeches, in which Chatham urged conciliation towards "our brethren in America," he looked back upon the success of this first measure of his bold statemanship: "I remember, after an unnatural rebellion had been extinguished in the northern parts of this island, that I employed these very rebels in the service and defence of their country. They were reclaimed by this means; they fought our battles; they cheerfully bled in defence of those liberties which they attempted to overthrow but a few years before."

As the war minister of George II, Mr. Pitt had to modify some of his former opinions with regard to continental alliances. He brought down a message from the king on the 17th of February, to ask from his faithful commons that they would assist his majesty in maintaining an army of observation to protect his electoral dominions, and to fulfil his engagements with his good ally the king of Prussia. This was the first day that Pitt had entered the house of commons since his accession to office. His appearance there had been delayed by continual illness. He followed this demonstration of his individual opinions, by moving a grant of £200,000 in compliance with the message. Fox twitted his rival with a saying of the previous year, that "German measures would be a mill-stone about the neck of the minister." Yet Pitt was not inconsistent in proposing this measure. He had told Lord Hardwicke, in September, 1755, that he thought that "regard ought to be had to Hanover, if it should be attacked on our account." Lord Mahon has very justly defended Pitt against the sneer of Fox. "The French were preparing to invade the electorate, not from any injury, real or pretended, which

the electorate had done them, but notoriously and avowedly as a side-blow against George II — as a retaliation for the measures which his majesty had adopted in British America." Hanover was about to be attacked on the British account. Walpole, with reference to the Prussian subsidy, bitterly remarks, "One cannot say which was most ridiculous — the richest prince in Europe [Frederick] begging alms for his own country, or the great foe of that country [George] becoming its mendicant almoner." Frederick of Prussia commissioned the British envoy to express his thanks to Mr. Pitt for his speech of the 18th of February; and to inform him that he regarded the resolutions of parliament as the strongest assurances that can be given of the favourable and friendly disposition of the British nation towards him. Pitt, in his reply, expressed his "sentiments of veneration and zeal for a prince, who stands the unshaken bulwark of Europe, against the most powerful and malignant confederacy that ever yet has threatened the independence of mankind."

THE FATE OF ADMIRAL BYNG

Amongst the difficult questions which the recently formed administration had to deal with was that of the fate of Admiral Byng.[k] His court-martial was held at Portsmouth, presided over by Admiral Smith, an illegitimate brother of Lord Lyttleton; it began in December, 1756, and continued through great part of January. Besides his defence before his judges, the admiral had published a statement in his vindication. Thus far he certainly succeeded in proving that many and flagitious arts had been employed to blacken him. It was shown how his own letters and reports to the admiralty had been garbled and perverted before they were allowed to appear in the gazettes, so as to give some colour to the charge of cowardice; thus the words "making the best of my way to Gibraltar" were substituted for the passage, "making my way to cover Gibraltar." Before the court-martial many witnesses were examined on both sides.

Towards the close of the proceedings an express was despatched to the admiralty in London to inquire, on the part of the officers of the court, whether they were at liberty to mitigate an article of war on which they had doubts. They were answered in the negative. Their doubts related to the twelfth of the articles, which had been new-modelled some years before, and which, to strike the greater terror into remiss or careless officers, left no alternative but death as the punishment on neglect of duty. Thus confined to the rigorous bounds of the law, the court-martial framed their sentence, fully acquitting the admiral either of treachery or of cowardice, but declaring that in their unanimous opinion he had not done his utmost, either to relieve St. Philip's Castle or to defeat the French fleet. They therefore pronounced that he fell under part of the twelfth article, and, as the law required, adjudged him to be shot to death. But with the same unanimity the court declared that, on weighing all the circumstances of the case, they most earnestly recommended him as a proper object of mercy to the crown.

The admiral's conduct during his imprisonment had, on some points, appeared ill-judged and froward, but was throughout manly and firm. When one of his friends was endeavouring to inform him, by degrees, of his sentence, and dropping a hint of ill-news, Byng started, and exclaimed, "What! they have not put a slur on me, have they?" — apprehending that they had condemned him for cowardice. On being assured that they had not, his countenance at once resumed its serenity, and he went with the utmost calmness and composure to hear the sentence of his death pronounced.

[1756 A.D.]

