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THE PATRIOT KING

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The First Gentleman. (Jonathan Cape. 12s. 6d.)

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Part Author of

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National Portrait Gallery

WILLIAM IV
After Sir Martin Archer Shee.

THE PATRIOT KING

The Life of William IV

by

GRACE E. THOMPSON

"To espouse no party but to govern like the common father of his people is so essential to the character of a PATRIOT KING that he who does otherwise forfeits the title."

LORD BOLINGBROKE,
The Idea of a Patriot King.

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" Read no history, nothing but biography, for that is life without theory."

Contarini Fleming, by BENJAMIN DISRAELI.

" How amazingly dull were these historians . . . they seemed to take from that crowded and coloured pageant all the magic which it should have possessed."

Patchwork, by BEVERLEY NICHOLS.

Introduction

BY THE RT. HON. THE VISCOUNT SNOWDEN, P.C.

IN this volume Miss Thompson has given us a history of the early part of the nineteenth century which is a valuable contribution to the story of the stirring events of that period. The book is written round the personality of William IV, a monarch who, though he reigned so comparatively recently, is hardly remembered by this generation.

The period during which William IV sat upon the British throne was the most revolutionary epoch in our history. Great changes which had long been maturing in the womb of time came to birth—political, religious and industrial. The political agitation which had begun under the leadership of Cartwright and Wilkes in the latter part of the eighteenth century continued with increased vigour during the early years of William's reign, and culminated in the Reform Act of 1832. The evangelical crusade of Wesley had a profound influence on the minds and emotions of the populace, and probably acted as an antidote to the revolutionary movements of the time.

The industrial revolution broke out about the time of William's accession to the throne, and during his brief reign a greater change came over the industrial and social life of the people than in centuries of their previous history.

The modern historian has given little attention to the part which the monarch, and those who surrounded him, played in these momentous changes and events. In Miss Thompson's book we get for the first time a vivid and lively picture of the lives of " society," and of their relations to and their influence upon the political movements of the period. It is a fascinating picture, and will give the reader a new understanding of what she rightly calls " the greatest drama of the century."

Incidentally, this story of William IV gives confirmation

to the old saying that "history repeats itself," for we find him expressing his contempt for Whig and Tory alike and his desire for a great national party.

Miss Thompson's previous book *The First Gentleman* was a well-deserved success, and readers of this volume will, I am sure, agree that she has rendered a great service to historical knowledge by this illuminating work on the social and political life and events of a period which saw the beginnings of modern democracy.

EDEN LODGE,
TILFORD.

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THE WILHELMINE PERIOD AND THE PATRIOT KING

MOST of the Kings of England are shadows because no personal aspect of them is remembered; history is regarded as an affair of dates, of battles, and Acts of Parliament. This, of course, is a mistake; history is a pageant, a series of dramas, sometimes tragedies, but sometimes, fortunately, comedies verging on farce. History, traced to its original sources, is a most enthralling study, full of wit and humour, theatrical episodes, odd manners and fascinating clothes.

There is no period duller to read about in the histories than that of the Reform Bill; there was, in fact, no period fuller of drama, entertainment, and broad comedy; Sir Charles Wetherell's breeches, Mr. Baring's hat, the "skipping" King with the engaging habit of wiping his nose with the back of his forefinger and shaking his fist at his coachman, honest Jack Althorp's pipe, the Lord Chancellor's port, Lord Grey's front tooth, and the Duke of Wellington's gossip are a few of the subjects which afford entertainment.

The chief comedian was the King: "A *bon enfant* with a weak head," said one critic; "a good egg, but a cracked one," said another, but two Prime Ministers said that he was "perfect." "There is little guile in his nature nor obliquity in his course," said *The Times*. His reign was a "transition from Eastern seclusion to English freedom and frankness," said *The Watchman*.

No biographer has yet done William IV justice; no one hitherto has discovered the clue to his character and reign. "He never reads," said the Duke of Wellington. The Duke's own favourite reading was *Cæsar's Commentaries*—not a very good guide to the government of England. "He reads *John Bull*," sneered the Whigs. The King, in fact, was quite well read; his favourite reading was *Lives of the Admirals* and Lord Bolingbroke's *Patriot King*. In the latter, which no one seems to have observed, lies the clue

to his behaviour. He detested party government; he held firmly the theory of government which, a little later, Disraeli was to revive: "I am neither Whig nor Tory. My politics are described by one word and that word is—England." "Rid yourselves of all that political jargon and factious slang of Whig and Tory—two names with one meaning and only to delude you—and unite in forming a great national party which can alone save the country from impending destruction."

There was an odd little hero for the greatest drama of the century. He was sixty-five, and had been neglected or jeered at all his life; no one, except perhaps Nelson, had ever suspected anything heroic in his composition, yet between the Scylla of Revolution and the Charybdis of a breach in the Constitution he sailed the ship of State and brought her to safe anchorage. The Whigs, as is their way, claimed all the credit. It is an odd fact that nearly all histories are written by Whigs, which is why they are so inaccurate; not, of course, that the Tories, if they *did* write history, would send the bucket too far down the well of Truth.

It is possible that the difficulty of finding an adjective to fit his period has something to do with the neglect of William. The period, with its peculiar virtues and failings, which was to be known as Victorian, did, in fact, begin with William's accession, when all that had belonged to the Georgian era was wiped away, like a drawing from a slate. William's short reign saw not only reforms of Parliament, of law, of morals, but the arrival of the British Sunday which has driven so many foreigners to despair.

"Georgian" and "Victorian" were easily contrived, but what can be done with William?

The Stuarts tried a foreign tongue; Charles solved the difficulty gracefully with "Caroline" and James a little heavily with "Jacobean." William, I fear, was not a classical scholar, but he could talk, nervously, to Frederick the Great, and doubtless his mother sometimes called him "Wilhelm"; so I think "Wilhelmine" might do, though I fear he might not have cared for it, for he prided himself on being an Englishman, and he served England well; still, he chose the name "Wilhelmina" for his god-daughter, Miss Coke.

I have tried to paint a full-length portrait of King William IV, with a background of the times in which he

lived; of Brougham, Grey, the Duke, Lady Holland and the rest there is only space for thumbnail sketches. For those who wish to read more deeply I have supplied a list of the original sources from which I have drawn my facts.

"My accuracy as to facts," said Macaulay, "I owe to a cause which many men would not confess. It is due to my love of castle-building. The past is in my mind soon constructed into a romance. . . . With a person of my turn, the minute touches are of as great interest, and perhaps greater, than the most important events. . . . A slight fact, a sentence, a word, are of importance in my romance. . . . The conversations which I compose between great people of the time are long and sufficiently animated."

I have not followed Macaulay in composing conversations, particularly long ones, but have allowed the characters, where possible, to speak for themselves.

HAMPSTEAD.

THE PATRIOT KING

I. THE ROYAL TAR

CHAPTER I

SAILOR WILLIAM

On a fortunate day for himself and his country Prince William Henry went to sea.

He had, until then, made very little stir in the world. Horace Walpole had welcomed him: "If it was not for the Queen the peerage would be extinct; she has given us another Duke." Porter had been lavishly distributed on his birthday and the Corporation of London had delivered a not-too-cordial Address. The only other fact the world knew of him was that on the 19th of August, 1767, he had, at the age of two, been innoculated for the smallpox, in spite of a loud outcry against such an impious practice. August, however, was always the lucky month of the House of Brunswick, and Prince William Henry survived.

In due course preceptors were chosen; of these the most important was Colonel Budé, a Swiss. Fanny Burney, a little later, said of this gentleman: "His person is tall and showy, and his manners and appearance are fashionable. But he has a sneer in his smile that looks sarcastic, and a distance in his manner that seems haughty." He had been page to the Prince of Orange and had served in the Sardinian army; he was an excellent player on the violin and knew something of the flute; he had been in Holland and was an excellent judge of tobacco; he had been in Sardinia and could never breakfast without anchovies. "His religion," says one of his biographers, "was founded on the firm base of unadulterated Christianity"; while another says it "was of an accommodating kind."

However, no great harm was done, for Mrs. Chapone,

that great writer of admonitory books for children in which virtue is rewarded a little insubstantially, but vice is most horribly punished, was favourably impressed by Colonel Budé's pupil: "I was pleased with the Princes," she said, "but particularly with Prince William, who is little of his age, but so sensible and engaging that he won the Bishop's heart. . . . His conversation was surprisingly manly and clever for his age."

This sensible and engaging child, nevertheless, was always in scrapes with his elder brothers, and the King, in a rare fit of wisdom, determined to send him to sea. Queen Charlotte did not like the idea of her boy being torn from his worsted work, but the King, as usual, was mulish. He went down to Portsmouth and arranged the business with Captain Robert Digby. He also talked with Sir Samuel Hood, the commissioner of the Dockyard, and on July 12, 1778, wrote to the latter "to write down what clothes, necessaries, and books he ought to take. He has begun geometry, and I shall have an intention to forward him in whatever you may hint as proper to be done before he enters into that glorious profession."

It was arranged that the fourteen-year-old boy should join the *Prince George*, Digby's flagship, and on May 27, 1779, the King wrote to Hood: "I have sent an hair trunk, two chests, and two cots done up in one mat to be delivered unto you for the use of my young sailor. I flatter myself you will be pleased with the appearance of the boy, who neither wants resolution nor cheerfulness, which seem necessary ingredients for those who enter into that noble profession."

They did indeed. The King gave him some sound advice, presented him with a Bible and sent him off with Mr. Majendie, who accompanied the unfortunate child to attend to his classical studies. All Prince William's resolution and cheerfulness must have been needed, for the comfort of a midshipman left much to be desired.

Prince William did not record his impressions, but another midshipman described very vividly the kind of life he must have led: "I descended another ladder, which brought us to the between-decks and into the steerage to my future residence—a small hole which they called a berth. It was ten feet long by six, and about five feet four inches high, a small aperture, about nine inches by six, admitted a very scanty portion of that which we most needed, namely, fresh

air and daylight. A deal table occupied a very considerable extent of this small apartment, and on it stood a brass candlestick, with a dip candle and a wick like a full-blown carnation. The tablecloth was spread, and the stains of port wine and gravy too visibly indicated the near approach of Sunday. . . . The noise of the caulkers over my head, the stench of bilge water combining with the smoke of tobacco, the effluvia of gin and beer, the frying of beefsteaks and onions, and red herrings, the pressure of a dark atmosphere and a heavy shower of rain, all conspired to oppress my spirits. "You are," said the captain, "like a young bear; all your sorrows are before you." It was stifling in the berth, and the midshipmen were without either jackets or waistcoats; some of them had their shirt sleeves rolled up, either to prevent the reception or to conceal the absorption of dirt. The repast on the table consisted of a can or large black jack of small beer, and a japan breadbasket full of sea biscuit . . . a sack of potatoes stood in one corner, and the shelves all round and close over our heads were stuffed with plates, glasses, quadrants, knives and forks, loaves of sugar, dirty stockings and shirts, and still fouler tablecloths, small tooth combs, and ditto large, clothes brushes and shoe brushes, cocked hats, dirks, German flutes, mahogany writing desks, a plate of salt butter and some two or three pair of naval half boots. A single candle served to make darkness visible, and the stench nearly overpowered me. . . . A black man, not smelling of amber, stood within the door. (Eight young gentlemen occupied this healthy and agreeable apartment.)

Into what a situation was I thrown? In a ship crowded with three hundred men, where oaths and blasphemy interlarded every sentence; where religion was wholly neglected and the only honour paid to the Almighty was a clean shirt on Sunday, where implicit obedience to the will of an officer was considered of more importance than the observance of the decalogue. Our only pursuits when on shore were intoxication, to be gloried in and boasted of when we returned on board. . . ."

A dark picture, but hardly exaggerated since other seamen, besides Captain Marryat, described it in similar terms. Marryat moralised: "He that is brought up a slave will be a tyrant when he has the power. The adventures of a midshipman might, if fully detailed, disgust more than amuse, and corrupt more than they would improve."

Prince William Henry embarked at Spithead on June 15th. He was dressed in the plain blue jacket and trousers of the sailor, topped by the slouched, low-crowned hat. Without doubt that young exquisite the Prince of Wales had very heartily jeered at the young tar's costume before he set out. His fellow-tars were quite ready to jeer when he set foot on board.

"By what name are you rated in the books?" one more impudent than the others asked him.

"I am entered," answered the boy cheerfully, "as Prince William Henry, but my father's name is Guelph, and therefore, if you please, you may call me William Guelph, for I am nothing more than a sailor like yourselves."

He won instantly a kind of liking from his intimates which he kept ever after; none who knew William well ever disliked him, though they were sometimes unable to admire.

William Guelph must have found life hard in the cockpit after the luxury of Kew and Windsor, but if he grumbled none of his complaints survive. They told enough anecdotes of him, some true, doubtless, and some lying, to show that his temper was distinctly pugnacious. He early caught the proper attitude of sailors towards those inferior creatures who followed other callings. After a bout of fisticuffs with Lieutenant Moodie he shook hands, with a genial: "You are a brave fellow *though* you are a marine."

He had a difference of opinion with a brother midshipman named Sturt, who said hotly: "If you were not the King's son, sir, I would teach you better manners."

"Oh!" said the Prince, "don't let that be any hindrance," and offered to fight his adversary nautical fashion over a sea-chest. Sturt declined, saying it would be unfair, he being the elder and stronger of the two.

With young Beauclerck and another mid (they called them that in those days) he rollicked ashore in the approved fashion, was a little over-boisterous in the taverns of Gibraltar, and ogled the pretty ladies of Spain.

His admiral was that good sailor, Rodney, and having, off Sandwich, captured a Spanish convoy of sixteen vessels, with seven men-o'-war, they were later in action off Cape St. Vincent with another Spanish fleet, commanded by Don Juan de Langara, which they very effectively defeated. The Spanish admiral was surprised, and, legend says, filled

with admiration, to find a son of the King of England being respectful to his captain.

The Prince was immensely popular on his return to England; his name was associated with Rodney's, and Mr. Pye, the Poet Laureate, and many minor bards, produced such poetic efforts as:

"Now last, not least in love, the Muse
Her William's name would fondly chuse
The British youth among.
Still may the sailors love thy name,
And happy wealth and blooming fame,
Awake the future song."

He also charmed a song from Robert Burns, but that was for his prowess in another art than that of war:

"Young royal Tarry-breeks, I learn
Ye've lately come athwart her—
A glorious galley, stem and stern,
Weel rigg'd for Venus' barter."

During his stay ashore the Royal Tar joined his elder brothers, already growing unpopular, in their dissipations. He went to Vauxhall and the Rotunda at Ranelagh, and Mr. Walpole has an amusing tale of a masquerade in which a Spanish grandee met a gallant tar with a fair Ursuline. To her great resentment the grandee paid too much attention to the lady; the tar, naturally, doubled his fists and produced a few nautical oaths; the grandee murmured a sneer about the ladies of Portsmouth Point; a general uproar followed, and the rioters were marched off to the watch-house. The revellers unmasked.

"Eh, William, is it you?"

"Eh, George, is it you?"

The riot ended in a gale of laughter under the eyes of the astonished constable. The lady drops out of the tale as the Prince of Wales and his younger brother go off arm in arm.

His alarmed Papa had William's leave cut short and May found him at sea once more. In August, 1780, occurred a significant milestone in his young life; he made his first speech, "to the surprise of all present." It was rambling and long-winded and was the first of a long, long series. Perhaps that epithet "the Silent Service" had not yet been coined.

The Navy was not at its most brilliant in 1780; the

Channel Fleet went out for cruises lasting about two months, and taking place at fairly frequent intervals. The French always timed their actions by these excursions, using the Fleet as a clock and evading it with ease on account of its punctuality. The wags noted the fact :

" Lord Howe he went out.
Lord ! how he came in."

There was, however, a terrible amount of sickness in the ships, which, perhaps, went a long way towards explaining this folly.

William Guelph had ample opportunity for observing abuses in the Navy, and he *did* observe intelligently. The ordinary routine of these cruises did not, however, give him the chance to learn a great deal besides. He had more leave than was good for him. He went to Court to say good-bye to his brother Frederick, who was off to learn the art of war at the Prussian Court, and lost his heart to the beautiful Miss Fortescue, with whom he danced all night at a St. James's ball. As, however, his biographer calls her " Julia " on one page and " Matilda " on another she may have been a myth.

Once more Papa decided that sea was the safer element, and Prince William had the good fortune to make part of the expedition, under Admiral Digby, which relieved Gibraltar. His ship next sailed across the Atlantic, and William Guelph was the first Prince of the Blood to set foot on American soil.

The arrival of Prince William at New York was hailed by the inhabitants with every token of loyalty and esteem. He was, according to Huish, " a fine bluff boy of sixteen, frank, cheery and affable, fond of outdoor sport and of sauntering about the city without any guard."

These habits of his struck the imagination of Colonel Ogden, of General Washington's army, who thought it would be an excellent plan to capture the boy. General Washington thought so too, and wrote to Colonel Matthias Ogden from his headquarters on March 28, 1782 :

SIR,

The spirit of enterprise, so conspicuous in your plan for surprising in their quarters and bringing off the Prince William Henry and Admiral Digby merits applause ; and you have my authority to make the attempt, in any manner

and at such a time, as your own judgment shall direct. I am fully persuaded that it is unnecessary to caution you against offering insult or indignity to the persons of the Prince and Admiral, should you be so fortunate as to capture them; but it may not be amiss to press the propriety of a proper line of conduct upon the party you command. In case of success you will, as soon as you get them to a place of safety, treat them with all possible respect, but you are to delay no time in conveying them to Congress, and reporting your proceedings with a copy of these orders. Take care not to touch upon the ground which is agreed to be neutral—viz. from Rayway to Newark, and four miles back.

G. WASHINGTON.[1]

The attempt, if it was made at all, unfortunately came to nothing. But the fact that it was even suggested opens up a long vista of that fascinating game of "If." Supposing that that good-tempered, promising boy of sixteen had been captured by the Americans and had pleased them, as he might very well have done? His sympathies, as he declared quite clearly later on, were with them; they were still quite unused to a republican government; there was still an enormous number of loyalists; feeling in the United States of America was very far from being uniform or fixed. If William Henry had been captured; if in William Henry public sentiment had seen a solution of difficulties, a means of union which nothing else could provide; if, in short, William Henry had been proclaimed the first King of America?

Fortunately for England the scheme came to nothing, and at the end of the year William had another exciting experience. He told the story himself, years afterwards, to Doctor Clarke, Canon of Windsor:

"I was a midshipman on board the *Barfleur*, lying in the Narrows off Staten Island, and had the watch on deck, when Captain Nelson, of the *Albemarle*, came in his barge alongside. He appeared to be the merest boy of a captain I ever beheld, and his dress was worthy of attention. He had on a full-laced uniform, his lank unpowdered hair was tied in a stiff Hessian tail of an extraordinary length; the old-fashioned flaps of his waistcoat, added to the general quaintness of his figure, produced an appearance which

[1] *Washington's Writings*, ed. Jared Sparks, Vol. 8, p. 261.

particularly attracted my notice, for I had never seen anything like it before, nor could I imagine who he was, nor what he came about. My doubts were, however, removed when Lord Hood introduced him to me. There was something irresistibly pleasing in his address and conversation, and an enthusiasm, when speaking on professional subjects, that showed he was no common being."[1]

He added on another occasion: "Throughout the whole of the American War, the height of Nelson's ambition was to command a line of battle ship; as to prize money, it never entered his thoughts; he had always in view the character of his maternal uncle. I found him warmly attached to my father and singularly humane."

Nelson also approved of Prince William. He wrote to William Locker on February 25, 1783:

"He is a seaman, which you could hardly suppose, with every other qualification you may expect from him; but he will be a disciplinarian and a strong one. . . . He has levées at Spanish Town; they are all highly delighted with him. With the best temper, and great good sense, he cannot fail of being pleasing to everyone."[2]

His presence, if not his gift as a disciplinarian, was certainly of value to some English prisoners of war who had been sentenced to death for insubordination by the Spanish Governor of Havannah, who made a gesture of great courtesy to Prince William:

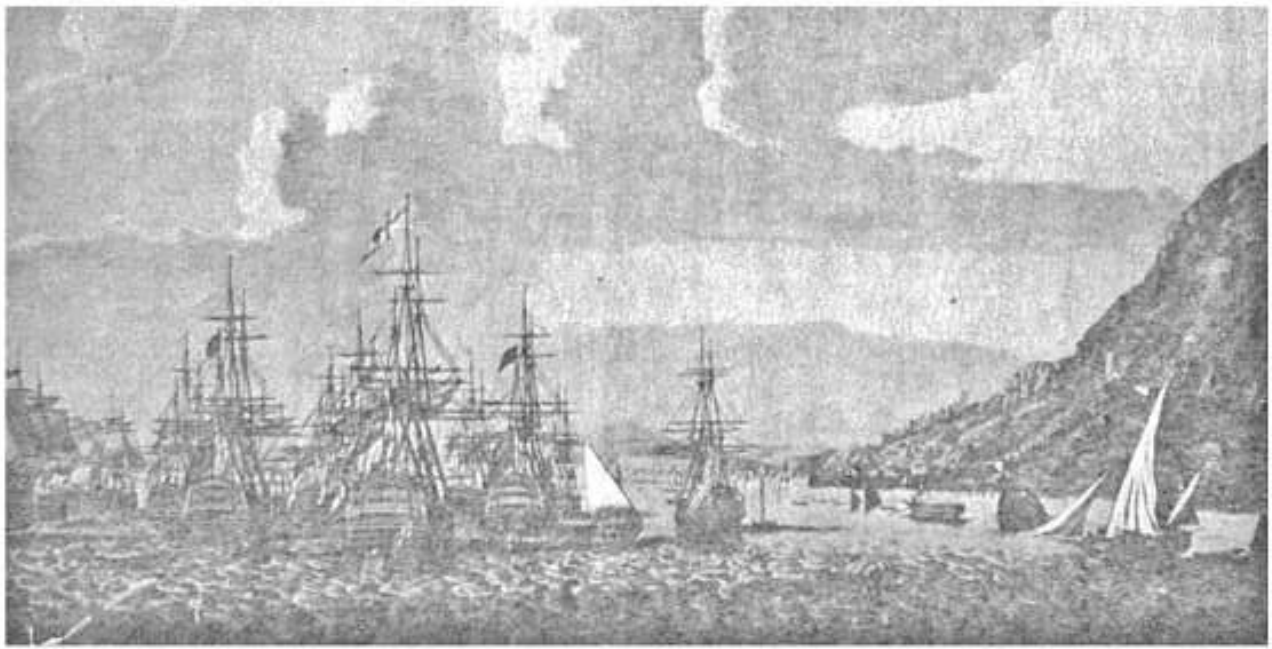
". . . Will you be pleased, sir, to accept their pardon and their lives in the name of the Spanish army, and of my King? It is, I trust, the greatest present that can be offered to one Prince in the name of another. Mine is generous and will approve my conduct. . . ."

Prince William was equally courteous: ". . . the most agreeable present you could have offered me. . . ."

It is a little amusing to read that some people in England did not think that he should have accepted this present, but should have insisted on the penalty for insubordination being paid to the full.

The young man was much impressed by the Spaniards at Havannah and lost his heart again, to Doña Maria Solano, the daughter of his host; perhaps if he could have talked to her in Spanish instead of in fluent but imperfect French

[1] *Life of Nelson*, by Rev. J. S. Clarke and J. McArthur, I, p. 53.
[2] *Nicolas*, I, p. 71.



THE ACTION OFF GIBRALTAR WITH DON JUAN DE LANGARA IN WHICH PRINCE WILLIAM HENRY TOOK PART

things might have been even more desperate. Captain Nelson, seeing his danger, hurried him away.

There is, unfortunately, no record of the boy's feelings at this time, but it is permissible to suppose that he was profoundly affected by the situation in America. Huish takes it for granted that he was, and that he "imbibed the principles of liberty" while there.

"He was witness of the dangerous effects of favouritism in the selection of the commander of an army; he saw it in the selection of Sir William Howe, in America, on the same principle that he saw it so fully exposed in the choice of his own brother to the command of an army against such a general as Dumouriez." Huish's comment is a reasonable one: "He imbibed certain principles from his observations on the cause and effects of the American revolution which ultimately exhibited themselves in the staunch reformer. Fortunately for Prince William, and still more fortunately for the nation over whom he was called to reign, he was thrown at an early period of his life into those relations of society, where he discovered the instability of the principles in which he had been educated under the high aristocratical regime of his parents."

Huish assumes a little more ardour for reform than did in fact exist in William, but there is a probability that his observations in America *did* put an additional nail or two into the coffin of those "high aristocratical" principles to which his naval training had already dealt a death-blow. He could read without wincing such letters as this which Captain Maxwell wrote to him on February 10, 1783:

"The time is not far distant when the voice of the people will be paramount in this country and that the improvements in the administration of their affairs will depend on other persons than that of the sovereign or a junta of men who preside over the most important branch of the public service, without being in possession of the slightest skill or talent to guide them in their decisions."

He was too young then to do much, or to think very deeply, but these things were remembered later.

In the meantime he enjoyed himself in a roystering, swearing, rowdy way with his fellow-mids. Sailors, in those days, were lamentably coarse and often deplorably immoral; it is probable that young William Guelph followed the crowd. It is rather odd, however, to read in a tale of any sailor such a comment as this: "He had a great dislike

to poetry, and it was not until his imagination had become inflamed by the battles of the Iliad that he could be brought to confess that there was any poetry worth reading."

Is the Iliad read in modern gunrooms?

"His favourite form of literature," Huish goes on, "was the drama, and many a tedious night have he and his messmates changed into one of fun and laughter by their attempts to enact some of the scenes of Shakespeare, particularly those in which the gallant Falstaff professes his deeds of valour and in which Prince William always took the part of the libertine Hal. One of their favourites was the third scene in the third act of the *Merry Wives of Windsor*."

On his return to England William's parents thought it wise for him to make the Grand Tour like other noble youths. Never having done it himself his father thought it would be good for his son to see the world; his mother, finding him deplorably indifferent to etiquette, hoped he might acquire it in its natural home, the smaller German courts.

On July 31, 1783, Prince William set out for Greenwich attended by Captain Merrick, a fellow-tar, and that Colonel, now General, Budé, who could not breakfast without anchovies.

At Greenwich Prince William called on an old friend.

"Well, my Royal William," the old Commodore of the *Prince George* greeted him, "I am comfortably brought up at last, and thanks to you for it. You promised me, when you visited me in my berth after the action with the lubberly Dons, that you would find a berth for me for life, and I am now here safely moored. Thanks to you, my Royal William."

At Hanover the Prince met his brother Frederick, the Bishop of Osnaburg, but very unepiscopal in all his tastes. While General Budé held forth on the subject of fashions, Frederick prattled about the joys of card-playing. They jested at the tedium of Budé's harangues, and William, whose wit was of the simple kind, nicknamed him "Et Cetera." Frederick's pocket money was not much more than William's, which was reputed to be £100 a year, and the Bishop's passion for gambling was both mighty and infectious. They both fell into the hands of the Jews and began to pile up that load of debts which hampered Frederick all his life and William until his wife took his affairs in hand.

General Budé hurried his charges off to Berlin to be

entertained by the great Frederick. They saw some impressive reviews of troops, but the King of Prussia turned his back on the Royal Tar when he found that that illiterate youth had not read *Candide*. It was a worrying time for General Budé; the young men might learn something of the art of war from Frederick the Great, but then they might also imbibe some of his free-thinking opinions; the General hurried William away to Lunenburg, where he studied tactics by driving a lovely girl at a *Schlittenfahrt* (train of sledges) behind one of his father's beautiful cream-coloured horses, and dancing the waltz with her before the waltz had received Almack's seal of approval. The lucky girl, however, was apparently prudent enough to prefer Captain Merrick, who was a marrying man.

This harmless amourette was apparently the foundation for the Linsingen legend, which died very hard, though there was no vestige of truth in it. William could not have married Caroline von Linsingen secretly in 1790, for the simple reason that he was then at sea, and although soldiers may slip out of barracks, sailors cannot vanish through portholes in mid-ocean without being missed. In any case the Prince, it is fairly safe to say, was not given to reading Wertherian romance, and Caroline von Linsingen had chosen quite the wrong type of hero for her fantastic Wertherian tale. William was capable of chivalry, but to picture him as kneeling all night by the bedside of his bride on her wedding-night shedding copious tears was really too much. *The Times*, with less than its usual perspicacity, declared that "it was of extreme interest from a psychological point of view."

William was no saint; there was a rather disagreeable story of a coloured girl brought home from the West Indies, who answered to the somewhat peculiar name of "Wowski," and whom William was reported to call "his mole" because "in sight of anyone she goes under immediately." But there may have been no truth in it; in accordance with the reputed customs of sailors—a libel, of course—Prince William Henry was credited with a wife—or two—in every port, and the scandal-sheets were always inserting waggish paragraphs about the love affairs of the Royal Tar; journalists, even in those days, had vivid imaginations.