At this crisis the conduct of Pitt appears in no small degree deserving of honour and respect. He saw the tide of popular opinion running decidedly and strongly against Byng. And it was on popular opinion only that Pitt himself leaned for support. He could not trust to dexterous cabals, like Fox, nor to royal favour, as once did Granville, nor to patronage of boroughs, like Newcastle. Yet this public feeling, which alone had borne him to office, which alone could maintain him in office, he now, when he deemed justice at stake, deliberately confronted and withstood. He openly declared in the house of commons his wish that the king's prerogative might be exerted in mitigation of the sentence, adding that he thought more good would come from mercy than from rigour. To his majesty in private Pitt detailed whatever other relenting indications had, though timidly, appeared in the debate, and said that the house of commons wished to see the admiral pardoned. "Sir," replied the king, "you have taught me to look for the sense of my subjects in another place than in the house of commons."

The royal ear had been, however, prepossessed by other advisers, and remained deaf to all arguments for the mitigation of the sentence. His majesty appears to have entertained the opinion — in common with a large majority of his subjects at the time — that some rigorous example was required for the future discipline of the navy. One of Voltaire's tales has well portrayed this prevailing idea, when he makes his imaginary traveller land at Portsmouth, and witness the execution of an admiral who is shot, as he is told, on purpose to encourage the others! Voltaire, however, did not confine himself to satire on this subject; having received by accident from the duke de Richelieu a letter containing some laudatory expressions on Byng, he sent it over to the unfortunate admiral to be used in his defence — an act of much humanity, but of no result.

Nowhere did the admiral find more strenuous intercessors than among his former judges. Several of the court-martial were constantly urging the admiralty with entreaties that his life might be spared. One of them, Captain Augustus Keppel (famous in after years as admiral and lord), authorised Horace Walpole the younger, and he in his turn authorised Sir Francis Dashwood, to declare to the house of commons that Keppel and some of his brethren desired a bill to absolve them from their oath of secrecy, as they had something of weight to say in relation to their sentence. Keppel was himself a member of the house, but too bashful to speak in public. Being, however, generally called upon to rise and explain himself, after Sir Francis' communication, he again expressed his wish, and named four other members of the court as concurring in it. There was here, however, some misapprehension on his part or some treachery on theirs, since of these four, two afterwards disclaimed what Keppel had alleged in their name. "The house," says an eyewitness, "was wondrously softened." Next day the king sent a message, through Pitt, announcing that he had respited the admiral's execution while these suggestions for disclosures were in progress. A bill to absolve the members of the court-martial from their oath of secrecy was accordingly brought in by Sir Francis Dashwood, supported by Pitt, and cavilled at by Fox. "Is it proper," asked he, "that a set of judges should go about for three weeks, hearing solicitations from the friends of the prisoner, and then come and complain of their own sentence?" The bill was carried rapidly and tumultuously by 153 against 23. But in the upper house it was treated with judicial accuracy and precision by two chiefs of the law — lords Hardwicke and Mansfield. They examined at their bar separately and on oath every member of the court-martial, requiring answers especially to these two ques-

tions: "Whether you know any matter that passed previous to the sentence upon Admiral Byng, which may show that sentence to have been unjust?" And, "Whether you know any matter that passed previous to the said sentence which may show that sentence to have been given through any undue practice or motive?" To the general surprise every member of the court-martial — even Keppel himself — answered both these questions in the negative. It thus plainly appeared that the bill owed its origin rather to kind feeling than to settled judgment, and that its whole foundation had now crumbled away; it was accordingly rejected by the lords, not without some expressions of contempt for the haste and heedlessness of the house of commons.

No further obstacles interposed, and the completion of the tragedy was fixed for the 14th of March. Byng's whole behaviour was most manly — equally unaffected and undaunted. A few days before one of his friends standing by him said, "Which of us is tallest?" He answered, "Why this ceremony? I know what it means; let the man come and measure me for my coffin."

More than once he declared his satisfaction that at least he was acquitted of cowardice, and his conviction that he had acted throughout to the utmost of his ability. These sentiments were also expressed in a written paper, which he delivered to the marshal of the admiralty a few moments before his execution. For some time past he had been confined on board the *Monarque* in Portsmouth harbour; he now desired to be shot on the quarter-deck, and not in the place assigned to common malefactors. At the appointed hour of noon he walked forth with a firm step, and placed himself in a chair, refusing to kneel or allow his face to be covered, that it might be seen whether he betrayed the least symptom of fear. Some officers around him, however, represented that his looks might confuse the soldiers, and distract their aim, on which he submitted, saying, "If it will frighten them, let it be done; they would not frighten me." His eyes were bound; the soldiers fired, and Byng fell.

On reviewing the whole of this painful transaction it appears just to acknowledge that, notwithstanding the party insinuations of that time, the officers of the court-martial were swayed only by pure and honourable motives. They judged right in pronouncing that Byng did not do as much as he might have done for the relief of Minorca; they judged right in acquitting him both of treachery and cowardice. But they seem to err when they proceed to apply to the case of Byng the severe penalties prescribed by the twelfth article of war. They confound the two ideas — neglect of duty and error of judgment. It was not from any heedless omission that the admiral had failed to pursue the French fleet, or to relieve the English garrison; it was from inferior talent and inferior energy of mind. To such deficiencies the twelfth article, with its penalty of death, was clearly not intended to apply. But further still, supposing the sentence passed, it was surely no light stain on the royal prerogative, or on those who wielded it, to set at nought the unanimous recommendation of the judges. To deny the claim of mercy in such a case could scarcely be palliated even by the strongest motives of state policy.

In truth, however, all sound state policy points in the opposite direction. Whenever a disproportionate severity is applied to an involuntary fault, the sure result, after a short interval, is to enlist public sympathy on the side of the sufferer, to change condemnation into pity, and to exalt any ordinary officer, who has acted to the best of his small abilities, into the fame of a hero and a martyr.

[1757 A.D.]

DISMISSAL AND RE-APPOINTMENT OF PITT (1757 A.D.)

Notwithstanding the readiness that Pitt had shown for the support of Hanover, he had by no means succeeded in surmounting the aversion of the king. Early in 1757 his majesty sent for Lord Waldegrave, as his personal friend, to hear his complaints. According to Waldegrave's own testimony (and there can be none higher), the king, who had a quick conception, and did not like to be kept long in suspense, expected that those who talked to him on business should come at once to the point. Now Pitt and Lord Temple, being orators even in familiar conversation, endeavoured to guide his majesty's passions, and to convince his judgment, according to the rules of rhetoric.

In the king's own statement to Lord Waldegrave, however, a wide distinction was made between Pitt and Temple. "The secretary," said his majesty, "makes me long speeches, which, possibly, may be very fine, but are greatly beyond my comprehension; and his letters are affected, formal, and pedantic. But as to Temple, he is so disagreeable a fellow that there is no bearing him. When he attempts to argue he is pert, and sometimes insolent; when he means to be civil he is exceedingly troublesome, and in the business of his office he is totally ignorant." Above all, his majesty resented a parallel with which the first lord of the admiralty had indulged him between Byng's behaviour at Minorca and the king's own conduct at Oudenarde in 1708, giving a preference to the former, and thus leaving his majesty to draw the inference, that if Byng deserved to be shot, his royal master must deserve to be hanged! — It may seem incredible that any minister, even Lord Temple, should be thus rash and presuming, yet the narrative of Lord Orford to that effect will be found substantially confirmed by Lord Waldegrave.

Another train of events brought matters to a crisis. The king had during the winter mustered his electoral army at Hanover for the defence of his dominions, and to the command of that army he appointed the duke of Cumberland. The time for action was now close at hand, and the duke's departure for his post became of pressing importance. But the duke had conceived a strong prejudice against Pitt as an anti-Hanoverian, and felt most reluctant to commence his operations with such a secretary of state to control them. He urged the king at all hazards to dismiss his ministers before his royal highness embarked, and this importunity of a favourite son prevailed over all the dictates of prudence.[b]

In April, 1757, Pitt was unceremoniously dismissed, Legge and the Grenvilles resigned of course, and Fox regained the ascendant. But petitions were poured in from all quarters, and the national feeling in favour of Pitt was so unequivocally manifested that Fox would not venture to resist it. Pitt and Legge therefore resumed their stations, Newcastle became once more the nominal chief, and Fox obtained the lucrative post of paymaster of the forces (June 29th). All opposition in parliament was now at an end, and Pitt had the entire conduct of the war, and thus commenced an administration one of the most brilliant in English annals.