Sometime during his stay in Hanover, however, William does appear to have had an amour; for a boy who, years later, claimed to be his son and was accepted by him as

such, was put into the Navy and lost in the *Blenheim*, as William wrote to Collingwood in 1808.

William returned from the Continent without acquiring much useful knowledge, unless he had, unknown to himself, learnt something from the King of Prussia about a sovereign's relations with his people, and was examined by the Board of Admiralty as to his qualifications for a lieutenancy. He had them all, of course, and his Papa must have been gratified to hear from Lord Howe, who presided, that his son "was every inch a sailor." He did a little of the usual summer cruising, was promoted captain in a month or two and put in command of the *Pegasus* frigate, twenty-eight guns.

On October 8, 1786, he cast anchor off Antigua, where he found his friend Nelson, who was commander of the station. They had liked each other at their earlier meeting; they now became bosom friends, dining at each other's table on alternate days, and having long and serious talks about the Service. Nelson was investigating abuses and introducing reforms on the station and meeting, naturally, with strong and bitter opposition. Prince William, with all his heart, supported him. Long afterwards William said: "It was then that I particularly observed the greatness of Nelson's superior mind. The manner in which he enforced the spirit of the Navigation Act first drew my attention to the commercial interests of my country. My mind took its first decided naval turn from this familiar intercourse with Nelson."

Reform is seldom popular, and Nelson's reforms were largely aimed at the pockets of dishonest agents. The Prince's support made him, too, unpopular with these pirates, and "the consequence was that slanders upon both, of those who had profited by abuses which they could no longer continue, were dealt with no sparing hand."

Nelson bore an unblemished reputation, and the Prince, in his company, appears to have behaved very well. "The Prince," wrote a West Indian merchant, "is quite the officer, never wearing any other dress than his uniform, and his star and garter only when receiving addresses or on any public occasion. He has not slept a night out of his ship since his arrival in these seas, until coming into English Harbour, where the ship's heaving down obliged him to be ashore."

If the Prince's susceptible heart troubled him nothing

was heard of it. Nelson was in love with Mrs. Nisbet, and wrote to her about his friend: "Our young Prince is a gallant man; he is indeed volatile, but always with great good-nature. There were two balls during his stay, and some of the old ladies were mortified that H.R.H. would not dance with them; but he says he is determined to enjoy the privilege of all other men, that of asking any lady he pleases. . . . I would, if possible or in my power, have no man near the Prince who can have the smallest impeachment as to character, for as an individual I love him, as a Prince I honour and revere him."

Captain Nelson also wrote to Captain Locker at this time: "He has his foibles as well as private men, but they are far outbalanced by his virtues. In his professional line, he is superior to near two-thirds, I am sure, of the list; and in attention to orders and respect to his superior officers, I know hardly his equal; this is what I have found him; some others, I have heard, will tell another story."

The "other story" would probably be heard from the officers of his own ship, and the reason for that Nelson supplied in another letter: "His Royal Highness keeps up strict discipline in his ship, and without paying him any compliment, she is one of the finest ordered frigates I have seen. He has more plague with his officers than enough. His first lieutenant will, I have no doubt, be broke. . . ."

There is, hateful as the notion is, a suspicion that Nelson was something of a snob; that accusation could certainly not be brought against Collingwood, who also approved the Prince and corresponded with him. Captain the Hon. William Cornwallis also thought well of William Henry. In a letter to Nelson he said:

"Our Royal Duke is, I hear, almost tired of the shore, but how he will be able to employ himself in time of peace at sea is not easy to determine. It would, however, be a pity that any of the zeal and fondness he has so evidently shown for the Service should be suffered to abate, as there is every reason to believe that with his ability he will one day carry its glory to a greater height than it has yet attained."

The trouble was evidently not due to Prince William, who had been docile as a junior officer and was, in the eyes of his peers, efficient as a commander. Nelson was always complaining about the deplorable condition into which the Navy had fallen; discipline, in particular, was unequally maintained; some commanders bullied, some were slack;

a "happy" ship, yet well-ordered, was the exception rather than the rule. There was on board the *Pegasus* a lieutenant named Schomberg who added to extreme touchiness of temper a personal dislike for his commander. The Prince rather took this business to heart, but Nelson regarded it as trivial, as indeed on the evidence it appears to be. William gave a not-very-important order which Mr. Schomberg failed to obey. The Prince noted it in Orders:

ENGLISH HARBOUR,
23rd January, 1787.

From Mr. Schomberg's neglecting to inform me yesterday of his sending a boat on shore, and Mr. Smollett doing the same, I think proper to recommend the reading over of these orders, with attention, to the Officers and Gentlemen, as, for the future, I shall make them accountable for their conduct in disobeying any commands or orders I may from time to time give out.

It was a not-very-severe reprimand for a not-very-grave offence. Mr. Schomberg chose to be affronted, and applied to Captain Nelson for a Court Martial. Nelson put him under arrest pending the calling of a Court. It was a wretched business, a storm in a nutshell. William Henry suffered great uneasiness of mind over "this miserable object," "this unhappy and deluded man." Mr. Schomberg seems to have been quite unforgivably insolent; when his Royal Highness, with whom Captain Nelson agreed, told him how wrong he was to write for a Court Martial on himself, Mr. Schomberg told him that every officer "who served under him must be broke, and the sooner he was from under his command the better." That tightening of discipline which Nelson believed to be so necessary was evidently unpopular; Schomberg, according to Nelson, had been troublesome before. The wretched business dragged on for months and greatly distressed William Henry. (It was eventually tactfully arranged by Commodore Alan Gardner at the Admiralty.)

The Prince was depressed on another account. On March 12, 1787, Nelson married Fanny Nisbet, who, he said, he was "morally certain will continue to make me a happy man for the rest of my days." William Henry insisted on standing the bride's father on the occasion; he said he "would be mortified if impediments were put in the way."

He added " that since he had been under Nelson's command he had been happy and that he was indeed sincere in his friendship."

Captain and Mrs. Nelson sailed for England and the spirits of the Prince were much depressed—his friendship for Nelson was deep and lasting ; indeed, it almost amounted to hero-worship. The effect on him was most odd ; the disciplinarian suddenly threw discipline overboard and set sail for Halifax without instructions. From Halifax, by way of punishment, he was ordered to go to Quebec. In Quebec he must inevitably have wintered ; disliking the prospect, he set sail for England.

The young gentleman's arrival in home waters in contravention of orders was reported to the Admiralty, whose First Lord—the " late " Lord Chatham as he was called from his " lying in bed half the day after playing but part of the preceding night "—sent off the intelligence to Windsor. His Papa was extremely angry with the culprit ; he, too, was a great believer in discipline. Peremptory orders were sent to the young gentleman to report at Plymouth ; he was forbidden to leave his ship, and was required to superintend her refitting as a preliminary to returning to the port from which he had sailed away. The sinner would probably have been more obedient had not his scapegrace brothers, the Prince of Wales and Frederick the Bishop, posted down to Plymouth to keep him company. Plymouth had a very merry season ; there were balls and pleasant excursions, and the smiles of charming Miss Wynn for William in disgrace. The papers jested about " the roses of Plymouth and Sweet William." Peter Pindar suddenly took an interest in the West Country :

Plymouth became

> " A town where, exiled by the higher pow'rs
> The Royal Tar with indignation lours ;
> Kept by his sire from London and from sin,
> To say his catechism to Mistress Wynn."

Then Nelson arrived to visit William and they talked about the reform of abuses on the West Indian station, and discussed what could be done about the matter ; the Admiralty, of course, was fast asleep with both ears stopped.

The Prince of Wales said that " William had run away with all the plain sense of the family." George, of course, may have wanted to borrow his money.

Prince William Henry was appointed to the *Andromeda*, where he found discipline as lax as it had been on the *Pegasus*. His passion for writing was usefully employed in transferring choice spirits from among the crew of the *Pegasus* to his new command, and in writing to demand pensions for deserving cases which came under his eye. As early as 1788 he was bickering with the Admiralty over Captain Nelson's authority to appoint officers, and remonstrating with My Lords about the slackness of a clerk who failed to acknowledge an important packet.

Prince William Henry's Letter Book in the *Andromeda*[1] contains some illuminating illustrations of his constant war with slackness and abuses of discipline.

Andromeda,
PLYMOUTH,
30th March, 1788.

From the shameful and unofficer-like conduct of Mr. —— towards Mr. —— last night, and from the very relaxed manner in which the Service is carried on by the rest of the gentlemen it is my positive orders that none of the gentlemen sleep out of the ship till they behave themselves with diligence and obedience in their stations.

W.

Andromeda. At sea,
4th August, 1788.

From the scandalous and disgraceful laziness of the gentlemen it is my positive orders and directions that the Officer of the Watch at sea, and the officer carrying on the duty at an anchor do at six bells in the morning send down the day mate to have the hammocks of the gentlemen lashed up and taken down ready to be immediately brought up when they are piped up. In future the hammocks to be up in ten minutes from the first pipe up, and down in five after being piped down.

W.

Prince William Henry, taking his punishment like a man, returned to Halifax without protests or grumbles, but being in disgrace himself did not make him lenient towards other

[1] Preserved at the Record Office.

National Portrait Gallery

HORATIO NELSON
After L. F. Abbott.

offenders. He met officers ashore at Halifax in improper dress and gave them a wigging. He dealt with presumption :

HALIFAX,
Sept., 1788.

No person to presume to put a fishing-line overboard without the Captain's leave first obtained.

W.

But he looked after the interests of his men :

THE CAPTAIN OF THE *DIDO*,
SENIOR CAPTAIN AT HALIFAX, N.S.,
27th August, 1788.

Whereas H.R.H. Prince William Henry, Captain of H.M.S. the *Andromeda*, has represented to me by letter of this day's date that there is a quantity of Bread, Butter and Cheese on board His Majesty's said ship, Mouldy, Rotten, Rancid, Stinking, and unfit for men to eat :

You are therefore hereby required and directed to repair on board the said ship and take a strict and careful survey of the Provisions thus complained of, and if found as represented you are to see the Bread and Cheese thrown overboard into the Sea and to leave the Butter in charge of the Purser to be returned into store.

THE MASTERS OF H.M. SHIPS *DIDO* AND *RESOURCE*.

William was still abroad at the time of the debates on the Regency Bill and so took no part in the shameful intrigues of his brother. When he returned his father was convalescent, and he was in time for the national rejoicing, during which he was advanced to the dignity of the Dukedom of Clarence. William, however, though he had taken no active part in the shocking treatment of his father, was always devoted to his brother George. During the festivities he sat with George and Fred, apart from the rest of the royal family ; the three adopted as their slogan " United for Ever."

" The Prince of Wales," says Huish, " led his brother Clarence any way he liked." He led him into some very disreputable but rather obscure financial scrapes. (Huish has pages and pages about this, probably inaccurate, but certainly exhaustive and exceedingly dull.)

As a pendant to his peerage William was given quarters

in St. James's Palace, with a table and covers, the number of courses to be limited (Could his mutton-loving papa have thought him greedy ?), and £12,000 a year. Twelve thousand pounds a year, doubtless, seemed a great deal to the simple sailor ; George and Fred, whose credit was extremely bad—Fred's indeed was non-existent—persuaded him to sign documents which already bore their signatures. It seems doubtful if William himself benefited by the transactions, but he was certainly involved in the Prince's disgraceful attempts to raise loans and his later repudiation of them. William's financial affairs at this time are just as obscure as they were later when the scurrilous Press tried to drag them all into the light of day. Whether he was guilty of knavery or simply muddle it is, on the evidence provided, quite impossible to say.

He was given a country house at Richmond, Clarence Lodge, which was to be furnished and kept up for him. It was on the edge of the Old Deer Park and three or four steps led up to a narrow door which, Horace Walpole said, " the Duke himself locked up every night that his servants should not stay out late." Horace appears to have liked him : " My neighbour, the Duke of Clarence, is so popular that if Richmond were a borough, and he had not attained his title, he would certainly be elected there. He pays his bills regularly himself and never drinks but a few glasses of wine."

The report was equally favourable a year later : " The Duke of Clarence is here (at Richmond) and every night at Mrs. Bouverie's, Lady Di's, at home, or at the Duke of Queensberry's, with suppers that finish at 12. . . . The hours in London are not half so reasonable as those of this young prince, who never drinks or games, and is extremely good-humoured and well-bred."

Clarence Lodge was soon damaged by fire and the Duke took Ivy House on the river-bank above the ferry at Richmond. Mr. Walpole, of course, noted the change of address : " The Duke of Clarence has taken Mr. Henry Hobart's house point-blank over against Mr. Cambridge's," he wrote to Miss Berry, " which will make the good woman of the mansion cross herself piteously, and stretch the throat of the blatant beast at Sudbrook[1] and of all the pious matrons *à la ronde*, for H.R.H. to divert loneliness has brought with him Polly Finch, who, being still more averse to solitude,

[1] This was Lady Greenwich.

declares that any tempter would make even Paradise more agreeable than a constant *tête-à-tête.*"

Polly, who was young and lively, was " sprung from the Lord knows whom, and born the Lord knows where " ; she had, alas, an uncultivated mind, for, according to that arch-gossip, Lord Glenbervie, she quitted William Henry " because she could not persevere in hearing him read *The Lives of the Admirals.* She had borne this through one half of the work, but finding that as much remained, her patience sank under it, and a quarrel and separation ensued."

William speedily tired of life on shore, as Captain Cornwallis had prophesied he would. He was anxious to go to sea again, but, alas, his career as a naval officer on active service was over. Some stupid, obstinate idea took root in the poor King's clouded brain ; the young man of twenty-five, who had been so happy at sea and had shown so much promise, was henceforth doomed to a life of inactivity. It was a most lamentable error of judgment. There was nothing left for the Royal Tar but to forward the affairs of the Navy as well as he could ashore. The Admiralty treated him with the same indifference as his father ; his efforts to secure promotion, or even employment, for his friends, were seldom successful ; he could not get a ship for Nelson, and when Lord Rodney died, though William was able to make an enthusiastic speech about him in the House of Lords, his influence at the Admiralty was not great enough to secure promotion for Rodney's son. He was luckier in a second application for a ship for Nelson, or perhaps Nelson had impressed even the Admiralty as a man it would be foolish to ignore. Nelson went to sea in the *Agamemnon,* but all William's passionate entreaties to be allowed to serve at sea on the outbreak of the war with France were refused.

After making a rather rambling speech on the shocking excesses of revolutionists in France he wrote to the Admiralty :

CLARENCE LODGE,
March 15th, 1794.

MY LORDS,

At a time when this country is engaged in a war with a powerful and active enemy, whose great aim appears to be the subversion of all the ancient monarchies of Europe, it becomes every man who values the Constitution under which he enjoys so many blessings, to rally round the throne,

and protect it from the dangers by which it is so imminently threatened. Conscious that during my naval career, I never committed an act which could tarnish the honour of the flag under which it was my pride and glory to fight, I solicit in this hour of peril to my country that employment in her service which every subject is bound to seek, and particularly myself, considering the exalted rank which I hold in the country, and the cause which it is my duty to maintain and defend. I regard a refusal of that employment as a tacit acknowledgment of my incapacity, and which cannot fail to degrade me in the opinion of the public, who, from the conduct which has been pursued towards me, are justified in drawing a conclusion unfavourable to my professional character, on account of the very marked neglect which has been shown towards every application on my part which has been transmitted to your lordships to be employed in the service of my country. If the rank which I hold in the Navy operates as an impediment to my obtaining the command of a ship without that of a squadron being attached to it, I will willingly relinquish that rank, under which I had formerly the command of a ship, and serve as a volunteer on board any ship to which it may please your lordships to appoint me. All I require is active service, and that when my gallant countrymen are fighting the cause of their country and their sovereign, I may not have the imputation thrown upon me of living a life of inglorious ease, when I ought to be in the front of danger.

WILLIAM.

A letter which does great credit to the young man's heart and patriotism, even if it leaves something to be desired on the score of brevity. My Lords, perhaps, found it too long to read in such strenuous times; they took not the slightest notice of it.

William complained bitterly to his father:

March 24th, 1794.

SIR,

On the 15th of this month I addressed a letter to the Lords of the Admiralty, of which I transmit you a copy, soliciting from them that employment in the service of my country to which my rank and character entitle me. To neglect they have added insult, inasmuch as they have withheld from me even that courtesy which is due to every

individual who makes a respectful tender of his services at a momentous period like the present, when everything that is valuable to an Englishman is at stake, and the throne on which you sit is endangered by the machination of regicides and revolutionists. As in this treatment of the Lords of the Admiralty my character as a naval officer becomes seriously implicated, I am emboldened to make this request to my royal father, soliciting from him that he will be pleased to issue his commands to the Lords of the Admiralty to grant me that employment which I desire, or publicly to state the grounds on which their refusal is founded.

WILLIAM.

It was useless; George III's obstinate mind was made up. He had to content himself with reading naval history, in which he was extremely well informed, and in taking an interest in such reforms as were not completely condemned by the Admiralty.

There was not, in Prince William's youth, a single school in which naval architecture was taught. In some articles published in the *European Magazine* Mr. Sewell, the bookseller of Cornhill (a very odd sort of person for the task, surely?) called the attention of the public to the fact that France had schools in almost all her principal ports for study of the subject. The Duke of Clarence had observed the superiority of French ships for himself, and threw himself with enthusiasm into the question of forming a society under his patronage for the improvement of English naval architecture. All his efforts failed to interest the Admiralty, and much to his chagrin, the Society was dissolved almost before it had begun to exist. Happily the idea was revived later, when Lord Spencer was at the head of naval affairs, and the Duke had the felicity of seeing a Board of Naval Architecture formed under the direction of the Admiralty itself.

His passion for the Navy never left him; his interest in naval affairs was always cordial and intelligent; he kept up a constant and lengthy correspondence with Nelson, Collingwood, and other heroes of the sea; Nelson came to see him at Bushey; he was always at his best and happiest when in the company of other tars. He had been a sailor, a real sailor, for over ten years; the experience and training had left indelible marks upon him. The evil results of their earlier education were never eradicated from his brothers;

William escaped the worst of them; his vices were no more than skin-deep. The squib writers, later, called him an arm-chair sailor; there was no justification for the jibe. He would have been a real sailor all his life had it been allowed; there was no tittle of justification for calling him a coward. Huish says: "He had been bred up in a good school when serving in the Navy. He was accustomed to see things with his own eyes, call them by their plain names, submit to his superiors and self-denial, and judge by matter of fact, not prejudice. His Royal Highness was untutored in the chicanery of a Court, and saw nothing through that jaundiced medium; it was from this cause the Court had no sympathy with him and he lay so long in the background."

Huish is probably right, but a little of his difficulty with the Court possibly consisted in that desire to call "things by their plain names." There is no doubt that William Henry did so, and brought many blushes to less frank cheeks; his language was appalling, and, with the utmost zest, he told very racy tales in mixed company. The more correct, or prudish, avoided his presence; at Court his blunt manners were both an embarrassment and an entertainment. Fanny Burney has a sprightly tale of how he routed her bitter enemy, the Schwellenberg, that wicked old German woman whom everyone but the Queen hated and feared:

> "Off Schwellenberg, thou lean, old, wicked cat,
> Restless and spitting, biting, mewing, mean,
> Thou shalt not in my chimney corner squat,
> Thou shalt not, harridan, be queen;
> Off to thy country by the map forgot,
> Where tyranny and famine curse the spot."

Prince William disliked her and her stiff manners as much as Fanny Burney did; he was heard to say "that she deserved a round dozen before all the pages of the back stairs."

Fanny Burney was very amusing about Prince William: "At dinner Mrs. Schwellenberg presided, attired magnificently. Miss Goldsworthy, Mrs. Stainforth, Messrs. De Luc and Stanhope dined with us; and while we were still eating fruit the Duke of Clarence entered. He was just risen from the King's table, and waiting for his equipage to go home and prepare for the ball. To give you an idea of the energy of His Royal Highness's language, I ought to set apart a

general objection to writing, or rather intimating, certain forcible words, and beg leave to show you in genuine colours a royal sailor. We all rose of course upon his entrance, and the two gentlemen placed themselves behind their chairs, while the footmen left the room; but he ordered us all to sit down and called the men back to hand about some wine. He was in exceeding high spirits and in the utmost good-humour. He placed himself at the head of the table, next Mrs. Schwellenberg, and looked remarkably well, gay, and full of sport and mischief, yet clever withal as well as comical.

"Well, this is the first day I have ever dined with the King at St. James's on his birthday. Pray have you all drunk His Majesty's health?"

"No, your Roy'l Highness; your Roy'l Highness might make dem do dat," said Mrs. Schwellenberg.

"Oh, by —— will I. Here, you (to the footman) bring champagne. I'll drink the King's health again, if I die for it. Yet, I have done pretty well already; so has the King I promise you. I believe His Majesty was never taken such good care of before. We have kept his spirits up, I promise you; we have enabled him to go through his fatigues; and I should have done more still, but for the ball and Mary—I have promised to dance with Mary."

Champagne being now brought for the Duke, he ordered it all round. When it came to me I whispered to Westerhaults to carry it on; the Duke slapped his hand violently on the table, and called out, "Oh, by —— you shall drink it."

There was no resisting this. We all stood up and the Duke sonorously gave the royal toast.

"And now," cried he, making us all sit down again, "where are my rascals of servants? I shan't be in time for the ball; besides I've got a deuced tailor waiting to fix on my epaulette. Here, you, go and see for my servants. D'ye hear? Scamper off."

Off ran William.

"Come let's have the King's health again. De Luc, drink it. Here champagne to De Luc."

"I wish you could have seen Mr. De Luc's mixed simper—half pleased, half alarmed. However the wine came and he drank it, the Duke taking a bumper for himself at the same time.

"Poor Stanhope," cried he. "Stanhope shall have a glass, too. Here, champagne. What are you all about? Why don't you give champagne to poor Stanhope?"

Mr. Stanhope, with great pleasure, complied, and the Duke again accompanied him.

"Come hither, do you hear?" cried the Duke to the servants, and on the approach, slow and submissive, of Mrs. Stainforth's man, he hit him a violent slap on the back, calling out, "Hang you, why don't you see for my rascals?"

Away flew the man, and he then called out to Westerhaults, "Hark'ee bring another glass of champagne to Mr. De Luc."

Mr. De Luc knows these royal youths too well to venture so vain an experiment as disputing with them; so he only shrugged his shoulders and drank the wine. The Duke did the same.

"And now, poor Stanhope. Give another glass to poor Stanhope, d'ye hear?"

"Is not your Royal Highness afraid," cried Mr. Stanhope, displaying the full circle of his borrowed teeth, "I shall be apt to be rather up in the world, as the folks say, if I tope on at this rate?"

"Not at all, you can't get drunk in a better cause. I'd get drunk myself if it was not for the ball. Here, champagne. Another glass for the philosopher. I keep sober for Mary."

"Oh, your Royal Highness," cried Mr. De Luc, gaining courage as he drank, "you will make me quite droll of it if you make me go on—quite droll."

"So much the better, so much the better. It will do you a monstrous deal of good. Here, another glass of champagne for the Queen's philosopher."

Mr. De Luc obeyed and the Duke then addressed Mrs. Schwellenberg's George. "Here, you, you, why, where is my carriage? Run and see, do you hear?"

Off hurried George, grinning irrepressibly.

"If it was not for that deuced tailor, I would not stir."

After a few more drinks Mrs. Schwellenberg, who had sat laughing and happy all this time, now grew alarmed, and said, "Your Royal Highness I am afraid for de ball."

"Hold your potato-jaw, my dear," cried the Duke, patting her; but recollecting himself, he took her hand and pretty abruptly kissed it, and then flinging it hastily away, laughed loud and called out: "There that will make amends for anything, so now I may say what I will. So here a glass of champagne for the Queen's philosopher and the Queen's gentleman usher. Hang me if it will not do them a monstrous deal of good."

Here news was brought that the equipage was in order. He started up, calling out: "Now, then, for my deuced tailor."

"Oh, your Royal Highness," cried Mr. De Luc, in a tone of expostulation, "now you have made us droll, you go."

Off, however, he went. And is it not a curious scene? All my amaze is, how any of their heads bore such libations.

William's head must have borne many such libations. Deprived of his career he joined his brothers in sampling the pleasures of the Town; the royal rantipoles had high jinks at Brighton; they drank and they gamed and were uproarious and dissolute. Since his brothers were extravagant, the simple Tar must be extravagant, too. Thinking his apartments at St. James's too dingy he had them redecorated, and the *Gazetteer* suggested that he must have taken lessons from Old Q., for he had a door opened in the outer wall of the parlour under his bedroom, which was painted to look like bricks, and of which William alone had a key. There may have been no harm in it, but the Town was talking. This time the talk had some foundation; William's susceptible heart had come to anchor at last.

CHAPTER II

" LITTLE PICKLE "

ALL the world of fashion went to the theatre to see a new play or new actress when the Duke of Clarence was young. Drury Lane, with Sheridan as manager, captured most of the stars. Gothic romance, and a rather Gothic style of acting, were in fashion. Mr. Sheridan, as might be expected, did not care greatly for such popular " thrillers " as ' Monk ' Lewis's " Castle Spectre." Sherry was witty on the subject :

" I will bet you, Mr. Sheridan, a very large sum," ' Monk ' Lewis once said, " I will bet you what you owe me as manager for my ' Castle Spectre.' "

" I never make large bets," retorted Sheridan. " But I will lay you a very small one ; I will bet you what it's worth."

Farcical comedy was not modish ; people went to the theatre to have their blood curdled, to shiver, to gasp, to weep, to faint. Mrs. Siddons dominated the stage, and her gifts, though superlative, were not light. It seemed that her pre-eminence could not be seriously challenged when, in October 1785, Dorothy Jordan came to Town.

She was put up as a rival attraction to the great tragedienne, and in a very short time had made comedy the mode.

" She came to town with no report in her favour to raise her above a very moderate salary," said Mrs. Inchbald. " But she displayed such consummate Art, with such bewitching good nature, such excellent acting and such innocent simplicity that her auditors were boundless in their plaudits."

It must have been a relief after hearing Mrs. Siddons being tragic over the purchase of a yard of calico to laugh uproariously with the Jordan over such catchy ditties as this from " The Poor Soldier " :

"How happy the soldier who lives on his pay
And spends half a crown out of sixpence a day.
Yet fears neither justices, warrants, or bums
But pays all his debts with the roll of his drums.
With a row de dow."

The critics compared her to Peg Woffington and Kitty Clive. Happily for Dorothy Mrs. Siddons' haughtiness of manner offended people, and Sheridan loved laughter. "Mrs. Jordan's laughter is the happiest and most natural thing on the stage," wrote Leigh Hunt. "If she is to laugh in the middle of a speech, it does not separate itself so abruptly from her words as with most of our performers . . . and when you expect it no longer it sparkles forth at little intervals as recollection revives it, like a flame from half-smothered embers. This is the laughter of the feelings, and it is the predominance of heart in all she says and does that renders her the most delightful actress."

Sheridan was delighted with her. She went from success to success, and, lest life should be too sweet, it was made lively for them all by her bickerings with Mrs. Siddons and the Kembles. However, as Tate Wilkinson had been in the habit of saying: "A little pique and jealousy among the ladies of his party was wont to prevent indisposition and make them do their best."

Mrs. Jordan was enchanted with her success and followed it up shrewdly. She had a lively appreciation of the value of friends on the newspapers and of a publicity agent. (The *Morning Post* of December 14, 1786, mentions "the mercenary of a certain actress.")

The favour in which she stood was shown by the presentation of a purse of £300 from Brooks's. "The Whigs of that day," said Boaden, her biographer, drily, "had a very strong personal attachment to their principles; they loved the principles sometimes for the men and the men frequently for their principles. Burgoyne being attached to the Earl of Derby, they supported ardently "The Heiress" and Miss Farren. Mrs. Jordan also received the support of the Whigs on Sheridan's account.

Her private life was not quite as satisfactory as her public one. It was certainly not her fault that she came to Town with a tarnished reputation. There had been an unhappy incident with "that villain Daly," a notorious scoundrel, in Dublin, when she was still a child. She had fled from him, but handicapped with a baby. The new star

was, without doubt, pestered by those who considered it a ridiculous affectation in an actress to be chaste. It is possible, though not proved, that she was not always obdurate to pleadings before she met Richard Ford. Of Ford Boaden says: "I never knew a man of whom there is so little to tell. I asked men of his own standing at the bar, and on the bench, their recollections of Ford. They knew him, as I did, personally, but he had impressed their minds as a fly would their hands—they had just shaken it, and it was gone."

He made more impression than that on Dorothy Jordan; it is indeed probable that she really loved him. He attended her, not too much in the background, as a husband, or as nearly a husband as an eighteenth-century actress had any right to expect. He allowed her to call herself Mrs. Ford and to bear him four children to add to the daughter by Daly who headed her family. She was passionately maternal, not only to her children but to other members of her family who hung themselves like millstones about her neck. She earned a good salary, but they drained her of it. She was always too generous to save.

She had not been a month in Town before the Prince of Wales, that inveterate theatre-goer, had seen her in "The Country Girl." He went again with his uncle Cumberland. Lord North indulged in one of his honest laughs at her. The King and Queen next year saw her in both "The Country Girl" and "The Romp," and were "highly entertained with her pert humour." Perhaps Prince William Henry saw her in that year, but being hurried back to sea forgot her.