It almost amazes one to read in the contemporary memoirs and letters, of the degree of despondency and dejection to which the public mind had been reduced by the late untoward events of the war. Lord Chesterfield thus describes the state of affairs at this time: "Whoever is in, or whoever is out, I am sure that we are undone both at home and abroad: at home by our increasing debt and expenses; abroad by our ill-luck and incapacity. The king of Prussia, the only ally we had in the world, is now I fear *hors de combat*

[he had just been defeated by the Austrians at Kolin]; Hanover I look upon to be by this time in the same state with Saxony, the fatal consequence of which is but too obvious. The French are masters to do what they please in America. We are no longer a nation; I never yet saw so dreadful a prospect." On the other hand it is cheering to behold the magic influence of genius and high-toned ambition and public spirit. At the voice of Pitt despondency fled and hope and zeal revived. Money was liberally contributed, for the confidence in the minister was unbounded. Expeditions were judiciously planned, and officers were selected for command from merit, and not from family or parliamentary interest, and success in consequence crowned their efforts.

This happy condition of things could not, however, be brought about all at once. It took some time to renovate and regulate the machine of war. Mr. Pitt was also too much attached to the absurd system of seeking to injure France by descents on her coasts, and his operations in this way proved utterly unsuccessful. A powerful expedition sent in September against Rochefort, under Sir Edward Hawke and Sir John Mordaunt, proved a total failure. The chief blame was laid on the general, but a court-martial acquitted him. In Germany, meantime, the duke of Cumberland, at the head of forty thousand Hessians, Hanoverians, and Brunswickers, being hemmed in by the French between the sea and the rivers Elbe and Weser, actually capitulated at Closter-Seven, and the electorate was thus given up to the French. In America the marquis de Montcalm, governor of Canada, had taken Fort William Henry, on the shore of Lake George, and thus obtained the command of the entire range of the lakes.

The following year (1758) the tide of war began to turn in favour of England. Admiral Boscawen and General Amherst took the island of Cape Breton in America. On the coast of Africa the French settlements at the Senegal and Goree were also reduced. Another of those expeditions to which Mr. Pitt was so much attached was sent to the north coast of France. It landed at Concale, whence it advanced to St. Malo, where it destroyed the shipping and naval stores; but as the enemy was collecting a large force, the troops were re-embarked, and the fleet moved on to Cherbourg. A hard gale which came on prevented their landing at that place, and the expedition returned to St. Helens. These expeditions, in which the cost was great and the damage done to the enemy trifling, were not unaptly styled "A scheme to break windows with guineas."

VICTORIES IN AMERICA, IN INDIA, AND ON THE SEA (1759 A.D.)

The year 1759 is one of the most glorious in the naval and military annals of England. Admiral Boscawen, who commanded in the Mediterranean, where he was blockading the port of Toulon, being obliged to retire to Gibraltar for water and repairs, the Toulon fleet, under M. de la Clue came out with the hope of being able to pass the straits. They succeeded in their object; but they were descried off the coast of Barbary; and Boscawen, though he did not hear of it till seven in the evening and most of his ships had their topmasts struck and sails unbent, by great exertions got to sea by ten that night. Next day (August 10th) he came up with them and took one ship, and the following day, off the bay of Lagos, he destroyed the admiral's ship, the *Ocean*, and three others.

In this year also was fought (August 1st) the great battle of Minden, in which the English infantry covered themselves with glory, while the blame of the victory's not being more complete was laid on the inactivity of Lord

[1759 A.D.]

George Sackville who commanded the cavalry of the right wing. By sentence of a court-martial in the following year this officer was dismissed the service, and his name was struck out of the list of privy-councillors.[e]