Triumph succeeded triumph. In the winter of 1788 she appeared as Beatrice in "The Pannel" and, to the delight of the audience, sang:

> "Ah why, when I try your affection to move,
> Are you deaf to my sighs and my tears?
> Perhaps it was right to dissemble your love,
> But why did you kick me downstairs?"

In 1789 the Duke of Cumberland was seen "in close confab." with her. "Such a union of wisdom and elegance has seldom been observed," remarked a journalist with his tongue in his cheek.

In March 1790 Mrs. Jordan appeared for the first time in the farce "The Spoil'd Child." She took the part of "Little Pickle" and stole the Duke of Clarence's very susceptible heart.

The farce was one which would naturally appeal to the Duke's sense of humour; the hero played a series of practical jokes, substituted his aunt's parrot for the pheasant on the spit, sewed together with needle and thread a country couple, removed a chair suddenly from behind an old gentleman, and much more of such delicious waggery.

The Royal Tar was often at Drury Lane; he was living at Petersham Lodge again when Mrs. Jordan played at Richmond in 1791, and he immediately laid siege to her. The Town—it was the Silly Season—took note of it at once:

"Little Pickle has been besieged at Richmond," said the *Morning Post* of July 15th, "by a certain exalted youth, whom at present she has managed to keep at bay."

"We hear from Richmond that an illustrious youth has at length passed the Ford, yet is not likely to be pickled by a legal process," was a later report.

How much more entertaining the *Morning Post* was allowed to be then!

Mrs. Jordan was—there can be no doubt of it—unwilling to sever her connexion with the father of most of her children, who, she still hoped, would keep his half-promise to marry her. Richard Ford was reluctant to give her up, but even more reluctant to take any definite step towards keeping her; *he* was not bound, but *she* was not to consider herself free. The end of the business was a sordid arrangement between the three of them, an arrangement in which William did not play the blackest part. He was the only one of the three to bring an honest emotion into it, for he was in love with her, and for that reason bought her from Richard Ford, who in course of time became Police Magistrate and Sir Richard Ford.

As far as Dorothy Jordan was concerned there can be little doubt that the change was made largely for the children's sake. Since Ford was obdurate about marriage and difficult in temper her hold on him was very precarious; the Royal Duke was not only ardent but tender. He promised to settle a handsome allowance on her, and, it cannot be doubted, had the attraction which any youthful Prince of royal blood, not positively repulsive, must have for an actress with a tarnished reputation and a future to consider.

On October 11th the *Morning Post* told the Town:

"The comic Syren of the Old Drury has abandoned her quondam mate for the superior attractions of a Royal

Lodge, to which Little Pickle was long invited. This movement the Gossip Fame had for some time anticipated, but it was not until Saturday last that she quitted the comforts which a private situation could af-FORD."

Another gossip had: "Little Pickle's assumed character of the Tar was a prelude only to her future nautical fame; for, though pressed into the Service, she has consented, we find, to be close moored under the guns of the Royal Commodore."

When she appeared in "The Spoil'd Child," the line "What girl but loves the merry Tar" excited uproarious laughter.

They settled down at Petersham Lodge, as far as it could be called settled, for Mrs. Jordan acted with even more vigour than before. There were occasional outbreaks of hostility from the public, but, on the whole, she lost nothing of her popularity. The shafts of satire were, for the most part, aimed at the Duke. The *Bon Ton* and other periodicals of that high class, asserted that the Duke was so short of money that he collected Mrs. Jordan's salary in person and even took it in advance. Peter Pindar inquired:

> "As Jordan's high and mighty squire
> Her playhouse profits deigns to skim;
> Some folks audaciously inquire:
> If he keeps her, or she keeps him?"

The caricaturists found the royal love affair a godsend, and skits of varying degrees of vulgarity entertained the Town. The title of Duchess was bestowed on her by the Press, with several funny stories; the cartoonists showed her with Mrs. Fitzherbert in "The Pot calling the Kettle Black."

Mr. Ford, caught in the flood of lampoons, joined the band of poor Dorothy's enemies.

She and her Duke settled down to a life of "blameless irregularity" which lasted for twenty years. In spite of cartoonists and lampooners ever on the watch no real scandal was ever talked of either of them. They were both naturally domestic and devoted to children. William's "step-children"—to be euphemistic—were lodged in the neighbourhood, and their mother saw them when and as she liked. Sometimes, of course, there was a hint of disagreement. In 1796, for instance, that industrious collector of scandal, Lord Glenbervie, had a pretty little tale: "The report at Richmond is that the Duke of Clarence has dismissed Mrs.

Jordan with a handsome annuity, much to her satisfaction. She is said to have taken umbrage at his very marked attentions to Mrs. Horsley (sister-in-law of the Bishop of Rochester) this autumn and winter, attentions which have not escaped the observation of that populous and gossiping neighbourhood. The Duke's idle and indiscreet abuse of the war and the characters and conduct of His Majesty's Ministers, particularly Mr. Pitt, in every promiscuous company, at balls, to women, young officers and boys, is a matter of scandal and discomfort. The Prince is much with him."

The Duke, naturally, like his favourite brother, was a Whig, and disliked Mr. Pitt. Lord Glenbervie followed up the scandal with an eager interest in details:

"At the last ball given by Lady Darell about a fortnight ago, at which the Prince of Wales was present and, as usual, the Duke of Clarence and the family of the Stadtholder, Mrs. Jordan came into the orchestra muffled up and with a long close veil over her face."

She apparently made a scene and threatened to leave the Duke, but he followed her home and they made up the quarrel. Mrs. Horsley expressed "her surprise and vexation to the Anguishes at the report concerning her and says she intends to part with her house at Richmond and go abroad."

A few months later in a conversation with "Mrs. Sutton of Molesey" the Duke said:

"Mrs. Jordan is a very good creature, very domestic and careful of the children. To be sure she is absurd sometimes, and has her humours. But there are such things more or less in all families. I daresay you and Mr. Sutton have your little disputes. To be sure she made a strange foolish business last summer (relative to the jealousy of Mrs. Horsley) but then she repented and was sorry for it. You heard of it, I daresay? "

For twenty years, except for some Parliamentary speeches, which astonished the world, and a revival of jests every time a new babe was added to his quiverful, the Duke lived in comfortable obscurity. It is really astonishing how seldom he is mentioned in the letters and memoirs of his contemporaries, which are full of his brothers' doings. He visited and entertained his neighbours, but the fashionable world saw almost nothing of him. He was sometimes at Brighton, sometimes at Carlton House, but the Court ignored him.

The new babies were announced in this delicate way: "Mrs. Jordan is shortly expecting to produce something,

whether a young Admiral or a Pickle Duchess it is impossible yet to tell." When she was ill no one could be more attentive than the Duke: "I have hitherto been prevented answering you by attending Mrs. Jordan, who has been very ill indeed," he apologised to a friend.

When old Lady North died in 1797 the Duke was made Ranger of Bushey Park and moved to Bushey House, the home which he always loved more than any other place on earth.

When Lord Liverpool told Charles Townshend that the Duke of Clarence had got Bushey Park, Mr. Townshend said that he thought the King was prudish on the point of kept mistresses living in his houses. Lord Liverpool said, "Things are altered, and the Duke of Clarence has managed so well that the King jokes with him about Mrs. Jordan," said Lord Glenbervie.

Bushey House was built in the time of William and Mary and was of mellow red brick, surrounded by gardens and set in the Park. Mrs. Jordan's other children were boarded near her and at Bushey most of the Fitzclarences were born and brought up. The Duke was kind to her family. Frances Daly and the Ford children ran in and out of his house. Dorothy's sister stayed with her from time to time, and an aunt was invited by the Duke "to come and enjoy the fresh eggs, butter and cream. Remember we dine at five."

Dorothy herself asked her friends to stay with her: "The dear good Duke desires me to say that he shall be the first to welcome you."

It was evidently a pleasant, if rather dull, house to visit: there was little to tempt the hunters for details of gilded iniquity. Mrs. Jordan, however, in the intervals of child-bearing, continued her career as a popular actress. She was still connected with Drury Lane Theatre when it was burnt down and poor Sherry, called from the House to watch his ruin, sat sipping his wine with a bon mot, "May not a man drink by his own fireside?"

Mrs. Jordan also frequently went on provincial "cruises" while the Duke went down to Brighton to stay with the Prince. On one such occasion Mr. Creevey saw him achieve the considerable feat of out-drinking the "Jockey" of Norfolk, after the Prince had given up the attempt. The joke was apparently carried too far and the Duke of Norfolk was affronted.

"Stay after everyone is gone to-night, Mr. Creevey,"

MRS. JORDAN IN "THE COUNTRY GIRL"
After Romney.

said the Prince. "The Jockey's got sulky, and I must give him a broiled bone to get him in a good humour again."

"So, of course, I stayed," says Mr. Creevey. "And about one o'clock the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Clarence, the Duke of Norfolk and myself sat down to a supper of broiled bones, the result of which was that, having fallen asleep myself, I was awoke by the sound of the Duke of Norfolk's snoring. I found the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Clarence in a very animated discussion as to the particular shape and make of the wig worn by George II."

William seldom took so active a part in his brother's entertainments. He was reported as sitting next to George at many a dinner, as shutting the gates of Carlton House when a curious mob grew obstreperous, occasionally as making a speech, but apparently no one took much notice of him or listened to anything he said except—once more Mr. Creevey is the authority—on the occasion of the famous fight between Gully and the Game Chicken. The Duke of Clarence was present at it, and as the battle, from the interference of the Magistrates, was fought at a greater distance from Brighton than was intended, the Duke was very late and did not arrive until dinner was nearly over.

"Gully was beaten that day by the Chicken, as I have reason to remember," says Mr. Creevey sadly. "Lord Thurlow and myself being the two first to arrive before dinner, he asked if I had heard any account of the fight. I repeated what I had heard in the streets, viz. that Gully had given the Chicken so tremendous a knock-down blow at starting, that the latter had never answered to him; so when the Duke of Clarence came and told us that Gully was beat, old Thurlow growled out from his end of the table —"Mr. Creevey, I think an action would lie against you by the Chicken for taking away his character."

The law against prize fighting seems to have been much like the present law against street betting, in England, and prohibition in the U.S.A., no one, not even a Royal Duke, regarded it.

In spite of his seclusion the Duke was evidently taking an interest in his country's serious affairs.

He did not lose his interest in the theatre after he had become so much indebted to it. He detected Ireland's forgery of the pseudo-Shakespearean "Vortigern" and had under his direct patronage Master Betty, the "Young Roscius," who was all the rage.

Perhaps it was his connexion with the theatre which made the Duke yearn to shine on another stage. He began quite early to make speeches in the Lords; they were not as a rule very good speeches, and it was generally a pity that he made them, but they show that he was taking an interest in his country's business, setting his mind to work, and doing some active thinking about other affairs than his own. His interest in politics was not, like his brother's, a purely party one inspired by a desire to wound the King. Clarence had a good deal to say about the Slave Trade and made himself unpopular by defending the slave owners; this, if it did little credit to his head did a good deal to his heart; he had been most hospitably treated by the West Indian planters, he had seen on their estates great gaiety and happiness and had not been capable of reasoning that these were gala occasions and that life on plantations was not always a holiday. Loyalty to his friends and hosts made him point out that "having served for some time on the West India station he had had frequent opportunities of being an eye-witness of the treatment of negro slaves, and he was able and ready to prove, whenever he was called upon, that the conduct observed towards negroes was not contrary to any one principle of humanity and justice." He thought that "the bringing of slaves from the slave coast, where they were treated with shocking barbarity, was a blessing instead of an evil." He also considered "that the abolition of slavery would ruin commerce." So far his reasoning, not very enlightened, was in agreement with that of many others, but in a subsequent debate he made some very odd remarks: "The complexion of slaves," he said, "is the obstacle to every redress; their complexion is suitable to the climate; that alone is a host against superior European discipline and knowledge."

Mr. Wilberforce had been very eloquent about slaves; he had stirred many hearts in which flowed the milk of human kindness. Sydney Smith had even gone so far as to give Wilberforce his vote "on account of his good conduct in Africa, a place returning no members to Parliament, but still, from the extraordinary resemblance its inhabitants bear to human creatures, of some consequence."

The Duke was with the unpopular minority; a caricaturist represented him leading a train of negroes in chains, whilst in the background were exhibited the various methods of

inflicting punishment on the refractory slaves, especially on the women.

In 1800, during the discussion of the Divorce Bill, the Duke delivered a course of lectures in the Lords on the wickedness of adultery, and, in the presence of his elder brother, described an adulterer as "an insidious and designing villain, who would ever be held in disgrace and abhorrence by an enlightened and civilized society." The speech was sensible but would have been better unmade by a young gentleman who hurried home from the House to the comfort of Mrs. Jordan's loving arms.

The satirists, of course, made the most of it, but it does not seem to have led to any coolness between him and George.

It was on matters that affected the Navy that the Duke was at his best. He gave a moving tribute to the memory of Rodney, and ended modestly: "I trust this House will pardon my expatiating on the virtue and great professional merits of my departed friend, for which myself and every officer of the British Navy entertain the highest respect and veneration."

He supported Lord St. Vincent in most of his measures, particularly in the reform of the naval arsenals. In the Parliamentary debates on St. Vincent William was heated in his defence and had several skirmishes with the Chancellor, Lord Eldon, who treated him with scant courtesy. Clarence, of course, was a trial to old Eldon, for he *would* digress into an historic view of his subject from the time of Elizabeth.

All the time he was corresponding with Nelson. When his hero came home, after losing his arm, William welcomed him warmly, carried him off to Bushey until he was recovered in health, presented him to the King and went with him in grand procession to St. Paul's to deposit the captured colours.

The death of his friend affected the Prince profoundly. He made a long and genuinely moving speech in the Lords. He wrote to Captain Hargood: "You knew well my attachment and friendship for him, and you may therefore easily conceive what I must have felt, at the moment of the most brilliant victory, to lose my friend, covered with glory, and entitled to the first honours of a grateful country. I did not think it possible, but for one of my dearest relations, to have felt what I have, and what I still do, for poor Nelson."

The bullet which killed Nelson was brought by the surgeon to the Duke, who always treasured it. He asked Mrs.

Damer to make him a cast in plaster of Lord Nelson's bust. More than twenty years later he wanted another bust of his hero to place on a pedestal made out of the mast of the *Victory*.

When Nelson was gone he transferred a little of the admiration he had given him to Collingwood, " the bosom friend of my ever to be lamented Nelson. . . . I am most seriously interested in all your operations, and must be allowed to be a sincere friend and well-wisher to the Navy."

The Duke was only allowed to be a well-wisher to the Navy from the safe seclusion of Bushey. He turned farmer, and assured Captain Wright, " I believe officers of the Navy make the best, as they are always active. . . . As a farmer, I am well aware of the necessity of the presence of the master, but at this time of year, when the harvest is going on, he ought not to be absent a minute, except half an hour at breakfast, and an hour to dinner. I never am out of the field the whole day."

With his farm and his garden and his children the Duke stayed his hunger for the sea. He sometimes emerged with his family for a moment into the limelight. He danced at a ball with Lady Katherine North, wife of Lord Glenbervie, who complained that she was not so active as formerly.

" Ay, Ma'am, you and I have families," agreed the Duke, " and that brings care and trouble with it."

Lady Glenbervie was still able to dance eight years later, however, for she gave a party, and " among the company was the Duke of Clarence and his eldest son by Mrs. Jordan, Master Fitzclarence, a fine boy of eleven with a promising countenance. His care of these children and marked affection for them is certainly very amiable."

There was also the famous party of 1806. *The Courier* published an account of it :

" The Duke of Clarence's birthday was celebrated with much splendour in Bushey Park on Thursday. The grand hall was entirely new fitted up with bronze pilasters, and various marble imitations ; the ceiling was correctly clouded, and the whole illuminated with some brilliant patent lamps suspended from a beautiful eagle. The pleasure ground was disposed for the occasion, and the servants had new liveries. In the morning the bands of the Dukes of York and Kent arrived in caravans ; after dressing themselves, and dining, they went into the pleasure grounds, and played alternately

some charming pieces. About five o'clock the Prince of Wales, the Dukes of York, Kent, Sussex, and Cambridge, Colonel Paget, etc., arrived from reviewing the German Legion. After they had dressed for dinner, they walked in the pleasure grounds accompanied by the Lord Chancellor, Earl and Countess of Athlone and daughter, Lord Leicester, Baron Hotham and lady, Baron Eden, the Attorney-General, Colonels Paget and M'millon, Serjeant Marshall, and a number of other persons. At seven o'clock, the second bell announced the dinner, when the Prince took Mrs. Jordan by the hand, led her into the dining-room, and seated her at the top of the table. The Prince took his seat at her right hand, and the Duke of York at her left; the Duke of Cambridge sat next to the Prince, the Duke of Kent next to the Duke of York, and the Chancellor next to His Royal Highness. The Duke of Clarence sat at the foot of the table.

It is hardly necessary to state that the table was sumptuously covered with everything the season could afford. The bands played on the lawn, close to the dining-room window. The populace were permitted to enter the pleasure grounds to behold the royal banquet, while the presence of Messrs. Townshend, Sayers and Macmanu preserved the most correct decorum.

The Duke's numerous family were introduced, and admired by the Prince, the Royal Dukes, and the whole company; an infant in arms, with a most beautiful white head of hair, was brought into the dining-room by a nursery maid. After dinner the Prince gave 'The Duke of Clarence,' which was drunk with three times three; the Duke then gave 'The King,' which was drunk in a solemn manner. A discharge of cannon from the lawn followed. 'The Queen and the Princesses'—'The Duke of York and the Army.' His Royal Highness's band struck up his celebrated march."

This publicity was scandalous; Mr. Cobbett and other writers made a great deal more of it than the occasion warranted. In future the Duke of Clarence's birthday parties receded into the obscurity in which the rest of his life was passed.

The only real trouble at Bushey was lack of money. Critics at the time and later apologists for Dorothy Jordan have accused the Duke of taking all her money, but there is no evidence that he spent it. On the contrary he lived quietly at Bushey while she went away on tours which must

have cost money. She supported several members of her family; she had separate establishments for her other children; she was generous and extravagant. It is probable that she contributed to the household expenses and sometimes lent money to the Duke, but her known expenses must often have eaten up her salary.[1]

The Duke's financial difficulties were many and constant; his income was totally inadequate for a Royal Prince with a family of ten children. He had heavy debts remaining from the years of dissipation in the company of George and Frederick. His affection for his brothers was so great that it is possible they continued to borrow from him (though his whole income would not have been enough to pay for the glass which George ordered for the Brighton Pavilion).

The money troubles were evidently acute in 1809 when Mrs. Jordan's eldest daughter, Frances, married Thomas Alsop. Perhaps there were quarrels on the subject; Frances was a thoroughly unsatisfactory daughter, irresponsible, and, as later transpired, dissolute. Her mother, mindful of her own harsh experiences, was determined that her daughters should be respectably married at any cost; she worked for that end. It is possible that the Duke resented the large sums of money which her mother lavished on Frances; certainly he had cause to dislike the girl, for she persistently maligned him at a later date.

The year 1809 was an uncomfortable one for the royal family. The Duke of York's affair with Mrs. Clarke turned the limelight on the love adventures of all the royal dukes, and their financial straits. The fire at Drury Lane was an additional cause of worry, since it deprived Mrs. Jordan of her chief stage. Rumour asserted that she and the Duke had quarrelled violently on the night of the fire; if so, the quarrel had probably to do with Frances's marriage

[1] The whole dull and sordid business is discussed at length in Huish, Boaden and Claire Jerrold's *Dorothy Jordan* and P. Sergeant's *Mrs. Jordan*.

That the Duke borrowed Mrs. Jordan's money is obvious from the following letter which he wrote to Mr. Coutts the banker:

BUSHEY HOUSE.
18th October, 1797.

DEAR SIR,

. . . . Mrs. Jordan is getting both fame and money; to her I owe very much, and lately she has insisted on my accepting four and twenty hundred pounds which I am to repay as I think proper. . . .

Yours sincerely,
WILLIAM.

(From *Francis Burdett and his Times*, by M. W. Patterson.)

settlement, for which £10,000 had been promised. Dorothy herself denied the quarrel in a letter to Boaden:

"With regard to the report of my quarrel with the Duke every day of our past and present life must give the lie to it. He is an example for half the husbands and fathers in the world, the best of masters, and the most firm and generous of friends."

This may have been loyalty, of course, but then it may just as well have been true.

The only evidence which could satisfactorily explain their relationship as to both affection and money is their correspondence with each other, and though many of Mrs. Jordan's letters to the Duke are supposed to be in existence and to prove his villainy in keeping her on the stage long after she had tired of it, and in taking her money, these have not been produced. The truth probably is that she was *sometimes* weary and anxious to retire, and at other times sighed for the footlights; that she *sometimes* gave the Duke part of her earnings, which he promised to pay back, meaning to keep his word but finding himself unable to do so.

"Money, money, my good friend, or the want of it has made HIM at the moment the most wretched of men," she wrote to a friend when the parting was shown to be inevitable.

It was a slow, cruel business. In 1810 the Duke had his usual summer illness (asthma followed by gout, to which he had been subject for years) in an aggravated form and was very ill indeed. Dorothy was greatly worried about him, but so, unfortunately for Dorothy, was his mother. At Windsor William was restored to a degree of approval to which he had been a stranger for years. The Queen, perhaps, was scared of the future and anxious to propitiate her sons. Tragedy was in the air around her. Princess Amelia, her youngest daughter, was dying, was dead. With the loss of his dearest child the King's sanity flickered out for the last time and the Prince Regent reigned in his stead. For a moment the members of the family were drawn together more closely than they had been for years. His sister's death greatly distressed William; he wept bitterly at her funeral. He supported his brother firmly over the Regency Bill; this time the Queen was not put forward as a rival as she had been on a former occasion. There was a general tightening of family bonds, a revival of something resembling affection. The Queen was cordial to William,

but the Queen disapproved of Mrs. Jordan, and the Prince Regent, to whom fidelity was a jest, probably added his persuasion.

The Regency changed many things, among them was the household at Bushey. William was always with his mother or his brother. It is almost possible to hear the arguments at Carlton House and Windsor.

"William must give up this disreputable connexion and take a wife."

With the King's incapacity had come a relaxation of the restrictions on royal marriage, or William thought so; the Prince Regent had no objection to an English wife.

"Money, money, money," was the burden of the argument. He must part with Dorothy; it was inevitable, though painful.

In 1811 they were seldom together at Bushey; relations between them were undoubtedly strained; bickerings about money were frequent. Mrs. Alsop said her mother threw a rug at the Duke's head, but Mrs. Alsop was a person whom it was quite impossible to believe on any subject.

The Duke of Clarence went courting heiresses, and the caricaturists, who had ignored him for years, fell on him with rapture; the poets once more took up their pens:

"What! leave a woman to her tears?
Your faithful friend for twenty years;
One who has wasted half her charms,
The fond companion of your arms?"

and:

"Where among our nobles will you meet
A man so faithful, modest and discreet,
As love-sick Cl—ce, amorous and gay,
Who steals the ladies' tender hearts away?"

and again:

"Quoth Cl—ce, heav'n inspir'd, 'I'll wed;
I'll live no more in fornication,
But take a virgin to my bed,
And serve and gratify the nation.
One at this moment I would wed
With sixteen thousand pounds per annum
For such a prize as that I'd bed,
For aught I care, the devil's grannum.'

To Tilney Long His Highness sped
Whose riches roused his admiration,
Full of great schemes his royal head,
His heart convulsed with palpitation.

'Angel,' quoth he, 'for such thou art,
Come, be the sharer of my pillow;
Take, prithee take, my melting heart,
And doom me not to wear the willow.

The wicked world strange things has said,
And slander'd much my past behaviour,
But thou shalt share my board and bed,
And be my reputation's saviour.'"

Miss Tilney Long refused the Duke, but having made up his mind to the separation from Mrs. Jordan he pressed on with it. She was acting at Cheltenham, and on the last night of her engagement, she received a letter from him asking her to meet him at Maidenhead to arrange the terms of their separation. It had been discussed before; she must have known that it was inevitable, but the reality came as a bitter blow. She should have been "laughing drunk" in the play; she wept instead, and the keen-witted actor altered her cue: "Why, Nell, the conjuror has not only made thee drunk, he has made thee crying drunk."

The meeting took place, but no one knew exactly what transpired. They were together at Bushey at a later date. The terms of the separation indeed dragged on for months; it was not until the end of the year that settlement was reached. On December 7, 1811, Mrs. Jordan wrote to a friend: "I lose not a moment in letting you know that the Duke of Clarence has concluded and settled upon me and his children the most generous and liberal provision, and I trust everything will sink into oblivion." Poor soul! she took it bravely.

William's best biographer, Harding, tells the story in the kindliest way: "Originally one of those personal and domestic arrangements with which the country had no concern, the connexion with Mrs. Jordan at length assumed a character that did not at first belong to it. . . . Circumstances led to the breaking up of an establishment that had been distinguished for a length of duration not common in the conventional connexions of high life. . . . He made ample provision for those on whom his attachment had been so long bestowed. Mrs. Jordan wrote: "And now, do not hear the Duke of Clarence unfairly abused. As far as he has left it in his power, he is doing everything kind and noble, even to the distressing himself."

Huish, in dwelling, at great length, upon the iniquities of the Royal Marriage Act, says: "If persons of inferior

rank in life would consider the great difficulties that Princes have to encounter they would be less inclined to judge them with so much severity as they generally do."

For years the Duke's matrimonial projects continued to entertain the Town. He sent a proposal to a Princess of Denmark:

"She read it through with great attention
And praised the R—l swain's invention.
Then straightway beckoned to a page,
From a Court Guide to learn his age.

That once found out was quite enough.
The courier brought back this rebuff:
'I am fifteen, you're fifty-three,
They're ages that can ne'er agree.'"

The Duke went to Brighton for change of air:

"He thought of Wickham, charming fair,
And cried 'From her I'll gain an heir,
She's young and fair, has wealth and land,
I'll go and ask her for her hand.'

She cried, not troubled with much shyness,
''Twere treason to refuse your Highness;
I'm ready with my gold and land,
Whene'er your Highness may command.'

Around the town the tidings spread,
And many funny things were said;
Some laughed, some envied, and some jeered,
So very odd the thing appeared."

The Prince Regent, however, spoilt this romance. The lady's birth was too plebeian,

"So he a Privy Council call'd,
And they the business overhaul'd,
When all of them agreed *nem con.*
The thing must not, could not, be done."

The Duke appeared to have sacrificed his feelings and his domestic comfort for a bubble fortune. If George had promised him a tangible reward for virtue it was not forthcoming. He was allowed, however, to hoist his flag on board the *Jason* and sail over to Holland to witness the operations on the Dutch coast.

"Dear brother, I own I am delighted
To find myself kindly invited,
To take the command
Of a squadron well mann'd
At a time when I thought myself slighted.

I'll make war on the coasters I meet,
And compel all the boats to retreat,
To the wave and the gale
Not a smack shall set sail
Through the terror of me and my fleet.

I'll despatch all the mackerel to quod;
Destroy millions of herrings, by G—d;
And intrepidly sweep,
All the depths of the deep
Of their tenants, from cockles to cod."

Then, under George's ample wing, he once more honoured with his presence the world of fashion which he had hardly seen for twenty years.[1]

[1] The remainder of Mrs. Jordan's life is still obscure. She has had two kinds of biographer, those anxious to besmirch him and those eager to apply whitewash. It was a lamentable business, and he must in any case come ill out of it, but I think, after reading the very unsatisfactory and inadequate evidence which is available, that Boaden's account is the most reliable. Nothing can absolve William from the cruelty of discarding a woman who had been faithful to him for twenty years, but, having parted from her, he seems to have kept to the terms arranged between them, and was in no way responsible for the financial misery of her last years, or even aware of it. Her daughters and their husbands were entirely responsible for that. There is just this to be said for William, that in his youth such connexions were the rule rather than the exception; very little abuse would have been cast at him if he had discarded her after a year or two. It was the very fact that he had been faithful for so long that made the final rupture seem so callous, and also the fact that he kept her children and his to live with him in luxury. He certainly did not forbid her to see the children, and she received visits from them, and the elder ones wrote to her. The fact remains that she died in misery and exile in France while they did nothing for her. But that the Duke was not guilty of leaving her without resources after their separation is proved by the contemporary evidence of many reliable informants.

"The distress which she (Mrs. Jordan) suffered abroad . . . must have resulted from some unfortunate mistake or misconception, for while she was abroad, Mr. Barton, an officer in the Royal Mint, and private secretary to an illustrious personage, assured me that he had £2500 at her disposal whenever she demanded it, and Mr. Barton's character for integrity, as well as high scientific attainments, is held in the utmost respect."

(J. Taylor, *Records of my Life.*)

CHAPTER III

THE WORLD OF FASHION

1809–1817

THE fashionable world which the Duke of Clarence re-entered, seeking a bride for himself and education for his children, was not, of course, quite what it had been in Prince William's youth. The French Revolution had shaken Society to its foundations, and, although on the surface things seemed much the same, there were underground rumblings of change and dissolution. The years of the Regency sparkled very brightly, but to the observant their brilliance was not quite the real thing, French paste, perhaps, instead of diamonds.

It is difficult to find the key years to such a change; 1789 struck the first blow; 1805–1806 cleared the stage of several of the great figures who had made the last years of the eighteenth century so remarkable, Duchess Georgiana of Devonshire, Pitt, Fox and Nelson left gaps which could not be filled. In 1807 gas lighting was introduced into London; perhaps candle-light and link-boys gave some enchantment to life, some beauty to eyes and elegance to figures, some wit and brilliance to conversation which could not survive the harsher light of gas. It is impossible to fix the year of its passing; the eighteenth century took a long time dying, but it died, as it had lived, with grace. It is difficult to explain in any but technical terms, exactly why Sir Thomas Lawrence is a painter so immensely inferior to Reynolds and Gainsborough, yet one knows that he is; there is a similar deterioration in Society between 1780 and 1820.

As steadily as the brilliance faded, the moral tone improved. The war, of course, had something to do with it; young gentlemen of fashion were no longer able to make the Grand Tour and learn the arts of conversation and gallantry in the *salons* of Italy and France. Eton was an insufficient substitute.

"I confess I have known so many instances of boys going through Eton without learning anything," wrote the Duke of Wellington to Lady Shelley. "I am astonished that you don't send your second son to the Charter House, which, I believe, is the best school of them all."

But Eton was the fashionable school, and even Eton boys must be in the mode: "George's progress is very great at school, and if he were not trying to be idle, for the sake of being in the Eton high fashion," wrote another mother, "he would do just as much in the way of learning as anybody."

"Pelham" explains how much that was: "I was reckoned an uncommonly well-educated boy. I could make fifty Latin verses in half an hour; I could construe *without* an English translation, all the easy Latin authors, and many of the difficult ones *with* it; I could read Greek fluently, and even translate it through the medium of the Latin version technically called a crib. I was thought exceedingly clever, for I had been only eight years acquiring all this fund of information, which, as one need never recall it in the world, you have every right to suppose that I had entirely forgotten before I was five-and-twenty. I was never taught a syllable of English during this period; when I once attempted to read Pope's poems out of school hours, I was laughed at and called a "sap."

From Eton the young gentleman might go to Cambridge and obtain an "honorary degree," the other degrees being obtained by "pale men in spectacles and cotton stockings after thirty-six months of intense application."

Mr. Pelham found Cambridge vulgar: "The men drank beer by the gallon and ate cheese by the hundredweight, wore jockey-cut coats, and talked slang, rode for wagers and swore when they lost, smoked in your face and expectorated on the floor. Their proudest glory was to drive the mail—their mightiest exploit to box with the coachman; their most delicate amour to leer at the barmaid."

The young gentleman frequently stepped straight into a seat in Parliament. "I know as little of history, even of my own country, as any gentleman need do," wrote "Squire" Western, M.P., to Mr. Creevey.

The untravelled young gentleman who did not find a seat in Parliament awaiting him took to country pursuits, entered the Army or the Navy, or became a dandy and astonished the Town, and made the young ladies titter.

"Did you see the farce they are acting at the Lyceum called 'Hit or Miss'? It is to ridicule those great fools the barouche club gentry. Did you ever hear an account of them? A set of hopeless young men, who think of no earthly thing but how to make themselves like coachmen, and, in order to improve each other, have formed themselves into a club where they spend their time inventing new slang words, adding new capes to their great coats, and learning to suck a quid of tobacco and chew a wisp of straw in the most vulgar style; for it is not only on the box but off it, in all society, that these ornaments of the present age choose to be mistaken for their coachmen."

The young men might be silly but the world in which Miss Tylney Long and other young ladies of fashion amused themselves was still a very agreeable one; heiresses, particularly pretty heiresses, were not likely to see any need for reform while Royal Dukes and other beaux fluttered around them. Miss Tylney Long had a splendid time as long as she refused to capitulate; no less a moth than Lord Althorp singed his wings at her flame, but, as his sister says, "it ended in smoak."

That sister, an agreeable and sensible young woman with a sense of humour, was, however, sometimes pensive about it all: "Entering the world is so different an epoque, if one thinks seriously about it, from what a child imagines it to be." It was, alas, more than an affair of "dining at seven and putting on hoops." Poor Miss Long, who refused to be dazzled by the Duke of Clarence, fell a victim to a younger fortune hunter, William Pole Wellesley, who stole not only her fortune but her name, and was known to the wits as "Long Pole Long Wellesley," and aspired to be a dandy. He was not much of a dandy, however, not much of anything in fact except a nuisance and a scandal; poor Miss Long would have been happier with the Duke, who would at least have shared her fortune with her, not spent it all on himself.

Lord Althorp's sister, Lady Sarah Spencer, was more fortunate than some of her contemporaries, and married a man who made her happy, after an enjoyable youth. Lady Sarah took notes of everything that came under her eyes and ears and sent them to her favourite brother at sea.[1] The year 1809, for instance, afforded a good deal of enter-

[1] This was the Captain Spencer who was the Duke of Clarence's secretary when he became Lord High Admiral. (See II, Chapter VI.)

tainment, and turned the limelight on the Royal Dukes. It was the year of George III's Jubilee; Lady Spencer and the Whig ladies felt it was no occasion for rejoicing.

"Mary Carter says," reported Sally Spencer, "the text of Jubilee sermons should be 'Forty years (or fifty years if you like) long have we been grieved with this generation.' Poor Mr. Allen was 'in a stew about his sermon.'"

The relations between Whigs and Tories were, naturally, a little strained. "I can't say I enjoyed the dinner. For what with the bustle of going out, not knowing who you were to meet, then meeting people half of them one way and half the other in politics, and seeing them at dinner dying to talk of this debate and that debate, and not daring, for fear of throwing all their neighbours' fat into the fire made it a most formal piece of work."

The fashionable young lady spent her mornings with her masters: "What with singing myself hoarse and drawing myself blind, and listening to Gin's twanging and strumming her passages on the harp and the piano till I was near deaf, I got fully tired by five o'clock."

It was not everyone, of course, who was so eager for improvement. Some young ladies regarded drawing lessons and singing lessons as waste of time, as, no doubt, they were. One of these, who later wrote an amusing novel called *Almack's*, described the routine:

"How was the morning spent? Of course in the usual style of the fine lady's morning. The London season had yet scarcely commenced, but the preliminaries were already *en train*.

> "A thousand cards a day at doors to leave,
> And in return a thousand cards receive"

is one great employment of all women of fashion. And then there is always that delightful resource—shopping, to occupy every idle hour. So many lounges, *pour passer le temps*, and to empty the pockets. That ruination shop in Waterloo Place; the various bazaars; and afterwards some new novel to inquire for at St. Andrew's, though that tiresome man has never got the thing at home you most want. Boosey's classical foreign music shop probably comes next. Then, after showing yourself in Bond Street, St. James's Street, and Pall Mall, drive off, post-haste, to the dear, enchanting Park, as the last and best resort; where, if the crowd will permit, you may see your friends, at least, though without any chance of speaking to them; and be choked

with dust, if you escape being broiled by the unintercepted rays of the sun. Oh! it is a rational life at the very best, this same interesting mode of passing time in London; and we of the nineteenth century are a most philosophical sort of people, in very truth. What with the busy lives of the very idle and the idle lives of the very busy, it would seem almost difficult to determine which is best—*ne rien faire ou ne faire que des riens.*

And as for conversation:

> "The numerous questions, that no answer wait:—
> How vastly full—Arn't you come vastly late?
> Isn't it quite charming? When did you come to Town?
> Arn't you quite tired?—Pray can't we set you down?"

"Polite Society," said the author of *Almack's*, "in the nineteenth century may indeed be characterised as *le triomphe de la fatuité.*"

The Englishwoman was apparently more fatuous than the Frenchwoman:

"Je sais qu'en Angleterre il ne faut pas s'attendre à cultiver son esprit; qu'il faut, pour être contente à Londres, se résoudre à se plaire avec la mediocrité; à entendre tous les jours repèter les mêmes banalités et à s'abaisser autant qu'on le peut au niveau des femmelettes avec lesquelles l'on vit, et qui, pour plaire, affectent plus de frivolité qu'elles n'ont réellement.

Le plaisir de causer nous est defendu. Les hommes ne s'amusent pas ou, pour se servir de leur langage, 'ne perdent pas leur temps' à dire aux femmes ces aimables riens qu'on paye par un sourire sur le Continent.

Il faut ici tout ou rien; eh bien, on ne me donne pas le choix, j'accepte. Je ne serai rien pour le monde, moi, pour mon intérieur je serai toujours le lien qui réunit tous les suffrages. Je serai l'amie dont on suit les conseils, la femme qu'on respecte, et je ferai le bien parmi mes pauvres avec tout le zèle de mon caractère ardent."

If young ladies indulged in thought at all, evidently, it was necessary to think in French.

Almack's—"the Ladies' Club of both sexes," Horace Walpole had called it—played a great part in fashionable life. It was a curious assembly through which the ladies of Society tried to maintain the exclusiveness of the circle in which they moved. It was managed by a committee of ladies of the first rank and the only method of admission to the balls

National Portrait Gallery

QUEEN ADELAIDE
After Sir William Beechey.

was by vouchers and personal introduction. Dancing was as much a craze as it was with a later generation. It was at Almack's that Madame de Lieven introduced that fascinating pastime, waltzing, on which the Czar of Russia put the seal of fashion when he danced it there in very fine company.

The lady patronesses of Almack's were as autocratic as the Czar of Russia himself. The ladies of the committee held, in theory, equal powers, but, on most occasions, Lady Jersey, Mr. Creevey's "Sally," contrived to have her own way. She never stopped talking, so that her friends were even obliged to invent her nickname of "Silence" behind her back; there was a popular story that once when talking her hardest she was overtaken by a yawn and clapped her hand over her companion's mouth to prevent him taking advantage of the interruption. She had beauty, riches and a fine constitution, but she was "apt to run off at a tangent, relying on her personality to carry a matter through, right or wrong."

Almack's was patronised all the year, but in the spring it was thin. "Nobody likes going before Easter. The fools think it is not fashionable, that magic word which has such power in England."

There were also, of course, a number of bright young people who preferred eccentricity to exclusiveness. Lady Cowper, though a stern janitress at Almack's, was less particular in her own home; she was agreeable and good-humoured and benevolently indifferent to gate-crashers.

"If it amuses them, I am sure they are very welcome," she drawled in her deep voice.

Hoaxing was very popular among them. Mrs. Champney, who rode behind such beautiful grey coach-horses, was married to a man famous for "the most extraordinary of distinctions," being the best mask in the world. "I never heard of him in any other way," said Lady Sarah Spencer, "except at a masquerade, where I have heard him, and watched him, too, without being tempted to think his performance at all tolerable, certainly not good enough to make up for the absence of all other merit. He and his wife contrive, however, to extend the duty of good masqueraders beyond the usual limits; and performed for two months the task of passing for a travelling Spanish Archbishop and his niece. They completely took in all the northern country gentlefolk, were asked about, fêted, puffed. Considering they are fine people and get nothing for these

labours, one rather wonders at their choice of an amusement."

Silliness, evidently, is not a monopoly of these times.

So popular were hoaxes that the first Persian Ambassador, though seen, was not believed. He dined about with his very fine teeth and magnificent black beard, but "Many people disbelieve in his reality," said Lady Sally, "and think he is a witty Jew who is amusing himself by making fools of all the fine folks and keeping up a masquerade character for the sake of the good dinners."

When such amusements failed, of course, one could always fall back on a love affair. "Lady Frances Pelham" was not the only lady of fashion who ended her season like this:

"Mr. Conway had just caused two divorces, and of course all the women in London were dying for him. Judge then of the pride which Lady Frances felt at his addresses. The end of the season was unusually dull, and, after having looked over her list of engagements and ascertaining that she had nothing worth staying for, she agreed to elope with her new lover."

London grew exhausting, and a London physician well knew that the summer was of no use to a fine lady but to recover from raking and prepare for more raking, and he therefore "peoples Brighton with all such poor wretches during the whole season. Whether the wretch in question (meaning me)," said Lady Sally, "is of opinion that a month spent looking at a boundless expanse of naked sea, adorned once in sixteen days with the faint glimmerings of a passing fleet of colliers on the horizon, and in a very large, Londonish town full of fine folks, barouches, princes, theatres and public lounging rooms will be pleasant is another question. I hate it heartily; dissipation out of London has something particularly disagreeable about it."

The Prince of Wales did not think so; he filled Brighton with his brothers and his friends; the place, grown immense, was filled with barouches, tandems, curricles, men, women and children on horseback, on donkey back, on foot, jostling each other, quite in the London fashion, like pribble prabbles in the streets.

If Brighton palled there were the watering-places. Mr. Pelham went to Cheltenham and sampled English hotels. Madame de Dino had a caustic comment to make on these: "I got as far as Stony Stratford, where I advise no

one to pass the night. The beds are bad, *even for England*, and I never experienced anything more like a trappist's couch."

Mr. Pelham had nothing to say about the beds but plenty of comments on the food and surroundings.

"A corpulent but stately waiter, with gold buckles to a pair of very tight pantaloons, showed me upstairs. I found myself in a tolerable room, facing the street, and garnished with two pictures of rocks and rivers, with a comely flight of crows, hovering in the horizon of both, as natural as possible—only they were a little larger than the trees. Over the chimney-piece, where I had fondly hoped to find a looking-glass, was a grave print of General Washington, with one hand stuck out like the spout of a teapot. . . . The waiter entered with the bill of fare: "Soups, chops, cutlets, steaks, roast joints, etc. etc.—lions, birds."

"Get some soup," said I, "a slice or two of lion, and half a dozen birds."

"Sir," said the solemn waiter, "you can't have less than a whole lion, and we have only two birds in the house."

"Pray," said I, "are you in the habit of supplying your larder from Exeter Change, or do you breed lions here like poultry?"

"Sir," answered the grim waiter, never relaxing into a smile, "we have lions brought us from the country every day."

"What do you pay for them?" asked I.

"About three and sixpence apiece, sir."

"Humph. Market in Africa overstocked," thought I. "Pray how do you dress an animal of that description?"

"Roast and stuff him, sir, and serve him up with currant jelly."

"What! like a hare?"

"A lion *is* a hare, sir."

"What!"

"Yes, sir, it is a hare, but we call it a lion because of the game laws."

The soup was a little better than hot water, and the sharp sauced cutlet than leather and vinegar.

Mr. Pelham, having dined, repaired to the Rooms. "A whole row of stiff necks, in cravats of the most unexceptional length and breadth were just before me. A tall thin young man, with dark wiry hair, brushed on one side, was drawing

on a pair of white woodstock gloves and affecting to look round the room with the supreme indifference of *bon ton*.

"Ah! Ritson," said another young Cheltenhamian, "haven't you been dancing yet?"

"No, Smith, 'pon honour," answered Mr. Ritson, "it is so overpoweringly hot, no fashionable man dances now; it isn't the thing."

"Why!" replied Mr. Smith. "Why! they dance at Almack's, don't they?"

"No, 'pon honour," murmured Mr. Ritson. "No. They just walk a quadrille or spin a waltz, as my friend Lord Bobadob calls it; nothing more. No, hang dancing, 'tis so vulgar."

A smiling, nodding, affected female thing in ringlets and flowers flirted up.

"Now reely, Mr. Smith, you should deence; a feeshionable young man like you. I don't know what the young leedies will say to you."

If the season in London proved exhausting there was the modish habit of week-ending in the country. Lord Alvanley, however, suggested that London during the week-end could be made quite as restful as the country.

"You have only to invite a parson of the parish to dine with you on Sundays, and to order your servants to bring you no newspapers or letters on Monday," said he.

The real rest from raking came in country-house visits. These, owing to the difficulties of travelling, and the long distances most of the great seats were from London, were not expected to last less than a fortnight. Late hours were the rule, but guests were not expected to appear before noon or one o'clock, unless the gentlemen were going hunting or shooting. This they did a great deal too much for the liking of the young ladies, since it meant that they returned tired from their sport, refreshed themselves by getting "drunkish" at dinner, and were quite unequal to Colin Maillard or "musical chairs."

"God knows some people do love hunting in rather an inconceivable way," wailed one young lady.

At Althorp they took their social duties seriously.

"It is amazing to me the crowd of morning visits we have received," said Lady Sarah. "And every one Mama is cruel enough to insist on my yawning through with her.

Every lady of the county has been here by turns. All this is very fine, it does vastly well to sit comfortably on the old red sofas in the library, and talk for a couple of hours about the bad roads, the next ball, this man's tumble, that woman's accouchement; a few yawns are the worst evil belonging to this. But oh pity your Mama and Sis when they will have to set out on a bleak morning over such rough, splashy, squashy, jolting and jumbling roads to be tossed from place to place, returning all these visits—six, seven, eight miles from one to 'tother; and when you get to the door not knowing which to wish against most, finding the lady at home and having an additional hour added to the time you spend away from home, or finding her not at home and having not a minute's respite from the jolts of the carriage. Shocking indeed are the various miseries of visiting."

Sometimes landowners were tiresomely intense. There was Pelham's uncle, for instance, who "was, as people rather justly observed, rather an odd man; built schools for peasants, forgave poachers, and diminished his farmers' rents; indeed, on account of this and similar eccentricities, he was thought a fool by some and a madman by others. However, he was not quite destitute of natural feeling, for he paid my father's debts, and established us in the secure enjoyment of our former splendour. But this piece of generosity, or justice, was done in the most unhandsome manner; he obtained a promise from my father to retire from whist and relinquish the turf, and he prevailed upon my mother to conceive an aversion to diamonds, and an indifference to china monsters."

Back in London the fashionable round began again.

"London dark and dreary. Mama's levee is as usual frequented by all the usual visitors; they arrive cross as ten sticks, dripping, soaked through and shivering in great coats, and snow-shoes, and then remain for hours. I can't wonder at people's desire to meet and talk now, tho', when we have all this battle of Corunna to talk about."

"What a retreat! And what a death was Sir John Moore's. And don't it appear as if every man belonging to us as soon as he begins to rise above all others is taken off?"

"Sir Samuel Hood was thanked for his exertions in the House. Till he rose to speak all was quiet and orderly, but

as soon as he got up the whole House burst into a roar of applause."

"I quite admire the House of Commons for it, tho' I own they just now seem to be made sad fools of by this respectable and dignified business of the Duke of York and his mistress they are degrading their journal with."[1]

"The only thing upon which people speak now is the examination of Mrs. Clarke before the bar of the House. It is a most infamous, scandalous and degrading business, look at it anyhow."

"They say it will soon be stopped by a vote of the House in compliment to the Duke of York, praising him, blaming all that has been done against him, describing Mrs. Clarke as no better than she should be, and saying she has told nothing but lies; and that then, Parliament having *doré la pillule*, his Royal Highness is to swallow it, and resign his office with as good a grace as he can and retire to *otium sine dignitate* for the rest of his royal life."

The Duke of York's affair was of far more interest than the battle of Corunna. The social world talked of nothing else.

"A nasty story of corruption and profligacy it is indeed. But it may, it must, do good."

"It has already, for the King has expelled the Duke of Kent's mistress from his palace at Kensington and the Duke of Clarence's from Bushey Park in consequence of all this bustle."

"By the way, how many pretty letter endings there are among the Duke of York's performance, quite ingenious and pretty: 'Yours and yours only'—that sounds well—and many more; but I don't think we'll adopt them from that nasty, foolish collection of trash. How he must wish he and his pen and ink had been at the bottom of the sea, when he saw it all in print."

"I am somewhat tired of this endless debate," said Lady Sally Spencer.

[1] Mrs. Clarke, the Duke of York's mistress, used her influence to secure the promotion of Army officers, who paid her well for her services. Colonel Wardle brought the matter before Parliament in 1809. It was referred to a Select Committee, which acquitted H.R.H. of having benefited financially himself, but reported very cuttingly upon his discretion. He was removed from his position as Commander-in-Chief, but restored in 1811. The "Annual Register" said: "No one seemed to think it of any consequence what was done either in the prosecution of the war or negotiation for peace until that affair should be settled."

"La! what else is there to talk about? The Opera is very bad, and only one theatre for the play, you know; because of Covent Garden Theatre being burnt, and its temporary successor, the little Haymarket Theatre, being without private boxes, so that one can go to the play only every other week. All the subscribers to our box are very cross about it."

In September, however, the new theatre at Covent Garden was opened, with John Kemble in the part of Macbeth, and with increased prices for the seats.

The "Old prices" riots disputed pride of place as a conversational subject with the Canning-Castlereagh duel.

"These heroes have quarrelled and fought about the Walcheran affair," said Mr. Creevey's correspondent, Lord Folkestone. "Castlereagh was not touched; Canning's wound is likely to be very tedious, not dangerous. In the meantime the diversions at Covent Garden go on bravely."

The world of fashion flocked to see the fun. "Hearing the play is a thing nobody has done there yet, for, as you will know, if you ever see a newspaper," wrote Lady Sarah to her brother, "the mob are making open war upon the managers, to force them to give up an addition they have been absurd enough to make to the prices of admission, and this war the Cockney nobility carry on most steadily. As soon as the curtain rises, the whole of the audience begin in chorus whistling, roaring, hissing, ringing great bells, blowing French horns and sounding cat-calls through the whole performance. Of course not a word is heard of what passes on the stage, and all you have to amuse you is the pantomime and a few battles royal in the pit, which are carried on between some of the amiable black-faced blackguards who sit in it, much to the delight of the rest. Both the managers and their opponents are resolved to die before they yield; and so till the Lord Chamberlain puts his finger in the pie we shall have no play to go to."

The "Cockney nobility" won, of course, and the pit was reduced to its old price.

Among other items of gossip which particularly interested the Town this year were these tit-bits of scandal:

"A marriage is said to have taken place which shocks the Spencers very much; it is a dead secret, only told in whispers by everybody to everybody as yet. It is not an

interesting union *de deux jeunes cœurs*, but rather the crowning of a perseverance in vice and artfulness which is, I fancy, unheard of. Clifford, of course, knows it, as it is no other than the long-expected wedding of his venerable parents, the Duke of Devonshire and Lady Elizabeth Foster."

"You have, of course, heard of the new appointments, the new Secretary to the Admiralty, Mr. Croker?"

"I wish I expected better things from him than I do. However, he is not much known; perhaps his connexion with the Navy may strike out of him some unexpected talents."

"We have heard nothing worth repeating about Lord Palmerston's appointment as Secretary at War. That place is now made use of as a sort of seminary for beginners in politics."

"I suppose we must be glad of it, as it may divert his Lordship from flirting, in the same way as people rejoiced at his predecessor's appointment because it was to cure him of gambling."

The year 1809 was, perhaps, a particularly exciting one for the gossips, but every year had its thrilling episodes or novelties.

The Marquis Wellesley's "profligate establishment" was a great Whig theme in 1810, but there were also Talavera and the old King's last lapse into insanity.

The year 1811 opened brightly with the antics of the new Prince Regent and his costly entertainments, at which his faithful brother Clarence was nearly always at his side. Madame de Stael, too, was a topic of conversation; she came to London this year with the avowed intention of marrying her daughter Albertine to the new Duke of Devonshire. The Duke of Clarence met the lady at Lord Glenbervie's, but she was "not agreeable. She abused English dishes—especially those at table, English customs and, by frequent insinuations, the language and literature of England." The Duke of Devonshire was, evidently, not charmed; he was reported to have a *tendresse* for the Princess Charlotte.

In 1812 Lord Moira produced a plan for "revoking Orders in Council, conciliating America by all manner of means, the most rigid economical reform, nay, parliamentary reform if it was wished for," but as a topic of conversation it could not compete with the German professor, Feinagle

by name, who gave lectures on the art of memory, "that is, teaches tricks and artificial means by which one may assist one's memory. All London is wild about him. He is very ingenious and some of his lectures are entertaining, but I own I am rather bored with having to listen to one every day."

According to Lady Shelley it was the influx of foreign visitors in 1814 which led to the change in manners, but she does not explain exactly what change; the great fêtes and balls given to the Allied Sovereigns were certainly something unique in the history of English society.

Even the world of fashion had little but Napoleon and Waterloo to talk of in 1815.

In 1817 there were reports of a change of Ministry, "not such a change as good Whigs pray for, but a walking out of Lord Castlereagh and a walking in of 'Orange' Peel, who is the great man in the whole country, since he made that famous fine speech against the Irish Catholics." In 1817, too, there was a new theory of dieting. Dr. Banyan advocated a meatless régime with plenty of vegetables. It became the mode "to banyan," and pathetic remarks appeared in letters. "It was a very good dinner, but I almost entirely banyanned and drank very little else than water." Mr. Lyttelton wrote to his wife during the elections: "Tippling, thank God, is quite gone by in this country, which to be sure is a most blessed change."

Manners were indeed changing.

The Duke of Clarence was very ill in the summer of 1817. Unsuccessful heiress-hunting and launching his children in society evidently tried him; he had asthma and gout and an upset stomach. He went with his Mama to take the waters at Bath. They agreed with him, and he was sufficiently recovered in November to dine with the Mayor and Corporation at the Guildhall.

As they sat at dinner there was a clatter outside, a wave of agitation and horror spreading from face to face as Sir Henry Halford, the royal physician, read a despatch which was brought him and handed it to the Duke with paling face. William read it and retired in much agitation. The whisper spread about the Hall. Lord Camden rose to his feet and in faltering tones proposed the break-up of the entertainment.

Charlotte, the Regent's daughter, the heiress of England, the nation's darling, and her longed-for baby were both dead.[1]

[1] I have described Princess Charlotte's death and its effect on the Royal Dukes in my book *The First Gentleman*.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ROYAL TAR DROPS ANCHOR
1817–1827

PRINCESS CHARLOTTE'S death left England in a state of profound gloom. A great deal had been tolerated because the nation saw an end to it, not very far ahead; the dissolute Regent and his brothers were elderly; they must die soon and leave the nation's darling Charlotte to make a "new earth" for her subjects. Charlotte alone had stood between the people and a calamitous future. The King was mad and the King's children, besides being more or less disreputable, were all over forty and without legitimate children.

In November, 1817, Lady Cowper wrote to her brother: "Now the gloom of Princess Charlotte's death has a little subsided, people try to amuse themselves and to make speculation for the future, and their imaginations see a long train of crowns like Macbeth's passing before them, Fred the First, William the Fourth, Edward the Seventh, Ernest the First, etc., and when it comes to Princess Mary we shall have William and Mary over again. Some people trust that we shall be saved all this by the prophecies which foretell that no more than three Brunswicks will ever reign in England. Nothing is talked of but marriages, divorces and posterity. The doctors will be in great requisition for some years, as long life is all that is wanted. The competitors are in great spirits, and each sees a crown upon his head. Clarence reckons much upon an oracle or a witch who once predicted to him future greatness."

The Royal Dukes must marry. The Duke of Kent made some astonishing and entertaining confidences to Mr. Creevey, which was, of course, as good as telling them to the town. The Duke of Clarence, hearing that a German Princess had been selected for him by his mother, was a little truculent because Parliament refused to vote him a

large enough income, but, as was William's invariable habit, he barked much more fiercely than he bit. Having reconsidered the matter, he consented to wed the lady.

In 1818 there was an epidemic of royal weddings, most of them rather comical. The Duke of Kent married a Princess of Coburg, sister of Prince Leopold who had been Charlotte's husband; the Duke of Cambridge was allotted a Princess of Hesse and the Duke of Clarence a Princess of Saxe Meiningen; the Queen's passion for the smaller German Courts was having full sway at last. The Duke of Cumberland, rather surprisingly, had married a little earlier, and for love, a lady of whom his Mama could not approve.

Most comical of all was the Princess Elizabeth's marriage to the Landgrave of Homburg. "The Princess Elizabeth is to be married next week," said Lady Jerningham. "She says it is the goal she has always looked forward to. Though forty-eight she is said to be really in love, and blushed rosy red when the Prince of Hesse Homburg entered the room. They immersed him several times in a warm bath to make him a little clean, and they kept him three days without smoking, which, as he smoked five pipes a day, was great forbearance."

The Queen was a little tremulous at losing her favourite daughter; the Prince of Homburg was to allow his wife to remain in England as long as he could.

"The poor Prince does not look forward with any pleasure to the honeymoon, in a cottage belonging to the Prince Regent," said Lady Shelley. "He has been heard to say *Je ne suis pas pour les pastorales, moi.*' As he was not accustomed to travel in a closed carriage, he felt so ill on the road that he was obliged to mount upon the box beside the coachman. The way in which he pronounces English is so comical that the Queen was unable to keep her countenance during the ceremony."

The Duke of Clarence took a house in South Audley Street for the Misses Fitzclarence, and engaged a gentlewoman to live with them. The Duke's match was much discussed, but nobody knew anything about the bride.