When the English minister cast his eyes on the condition of Canada, the prospect would have been disheartening to anyone but himself. In all the essentials of power the enemy had an incontestable superiority. A fortress at the Fall of Niagara was garrisoned by six hundred French. Lake Champlain was commanded by their small sloops of war, and Quebec itself was a position of great natural advantages, and strengthened with all the art of the engineer. The defenders were trained soldiers, assisted by militia and native Indians, and amounted to upwards of ten thousand men. But while the great blow was preparing under the suggestions of Pitt himself, the indomitable energy of the English character was shown in the achievements of the local commanders. Every place was ransacked for aid, and possession taken of every spot of vantage ground. Indians were engaged on the English side as numerously as on the French, and the two civilised nations of Europe had equal cause to be ashamed of the barbarity of their savage allies. While General Amherst launched vessels, built in the roughest way, upon Lake Champlain, and destroyed the French flotilla, Sir William Johnstone, a civilian with an innate genius for war, succeeded, after a severe engagement, in capturing the citadel of Niagara. All further outrage on the British colonies was rendered impossible by the destruction of the French superiority on those inland seas; and when the way was cleared by these successes, and only the great castle of Quebec dominated over the colony, Wolfe made his appearance on the Isle of Orleans a little below the city, and interrupted the communications of the garrison by occupying the St. Lawrence. Montcalm, the French commandant, was equal to the occasion, and kept constant watch on the proceedings of his enterprising assailant. Wolfe moved up the river, and failed in making a lodgment on the shore; but his attention had been attracted by a steep bank rising from the water's edge to the level platform above, which had evidently been considered so impracticable that it was left undefended by outpost or rampart. Orders were given to get the boats all ready to float down the stream, and embarking his whole force in a very dark night, the anchors were lifted, and the flotilla noiselessly glided down. A rush was made up the precipice when they landed, and, following closely with the main body of his forces, Wolfe found himself, at break of day on the 12th of September, in possession of the Heights of Abraham, in rear of the least defended portion of the town.

Montcalm, thus out-generalled, resolved to fight, and if courage and numbers could avail, he had every prospect of success. Wolfe, during that dark voyage to the landing place, had repeated in a whisper to his officers Gray's beautiful *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, then recently published; and the choice of the poem was afterwards remembered as ominous of his approaching fate. He had dwelt particularly, we may suppose, on the line, "The paths of glory lead but to the grave"; for if death and defeat had been the result of his attempt, they would only have realised the forebodings contained in a letter he wrote to the minister describing the difficulties of his position. When the depression which had seized the public on this intelligence was relieved by the arrival of the next dispatch announcing the battle of Abraham, the capture of Quebec, and the submission of many of the French occupants of Canada, the joy was universal, and the hero's name was on every lip. Particulars were inquired into, and the triumph of the people rose higher than ever when they heard the last words of their favourite soldier. He had been

wounded in the breast, and was lying bleeding on the ground. An officer near him said, "They run, sir; they run!" Wolfe raised his head, and asked curiously, "Who run?" "The French." "Thank God! I die content," was the reply, and in a few minutes he died. His gallant rival, Montcalm, was also carried mortally wounded from the field. When he was told he had no chance of surviving, he said, "So much the better; I shall not see the fall of Quebec." But the fall of Quebec was but the prelude to greater triumphs. The whole English force was directed on the town of Montreal. It was surrounded on all sides; and the governor, with too much generosity to waste his comrades' lives, capitulated to Lord Amherst. France was without a citadel or a soldier in North America, and Canada became thenceforth a possession of the British crown. No pang of humiliation embittered the transference of the French to their new king. Their civil and religious rights were secured. They became fellow-citizens, and not a conquered colony. As if to mark that their connection is one of equality and not force, a tall column is erected in one of the public squares of Quebec with the simple words inscribed on it — "Wolfe. Montcalm."

Another young man had risen in India to be the avenger of the wrongs suffered by the English residents in Calcutta, whom the tyrannical ruler of that country had immured in the Black Hole till only a few survived. Clive's great battle of Plassy was almost contemporaneous with Pitt's appointment to office; and victories in Hindostan were responded to by triumphs in other parts of the world. Cherbourg was taken and destroyed. The French settlements on the African coast were seized. In the intervals of his own triumphs, the minister listened to the joy-bells ringing for the successes of his German ally. He pleased the king by breaking the humiliating convention which the duke of Cumberland had entered into at Closter-Seven, and taking the Hanoverian troops again into his pay. England and Prussia defied the whole world; and with a king so indomitable as Frederick, and a minister so high-spirited as Pitt, eventual defeat or lengthened despondency was impossible.[1]