She was Amelia Adelaide, daughter of the late Duke of Saxe Meiningen, an excellent man, if a little eccentric. He had liberal principles, actually allowed the Press to be free, and invited the People to be god-parents to his son and heir. It is regrettable to think that the poet Schiller laughed at this admirable prince and voted him a terrible bore. He

died early, from the combined effects of a neglected cold and a violent rage caused by a demand from the King of Prussia for sixty thousand florins as a fine for refusing certain knightly honours too expensive to accept.

There had not been time for him to infect his daughter with his strange notions, for he died when she was eleven, and she was able to grow up in a sound conservatism which was not likely to be diminished by the fact that she lived under the Napoleonic shadow and could see for herself where liberalism led. She was brought up by her mother, remarkably well, in principles of piety, good morals and good needlework.

When Queen Charlotte selected her as a bride for Clarence she was twenty-five years old, serious and reserved in manner, with light flaxen hair and pale eyebrows, a plain face but a graceful figure.

Miss Tylney Long had not been dazzled by an elderly gentleman with £60,000 worth of debts, ten illegitimate children and a reputation for being weak in the head. The well brought up Princess Adelaide, however, realised how little these trifles weighed in the balance against the honour of an alliance with the House of Hanover.

The Duke approved of her conduct. He had, after his little preliminary jib at the financial aspect of his marriage, made up his mind to behave nicely. His eldest brother and the Queen had talked to him for his good, and, as usual, he had taken it well: "I cannot find words to describe their goodness," he said to Lady Harcourt. "My daughters once happily and respectably settled I do look forward with every fair prospect of happiness, considering the high character the Princess Adelaide bears and the insight that her letters give me into her mind and resolution not to be dazzled by the offer, but seriously to reflect on the step which she means to take."

The Princess Adelaide and her mother, with a scanty trousseau, reached Grillon's Hotel, in Albemarle Street, in the dusk of a July evening in 1818. No one, except the proprietor, was there to meet them. The Regent, who was dining, continued his dinner and then drove down to Albemarle Street to be more civil to his sister-in-law than he had been to his own bride. In tremendous haste a carriage and four horses bearing the bridegroom dashed up to the door. If he was not pleased with the lady he did not say so.

They shared a double wedding with the Duke and Duchess of Kent at Kew, and, having received the dying Queen's blessing, took tea with the Regent and presently sailed away to Hanover for a honeymoon. The following year there was a gratifying arrival of babies, each royal bride contributing her share; the Duchess of Cambridge won the race with a son; the Duchess of Clarence's daughter lived only a few minutes, while the Duchess of Kent's little daughter, who was to be known as Victoria, was the last to arrive, but had come to stay.

The Duchess of Clarence, in her quiet way, won the affection of most of the members of her new family. When the Duke of Kent died she was invaluable as a comforter to his bereaved Duchess, who was "in deep affliction." Lady Bedingfeld observed to her friend, the Duchess of Clarence, that her constant and kind visits to the Duchess of Kent must be a source of great comfort to her.

"The Duchess of Kent's consolation comes from a much higher source," replied Adelaide gravely. "She is truly religious."

The Duchess of Kent's little girl was a great favourite with her uncle and aunt; she was a very fine child and full of spirits; upon the Duke of Clarence entering, the child pointed to his Star and exclaimed, "Papa, Papa!" The Duke was delighted.

The Regent was not so fond of the little Victoria. When the Duchess of Clarence's second daughter was born Lady Cowper said: "There is great delight here at the Duchess of Clarence's daughter. I suppose the King likes it to cut out Victoria and Leopold."

The poor mite only lived three months to delight anyone, though they had hopefully given her the magic name "Elizabeth."

The Duke and Duchess of Clarence travelled a good deal, sometimes for the sake of her health and sometimes for his. Doctor Beattie, a physician who accompanied them in their travels, commented most favourably on the Duke's regularity and meals. His ill-health certainly had nothing to do with the over-eating and over-drinking which played such havoc with his brothers. "He breakfasts in the morning at seven upon tea and a simple slice of dry toast," said the admiring Dr. Beattie. They lunched simply on a picnic hamper placed in the carriage. "At night, on arriving at the inn, His Royal Highness takes tea—and only green tea—of

which a supply was brought from Ghent. However late the hour or potent the beverage the infusion never interferes with His Royal Highness's rest. Such is the power of long habit. Sherry is his favourite, indeed his only wine. The only beverage in which he indulges an innocent freedom is barley water flavoured with lemon."

Shades of the Jockey and that remarkably strong old brandy which the Prince of Wales called 'Diabolino'!

"H.R.H. does everything by system," reported the observant doctor. "When prevented by the weather from indulging in outdoor exercise he uses the drawing-room as a substitute."

Any naval family would know him for a sailor.

Although they travelled frequently the Duke and Duchess spent much of their time in England. For nine years they lived, as the bachelor Duke had lived, very much out of the public eye at the beloved home at Bushey, or in those inconvenient, dilapidated, dirty apartments in the stable court at St. James's to which Mr. Creevey light-heartedly referred: "To think of the King and brother York, both turned sixty, and terrible bad lives, having palaces building for them. The Duke of York's is 150 ft. by 130 outside, with forty complete sleeping apartments, and all this for a single man! Billy Clarence, too, is rigging up in a small way in the stable yard, but that is doing by the Government."

That was not until 1826, however. Between 1818 and 1827 Society paid little more attention to the Clarences than it had done before the Duke's marriage. Sometimes he went wistfully to Portsmouth to see how the Navy was getting on. Mr. Lyttelton met him there in 1822 and wrote to his wife, that lively Sally Spencer of earlier years, "We dined yesterday in the royal presence of the Duke of Clarence, who, to our astonishment, behaved perfectly well, was civil to everybody, even gentlemanlike in his manner, did not say a single indecent or improper thing. He brought his son, Lieutenant (Adolphus) Fitzclarence to go on board Clifford's ship. Could not judge of him, but his looks were not much in his favour; a strange sort of slouching eyelid to one of his eyes, and vast pouch-like chops proved that H.R.H. was more to blame than Mrs. Jordan."

Mr. Lyttelton's comment is the first indication that anyone in the fashionable world had taken note of what was going on at Bushey. Their neighbours, who liked them and saw a good deal of them, were not people who talked much. The

Duchess had earned the esteem of those who knew her, but the ladies of Almack's thought it quite safe to be rude to her. Even the death of the Duchess of York, in 1820, which left her the first lady of the land, made little difference to the Duchess of Clarence. The Duchess of York had not been very fortunate in her marriage, but she had more natural dignity than her sister-in-law, Caroline, whose troubles had occupied so much of their attention at that time. She lived apart from the Duke, but entertained him with other guests at her famous week-end parties at Oatlands Park. Even fashionable people spoke of her with respect:

"The poor Duchess of York is dead. She is extremely regretted. She gave up the whole of her time to the exercise of charity and to the well-being of those around her. . . . Her hours were singular; she was read to most of the night and took her sleep late in the day. Several large dogs shared her apartment and were often dirty companions. The Duke and her were always on a friendly footing of acquaintance and no Green Bag discussions."

The Duchess of Clarence, unlike the Duchess of York, did not good-naturedly take things as they were and make the best of them; in the most efficient manner, but with so little fuss that hardly anyone noticed what she was doing, she took charge. It would be interesting to know what she thought of those first years at Bushey, but she wisely made no confidants and only one great friend—her husband. She welcomed the Duke's children with great kindness, handling the awkward situation in the most sensible manner possible, as if the Duke had been married before and she had come to the house as a second wife, prepared to play as well as she could a mother's part. She won the Duke's heart so, and theirs; except in the stress of a political crisis, years later, the Fitzclarences all spoke of her with approval and affection.

"She is the best and most charming woman in the world," declared the eldest son.

This most difficult point of behaviour settled so satisfactorily the Duke was clay in her hands. He let her take over the management of his household. Where chaos had reigned, order emerged. The Duke was naturally honest; he simply did not understand money. To his astonishment his wife made him comfortable while practising economy; to his pleasure and surprise he was able to pay off his debts and presently found himself cheerfully subscribing to

charities. An admirable woman! Why had he never come across one of this kind before? A high moral tone was evidently not incompatible with cheerfulness and affection. The Duke, always a man with strong domestic instincts, settled down to enjoy a model old age. He had retained a love of order and punctuality from his naval days; a simple, frugal way of living had always been the way which, in his heart, he preferred. It was too late to alter his speech altogether, but he was perfectly willing to amend his manners to please this amiable wife.

"You would be surprised at the Duke of Clarence if you were to see him," said Colonel Wilbraham to Lord Colchester. "For his wife, it is said, has entirely reformed him, and instead of that *polisson* manner for which he used to be celebrated, he is now quiet and well-behaved like anybody else."

Quiet visitors, increasingly, enjoyed a stay at Bushey; the hostess was an admirable horsewoman, the host a good walker; there was little etiquette and much friendliness; the gardens, especially the kitchen gardens and the hothouses, were extremely interesting; the dairy and the cottages were model affairs.

The world of fashion, when it noticed Bushey, sneered; the simple admired it. But "how rarely you meet a simple man or woman in our great world," said the Duchess to Madame von Bülow, the German Ambassador's wife and the one woman with whom she permitted herself something approaching intimacy. "They would be hard to find even with Diogenes' lantern."

The Duchess, in her quiet way, was quite able to hold her own in the modish world. She dutifully accompanied the Duke on those detestable visits to the Pavilion at Brighton and won grudging praise: "A small well-bred, excellent little woman, who moves very gracefully and enters or leaves a room *à ravir*. She has nine new gowns; the most loyal of us not having been able to muster above six," said Lady Granville.

The Duke and Duchess acquitted themselves very well on such occasions but they much preferred the peace of Bushey and their continental tours. Year by year the Duke's health and manners improved, and his happiness pushed its roots deeper.

II. THE LAST YEARS OF PRIVILEGE
1810–1830

"It was holiday time for people intent on promoting the greatest happiness for the smallest number."

MRS. GORE, *Cecil—A Peer.*

CHAPTER I

THE KING AND HIS BROTHERS
1810–1830

GEORGE IV was the last King of England who, habitually, succeeded in having his own way, but, not being a man of principle like Charles I, he did not insist on having his own way in important matters if the result were likely to cause him trouble. He enjoyed himself very well as Prince Regent; he did not cease to enjoy himself when he became King. He had notions of kingship which were very odd in England; the two most popular monarchs in the history of England and the two whom, in many respects, he most resembled, had been accessible; George IV chose to withdraw himself into an almost Oriental seclusion, with the Sultana of the hour. He had been popular once, and only in hiding could he manage to persuade himself that he was popular still. His abominable treatment of his wife and daughter had earned him such bitter hostility from the English people that not even his magnificence, which in their hearts they loved though they grumbled at it, could counteract their hate.

Lady Hertford, the Sultana of the Regency, shared his unpopularity. Such comments as this of Lady Jerningham's were common: "The Fête of Wednesday was magnificent. The Prince was hissed by an immense mob, and Lady Hertford, dressed in her scarlet crape in a chair nearly overturned. The Duke and Duchess of Clarence were

there. The Duchess's manner is found pleasing but she is not handsome as you know."

Lady Hertford, who was probably the most skilful performer in the art of keeping up appearances in the whole of history, evidently wore scarlet to emphasise her spotless reputation.

"At a ball at the Spanish Ambassador's all the ladies are to be in white," went on Lady Jerningham, "but Lady Hertford is to be in scarlet satin trimmed with crape of the same colour. This will make a very conspicuous appearance."

The Sultana was evidently not sufficiently sympathetic when poor George was having trouble with his Queen, for he sought another comforter. Lady Hertford's handling of the situation was masterly. When the King went to Drury Lane for the first time after the Trial, the Dukes of York and Clarence went with him, as well as a great suite. They were all very nervous; when a man in the gallery called out "Where's your wife, Georgy?" Lord Hertford, who was lighting them into Lady Bessborough's box, dropped one of the candles. The King swore.

Clarence whispered in York's ear, "The mob has broken Lady Hertford's windows."

York raised his eyebrows. "And made no assault on Lady Conyngham's?"

Clarence tittered: "Somebody asked Lady Hertford if she had been aware of the King's admiration for Lady Conyngham, and whether he had never talked to her about the lady. She replied 'that intimately as she had known the King and openly as he had always talked to her upon every subject, he had never ventured to speak to her upon that of his mistresses.'"

"I must say I admire that woman; she has great pride." Clarence's sympathy with his brother, however, was not sufficiently great to keep him from his own modest amusements. He disgraced himself by his behaviour at Queen Caroline's trial,[1] but at least he had been consistent in the matter of supporting his brother George through thick and thin, and Brougham treated him harshly when he thundered: "Come forward thou slanderer, and let me see thy face."

The Duke of Clarence was always in a rather odd relation to the Queen; he had never ceased to regard and treat Mrs. Fitzherbert as his brother's wife. It is also possible that his

[1] I have dealt with the Duke of Clarence's behaviour at the trial of Queen Caroline in my book *The First Gentleman*.

unseemly behaviour was due to excitement at the birth of his new daughter rather than to excessive hostility to the Queen.

Clarence was always ready to attend a dinner or to make a speech. He went with the Dukes of York and Sussex to old Coutts' wedding feast. He was at dinner with Sussex when that consistent Whig entertained the King's enemies. He laughed as loudly as anyone at the Whig stories.

"We are getting very much into the Reform line, we assure you," said the Whigs.

It was the first time Clarence had heard of Reform at a royal dinner-table and he protested that he was all for Reform too.

The Duke of Gloucester with regal solemnity declared himself a Radical.

Someone whispered a little scandal: "Though Slice[1] of Gloucester is in politics a Radical, in domestic life he is a tyrant. Some lady called on the Duchess and quite out of breath was marched up to the top of the house. The Duchess apologised quite feelingly and said it was due to the cruel manner she was treated by the Duke; he locked up the drawing-rooms and kept the keys of them himself."

Sussex was entertaining the company with stories of his bogus cousin, "Olivia of Cumberland," with whom, for fun's sake, he said he had had various interviews, during which she had pressed upon him in support of her claims her remarkable likeness to the royal family. "Upon one occasion, being rather off her guard from temper or liquor, she smacked off her wig all at once and said: 'Why, did you ever in your life see such a likeness to yourself?'"

"She lived in the capacity of poplolly to Lord Warwick," said Mr. Creevey, who always knew that kind of thing. "It is from some papers of his that she has at length started into the royal line."

Clarence wanted to talk about the Queen's trial, but Sussex thought it politic to turn the conversation.

"Was there ever such a goose as the Duke of Wellington to call public meetings a farce?"

"He was pummelled black and blue by Carnarvon, Lansdowne and Holland, and had to apologise."

"A funny thing happened to Tierney. He was dining with Decaze, who said: 'If the opposition came in what would they do with Napoleon?'"

[1] The Duke of Gloucester was generally shown by the caricaturists as a slice of Gloucester cheese.

"Why, put him on the throne of France to be sure," says Tierney.

"Decaze, not understanding Tierney's humour, sent off a courier to old Louis *le desiré*. Old Louis forwarded the frightful information to the Emperor of Russia; he sends formal complaint to our Minister, who forwards it to the Foreign Office. Castlereagh has sent Tierney a funny message that he wishes he would have no more jokes with Decaze about Buonaparte unless he wants a war with Russia. Tierney is frightened out of his wits."

They settled down to political gossip.

"Brougham showed me a letter from the Princess Pauline requiring his influence with the Government to obtain permission for her to go out to St. Helena to her brother Buonaparte."

"Talleyrand is cursedly alarmed about Boney's memoirs. He will buy them if he can."

"Did you hear Castlereagh's speech? I thought I should have died with laughing when he spoke gravely and handsomely of the increased cleanliness of the country from the increased excise revenue of soap!"

"Our Brougham as a rival artist with him in talent and composition played the devil with him and made a great display."

"Ah! Brougham. He exceeds in oddity and queerness anything I ever beheld."

Brougham's oddity was an ever-fertile subject and could occupy any dinner-party for hours.

After the Queen's trial the Duke of Sussex, who had refused to lend himself to the persecution and sided openly with the Whigs, was by far the most popular of the royal brothers.

"He was," said Lady Jerningham, "intended for a domestic good man—a great deal of quick feeling and tact, a fine spirit, a sense of honour, a great lover of comfort in the old style, and old-fashioned grandeur such as Baronial Halls and all the Appendages. He has a flower garden at Kensington which he delights in, and quantities of piping bulfinches, old china and a vast library, for he is a very good scholar. You may imagine this *mélange* of a man. A little Black is his Valet (he calls him Blacky). Mr. Stephenson, when he moves off to bed, generally serves him for a walking-stick, being about 5 ft. 5 and the Duke 6 ft. 4 and large in proportion, he winds his arm round the Secretary's neck in a very affectionate way. He drinks abundantly

of everything. The Brunswick strength of constitution seems struggling through Asthma, Corpulence and a Bacchanalian life when he is in the chair.

Mr. Creevey affectionately called him "Little Suss" and often dined with him, as did most of the Whigs. Sussex was also a great country-house visitor, and, although all royal visitors are a bore, he was not a great nuisance. King Tom, Coke of Norfolk, expected him yearly for the shearings at Holkham and to shoot, and the Duke, Eliza Coke said, was very little trouble. When there was nothing to amuse him he slept, or 'puffed away at a long meerchaum in his bedroom till he actually blinded himself and all who came near him.' This disgusting habit of smoking was very rare in the eighteen-twenties and even Royal Dukes had to indulge in it in their bedrooms or out of doors. Harry Keppel 'smuggled good tobacco on shore, some of which contraband found its way to Kensington Palace'; that must have been for the Duke of Sussex, unless, of course, it was for the Duchess of Kent.

The Duke of Cambridge was generally in Hanover, but when he appeared in England he "keeps us all alive with his good humour and affability. He runs about just like a private gentleman, and will dine with you or drink with you as may be most convenient. His ragé for music is quite extraordinary; from morning to night he is at it. At eleven o'clock the King's Band practises in the Pavilion till two, when he immediately flies to his brother scraper, Kieswetter, and perhaps grinds away till four, when he rides out or visits, and recruits himself for the same routine at night."

No wonder little was heard of him in the political world.

It was a pity that the Duke of Cumberland did not share his brother's harmless pursuits. He was always shadowed by sinister rumours; he had murdered his valet; he had stolen his friend's wife and driven him to suicide; he was involved in this dark scandal, and that. His brother George, who was much under his influence, told the Duke of Wellington that Cumberland was so unpopular because "There never was a father well with his son, or husband with his wife, or lover with his mistress, or a friend with his friend, that he did not try to make mischief between them."

The King feared Cumberland because he dreaded his sarcasms, and ridicule, of all things in the world, was the thing he most hated. Wellington hated Cumberland because

he was so often the obstructing influence behind the throne and also because Cumberland called him "King Arthur," which annoyed George.

Yet, for a man with so evil a reputation, he wrote a kindly letter to people whom he liked, such as Lady Shelley: "God bless you. Time for no more, pardon my horrid scrawl. Yours affectionately, Ernest."

The little girl at Kensington and her Uncle Leopold called him Ernestus the Pious.

The little girl at Kensington did not see a great deal of her uncles, except Uncle Leopold.

"Claremont remains as the brightest epoch of my otherwise sad childhood," she said later. She loved to go and see "beloved Uncle Leopold and dear old Louis, the former faithful and devoted dresser of Charlotte, beloved and respected by all who knew her." Prince Leopold and Baron Stockmar told little Victoria tales of Charlotte who had been so happy in the rooms which now saw happiness for her.

The Duke of York was also very kind to little Vic; she found him "tall, large and shy" but he gave her beautiful presents, including a "donkey and a performance by a Punch and Judy Show."

The Duke of Clarence was also fond of her, as he was of all children. "I hope you are well and don't forget Aunt Adelaide who loves you so fondly. Your uncle hopes to receive soon a letter from you, of whom he is as fond as I am," wrote the Duchess.

King George disliked the Coburgs; he had more than one dispute with Leopold, and he called the Duchess of Kent "the Swiss Governess," but, oddly, and the fact is one of the few things in George's favour, little Victoria, like many children, was charmed with the King. She went to see him at Carlton House, and, on a never-to-be-forgotten occasion, visited him at Windsor with her mother: "When we arrived at the Royal Lodge," she remembered, "the King took me by the hand saying, 'Give me your little paw.' He was large and gouty but with a wonderful dignity and charm of manner. He wore the wig which was so much worn in those days. Then he said he would give me something to wear, and that was his picture set in diamonds which was worn by the Princesses as an Order to a blue ribbon on the left shoulder. I was very proud of this and Lady Conyngham pinned it to my shoulder." The Duchess of Kent must have shuddered.

The little girl went driving with Lady Maria Conyngham and poor Lord Graves (" who afterwards shot himself on account of his wife's conduct with the Duke of Cumberland "). They drove in a pony carriage with four grey ponies to the Sandpit Gate where the King had a menagerie, the next day to Virginia Water, where they met the King driving in his phaeton with the Duchess of Gloucester, and he said, " Pop her in." " We drove round Virginia Water and stopped at the Fishing Temple. Here there was a large barge and everyone went on board and fished while a band played on another."

The Duke of Wellington saw the little girl there and thought her very well brought up : " In spite of the King's dislike of both her father and mother, he cannot help being pleased with the little Princess."

The Duke was less entertained with the fishing party than she was :

" By the way ' The Kingfisher ' caricature has somewhat stopped the fishing," he remarked. How George hated the caricaturists !

The Duchess of Kent's little daughter was a trifle precocious : " The King paid great attention to my sister (Princess Feodore of Leiningen) who was eighteen, very lovely, had charming manners, about which the King was extremely particular. Some people fancied he might marry her."

The King still talked spasmodically of marrying again. It was an idea which appealed to none of those in his immediate *entourage*. There had been talk of it the year before Princess Feodore's visit to Windsor. The King, having prepared for Ascot week by having 12 ounces of blood taken from him by cupping, was able at dinner to eat very heartily of turtle, accompanying it with punch, sherry and champagne. " He must also have drunk a couple of bottles of claret before he rose from table," said Mr. Creevey, not without admiration. " Nevertheless we all think he will beat brother York still. He was in deep conversation with Lauderdale ; it probably concerned a blow up between Prinney and Lady Conyngham. Matters were soon settled again through the kind and skilful negotiation of Lauderdale. She had been very restless under what she calls her terrible restraint and confinement. Lauderdale, however, has satisfied her for the present that, however blameable it was for her at first to get into her present situation, now it is

SARAH SOPHIA FANE,
COUNTESS OF JERSEY
After an old print.

her bounden duty to submit and go through with it." Someone, evidently, found her influence with the King of use, but who? Lady Conyngham, in spite of her fine quarters and magnificent diamonds, evidently would not have minded greatly if the King had taken a wife; her daughter, even, had been suggested.

George, however, thought that a *maîtresse en titre* was more royal, as he understood royalty, than a wife; he was, by this time, as indifferent to an heir as he was to the people of England. He took a particular interest in Madame du Cayla, who was Louis XVIII's Egeria. She dined with the Duke of Wellington and was presented to the King of England. She had been indispensable to the happiness of the King of France, a happiness which was said to consist of inhaling a pinch of snuff from her shoulders, which were remarkably broad and fair. It was certainly happiness easily bought—and paid for. Louis's amusements inspired Tom Moore with a ditty:

> "Why, why will monarchs caper so
> In palaces without foundations?"

George did not think much of "Old *Cochon*"; his idea of monarchy was rather of the Louis XIVth pattern: "He never thinks of anything but building," said the Duke of Wellington. "He never speaks of business nor even gives a thought to the state of England."

The King was building furiously. In 1822 the Pavilion was supposed to be finished; the latest addition was a bath in the King's apartment with pipes to conduct water from the sea, and, though he had not really finished additions, alterations and variations there, he had turned his serious attention from Brighton to London. He wanted a carriage road from Carlton House to his own Regent's Park; at the same time he took a dislike to Carlton House because "it was in a street." Buckingham House must be reconstructed as a palace worthy of him (at a cost which was to work out at £719,000); Carlton House should be pulled down and a new wide street constructed. With John Nash, Sir John Soane and Henry Holland he sat in long and feverish conferences. Money, of course, was no object; it never had been an object to George. To Nash there came an opportunity such as had fallen to no other architect except Sir Christopher Wren, and to Wren money had been grudged—a meanness which George would have condemned with warmth. Nash did

very well, but he was not a Wren, though the *Quarterly Review* was, perhaps, a little hard on him:

> "Augustus at Rome was for building renowned,
> And of marble he left what of brick he had found.
> But is not our Nash, too, a very great master?
> He finds us all brick and leaves us all plaster."[1]

Both the King and Nash had planned a spacious and magnificent City. George, of course, could afford such luxuries; he always knew where to lay his hand on money for his whims. His father, for instance, left a legacy to the Duke of Clarence. George, however, decided that the whole of the late King's property devolved on him personally and not upon the Crown, and so appropriated it all. He also took away from Prince Leopold the plate which had been given him (George said "lent") on his marriage to Princess Charlotte. Pleasant little tricks of that kind made him much beloved.

To do the King justice, he was more tender of his subjects' lives than of their purses. The Recorder of London used to submit to the King in Council a report of all persons under sentence of death in the Metropolis. The question of execution was discussed in Council and sometimes put to the vote. Greville, who did not love him, says laconically: "The heaviest Recorder's report that was ever known, I believe; seven people left for execution. The King cannot bear this and is always leaning to the side of mercy. It not infrequently happens that a culprit escapes owing to the scruples of the King."

This is the best thing that was ever said of George; it is pleasant to record it.

His relations with the Recorder's office were not always so pleasant. Denman, Queen Caroline's counsel, he who had compared the King to Nero during her trial, was elected Common Serjeant by the Common Council of London in despite of the King. George was forced to consent to his having a silk gown but he would not see him. It did not matter in the least that the whole business of the office was at a standstill while the Recorder was ill; the King *would not* see Denman; the Prime Minister argued and pleaded in vain. No one who offended George could ever be forgiven.

Delay in the country's business never troubled the King.

[1] *Quarterly Review*, June, 1826.

"No Council yet," says Greville. "The King is employed in altering the uniforms of the Guards, and has pattern coats with various collars submitted to him every day. The Duke of Cumberland assists him, and this is his principal occupation; he sees more of his tailor than he does of his Minister."

His Army tailoring masterpiece, incidentally, was not the Guards' uniform but that of the 10th Hussars, whose cherry-coloured breeches were famous throughout Europe. George, naturally, had no time for Councils:

"In peace he was intensely gay,
And indefatigably busy,
Preparing gewgaws every day,
And shows to make his subjects dizzy,
And hearing the reports of guns,
And signing the reports of gaolers,
And making up receipts for buns,
And patterns for the Army tailors.
And building carriages and boats,
And streets and chapels and pavilions,
And regulating all the coats
And all the principles of millions,
And drinking homilies and gin,
And chewing pork and adulation,
And looking backwards upon sin,
And looking forward to salvation."

It was useless to remonstrate with him. "He was contradicted by Sir Benjamin Bloomfield t'other day, and he seized him by the collar, and gave him a good hearty shake; so one must not wonder if he ain't often contradicted."

The Duke of Wellington and Charles Greville's brother, rather than contradict him, "were occupied for half an hour in endeavouring to fold a letter to His Majesty in a particular way, which he has prescribed, for he will have his envelopes made up in some French fashion."

It was not everyone, however, who was so careful of his feelings. He gave a grand dinner for the Dukes of Orleans and Chartres, and a child's ball in the evening to which the young Queen of Portugal and little Victoria were invited. When he talked of giving the ball, Lady Maria Conyngham said: "Oh do. It will be so nice to see the *two little Queens* dancing together."

The King was beyond measure provoked at this lack of tact. However, little Victoria looked plain by the side of Doña Maria da Gloria, and the latter fell down and hurt her face, was frightened and bruised, and went away. So he had not much to detract from his own splendour.

CHAPTER II

THE ARISTOCRACY

GEORGE IV had lived through the period of the French Revolution and Napoleonic wars and had shut his eyes and ears to all the lessons he might have learned; he was too intelligent not to know that a change had taken place in his world, but his selfishness argued "Things will last my time." A large section of his nobility took the same stand; some of the great men were even sufficiently dull to be genuinely ignorant. They saw no need for any changes in the best of all possible worlds.

The small ruling class of England had had a wonderful time; it had been, as Mrs. Gore, the novelist, pointed out, "throughout Europe holiday time for people intent on promoting the greatest happiness of the smallest number"; in England the smallest number had been even happier than elsewhere, for England had, for more than a century, been free from war and invasion[1]; professional soldiers and mercenaries had done the fighting to keep life agreeable for the wealthy people at home.

They really thought, or they wanted to think, that the alarming cataclysm of the French Revolution had made no fundamental cracks; that now the Bourbons and the petty princes of Europe were safely back on their thrones, they were going to restore everything as it had been before 1789.

The more intelligent were speedily disillusioned; the old, comfortable state of affairs had by no means been restored, and, more serious still, the walls of caste had been breached when they were most vitally needed to protect privilege.

It was a post-war epoch, and post-war epochs are notoriously restless. A war-time aristocracy of money had been created, and had no intention of retiring or of putting its head under the heel of the old aristocracy of birth.

[1] Prince Charles Edward Stuart's "invasion" had provided no more than a delicious fright.

A King's Speech described the country as "victorious but paying the price of victory." It was not, of course, the privileged classes which paid that price; the burden weighed most heavily on those who had snatched none of the rewards of war, and who had had no voice in its conduct—skilful politicians, contractors, middle-men had taken the profits; the quiet gentlefolk, the thrifty, the industrious paid the price.

Sir Walter Scott noticed in 1817 that "every avenue to employment is choked with applicants, for the number of disbanded officers is greatly increased."

Earl Grey said in 1819: "My views of the state of England are more and more gloomy. Everything is tending to a complete separation between higher and lower orders of society, a state of things which can only end in the destruction of liberty, or in a convulsion which may too probably produce the same result."

Earl Grey really believed that between "higher and lower orders" there was a great gulf fixed; his intelligence should have told him that the war had placed a bridge over the gulf and that many had crossed it. All kinds of persons were now crowding places where formerly one class had walked alone; new ideas, new pretensions were evident and forceful; money had rivalled rank and was rapidly engulfing it. The lavish creation of peers had begun as long ago as 1760, and there were many noble families who dated their titles after that year and owed them to nothing more noble than a tactful financing of grateful governments. George IV was not likely to condemn so inexpensive a way of paying his debts.

"They promise us a sad rum set of peers for the Coronation," said Lady Cowper. "Only two names are good, Lord Ravensworth and Lord Delamere—Sir T. Liddell and Tom Cholmondeley. Then we have Donoughmore, Marquis of Alexandria, Lord James Murray, Lord Glenlion (who, it is supposed, would be a suitable companion at the Coronation for Lord Rock Savage) Lord Westmeath to be made a Marquis, who is said not to have money enough to pay for the fees—with Lord Eldon, an Earl, with his second title—Lord Income, and Wellesley Pole, Lord Merryborough, or as some call it Merryfellow, *enfin c'est folie ou badinage.*"

The new aristocracy was noisy and vulgar, as new aristocracies generally are. "The true principles of aristocracy,"

said Sir Egerton Bridges, " are at present grossly outraged in England; the aristocracy of money is the worst in the world, and if a lawyer of yesterday, bred in a clerk's office, gets, by the most odious and time-serving corruptions, a coronet on his carriage he thinks himself changed into imperial essence."[1]

John Stanhope's point of view was rather different. " The great advantage of being of old family," said he, " is that you are farther removed from the rascal who founded it."

There was no great hostess in the post-war period to take the place which the Duchess of Devonshire had held for so long; she had been supreme in the modish world, " the Empress of Fashion," Horace Walpole had called her, and round her had also swarmed all who were most brilliant among the Whigs; she had combined an empire of fashion and politics which was unique, unchallenged, and uncopied. Lady Cowper was as nearly her successor as anyone might be, but Lady Cowper had neither Duchess Georgiana's brilliance nor Lady Melbourne's power. Nevertheless she was the most representative of the younger generation of hostesses, she was courted as the representative of that Devonshire House world which was passing, and because she had great influence as the Egeria of Lord Palmerston and sister of Lord Melbourne and a certain gentle persuasion of her own. She was a Whig by family tradition, but a Canningite through devotion to Palmerston and Melbourne; she regarded the Radicals with as deep a horror as if she had been an Ultra Tory. Though she behaved more circumspectly than her mother, Emily Lamb's sense of right and wrong had very early grown confused; the sinners who dominated her childhood and youth " sinned so very charmingly and with so much sophistry and wit"; misdemeanours of the magnitude and blatancy of Lady Caroline Lamb's, however, shocked her inexpressibly.

Lady Jersey, another great London hostess, was even vaguer in her politics than Emily Lamb; she was intimate with the Whigs, but that did not mean that she turned her back upon the Tories. Lady Shelley said that she wished to supplant Mrs. Arbuthnot as the Egeria of the Duke of Wellington, but then Lady Shelley might have been jealous, since she loved to offer incense at that shrine herself. Mr. Creevey has a rather charming portrait of " our Sally ":

[1] Sir Egerton Bridges' *Autobiography*, p. 195.

"She is like one of her numerous gold and silver musical dickey birds, that are in all the show rooms of her house. She begins to sing at eleven o'clock, and, with the interval of the hour she retires to her cage to rest, she sings till 12 at night without a moment's interruption. She changes her feathers for dinner, and her plumage both morning and evening is the happiest and most beautiful I ever saw."

Lady Jersey's social activities, however, were rather at Almack's than at home. About 1816 the constitution of the famous club underwent a great change. The absence of a Court with a Queen at the head of it necessitated some alternative for dividing the sheep from the goats; Almack's was self-elected to the post. Marianne Stanhope wrote of it in 1826: "This institution has now existed ten years, and six self-elected sovereigns have, during that time, held the keys of the great world as St. Peter was supposed to do those of the Kingdom of Heaven. These ladies decide, in a weekly committee, upon the distribution of the tickets for admission; the whole is a matter of favour, interest, or calculation; for neither rank, distinction nor merit of any kind will serve as a plea, unless the candidate has the good fortune to be already upon the visiting book of one of these all-powerful patronesses; not to be known to one of the six must indeed argue yourself quite unknown. But the extraordinary thing is that all the world of fashion should submit patiently to such a tyranny. What will not *ton* do?"

The lengths to which tyranny could go were exemplified in a studied insolence to the Duchess of Clarence and a refusal to admit the Duke of Wellington.

"*Qu'est-ce que la gloire? Il n'y en a donc plus. Quand on a vu le conquérant d'Austerlitz mourir à St. Hélène, et son vainqueur content de se mettre sur la liste des élégantes d'Almack's on peut bien dire, 'Il n'y a plus de gloire.'*"

Insolence was the chief necessity for a patroness of Almack's, which explains, perhaps, why Lady Jersey and Madame de Lieven had more power than the good-natured Lady Cowper; insolence was considered the chief quality in all belonging to the *haut ton*. Those who were not the boots evidently enjoyed being the doormat.

"Almack's is a species of tyranny which would never be submitted to in any country but one of such complete freedom that people are at liberty to make fools of themselves." Marianne Stanhope had a caustic tongue; since

she was very much of the *haut ton* herself she published her book anonymously and dedicated it to :

That most distinguished and despotic
Conclave
The Ladies Patronesses of the Balls at
ALMACK'S,
The Rulers of Fashion, the Arbiters of Taste,
The Leaders of Ton, and the Makers of Manners,
Whose sovereign sway over " the world " of London has
long been established on the firmest basis,
Whose Decrees are Laws, and from whose Judgment
there is no appeal ;
To these important personages, all and severally,
Who have formed, or who do form, any part of that
ADMINISTRATION
usually denominated
THE WILLIS COALITION CABAL,
Whether Members of the Committee of Supply,
or
CABINET COUNCILLORS
Holding Seats at the Board of Control,
THE FOLLOWING PAGES
Are, with all due respect, humbly dedicated by
An old Subscriber.

The ladies of Almack's regulated not only Society but clothes. They decided, about 1822, that there was an indelicacy attached to pantaloons from which trousers were exempt, and refused to admit within their sacred precincts any man wearing the indelicate garment. They were reported, probably by a wag, to have framed a rather ambiguous rule : " Gentlemen will not be admitted without breeches and stockings."

These ladies, however, who were so exercised about the immodesty of masculine attire, had been the first to set the seal of their approval on that licentious dance, the waltz ; and must have been astonished to find that their approval was not sufficient to remove all scruples. Mrs. Stanhope first saw the abomination at Ramsgate in 1807. By 1812 it had attracted universal attention ; General Thornton, of the Guards, having ventured to praise it at a fête given by Albinia, Countess of Buckinghamshire, was violently attacked by Mr. Theodore Hook, who declared that the obnoxious dance was " calculated to lead to the most licentious consequences." The result was a duel between General Thornton and Mr. Hook, on account of which the former was obliged to resign his commission.

Subsequently, in the *Sporting Magazine*, a correspondent

PRINCESS LIEVEN
After Lawrence.

who signed himself "Hop" denounced in unmeasured terms the dance which "to the disgrace of sense and taste has obtruded itself into the whole circle of the fashionable world." It was, he pointed out, a "will-corrupting dance"; it was "a compound of immodest gesture and infectious poison . . . and while no Englishman would refuse currency to German music, this disgusting interloper must be dismissed and exported again to the soil whence it came duty free."

Even though the Emperor Alexander set the seal of his approval on it by dancing it at Almack's, so great was the horror with which its growing popularity was regarded, that the practicability was discussed of getting up a petition to Parliament to prohibit an innovation which might be regarded as a national danger, since it threatened the moral tone of the whole social world.

Byron, not always among the moralists, had a warning about the shocking importation:

> "Thus front to front the partners move or stand,
> The foot may rest, but none withdraw the hand;
> And all in turn may follow in their rank,
> The Earl-of-Asterisk—and Lady-Blank—;
> Sir-Such-a-one—with those of fashion's host,
> For whose blest surnames *vide Morning Post*
> (Or if for that impartial print too late
> Search Doctors' Commons six months from my date)
> Thus all and each, in movement swift or slow,
> The genial contact gently undergo;
> Till some might marvel with the modest Turk,
> If 'nothing follows all this palming work'?
> True, honest Mirzy—you may trust my rhyme—
> Something does follow at a fitter time;
> The breast thus publicly resigned to man
> In private may resist him—if it can."

Byron thought that the change in the fashion of women's clothes also made for immorality:

> "Hoops are *no more*, and petticoats *not much*,
> Morals and minuets, virtue and her stays
> And tell-tale powder—all have had their days."

He might have been comforted; corsets and voluminous skirts returned to fashion with the Bourbons; nothing could be more modest than the bonnets which nearly hid their wearers and raised an outcry in the newspapers about the sufferings of theatre-goers who had to sit behind the monstrosities.

Fashions for women might return to elegance, but men's were doomed. In the footsteps of Beau Brummell followed a crow dof minor beaux, abruptly dismissed by Byron:

> "The dynasty of Dandies, now
> Perchance succeeded by some other class
> Of imitated imitators—how
> Irreparably soon decline, alas!
> The demagogues of fashion: all below
> Is frail."

Captain Gronow described them: "They were generally middle-aged, some even elderly men, had large appetites and weak digestions, gambled freely and had no luck. They hated everybody and abused everybody, and would sit together in White's bay window, or the pit boxes at the Opera, weaving tremendous crammers. They swore a good deal, never laughed, had their own particular slang, looked hazy after dinner, and had most of them been patronised by the Prince Regent. . . . They gloried in their shame, and believed in nothing good or noble or elevated."

There were three survivors, however, of the great days of Dandyism, three who were worthy to stand on the steps of the throne which Brummell had occupied, and for which no successor could be found, who continued the tradition that a dandy should be something more than a fop, who were witty, good-natured and generally courteous, thinking that manners should be as well-fitting as coats—Lords Worcester, Sefton and Alvanley. Lord Worcester became in due course the 7th Duke of Beaufort; Alvanley and Sefton continued to delight a new generation.

There was no more popular man in Society than Lord Alvanley; he was witty, kindly, debonair. "He was about the middle height, and well and strongly built, though he latterly became somewhat corpulent. He excelled in all manly exercises, was a hard rider to hounds, and what those who do not belong to the upper ten call 'a good plucked one.' His face had somewhat of the rotund form and smiling expression which characterises the jolly friars one meets with in Italy. His hair and eyes were dark and he had a very small nose, to which after deep potations, his copious pinches of snuff had some difficulty in finding their way and were lavishly bestowed upon his florid cheek."

He was a *bon vivant* and indulged in costly fads, the more cheerfully because he never paid cash for anything, would

have scorned to do so. "He muddled away his fortune in paying tradesmen's bills," he said sadly of a once rich friend.

His wit and good-humour probably, almost, paid his tradesmen. Young Gunter of the famous catering firm had so far progressed towards the *haut ton* that he rode a high-mettled horse on which he bumped into Alvanley.

"I can't hold him, he's so hot," the young man gasped.

"Ice him, Gunter, ice him," said Alvanley.

He saw everything in a humorous light and in repartee he was quick as lightning; a slight lisp only heightened his drollery.

Lord Sefton was a typical figure of the Regency. He was an accomplished whip to a four-in-hand and one of the founders of the original Coaching Club. His play was notorious; he broke the bank at Crockford's two nights running, and then lost two hundred thousand pounds there. Trifles like that did not spoil his appetite; he was a great epicure, and invented a famous *plat* of the roe of the mackerel. He was one of the finest whist players in England and preferred to play for hundred guinea points, besides bets. He played with another dandy, Lord de Ros, for whom Alvanley suggested an epitaph:

"Here lies
Henry William, Twenty Second Lord de Ros,
In joyful expectation of the Last Trump."

Sefton, later, took to politics, much as he had taken to cards and the turf, from love of excitement. He was very friendly with Brougham, but his real crony was Thomas Creevey, who called him the "Pet" and made Croxteth and Stoke his "homes from home." Lady Sefton had been pretty and lively; she confided in Mr. Creevey that on first coming out Prince William Henry had been pleased to be very much in love with her; he contrived to send her a nosegay from Kew and to get her invited to the gayest and finest parties and balls then going, until her father took fright. There was another, less agreeable, passage in Lady Sefton's past in which the Prince Regent figured and for which Lord Sefton never forgave him.

It is, perhaps, time to introduce Mr. Thomas Creevey, that inveterate diner-out and country-house visitor, who was the bosom friend of Earl Grey, the confidant of Brougham, the crony of Sefton, the favourite of all the ladies, and

the constant correspondent of a hundred people who played important or amusing parts in the social and political worlds. Mr. Creevey was intimate with the Prince Regent and on friendly terms with the Duke of Clarence in the early days of the century, and, after a few years of coolness, was received again with great friendliness by King William IV.

"Old Creevey is rather an extraordinary character," said Charles Greville, his rival gossip. "I know nothing of the early part of his history, but I believe he was an attorney or barrister; he married a widow, who died a few years ago; she had something, he nothing; he got into Parliament, belonged to the Whigs, displayed a good deal of shrewdness and humour, and was for some time very troublesome to the Tory Government by continually attacking abuses. After some time he lost his seat, and went to live at Brussels, where he became intimate with the Duke of Wellington. Then his wife died, upon which event he was thrown upon the world with about £200 a year, no home, few connections, a great many acquaintances, a good constitution, and extraordinary spirits. He possesses nothing but his clothes, no property of any sort; he leads a vagrant life, visiting a number of people who are delighted to have him, and sometimes roving about to various places as fancy happens to direct, and staying till he has spent what money he has in his pocket. He has no servant, no home, no creditors; he buys everything as he wants it at the place he is at; he has no ties upon him, and has his time entirely at his own disposal and that of his friends. He is certainly a living proof that a man may be perfectly happy and exceedingly poor, or rather without riches, for he suffers none of the privations of poverty and enjoys many of the advantages of wealth. I think he is the only man I know in Society who possesses nothing."

He had one possession, a stepdaughter who was not dependent on him, Miss Elizabeth Ord, of whom he was very fond, to whom he wrote regularly and who preserved his letters and papers to bring instruction and entertainment to later generations.

He had a very waggish humour and was a delight to hostesses; parties were seldom dull when he was there.

"La! Mr. Creevey, you always make me laugh so. Come and sit by me, you mischievous toad."

He had his detractors, of course; Theodore Hook was one:

"Blessington hath a beaming eye
But no one knows for whom it beameth,
Right and left it seems to fly,
But what it looks at, no one dreameth.
Sweeter 'tis to look upon
Creevey, though he seldom rises;
Few his truths—but even one,
Like unexpected light, surprises.
Oh, my croney, Creevey dear,
My gentle, bashful, graceful Creevey,
Others' lies
May wake surprise,
But truth, from you, my crony Creevey."

During the years the Whigs were out of power Mr. Creevey did a good deal of visiting at country houses, popping up and down the country with amazing activity, considering the difficulties of travel and the costliness of coaches. Though most frequently at Croxteth with the Seftons or at Cantley with the Taylors, he went sometimes to greater houses, to Knowsley to visit the Derbys, to Lambton, to Raby Castle to visit the Earl of Darlington. Of Raby he wrote: "This house is itself by far the most magnificent and unique in several ways that I have ever seen. As long as I have heard of anything, I have heard of being driven into the hall of this house in one's carriage and being set down by the fire. You can have no idea of the magnificent perfection with which this is accomplished. Then the band of musick which plays in this same hall during dinner, then the gold plate and then the poplolly at the head of it all!"

To do the poplolly justice, Creevey acknowledged later that she filled her high station uncommonly well.

The magnificence of Knowsley was less to his taste: "The new dining-room is opened; it is 53 feet by 37 and such a height that it destroys the effect of all the other apartments. . . . You enter it from a passage by two great Gothic church-like doors the whole height of the room. This entrance is fatal to the effect. Lady Derby, when I objected to the immensity of the doors, said:

"'You've heard General Grosvenor's remark upon them, have you not? He asked in his grave pompous manner, "Pray are those great doors to be opened for every pat of butter that comes into the room?"' There are two fireplaces—yet those at the bottom of the table said it was quite petrifying in that neighbourhood, and the report here (at Croxteth) is that they have since been obliged to

abandon it entirely from the cold. My lord and my lady were all kindness (but quite uninterested in politics). . . . I must say I never saw man or woman live more happily with nine grown-up children. It is my lord who is the great moving principle."

Mr. Creevey also went to Lowther Castle, to Wentworth, to Howick, where they played charades, and even into that fastness of Torydom, Wynyard, where the Londonderrys kept such state that Lord Charles Somerset complained that he had no sleep for three nights, never having slept before in cambrick sheets, and that the Brussels lace with which the pillows were trimmed tickled his face so that he had not a moment's peace.

Earl Grey said that he would not dress Lady Londonderry for £5000 a year; her handkerchiefs cost fifty guineas the dozen; the furniture of her boudoir £3000.

The Duke of Rutland said ruefully: "The Londonderrys have been at Belvoir. They roll in such magnificence that my seven senses were reduced one half in number when they arrived."

"Alnwick Castle is the place for real comfort," said Mr. Creevey. "Ladies are handed out to breakfast as well as to dinner; and that entertainment over, the sexes are separated as at a cathedral; so much so that Tankerville was arrested by the coat flap for attempting to invade the seraglio."

Mr. Greville went to Tixall when the Granvilles were renting it, and found that "nothing could exceed the agreeableness of the life we led. We breakfasted about twelve or later, dined at seven, played at whist or macao the whole evening, and went to bed at different hours between two and four."

"At Teddesley, Edward Littleton's," he adds, "Luttrell and Nugent were both very angry at the badness of the fare."

For real badness of fare it was necessary to go to Lambton. A great many people joked, behind his back, at Mr. Lambton's expense, but none more than Creevey, who called him "King Jog," a nickname which arose out of this: "My little friend, the youngest Copley (Maria, who was soon to marry Lord Howick) can never resist touching up John George Lambton for one of his sublimities. The first day she was here he said he considered £40,000 a year a moderate income—such a one as a man might jog on with. Yesterday

at breakfast, when we were discussing Lord Harewood's fortune, little Cop said, with becoming gravity: 'She believed it exceeded a couple of jogs.'"

Mr. Creevey protested that Lambton was damned uncomfortable, but he often went to sample its discomforts: "I got here on Monday night, the company being at dinner. King Jog, hearing I was arrived, came out. I found nearer 30 than 20 people there, in a very long and lofty apartment, the roof highly collegiate, from which hung the massive chandeliers, the curtain drapery of dark-coloured velvet, profusely fringed with gold and much resembling palls. The company, sitting at a long and narrowish table, never uttered a single solitary sound for long and long after I was there; so that it really might have been the family vault of the Lambtons, and the company the male and female Lambtons who had been buried in their best clothes, and in a sitting position. . . . Such a dinner I defy any human being to fancy. . . . A round of beef at a side-table was run at with as much keenness as a banker's shop before a stoppage. It is certainly better than last year, for then there was no beef but only a sucking pig. . . . His civility," Mr. Creevey had the decency to add, "makes one almost ashamed of thinking him such a stingy, swindling, tyrannical kip as he certainly is."

Next year the fare was, if anything, rather worse: "Soup was handed round—from where, God knows! but before Lambton stood a dish with one small haddock and three small whitings in it, which he instantly ordered off the table, to avoid the trouble of helping. Mrs. Grey and I were at least ten minutes without any prospect of getting any servant to attend to us, though I made repeated applications to Lambton, who was all this time eating his fish as comfortably as could be."

An unsatisfactory host and a difficult husband even thus early! but "Nothing could be better than Lady Louisa in her quiet way. In every respect and upon all occasions she is a very sensible and discreet person."

She had need to be, as will appear hereafter.

It must have been a relief to exchange the Lambtons for the Lansdownes. Madame de Lieven thought Lord Lansdowne "the most distinguished of the great aristocrats of this country, without a spot on his great reputation, a remarkable orator, and a man of merit rather than of superiority."

Mr. Creevey, of course, found Lord Lansdowne comical: "His appearance alone was a disqualification of him for managing the affairs of the country in its present difficulties. His person was carefully protected by an umbrella, he being the only person in Oxford Street who had one up, and there not having been a single drop of rain the whole day."

Life at Bowood was very agreeable; like the Greys the Lansdownes delighted in the country and charades. Mr. Lyttelton wrote to his wife from Bowood: "How much fitter my good friends are for plain folks than fine folks, and what a sad mistake Fortune made when she made Lord and Lady Lansdowne preside at blue dinners and walk about the world on stilts."

Thomas Moore, the Irish poet, had a cottage near Bowood, where he was always welcome.

"Came yesterday Tommy Moore," went on Mr. Lyttelton, "who is as unaffected and agreeable a little man as ever I met with, and whatever may be thought of *Lallah Rookh* as a naughty book, there is no naughtiness at all in his conversation."

Tommy Moore had a fund of amusing stories and was immensely popular. "Tommy dearly loves a Lord," Byron had once sneered, but on another occasion paid tribute with "The poet of all circles and the idol of his own."

"His sprightly little figure seemed ever in motion, 'a round potato face' he called it himself, his upturned nose appeared always, as it were on on the alert for a witticism, his clear dark eyes alternately sparkled with fun and beamed with kindliness; his forehead had bumps of wit upon it so conspicuously pronounced that Leigh Hunt said they would have transported a phrenologist; his face radiant with good humour, his eyes sparkled like a champagne bubble."[1]

He came breezily to Bowood with a twinkling: "Did ye hear this one? Some Irish had emigrated to some West Indian colony. The negroes soon learnt their brogue, and when another shipload of Irish came soon after, the negroes, as they sailed in, said 'Oh! Paddy, how are ye?'

'Oh! Christ,' said one of them, 'What! ye're become black already.'"

"Will you sing, Mr. Moore?" asked Lady Lansdowne laughing.

[1] N. P. Willis, *Pencillings by the Way*.

Mr. Moore obligingly went to the pianoforte :

"'Tis the last rose of summer
Left blooming alone ;
All her lovely companions
Are faded and gone ;
No rose of her kindred,
No rosebud is nigh
To reflect back her blushes,
To give sigh for sigh.

I'll not leave thee, thou lone one,
To pine on the stem,
Since the lovely are sleeping,
Go sleep thou with them.
Thus kindly I scatter
Thy leaves o'er the bed
Where thy mates of the garden
Lie scentless and dead."

Soft-hearted Lady Lansdowne had tears in her eyes. Mr. Lyttelton was enchanted.

Some of the great landowners had ideas that went beyond hunting and charades. Coke of Norfolk, for instance, King Tom of Holkham, had theories about scientific farming. His "sheep-shearings" were very famous feasts which the Royal Dukes attended, Sussex frequently, York and Clarence on occasion. The Duke of Clarence was very fond of King Tom, and was already godfather to one of his children when Mr. Coke, after being a widower for twenty-two years, in 1822 married eighteen-year-old Lady Anne Keppel "in a breezy love fit." To be just to him the lady sather threw herself at him, and when pressed to marry said he "loved nobody but Mr. Coke." So the Duke of Clarence was able to stand godfather once more.

Holkham, with its miles of cold corridors and Spartan customs, was rather alarming to young ladies, but it was a great haunt of the Whigs. Among Mr. Coke's intimates were Lord Althorp and Sir Francis Burdett, and, of course, the Keppels. It was also a place of pilgrimage for curious foreigners ; young Harry Keppel, on leave from his ship, was much amused by a distinguished American named Paterson, who was staying at Holkham with his charming wife and two tall, handsome daughters. "It was the custom in those days to have after-dinner prayers. On Lady Anne's inviting Mr. Paterson to attend he said politely : 'I thank you, Lady Anne, but I pray devoutly and sincerely once a week.'"

King Tom took a real interest in farming and the agricultural labourer, but his interest, though not intentionally harsh, could hardly be called benevolent. The agricultural labourer was a problem which the great landowners should have made their own. Nobody could expect them to understand the artisan or the city worker, but the villagers who huddled in the hovels at their gates, who had been dispossessed by them, were their responsibility, a trust in which, with very few exceptions, they failed. When their "privilege" and the peasants' welfare clashed, it was privilege which won.[1]

[1] See Appendix.

CHAPTER III

THE PEOPLE

THERE was no privilege in these years for the labourer, except the privilege of working, dying and sometimes starving. During the war, unless he were pressed for a sailor or recruited for a soldier, life was not so bad; the farmer did very well in war-time and the labourers were less likely to starve when he was prosperous. The fall in prices which followed the signing of the peace plunged the whole agricultural community into terrible distress and was accompanied by an almost complete cessation of the foreign demand for British manufactures, arising from the complete loss of the buying power of other nations, so that the artisan population, too, was involved in the dreadful distress. To these troubles were added a crushing load of debt, crippling taxes and an appalling amount of unemployment.

The brighter kind of politician probably perceived it, but could, or would, do nothing, except make futile attempts to increase the doles under the Poor Laws.

The war had been followed by just that state of affairs which always follows wars and which no one in authority ever expects or has prepared for.

The Peace had been of the usual kind: "The peace, as it is with some stretch of courtesy called, satisfies no one class of person," said Lord Holland to Mr. Creevey.

All the signatories were busy squabbling over it among themselves when Napoleon escaped from Elba and the arduous business of conquering the conqueror had to be faced once more. The Allies supported each other, more or less, until Waterloo was over, when the squabbles and conferences were resumed.

"The dismissal of officers and other war functionaries will throw thousands out of employ, who will sooner or later ferment and turn to vinegar," Brougham prophesied correctly, but even he, who sometimes showed some understanding of the common people, had no remedy.

The more turbulent, of course, took matters into their own hands; an out-of-work labourer would steal a sheep and be hanged for it; an out-of-work artisan might murder a man and be hanged, too. A hanging was, at least, something in the nature of a holiday; a really good hanging would attract sightseers from all over the town, from Mayfair to Wapping. Housekeepers gave parties for them and persuaded the hangman to postpone the exercise of his art until the spectators had had their breakfasts in comfort and could get the full "kick" out of the show.

"Squire" Western, M.P., he who "knew as little history as a gentleman need know," saw history in the making: ". . . In regard to our internal—agriculture, etc., is getting into a state of Despair absolutely and distraction. . . . I assure you the landed people are getting DESPERATE; the universality of ruin among them, or distress bordering on it, is ABSOLUTELY unparallel'd, and at such a moment the Sinking Fund is not to be TOUCHED for the world, says Horner, no, not a shilling of it; and yet—taxes to be taken off, rents to come down, cheap corn, cheap labour, how can a man talk of such impossibilities? The interests of all debts and sinking fund together amount to £43,000,000

Establishment	29,000,000
	72,000,000

Now cut the Establishment ever so low, we shall have four times as much to raise as before the war. It is not to be done."

The poor, of course, had a remedy for a future generation, if not for themselves, but the remedy seemed not to appeal to them. Mr. Malthus was preaching an odd doctrine about population. He and Mr. Mill, who had a great dread that "some 10,000 years hence we shall eat one another for want of anything else to eat, say that the only way to prevent the evil is to educate the poor people, and that in proportion to their prudence they will despise the folly of propagation," Mr. Bulwer Lytton had heard.

Somehow the doctrine of Mr. Malthus left the poor quite blind to its excellence; the rich might listen, but then the rich had other amusements. So spring winds continued to sow disquiet and population continued to increase.

London, of course, except in its dregs, escaped the worst

of the business, as London always does. In that witty novel *Whitehall* you may read about the post-war world of the 1820's. (Or was it the 1920's? They sound uncommonly alike.)

"In London the face of things was gay. Everybody admitted that the nation was ruined; and yet if you visited their palace-like theatres they were full. The Opera was crowded; private parties were given in all quarters. Tattersall's was crammed, Crockford's crowded. In fact every place where money was to be spent displayed crowds of people, who all could testify to the melancholy fact that there was no money in the country."

The Londoners, like the King and aristocracy, were enjoying the last years of their privilege, and were equally unaware of it. Since the time of the Normans, and probably before it, the Londoners had had a very good share of having their own way. When things were dull, when they were in the mood for it, when they disapproved of things, they had been accustomed to start a little rioting, quite good-naturedly; a few broken heads, a great many broken windows, had testified to their high spirits.