Parliament was opened by commission on the 13th of November. Peace was talked of; but it was urged that such supplies should be given as would enable his majesty "to sustain and press, with effect, all our extensive operations against the enemy." In the course of the session fifteen millions and a half was voted for supplies — an enormous sum by comparison with the estimates of previous years of war. Pitt on the 20th moved that a public monument should be erected to the memory of General Wolfe. He moved also the thanks of the house to the generals and admirals, whose merit, he said, had equalled those who have beaten armadas — "May I anticipate?" cried he, "those who *will* beat armadas." At the hour at which Pitt used this remarkable expression, a naval battle was being fought, which made his anticipation look like some mysterious sympathy which outran the ordinary means of intelligence — the "shadows before" which a sanguine mind sees in "coming events." Admiral Hawke was driven by the equinoctial gales from his blockade of Brest. Conflans, the French admiral, came out with twenty-one ships of the line and four frigates. Admiral Duff was off Quiberon Bay with his squadron; and Conflans hoped to attack him before Hawke could come to the rescue. But Hawke did return; and then Conflans hurried to the mouth of the Vilaine — fancying himself secure amidst the rocks and shoals on that shore to which the Britons sailed to the aid of the Veneti. The danger of a sea-fight in such a perilous navigation had no terrors for Hawke. The pilot pointed out the danger. "Lay me alongside the French admiral," was Hawke's reply to the pilot's remonstrance. "You have done your duty,

but now obey my orders." The fight went on till night whilst a tempest was raging. Signal guns of vessels in distress were heard on every side. When the morning came, two British ships were found to be stranded, but their crews were saved. Four of the French fleet had been sunk, amongst which was the admiral's ship. Two had struck. The rest had fled up the Vilaine. This final victory put an end to all those apprehensions of a descent upon England, which prevailed before Pitt had infused his spirit into commanders by land and sea. The French admiral, Thurot, was to have co-operated with Conflans in an attempt at invasion. He landed in the north of Ireland; attacked Carrickfergus, which was bravely defended by seventy-two men; and then went again to sea, having plundered the town, and carried off the mayor and three other inhabitants as his prisoners.

It was the determination to believe nothing impossible to a strong will, and to think no loss irretrievable, which sustained Frederick of Prussia through the reverses of 1759 — the most disastrous of all his campaigns. The defeat by the Russians at Kunersdorf would have annihilated a less resolute man. But he rallied; and he fought through another year of chequered fortune, during which his own territories suffered the extremities of misery, to win the two victories of Legnitz and of Torgau.

A Corner of St. Paul's

DEATH OF GEORGE II (1760 A.D.)

The year 1760 was not a year of excitement to the English people. The war went on; but even the defence of the conquests of 1759 required no great exertions. Quebec was besieged; but the besiegers were compelled to retire, when an English fleet appeared in the St. Lawrence. There was little domestic agitation, except a ministerial difference with the court, which somewhat detracts from the dignity of Pitt, in his exhibition of contempt for that influence which prevented his brother-in-law, Earl Temple, from obtaining the Garter. Parliament had little more to do than vote supplies. "Success," said Pitt, "had produced unanimity, not unanimity success." A sudden event came, destined in a short time to change the whole aspect of affairs — to involve England once again in political contests more to be dreaded than the ordinary course of party warfare — more to be dreaded, because other leaders appeared than those of parliament, and the representatives of the people were not on the popular side. The reign of George II came suddenly to a close on the 25th of October. The king had risen at his usual hour of six: had taken his cup of chocolate; and had been left alone by his attendants. A noise as of a heavy fall was heard; then a groan. The old man lay on the ground, and never spoke more. The right ventricle of his heart had burst.[k]

ESTIMATES OF GEORGE II

"When George II. died in 1760," says Gardiner, "he left behind him a settled understanding that the monarchy was one of the least of the forces by which the policy of the country was directed. To this end he had contributed much by his disregard of English opinion in 1743; but it may fairly be added that, but for his readiness to give way to irresistible adversaries, the struggle might have been far more bitter and severe than it was. Of the connection between Hanover and England in this reign two memorials remain more pleasant to contemplate than the records of parliamentary and ministerial intrigues. With the support of George II., amidst the derision of the English fashionable world, the Hanoverian Handel produced in England those masterpieces which have given delight to millions, whilst the foundation of the university of Göttingen by the same king opened a door through which English political ideas afterwards penetrated into Germany."

Lecky,[m] in summarising the character of George II., quotes with approval the remark of Chatham in the succeeding reign: "The late good old king had something of humanity, and amongst many other royal virtues he possessed justice, truth, and sincerity in an eminent degree." Many a greater man lacks so good an epitaph.[a]