An election, particularly a Westminster election, was an enjoyable standing dish. The most famous of all elections were those of Wilkes[1] and Fox's success in 1784, but they were nearly always exciting in Westminster. In 1819, for instance, George Lamb stood for the Whigs against Hobhouse the Radical, and (the three-party contest sounds quite like modern times) received the Tory support.

"It is regarded as a trial of strength between the aristocratic and the rabble elements," said Lady Shelley. "It is for that reason that Lamb has my best wishes."

For that reason, too, Lamb had not the best wishes of the mob, which set fire to his committee rooms and chased him over the roofs. They beat in all the windows of the Tory Lord Castlereagh, and tore up all the paving stones in the court of the Whig Lord Sefton, after trying to beat in his hall door. The Sefton ladies climbed over the rails of the garden, and Lord Sefton himself retired to the stables to hide. No one was any the worse for the lark, and Lord Sefton could easily afford new paving stones.

The Melbournes took precautions; an appeal was sent to Brook's to recruit "constables, strong sedan-chairmen and gentlemen of the ring" to protect Melbourne House;

[1] In Middlesex, but Londoners journeyed to Brentford for it in force.

a detachment of Life Guards was sent to hunt for George on the roof-tops and bring him home.

"I think the Whigs have had a lesson as to the folly of violence," said Lady Shelley optimistically.

They had not, of course; the Whigs, like the Tories, never learned lessons.

An election roused the boisterous, rather than the feeling; it required a persecution to rouse the "Cockney nobility" to their best efforts. There was never such another joyous war with authority as that waged round John Wilkes, but the battle round Queen Caroline was nearly as exciting, and even more emotional. There was a minor, but quite enjoyable, skirmish round Sir Francis Burdett in 1810.

A little man named Gale Jones had published some abuse of the Government and been sent to prison. Sir Francis said—in the *Political Register*, after he had made a speech in the House on the subject—that Parliament could not do that kind of thing. Sir Francis had married a daughter of Thomas Coutts, the banker, and was by no means the usual kind of agitator, though Byron put him into very Radical company:

> "Who are now the people's men,
> My boy Hobby O?
> There's I and Burdett, Gentlemen,
> And blackguard Hunt and Cobby O."

He had often annoyed the Government, and the Government was charmed to find an opportunity to annoy Sir Francis. He was accused of breach of privilege, and the Speaker issued a warrant for his arrest and imprisonment in the Tower.

Sir Francis said, quite simply, "that he would not go by good will." The Goverment was not quite sure what it ought to do; perhaps, though this was almost too hopeful a supposition, it had learnt something from the case of Wilkes. It is more likely that its lawyers advised procrastination, which was most foolish counsel, since, instead of whisking Sir Francis away to the Tower before Westminster could hear of the trouble, there was time for Burdett to garrison his house, No. 78 Piccadilly, with volunteers.

The Battle of Piccadilly opened merrily: "For the whole length of Piccadilly where his house was, was one continued mass of the blackest of blackguards, men, women and boys, who professed to defend his door and prevent his being

taken by force. They insisted on every passer-by waving a hat and huzzaing for Sir Francis on pain of being totally covered with mud. Wherever there is a Minister's house, or that of any other unpopular man, a flying party of the mob attack it, shatter the windows, abuse the inhabitants and often break open the door."

Then the Government turned out the Life Guards, in spite of the prayer of Sheriff Matthew Wood, and the Westminster Committee went to support Sir Francis with the ingenious idea that the civil powers should arrest the officers.

Windham noted, "Found Life Guards hunted by and hunting the mob; good deal of disturbance."

The Guards charged, and the mob shouted "Piccadilly Butchers!"

The battle waged for four days, and then No. 78 was forcibly entered. Sir Francis, as good a comedian as any of his contemporaries, was discovered in an attitude of studied calm, supported by the ladies of his family and teaching one of his children the provisions of Magna Charta.

> "The lady she sate and she played on her lute,
> And she sang 'Will you come to the bower?'
> The serjeant-at-arms had stood hitherto mute,
> And now he advanced like an impudent brute
> And said 'Will you come to the Tower?'"

Sir Francis, "not by good will," departed to the Tower and made more history by being the last man imprisoned there.

"Privilege," however, entered even into this matter of imprisonment; it was not what a free man would choose, of course, but with money it was not altogether disagreeable. One might entertain one's friends in one's own apartments.

"When will you come again to dinner?" Sir Francis wrote to Mr. Creevey. "You shall have TWO bottles of claret next time, and as good fish."

Burdett's "libel on Parliament" had been published in William Cobbett's paper. Cobbett himself was in Newgate for two years for having published an article in the *Weekly Register* of July 1, 1809, denouncing the flogging of some mutinous militiamen at Ely. He, too, invited Mr. Creevey to dinner, in Newgate: "I being always at home you know. I give beef-steaks and porter. I may vary my food to mutton chops but I never vary the drink."

Brougham sent him, by Creevey, "a good motto from Dr. Johnson about special juries and imprisonment":

> "A single jail in Alfred's golden reign
> Could half the nation's criminals contain;
> Fair Justice, then, without constraint adored
> Held high the steady scale, but sheathed the sword;
> No spies were paid—no special juries known—
> Blest age! But oh! how diff'rent from our own."

The Press, too, enjoyed "Privilege." If you were on the side of authority you could publish the most appalling libels with impunity; ninety-nine times in a hundred you could libel authority itself, anonymously, without mishap, but the hundredth time earned shattering fines and years of imprisonment. The squibs and lampoons upon the Regent would form a library of no mean size, and most of the writers of them walked abroad with their hats upon their heads. Tommy Moore sang in safety, but a luckless creature like Leigh Hunt went to prison for discussing "Princely Qualities." Prison, as it happened, rather suited him; he had two rooms fresh painted for him, and a garden of such loveliness that he gave sprigs of sweet-briar to his friends. "There was no other such room except in a fairy tale," said Charles Lamb.

Hunt's wife and family lived with him; there were busts of the great poets, bookcases, a pianoforte and a lute. He was able to edit his paper every week and receive distinguished visitors; the Lambs came, and Hazlitt, and Barnes of *The Times*; Cowden Clarke sent in baskets of fruit and new-laid eggs; Byron sent game in the shooting season. Maria Edgeworth called on the captive, and a gentleman who puzzled the jailer: "I find that they calls him BROOM, but, mister, I calls him BRUFFAM.".

Byron not only came himself but sent a poem, through Tom Moore:

> "To-morrow be with me, as soon as you can, sir,
> All ready and dress'd for proceeding to spunge on
> (According to compact) the wit in the dungeon—
> Pray Phœbus at length our political malice
> May not get us lodgings within the same palace. . . .
> But to-morrow, at four, we will both play the Scurra,
> And you'll be Catullus, the Regent Mamurra."

When the time came to leave prison, Hunt did not want to go:

LADY HOLLAND
After Fagon.

"It was thought that I should dart out of my cage like a bird, and feel no end in the delight of ranging. But partly from ill-health, and partly from habit, the day of my liberation brought a good deal of pain in it."

Not all imprisonment was like that, nor all prisoners. Poor old Sherry died before his time, driven by fear of a debtor's prison.

Another class of the people who enjoyed privilege was that of the "gentlemen's gentlemen" and "ladies' ladies." They were as insolent as their masters and mistresses, as luxury-loving, much shrewder, and great gatherers of scandal, which they were beginning to send to the newspapers and retail, for a consideration, to such gossip hunters as Charles Greville, of whom a wit said:

> "For forty years he listened at the door,
> He heard some secrets and invented more."

There was a famous comedy of the eighteenth century, "High Life Below Stairs," which was full of entertainment and a great favourite of George Selwyn's and Horace Walpole's, who enjoyed their friends' foibles. A good deal was expected from them in return for the privilege of betraying and making fun of their masters and mistresses under the rose. Lady Andover drew up a list of essentials for a lady's maid for Eliza Coke on her marriage:

1. She *must not* have a will of her own in *anything*, and be always good-humoured and approve of everything her mistress likes. She *must not* have a great appetite or be the least of a gourmand, or care when or how she dines, how often disturbed, or even if she has no dinner at all. She had better not drink anything but water.

2. She must *run quick* the instant she is *called*, whatever she is about. Morning, noon and night she must not mind going without *sleep* if her mistress requires her attendance. She must not require high wages. She *must* be a *first-rate* vermin catcher.

3. She must have ears (strong ones), eyes and hands, but as for thinking or judging for herself or being in any way independent (if especially her mistress be a Whig of liberal *principles*) she must not think of such a thing; and let her not venture to make a complaint or difficulty of any kind."

Is it possible that Miss Coke was being waggish?

The newspapers printed some remarkable advertisements in this line:

"Wanted for a sober family, by the Profane denominated Methodists; a man of light weight, who fears the Lord and can drive a pair of Horses; he must occasionally wait at table, join in Household Prayer, look after the Horses and read a chapter in the Bible, he must (God willing) rise at seven in the morning, obey his Master and Mistress in all lawful commands; if he can dress hair, sing Hymns and play at Cribbage the more agreeable.

N.B. He must not be too familiar with the Maid Servants of the House, lest the flesh should rebel against the Spirit, and he should be induced to walk in the thorny paths of the wicked.

Wages fifteen guineas a year."

There was, of course, no need to wear the badge of servitude; for men of greater enterprise and ambition there were more profitable careers. In 1827, for instance, the firm of Burke and Hare set up a very lucrative business in Edinburgh, in which Dr. Knox, a lecturer on anatomy, was what might be called a sleeping partner. Hare was the leading light of the firm, and, though his invention was the result of an accident, he speedily saw its great potentialities, improved on it, and turned out a series of masterpieces.

It was quite simple, once he had hit upon the brilliant idea. Likely subjects were invited in to take refreshment with the partners and, having drunk away merrily until they were helpless, were ready to be smothered in comfort. The method had that simplicity which belongs to most really great ideas. Burke would lie on the body while Hare held nose and mouth. "In a very few minutes the victims would make no resistance but would convulse and make a rumbling noise in their bellies for some time. After they had ceased crying and making resistance *we let them die by themselves.*" The real beauty of this method lay in the fact that it left no mark on the body; indeed so elegant were some of the corpses that Dr. Knox, who was always the purchaser of the firm's wares, paying £10 in winter and £8 in summer for each item supplied, was able to recoup himself by inviting artists to draw his corpses in pickle; one, Mary Paterson, who "had lost in early youth the guiding care of a mother," was actually drawn in the same pose as the Venus of Velasquez.

The firm's good times came to an end; Hare turned King's evidence and Burke was hanged; Dr. Knox only had to answer a few inconvenient questions. The case was a nasty blow for the profession of "resurrection men."

Other ingenious suppliers of public entertainment had designs on pockets rather than on lives. "There is a charlatan of the name of Chobert," Greville found time to note, "who calls himself the Fire King, who has been imposing upon the world for a year or more, exhibiting all sorts of juggleries in hot ovens, swallowing poisons, hot lead, etc., but yesterday he was detected signally, and after a dreadful uproar was obliged to run away."

A few days later London had another really enjoyable entertainment. "Last night the English Opera House was burnt down—a magnificent fire." This is the supercilious Greville; if he enjoyed it so much, the less sophisticated populace must have had even greater fun. "All the gentility of London was there, from Princess Esterhazy's ball and all the Clubs (it was three in the morning), gentlemen in their fur cloaks, pumps, and velvet waistcoats mixed with objects like the *sans-culottes* of the French Revolution, men and women half dressed, covered with rags and dirt, some with nightcaps or handkerchiefs round their heads—then the soldiers, the firemen, and the engines, and the New Police running and bustling and clearing the way and clattering along, and all with that intense interest and restless curiosity produced by the event, and which received fresh stimulus at every renewed burst of the flames as they rose in a shower of sparks like gold dust. Poor Arnold has lost everything and was not insured."

In that entry of Greville's can be found the reason why the "good times" of the Londoners were coming to an end. Peel's "New Police" had come, and were beginning to take hold.

The aristocracy and the "lower orders," at least among the villagers, should have had some understanding of each other, since they had been clearly distinguished from each other for centuries. But there was another class which men like Earl Grey and Charles Greville had hardly realised as yet, a class between the upper and the lower, which was slowly finding a voice to defy the first and speak for the second, a class which had all kinds of odd ideas and ideals, which had a very strong and distinctly Puritan religion, which was educated, and beginning to be articulate. This new

middle class was providing speakers, writers and religious enthusiasts who were forcing their way into the public consciousness. They were even trickling into Parliament, and were prepared to flock there in large numbers as soon as they could force their rulers to acknowledge the imperative need for reform. Already at public meetings, in rapidly multiplying periodicals and newspapers, in pamphlets and books, in pulpits and in Universities, they were vigorously preaching the doctrine of a new social life; daring to say that the British Constitution was not designed for the benefit of the few, but for the many. Like America, England was beginning to think that people who paid taxes should have votes.

CHAPTER IV

HOLLAND HOUSE

THERE was one house opened to the Fitzclarence children in the eighteen-twenties which had tried to keep them out; Holland House thought its sons too good for the Duke of Clarence's daughters, but young Charles Fox thought otherwise. Mr. Lyttelton met the Duke of Clarence and his daughter at Portsmouth in 1822: "Miss Mary Fitzclarence was there, much more like her mother—indeed a fine-looking brown girl with a pleasant countenance and manners—the damsel young Charles Fox wanted to marry."

Opposition was at last overcome and the young people married, and did not, apparently, repent in haste. Miss Fitzclarence was not, in point of fact, at all a bad match for Charles Fox, who had himself been born out of wedlock. That was the skeleton of Holland House, and it could not be kept in the cupboard. Lady Holland had committed the one unforgivable sin of the eighteenth century, she had been found out.

Devonshire House had been full of children, who ate off gold plate in the morning and scampered down the back-stairs to the kitchens in the evening in search of scraps for supper, high-spirited, undisciplined children about whose birth and parentage it was much wiser not to inquire; some of them were the Duchess's, a good many of them were the Duke's; nobody concerned themselves about this—except in the way of gossip—since the Duke always stood by the side of his smiling Duchess when she received the company at the head of the stairs.

Lady Holland had had no discretion; she had run away from her first husband, and not all the Church's blessings could wipe out the stain of that indecorum; she remained a person to whom certain doors were for ever closed—King Tom's, for instance—and few women of high standing,

except those eccentric creatures the Blues, would cross her threshold. It was only this terrible past, which could not be lived down, which prevented Holland House succeeding to the position which Devonshire House had held, with host instead of hostess as the centre of a brilliant world. It could not be; Holland House could never be the centre of a fashionable coterie; its indomitable mistress set out to make it the centre of the world of Blues and wits, and the headquarters of the Whig party. The women might ignore her, but every man who was, or aspired to be, anyone must pay tribute to its queen.

Holland House became a power quite early in the century; Fox loved its master, that was quite enough for the Whigs, though in 1816 that promising young politician, Mr. Brougham, said to Mr. Creevey: "Nothing can be more unpropitious than the plan of carrying on the party by a coterie at Lady Holland's elbow."

People came, in the early years at any rate, to see Lord Holland, who was Charles Fox's nephew and intimate, but also greatly beloved on his own account for his sunny temper.

"Lord Holland always comes to breakfast like a man upon whom some sudden good fortune has just fallen," said Samuel Rogers. "His is the smile that speaks the mind at ease."

Her ladyship either could not, or would not, recognise the fact that the company did not come for her. It pleased her vanity to think that all the world wished to visit her, and so assiduously did she cultivate eccentricities that presently it did. Holland House became a show place at which every foreigner of note and every young man of promise was presented, as he was at Court. It took many years to reach pre-eminence; there were rivals and bitter jealousies.

"Lady Holland was in state with Henry at her feet, few men, no ladies, and the whole concern to the greatest degree sombre," was the report in 1821. "Her greatest aversion at present is Lady Jersey, as taking her company from her, which I don't wonder at, as Cowper and I soon went there and found a very merry party, cracking their jokes about a round table."

She was not a woman to bow before a rival; she increased her insolence.

"Lady Holland, in addition to all her former insults upon the town, has set up a huge CAT," Creevey reported the following year, "which is never permitted to be out of

her sight and to whose vagaries she demands unqualified submission from all her visitors. Rogers, it seems, has already sustained considerable injury in a personal affair with the animal. Brougham only keeps him, or HER, at arm's length by snuff, and Luttrell has sent in a formal resignation of all further visits till this odious new favourite is dismissed from the Cabinet."

They might threaten to stay away, but they were certain to return to see dear Lord Holland, who was confined to his chair with a bad attack of gout, and also because insolence, if carried to sufficient lengths, achieves a triumph of its own. Lady Holland tyrannised over everybody, and her tyranny, if resented, was not resented sufficiently to keep either poets or politicians outside the magic circle. She commanded and she criticised; she instructed poets, and laid down Whig policy; poets and politicians bowed. Sometimes she astonished by being almost deferential; she listened to young Mr. Macaulay, for instance, and "scolded him with a circumspection that was itself a compliment."

Mr. Macaulay stepped into the circle at a very late date, but he has, perhaps, left the most vivid description of Holland House and its mistress, "a large, bold-looking woman, with the remains of a fine person, and the air of Queen Elizabeth."

Mr. Macaulay pleased, and was bidden to present himself at Court. "I took a glass coach," said he, "and arrived, through a fine avenue of elms, at the great entrance towards seven o'clock. The house is delightful; the very perfection of the old Elizabethan style; a considerable number of very large and very comfortable rooms, rich with antique carving and gilding, but carpeted and furnished with all the skill of the modern upholsterers. The library is a very long room with little cabinets for study branching out of it, warmly and snugly fitted up and looking out on very beautiful grounds. At dinner there were Lord Albemarle, Lord Alvanley, Lord Russell, Lord Mahon—a violent Tory but an agreeable companion.

Lady Holland is certainly a woman of considerable talents and great literary acquirements. To me she was exceedingly gracious; yet there is a haughtiness in her courtesy which, even after all that I had heard of her, surprised me. The centurion did not keep his soldiers in better order than she keeps her guests. Lord Holland is, on the other hand, all kindness, simplicity and vivacity. He talked very well on politics and literature."

A little later Macaulay went to Holland House to breakfast: "She does not rouge at all, and her costume is not youthful, so that she looks as well in the morning as the evening. Luttrell was there. He is a famous wit, the most popular, I think, of all the professed wits, a man who has lived in the highest circles, a scholar and no contemptible poet. He wrote 'Advice to Julia' showing a most consummate knowledge of fashionable life. . . . We breakfasted on very good coffee, and very good tea, and very good eggs, butter kept in the midst of ice and hot rolls."

Lord Holland once began to keep a record of the conversation at Holland House, but he gave it up. It was often brilliant, and many diarists and letter writers recorded scraps of it. It would be kind, I think, to allow Lady Holland to give a dinner party[1] at which all her visitors sparkled at once.

Mr. Washington Irving, from America, went to call on the Hollands. Tommy Moore had told them that he was "not strong as a lion but delightful as a domestic animal." Lady Holland was at first not cordial; she liked her lions to roar for her benefit, but Lord Holland was as charming as usual and took the visitor into the grounds to see "Roger's Seat" on which the poet loved to sit, and above which Lord Holland had placed the inscription:

> "Here Rogers sate; and here for ever dwell
> With me those 'Pleasures' which he sang so well."

Presently Lady Holland condescended to be gracious and showed him the house and the miniature paintings, some by Stothard, which were on subjects from Lord Byron's poems. She also showed them to Macaulay.

"Yes," she said. "Poor Lord Byron sent them to me a short time before the separation. I sent them back, and told him that, if he gave them away, he ought to give them to Lady Byron. But he said he would not, and that if I did not take them the bailiffs would, and that they would be lost in the wreck."

"I have just finished the first volume of Moore's *Life of Byron*," said Charles Greville.

"I do not like the book; I do not like the hero." Macaulay, as usual, was positive.

"I don't think I like this style of biography," said

[1] This particular dinner party did not take place, but the comments have been put into the mouths which uttered them on some similar occasion.

Greville. "Half way between ordinary narrative and self-delineation in the shape of letters and diary. It is, however, very amusing; the letters are exceedingly clever, full of wit, humour and point. . . . But as to the Life, it is no life at all; it merely tells you that the details of his life are not tellable. The perpetual hiatus, and asterisks, and initials are exceedingly tantalising."

"Rogers saw Lord Byron in Florence," someone said. "The inn had fifty windows in front. All the windows were crowded with women, mostly Englishwomen, to catch a glance at their favourite poet. . . . He would not notice them, or return their salutations. Sharp and Rogers both speak of him as an unpleasant, affected, splenetic person."

"I have heard hundreds and thousands of people who never saw him rant about him," said Macaulay, "but I never heard a single expression of fondness for him fall from the lips of any of those who knew him well."

There was an awkward pause. Lady Holland had moved away to speak to Sir James Mackintosh.

Mr. Irving spoke unexpectedly. "Mr. Rogers serves up his friends as he serves up his fish, with a squeeze of lemon over each."

"Borrow five hundred pounds of him, I have heard Thomas Campbell say, and he will never say a word against you until you come to repay him."

"How *is* Rogers?" someone asked.

"He is not very well," Sydney Smith said gravely.

"Why! What is the matter?"

"Oh, don't you know? He has produced a couplet. When our friend is delivered of a couplet, with infinite labour and pains, he takes to his bed, has straw laid down, the knocker tied up, and expects his friends to call and make inquiries, and the answer at the door invariably is 'Mr. Rogers and his little couplet are as well as can be expected.'"

> "He but pays the pain he suffers,
> Clipping, like a pair of snuffers,
> Lights which ought to burn the brighter
> For this temporary blighter."

Someone murmured Byron's bitter lines.

"I have to live up to my reputation," said a mournful voice behind the group, which made them start. "I have a very weak voice and if I did not say ill-natured things no one would hear what I said."

Rogers was in excellent form; he served up all his friends with "a squeeze of lemon." Macaulay noticed that "nothing could present a more striking contrast to Sydney Smith's rapid, loud, laughing utterance and his rector-like amplitude and rubicundity, than the slow, emphatic tone and corpse-like face of Rogers."

The same thing must have struck Lord Alvanley.

"Why, Rogers," he asked in a matter-of-fact tone, "don't you set up your own hearse since you can well afford it?" [1]

They sat down to dine. Lady Holland "brought to the furnishing of her table the talents of a commissariat officer. She levied contributions of fish and game from the owners of salmon rivers and well-stocked preserves." Sydney Smith made up one of their quarrels by offering a sucking-pig.

"Mr. Creevey," Lady Holland called. "Come here and sit by me, you mischievous toad."

The company, as usual, was too great for the table.

"Luttrell," she called imperiously. "Make room."

"It will have to be made," Luttrell answered, "for it does not exist."

Lord Holland was suffering from a severe attack of gout, to which he was a martyr, never being able to limp more than a few yards in a day, and passing some weeks of every year in extreme torment. Yet he never lost his sweetness of temper nor his interest in the rest of the world. His servant wheeled him up to the dining-table. Her ladyship noticed at once that he had on the white waistcoat in which she had forbidden him to appear.

"Take him away," she screamed.

The servant wheeled him away, "looking," as Luttrell whispered, "the image of a turbot standing on its tail."

He came back presently, still good-tempered, and petitioned piteously for a slice of melon which she steadily refused. Lord Grey at length prevailed on her to let him have it; Lord Holland flashed him a grateful and affectionate glance.

Her ladyship could only eat the breast of a partridge and was frightened out of her wits by hearing a dog howl; she was sure this noise portended her death or my lord's.

My lord was, in fact, better, and in good spirits. He talked of his foreign travels, and gave an account of a visit he had once paid to the Court of Denmark.

[1] This is also attributed to Luttrell and Lord Dudley.

"Such a Tom of Bedlam as the King, I never saw. One day the Neapolitan Ambassador came to the levee and made a profound bow to His Majesty. His Majesty bowed still lower. The Neapolitan bowed down his head, almost to the ground, when behold the King clapped his hands on his Excellency's shoulders and jumped over him like a boy playing at leapfrog."

"Mr. Allen," interrupted her ladyship. "There is not enough turtle soup for you. You must take gravy soup or none. Ring the bell, Mr. Macaulay."

Mr. Macaulay rang.

Sir James Mackintosh was talking. "I do not know a greater treat than to hear him talk," said Charles Greville. "Not a subject could be mentioned of which he did not treat with equal facility and abundance, from the Council of Trent to Voltaire's epistles."

He talked of India. "It is very remarkable," he said, "that we lost one great empire and gained another in the same generation, and that it is still a moot point whether the one is a gain or the other a loss. America is now the second maritime power. How Franklin wept when he left England. When he signed the treaty at Paris he retired for a moment and changed his coat. It was remarked, and he said he had been to put on the coat in which he had been insulted by Lord Loughborough at the English Council Board."

Lady Holland tapped her fan on the table. "Now, Sir James, we have had enough of that, let us have something else. Ring the bell, Mr. Smith."

"Oh, yes," Sydney said meekly, hastening to obey. "And shall I sweep the floor?"

Someone mentioned Sheridan's famous speech on the second day of Warren Hastings's trial in Westminster Hall.

"You might have heard a pin drop," said Rogers.

"Sheridan had such fine eyes," sighed Moore.

"He was very vain of them," said Rogers. "When he was on his death-bed he said, 'Tell Lady Bessborough that my eyes will look up to the coffin-lid as brightly as ever.'"

"Do you remember how old Sherry used to smoke Lauderdale? 'By the silence that prevails, I conclude that Lauderdale has been making a joke. I must be careful what I say, Lauderdale, for a joke in your mouth is no laughing matter.'"

"Sheridan's wit was dry. Sir Philip Francis had a caustic humour."

" Tierney said he was sure Sir Philip Francis had written Junius, for he was the proudest man he ever knew and no one had heard of anything he had done to be proud of."

" Francis had a kind of greatness. He once said that though he hated Pitt, he must confess there was something fine in him, seeing how he maintained his post by himself. ' The lion walks alone,' he said, ' the jackals herd together.' "

To talk of Pitt roused memories of Fox, and even after twenty years they could not speak of him without tears.

" I was at Chiswick House at a fête of the Duke of Devonshire's," said Rogers. " Sir Robert Adair and I wandered about the apartments up and down stairs." " In which room did Fox die ? " asked Adair. " In this very room," I answered. " Adair burst into such a vehemence of grief as I hardly ever saw."

" Mr. Allen, take a candle and show Mr. Cradock the picture of Buonaparte," Lady Holland ordered. " Lay down that screen, Lord John, you will spoil it."

Tom Moore was telling Irish stories. " Wait till I tell you this one. Sir Somebody St. George who was to attend a meeting at which a great many Catholics were to be present, got drunk and lost his hat. When he went into the room where they all were, he said, ' Damnation to you all ; I came to emancipate you and you've stolen my hat.' "

" Will you sing, Mr. Moore ? "

" By the beard of the prelate of Canterbury, by the cassock of the prelate of York, by the breakfasts of Rogers, by Luttrell's love of side dishes, I swear that I would rather hear you sing than any other person I ever heard in my life," said Sydney Smith.

" I'm told, dear Moore, your lays are sung
(Can it be true, you lucky man ?)
By moonlight in the Persian tongue
Along the streets of Ispahan "

murmured Luttrell.

In a corner someone was talking of O'Connell and the turbulence in County Clare. Moore's face grew serious :

" Let Erin remember the days of old,
Ere her faithless sons betrayed her,
When Malachi wore the collar of gold
Which he won from her proud invader ;
When her kings, with standard of green unfurl'd,
Led the Red-Branch Knights to danger ;
Ere the emerald gem of the western world
Was set in the crown of a stranger.

On Lough Neagh's bank as the fisherman strays,
When the clear cold eve's declining,
He sees the round towers of other days
In the wave beneath him shining;
Thus shall memory often, in dreams sublime,
Catch a glimpse of the days that are over;
Thus, sighing, look through the waves of time
For the long faded glories they cover."

There was something in Moore's singing of his Irish melodies which struck emotional strings in all his hearers.

"What a lucky fellow you are," said Rogers. "Surely you must have been born with a rose in your lips and a nightingale singing on the top of your bed."

Holland House was not always given up to wits and literary gossip. It was sometimes an unofficial House of Parliament, the centre of Whig secret councils. Not that the Tories were always shut outside in darkness. During times of Parliamentary truce some of them were welcomed. Lady Shelley was there in 1819, and passed a very pleasant evening, though she was amused at finding herself among so many Whigs.

"There were about six or seven women and fifty men, all the most violent of the opposition. The Parliamentary lawyers of the opposition side with their wives and daughters —a comical set—looked completely out of it in the society of Lady Cowper and Mrs. George Lamb."

Conversation, after skirting politics, turned upon the violent opposition in politics of Fred Douglas, Lord Glenbervie's son (Lord Glenbervie having always been a staunch Ministerialist).

"I wonder how Lord Glenbervie feels about him?"

"Feels!" said Sydney Smith. "He feels like a hen that has hatched ducks."

There was another man who must have felt "like a hen that has hatched ducks."

"My husband's young kinsman, Percy Shelley, seems disposed to become a poet," said Lady Shelley. "Walter Scott wrote to him: 'The idylls of which you have favoured me with copies have all the merits and most of the faults of juvenile compositions. They are fanciful, tender, elegant and exhibit both command of language and luxuriance of imagination.'"

But there was no place for Ariel at Holland House.

Lady Shelley, being on visiting terms with the Whigs, had a good opportunity to act as observer,

" Party politics have become more violent than ever they were," she wrote in 1819. " On a great constitutional question it appears to me to be but a mean, place-hunting spirit that animates the Whigs. When Fox and Pitt were alive, the whole country was enrolled under their respective banners. Their superior talents and commanding personalities justified humbler individuals in surrendering their own judgments and placing their votes at the disposal of those mighty minds. But at the present time there is not, on either side of the House, a man universally acknowledged as leader."

That was exactly the position. Eliza Coke, from that Whig stronghold Holkham, wrote to John Stanhope: " Your WHIG friends have certainly a poor dependence if it rests on my efforts to convert you. I am tired of the whole FARCE, for it is only larger children's play. I have seen enough of STAUNCH WHIGS to dread the very name."

John Stanhope was only a lukewarm Tory, but Miss Coke was delighted to marry out of the Whig society; she had a profound contempt for it.

" How often have I heard Lord Castlereagh complain that the politicians of our day suffer from a *Hydrophobia* of the *Rights of the People.*"

Madame de Lieven found the English party system very droll, and quite incomprehensible to foreigners—always excepting such supremely intelligent foreigners as herself.

" It is ridiculous to say that there are political parties in England; it isn't true," she said. " There are only men who wish to keep their places, and others who wish to occupy them. These two parties only have a real existence. They adapt their principles to circumstances and there is no more reason to be frightened at the term ' radical ' than to be proud of the term ' ultra.' "

At no time after Pitt's death was there more confusion of parties than in 1827. There was a serious rift in the Whig party; Lonsdale, Sefton, Brougham and Holland joined the Canningites, but Mr. Creevey was one of the Malignants who remained true to Lord Grey. Holland House was, of course, closed to them.

CHAPTER V

THE GAME OF POLITICS: THE TORIES IN POWER, 1827–1830

THE Tories, who had travelled for so many years in such pleasant indifference under the leadership of the arch-mediocrity, Lord Liverpool, had a disagreeable shock when Mr. Canning succeeded him. Canning was not mediocre; on the contrary he was exceedingly brilliant, and the Tories were alarmed. Neither did they like him on personal grounds; he was not of the caste of Vere de Vere, and he had given great offence to his colleagues when, on December 12th, 1826, he concluded a magnificent speech with:

"I called into existence the new world to redress the balance of the old."

"The 'I' was not relished," said Charles Greville. He was loudly cheered by Peel, but was "much more cheered by the opposition than by his own friends. Brougham's compliment was magnificent." This was not at all reassuring to the Ultra-Tories, who disliked all liberal ideas in leaders.

The King came to Town when he heard of Lord Liverpool's stroke. "He saw his Ministers *seriatim*. He wavered and doubted and to his confidants with whom he could bluster and talk big, he expressed in no measured terms his detestation of Liberal principles, and especially of Catholic Emancipation."

Canning, it appeared, was not to have much support from the King, yet the gossips saw him walking in the Pavilion grounds with the King's arm round his neck; one never could tell with George. In spite of Canning's liberal principles and the King's blustering, he was asked to form a Ministry. Half the Tory Cabinet, in disgust, resigned.

"I say 'Preserve us from Canning,'" wrote that firm Tory, the Duke of Rutland, to Lady Shelley. "I am afraid of political theorists without a foot of land of their own in

the country." To be a good Tory, evidently, it was necessary to be a landowner; possessions are great stabilisers.

Mr. Canning approached the Whigs. Grey could never either like or trust Canning, but Grey was out of touch with his party, having handed over the leadership to Lansdowne in 1824. He had not even heard of the negotiations when he arrived in London, and was seriously annoyed that there should be any. The conversations between the Canningites and the Lansdowne Whigs were brought to a successful conclusion, and Grey retired to Howick in anger, "unconnected with anybody but the very few who took the same line I did."

The schism in the party was complete, but the coalition was an uncomfortable one; Canning was too clever, but he was also ill. His first measure, it was generally agreed, was very judicious. He revived the old appointment of Lord High Admiral, which had been in abeyance since Queen Anne's time, and offered it to the Duke of Clarence. "Nothing served so much to disconcert his opponents." It also helped to conciliate the King.

But Canning had reached the height of his ambition too late. He was really very ill. The King wavered and doubted once more; he gave Lord Lansdowne an audience, but at the same time sent quietly for the Duke of Wellington. Canning, on his death-bed and aware of his danger, said: "It is hard on the King to have to fight the battle over again."

A leader for the party had to be found; Lord Goderich was reluctantly forced into the vacant seat. "Goody Goderich," his followers called him; Madame de Lieven said he was "only padding"; it was left to Disraeli to coin the best name of all: "the transient and embarrassed phantom." Transient he was; the embarrassment was too great; the coalition fell to pieces.

"Lady Holland is the only dissatisfied Minister out of office," said Joseph Jekyll the wit. "She counted upon sailing down daily with her long-tailed blacks and ancient crane-necked chariot, to sit with Holland at the Secretary's office, to administer the affairs of Europe and make Sydney Smith a Bishop."

The King sent for the Duke of Wellington. The political muddle annoyed George. He said he did not see why he was "to be the only gentleman in his dominions who was not to eat his Christmas dinner in quiet and he was determined

he would." George was commendably firm on such occasions.

"Lansdowne may now retire and enjoy his charades at Bowood in peace," sneered Creevey.

The Duke of Clarence was also, shortly, able to retire to his farm and garden. The retirement was not, it is true, entirely voluntary; he had a little difference of opinion with the Duke of Wellington and the soldier Duke virtually dismissed the sailor.

The Tories breathed once more without inhaling Liberal opinions. The Canningite Whigs one by one stole back to their own fold. But Grey and his Malignants did not feel the same towards them; there was a lack of unity among the Whigs which was very helpful to the "Beau." Some old friendships were repaired; Sefton and Creevey easily made up their quarrel, but Creevey could not forgive Brougham.

"We have seen a good deal of Mr. Brougham lately," one of Lord Sefton's daughters said mischievously. "He went to the play with us three or four times, and you never saw such a figure as he was. He wears a black stock or collar, and it is so wide that you see a dirty coloured handkerchief under, tied tight round his neck. You never saw such an object or anything half so dirty." Mr. Creevey was pleased.

Lord Grey said he thought Brougham was mad. Sefton and Creevey agreed with him. But Brougham thought Lambton mad, and Sefton and Creevey were ready to endorse that, too.

Brougham was a very black sheep indeed. He did not improve things by circulating a report that Lord Grey had given as a reason for refusing to support Canning's Ministry that "it leaned too much to the people and against the aristocracy." Grey was the advocate of advocates of Reform, and the people, most oddly, thought that meant that he was for them. Brougham considered himself *the* champion of Reform.

"Low, lying, dirty, shuffling villainy," cried Creevey in a rage. However, Creevey went to Brooks's a month later, and "upon entering the room, Bruffam was sitting at a table with his back to me, convulsing a group of noblemen and gentlemen who stood round with some good story. Not having seen Bruffam before, I took up a *lateral* position to him, with my eye fixed upon him, waiting for recognition; which was no sooner effected than up he sprang to embrace me with 'Well, old Ultra-Tory, how are you?'"

" ' Charmingly, I thank you, dear moderate Tory ; how are you ? ' "

Lord Lansdowne, too, was restored to Mr. Creevey's acquaintance. " I met Lord Lansdowne in Oxford Street. . . . I congratulated him upon having no explanations to make in these explaining times."

Lady Holland made overtures to bridge over the great schism. Mr. Creevey received a pressing invitation to dine with her at " The Nutshell." At dinner she said " Let *Mr.* Creevey come next to me ; it is so long since I have seen him."

Was there ever ?

Lord Grey seemed less eager to receive the strays than to approve the " Beau's " Government. He made his appearance in a new " Wellington coat," a kind of half and half greatcoat and undercoat, meeting close and square below the knees. The Grey ladies, however, were better " party men " than he was and " instantly stormed it and carried it fairly by main force from his back never to see the light again, at least on HIS back."

" Wellington's name alone causes a sensation in the public mind," said Madame de Lieven. " England, however, is no longer suited to an apostolic *régime*."

It seemed, for a time, that it was. The Duke's merit, " and it is a real one," said Madame de Lieven a year later, " is his great love of order and economy, and it is said that he will be able to show a surplus of a million. This will sensibly appeal to John Bull's heart." The surplus was, in fact, two millions.

The " Beau " was managing very well, though the King was peevish and was reported to have said : " Arthur is King of England, O'Connell King of Ireland, and myself Canon of Windsor."

Lord Mount Charles told Greville that he " verily believed that the King would go mad on the Catholic question, his violence was so great about it. He says that ' his father would have laid his head on the block rather than yield, and that he is equally ready to lay his head there in the same cause.' "

George's fortitude, however, was greater than that ; Greville was standing next to him at the Council and he put down his head and whispered, " Which are you for, Cadland or the mare ? " (meaning his match between Cadland and Bess of Bedlam). So I put my head down, too, and said,

" The horse," and then as we retired he said to the Duke : " A little bit of Newmarket."

" After the Council," Greville had said on an earlier occasion, " the King called me and talked to me about race-horses, which he cares more about than the welfare of Ireland, or the peace of Europe. We walked over the castle, which is nearly finished but too gaudy."

Madame de Lieven, naturally, was chiefly concerned with foreign affairs, but these seemed tiresome and trivial to the British public, which was not really interested in anything further off than Belgium. Attention always wandered from abroad directly domestic affairs grew lively.

" Catholic Emancipation has been proposed by the Duke," said the Russian. " It is impossible to describe the excitement and agitation in London. There is no longer any thought of Europe, she is at the bottom of the sea and for a long spell."

Mr. Creevey went to Ireland in the autumn of 1828 to see these troublesome Irish Catholics for himself. He visited the Duncannons, good Whigs, of course, who were model and popular landlords.

" Lady Duncannon shines here," he reported. " She is devoted to the place, likes nothing so much as living here, and spends her time mostly in the village at her different institutions. . . . I never in any spot saw so marked a proof of a rapidly spreading civilisation, and yet this is only four miles from Carrick, one of the most lawless towns in Tipperary. Oh ! the English absentees from their Irish properties. What they might have done here by their influence and without Irish prejudices."

Lord Donoughmore said, " The English Government never takes any measure respecting Ireland except when pushed into it, and then they always take the wrong one."

O'Connell was far too dramatic for Mr. Creevey's taste, and yet " the nation is dramatic and likes it ; and if you come to that, even poor old Grattan was highly ornamental, too. O'Connell has a good-humoured countenance and manner, and looks much more like a Kerry squire than a Dublin lawyer."

" I would rather trust myself with Irish people than with any other in the whole world—be they who they may, Betty," he wrote to his stepdaughter.

Mr. Creevey, then, was more firmly convinced than ever that the Catholics ought to be emancipated. It had been

one of the Whig trump cards for years. Suddenly the Duke of Wellington turned a somersault and decided that it must be done, and done by the Tories; Peel, who had held back, had at last promised his support.

"How would the Duke recommend the Catholic Relief Bill in the House of Lords?" young Mr. Macaulay asked.

"Oh!" said Lord Clarendon. "It will be easy enough. He'll say: 'My Lords! Attention! Right about face! March!'"

The debate in the House of Lords was, in point of fact, very amusing. It was understood that the Duke of Clarence was to speak after years of silence in public, and there was a good deal of curiosity to hear him. Lord Bathurst was in a great fright lest he should be violent and foolish.

"He made a very tolerable speech," said Greville. "Of course with a good deal of stuff in it, but such as it was, it has exceedingly disconcerted the other party."

Greville underrated it; it was much too long, but full of sense. "He wished to God that His Majesty's Ministers had been unanimous on that question long ago; or he rather wished that a united administration could have been formed in 1804, for the purpose of carrying this measure, for from that hour to the present, his opinion had invariably been, that what was falsely called concession, ought to have been resorted to. He said 'falsely called concession' because he maintained that what was asked for was not concession; it was merely an act of justice, to raise the Roman Catholics from their present state of degradation. . . . When an Act was passed for that purpose he would pledge his life that it would have the effect of uniting and quieting eight millions of His Majesty's subjects. . . . He looked upon the measure which was about to be proposed, as one of the most important for this country that could possibly be conceived. He was happy that the noble Duke was selected by His Majesty to effect this great object. . . . He rejoiced to find him placed in his present situation. . . . The noble Duke and his colleagues had acted openly, boldly, firmly, and valiantly, and he thought it but an act of justice, thus publicly before God and man, to declare his sentiments with respect to their conduct. Professionally educated as he had been, it had fallen to his lot to have visited Ireland; and he should be the most ungrateful of men, if he forgot the reception he had there met with. If the venerable Duncan . . . if Earl St. Vincent . . . or if one, who was more dear to

him than any other officer in the Service, he meant the great Nelson, the hero of Trafalgar, were in being, would they not hold up their heads in admiration and say that the dawn of peace and happiness, and tranquillity in Ireland had arrived. . . . For his own part, His Royal Highness said, that he had differed from the noble Duke upon one particular occasion, but that this difference should never alter his opinion as to what he had already done, or as to the great service which he was now rendering to the Sovereign and the State. He recollected all the achievements of the noble Duke and the victories he had won, etc. etc. . . . After the year 1807 this was the third time that he had troubled their lordships with his opinions on a public occasion. When it pleased the Almighty to render it necessary for the present sovereign of the realms to assume the office of Regent, he, the Duke of Clarence, formed a resolution that although he should not be satisfied with everything that might occur he would henceforth give his support to His Majesty's ministers. . . . He trusted that before the measure was brought under their consideration the right reverend prelates would seriously deliberate, duly weigh and anxiously consider, in what way they ought to act, that they would keep in mind they were the ministers of peace . . . that they would seriously ask themselves whether their persevering opposition to the claim of their Catholic countrymen, might not hasten a crisis, or produce far worse, a civil war at home. . . . He thanked God that the measure of justice was at length about to be carried into effect, which would purify and tranquillize that dear, generous, and aggrieved country, whose rights had been so long withheld."

Two or three interesting points emerge from this speech; Clarence, at least, had never departed from his liberal principles; he was still, after all these years, anxious to pay tribute to those who had been his friends, and he bore no malice towards that high-handed Iron Duke who had robbed him of his treasured office.

They were points hardly noticed at the time—gossip was much more taken up with his public tiff on the matter with the Duke of Cumberland; besides it was so much the fashion to make fun of Clarence that such indices conveyed no information.

There were, of course, many more sensational speeches on the Catholic question. Sir Charles Wetherell earned

immortality: "The anti-Catholic papers and men lavished the most extravagant encomiums on his speech, and called it the finest oration ever delivered in the House of Commons. 'The best since the second Philippic,' said Greville. 'He was drunk, they say.'"

The Speaker said, "The only lucid interval he had was that between his waistcoat and his breeches."

When he spoke he unbuttoned his braces and in his vehement action his breeches fell down and his waistcoat ran up, so that there was a great interregnum.

Under these embarrassing circumstances it was a good thing that Sir Charles spoke in the Commons, for the House of Lords was "very full, particularly of women; every fool in London thinks it necessary to be there. It is only since last year that the steps of the throne have been crowded with ladies; formerly one or two got in, who skulked behind the throne, or were hid in Tyrwhitt's box, but now they fill the whole space, and put themselves in front with their large bonnets, without either fear or shame."

This feminine invasion evidently destroyed the immemorial calm of the House in which Lord North used to sleep so sweetly during debates.

"Lady Jersey is in a fury with Lord Anglesey, and goes about saying he insulted her in the House of Lords the other night. She was sitting on one of the steps of the throne, and the Duchess of Richmond on the step above. After Lord Anglesey had spoken he came to talk to the Duchess, who said, 'How well you did speak.' On which he said: 'Hush, you must take care what you say, for here is Lady Jersey, and she reports for the newspapers.'"

On which Lady Jersey said very angrily: "Lady Jersey is here for her own amusement; what do you mean by 'reporting for the newspapers?'"

To which he replied with a profound bow: "I beg your ladyship's pardon. I did not mean to offend you."

Lord Anglesey said he meant it as a joke.

"A very poor joke," said Lady Jersey.

Lord Anglesey probably wished for a return of the good old days when inquisitive women had to pay for their curiosity by being smuggled into the ventilator, "a place so small that I was forced to lie down, and the smell so dreadful that I thought I should faint," one of them had said.

As if the excitement of the Catholic Relief Bill had not been

enough, the Duke of Wellington chose to fight a duel with Lord Winchelsea, or rather considered that the noble lord had forced it on him.

"Winchelsea is mad, of course," said Creevey.

No harm was done to either of them; it was a supremely ridiculous affair.

The Beau was not finding his position so comfortable after all. He had alienated a number of his followers by being too liberal; he was not at his ease with Peel; all the glamour of the hero of Waterloo was fading from the politician; the King was very angry at the large majority for the Bill, and was mighty sarcastic when the Duke had a tumble from his horse at a review.

"I believe it to be impossible for a man of squeamish and uncompromising virtue to be a successful politician," commented Greville about this time. "It requires the nicest feeling and soundest judgment to know upon what occasions and to what extent it is allowable and expedient to diverge from the straight line. Statesmen of the greatest power, and with the purest intentions, are perpetually counteracted by prejudices, obstinacy, interest and ignorance, and in order to be efficient they must turn, and tack, and temporise, sometimes dissemble."

Wellington could never be a successful politician; he could not temporise or dissemble.

The Duke had returned from Waterloo the nation's idol; even the Whigs, with very few exceptions, had capitulated to his glamour, and his charm. Mr. Creevey, who had once expressed the opinion that he ought to be hanged, had been completely subjugated in Brussels.

The ladies, in particular, were so extravagant in their worship of the hero that Mrs. Gore, that observant chronicler of manners, wrote: "The Englishwomen who laid aside their prudery to make a virtue of hero-hunting certainly went lengths in the excitement of the hour which it would be difficult to match in the *histoire galante* of less highly reputed countries."

They collected fervently for a suitable memorial to him, and the Achilles statue which the ladies of England erected to the glory of the Duke led to much ribaldry because the modest Arthur was commemorated without clothes.

Women were the plague of the Duke's life, and the fact that he was chivalrous, and, in a way, susceptible, delivered him into their hands. They sometimes recorded their

adoration in their diaries, but ambiguously: "My hero-worship of Wellington caused me to accept with pleasure—though shrinking from the notoriety it gave me—the attention of the saviour of my country, a man to whom everyone was devoted."

The adorer described him. He spoke perfect French, and had courtly manners. He was a *perfect* Englishman. He was winning golden opinions in Parliament *in spite* of his having Cabinet rank; such was the simplicity of his manner that he seemed perfectly unconscious of the honours that had been heaped on him. He was, of course, good-looking; he was also an interesting talker, indeed something of a gossip it is to be feared.

"This evening I had a long conversation with the Duke on various interesting subjects," said Lady Shelley. "The recent publication by a Frenchman of a book on Waterloo led to a discussion of this, my favourite topic. (It was probably the favourite topic of all the adorers—as an opening move, at least.) The Frenchman attempts to prove that it was not the English but the Prussians who won the battle. This led to the Duke's emphatic assertion that it was the British, and the British alone, who won the field. . . . We laughed at poor Blücher's strange hallucination, which, though ludicrous, is very sad. He fancies himself with child by a Frenchman, and deplores that such an event should have happened to him in his old age. He does not so much mind being with child, but cannot reconcile himself to the thought that *he*—of all people in the world—should be destined to give birth to a *Frenchman*. The Duke assures us that he knows this to be a fact."

Everyone complained of the gross indecency of the Duke of Clarence's conversation; considering the extreme delicacy of the Duke's it would be interesting to compare them, but samples of Clarence's do not appear.

This was not the only occasion on which the Duke gossiped; Creevey has instances, and Greville. The Duke was willing to chat about anything. They talked of Marlborough and his victories, and loss of faculties.

"That won't happen to you, Duke, for you do not feel the same irritation and anxiety about trifles."

"That is true; I don't fret about trifles," said the Duke simply.

Reports were abroad that he and Peel proposed to turn out the rest of the Cabinet; their energy was much wasted

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON
After an old print.

" in this milk-and-water administration, which is conducted upon the principle of submitting every measure to committees in order to shift the responsibility from their own shoulders."

He did not turn out the administration at that time. He learned to shoot—at first very badly, peppering an old woman's arms and making her squeal. He gave his married friends advice on the education of children, advice of so strenuous an order that it was quite remarkable in the dilettante age in which he had grown up :

" As for John (Lady Shelley's eldest son), you must impress upon his mind first that he is coming into the world at an age at which he who knows nothing will be nothing. If he does not chuse to study, therefore he must make up his mind to be a hewer of wood and drawer of water to those who do. Secondly, he must understand that there is nothing learnt but by study and application. I study and apply more, probably, than any man in England. Thirdly, if he means to rise in the military profession, he must be a master of languages, of the mathematics, of military tactics, of course, and of all the duties of an officer in all situations. . . . He will not be able to converse or write like a gentleman unless he understand the classics. He must be a master of history and geography, and the laws of his country and all nations. . . . Tell him there is nothing like having an idle moment."

Soldiers, evidently, needed to know more than politicians ; Squire Western's " as little history, even of my own country, as a gentleman need know " looks very modest beside the knowledge of the Duke ; still, the Duke was NOT a good politician.

Poor John Shelley ! but perhaps the Duke knew how dangerous were idle moments, and how very much inclined the women were to fill them dangerously.

The Beau became a very keen sportsman, and, in spite of his " study and application " found time for visits to the country-houses of the great landowners, chiefly Tory, of course.

It happened, rather oddly, that the Tory hostesses of the moment were by no means all that they should have been. Belvoir and Wynyard, of course, were all that could be desired, but Sudborne had no mistress, or rather too many mistresses ; " Fair Rosamund " Croker was hardly worthy to entertain the Duke ; Mrs. Peel was wrapped up in her family,

and not cordial; Lady Ellenborough was "going on in a way *à faire peur*, for I cannot but think my lord will turn round upon her some day and blow her out of the water"; and as for Lady Lyndhurst, "*elle passe la permission* altogether in vulgarity. I never saw such a woman," Mrs. Arbuthnot reported.

There was, of course, Hatfield. Hatfield had the most delightful hostess in the world; in herself she was a whole volume of comedies. "Old Dow. Sally," Creevey called her, and gave an amusing account of a visit she paid to Stoke: "She arrived yesterday in her accustomed manner, in a phaeton drawn by four long-tailed black Flanders mares, she driving the wheel horses, and a postillion on the leaders. It is impossible to do justice to the antiquity of her face. If, as alleged, she is only 74 years old, it is the most cracked, or rather furrowed, piece of mosaic you ever saw, but her dress is absolutely infantine. She is reclining on a sofa reading the *Edinburgh Review* without spectacles or glass of any kind. Her dress is white muslin properly loaded with garniture, and she has just put off a large bonnet, profusely gifted with bright lilac ribbands, having on her head a very nice lace cap not less adorned with the brightest yellow ribbands."

She was just as amusing at home. "Last Sunday the old Marchioness of Salisbury was at church, a very rare thing with her," said the Duchesse de Dino. "The preacher, speaking of the Fall, observed that Adam, excusing himself, had cried out, 'Lord! the woman tempted me.' At this quotation Lady Salisbury, who appeared never to have heard of the incident before, jumped up in her seat, crying, 'Shabby fellow indeed!'

She was indefatigable. There were *tableaux vivants* at Hatfield, in which all the persons present were to appear as characters in "Ivanhoe."

"You must do the Jew, Isaac of York, Lord Alvanley," she ordered.

"Anything within my power you may command," he bowed, "but though no man in England has tried oftener, I never could *do a Jew* in my life."

When the Duke of Wellington was invited to stay at country houses Mrs. Arbuthnot was always invited, too. When he entertained at Strathfield Saye, though Mrs. Arbuthnot acted as hostess, the Duchess of Wellington sometimes appeared. She invariably called all the party

" the Duke's company," and sat apart from her guests " dressed, even in winter, in white muslin, without any ornaments, when everyone else was in full dress. She seldom spoke, but looked through her eyeglass lovingly upon the Duke, who sat opposite to her. When the ladies went into the drawing-room, she retired to her own room."

There was a tragedy here, or at least a tragi-comedy. The Duke, when a very young man in Ireland had fallen in love with pretty Kitty Pakenham, who had refused him. Years later, in India, a casual remark that " she had given up society and was wearing the willow for him in an Irish village " had roused his chivalry. He wrote to her; she replied that an illness had robbed her of her beauty. That clinched the matter for so honourable a gentleman. He wrote to her to renew his offer. They were married, and, since both had so fine a notion of playing the game, should have been happy; but it was not so. Illness, loss of beauty, " wearing the willow " had perhaps, cut too deeply into Kitty Pakenham for so magnanimous a marriage to obliterate the scars. When the Duke said, as an old man, that " no woman had ever loved him " he was wide of the mark; his wife had loved him, but it was not the kind of love of which he stood in need and could return.

Neither Mrs. Arbuthnot nor Lady Shelley were disinterested observers in that unhappy household.

" The poor Duchess is as foolish as ever and provokes me to a degree. I am sorry for her, too; and still more for him, for every year he must suffer more and more from it," the former wrote to the latter; but she wrote from Strathfield Saye, which was enough to make the Duchess foolish.

Peel put the general view of the matter in a letter to his wife in the same year: " The Duchess of Wellington, poor thing, was as much affected by the Duke's indisposition as if he had treated her with the kindness which was her due. 'I am so short-sighted,' she said, bursting into tears. 'I cannot remark his features, I can only judge by the colour, and when I look at that *precious face*, it seems to be very pale.' However, the Duke continued to prefer the company of his 'flirt' Mrs. Arbuthnot. She took the place next to him at dinner as if it were a matter of course."

When Mrs. Arbuthnot died, in 1834, there was a burst of comment on the invidious position she had occupied in relation to the Duke.

Lady Shelley wrote to him a letter of condolence, in which

she said: "That union of frankness and discretion which I so much appreciated and which made her so valuable a friend, gave you, from the experience of many years, a repose in her society which no one else could replace." Had it been more, surely Lady Shelley, the ardent hero-worshipper, would have been jealous?

Charles Greville's comment, naturally, was ambiguous: "The Duke, with whom Mrs. Arbuthnot had lived in the most intimate relations for many years, evinced a good deal of feeling; but he is accused of insensibility because he had the good taste and sense to smooth his brow, and go to the House of Lords with a cheerful aspect. She was not a clever woman, but she was neither dull nor deficient, and very prudent and silent."

Mrs. Arbuthnot's husband was generally at her side, and after her death remained the most intimate friend of the Duke. At *his* funeral service the Duke sat with the tears streaming down his cheeks.

The eighteenth century with its moral code was dead; the Duke had never quite belonged to the eighteenth century; not, of course, that he made a fetish of chastity; he got into scrapes, was blackmailed and said "Publish and be damned." For my part I am willing to take Lady Shelley's version of the affair with Mrs. Arbuthnot, written when she was an old woman, and the Duke was dead.

"Mrs. Arbuthnot, who was often the Duke's adviser, and gave him her clear and honest opinion on matters of which others were afraid to speak, views inspired by her own clear brain, was invaluable to the Duke. Their intimacy may have given gossips an excuse for scandal but I, who knew them both so well, am convinced that the Duke was not her lover. He admired her very much, for she had a man-like sense, but Mrs. Arbuthnot was devoid of womanly passions, and was, above all, a loyal and truthful woman. She had, from her childhood, been accustomed to live in the society of clever old people. She married, when very young, old Arbuthnot, who found her so perfectly discreet, that he and Lord Castlereagh—when in office—talked openly in her presence with a sense of absolute security. The Duke of Wellington fell into the same habit at her house, and would see people there, without the fuss of an interview which would have found its way into the newspapers. We three together formed a perfect union, where no jealousy or littleness of feeling ever intruded.

The Duke required a fireside friend, and one quite without nerves. Mrs. Arbuthnot often said that he ought to have found this at his own fireside, and how easy it would have been for the Duchess to have made him happy. He only asked for repose from the turmoil of public affairs, for absolute truth, and the absence of little-mindedness. Alas! the Duchess had precisely those faults which annoyed him most. Under the mistaken impression that she was smoothing family difficulties she made the Duke's children as afraid of speaking openly to him as she was herself. The words 'Don't tell your father,' were ever on her lips. She even tried to induce her visitors to share in this folly. She has often said to me: 'Don't tell the Duke—now mind don't tell the Duke,' in such small details as that the fire had been allowed to burn itself out, that the bread had a bitter taste, that such and such a person had called and so forth. This foolish habit, which began very soon after her marriage, afterwards caused all the misunderstanding which existed between father and son. Lord Douro had been warned by his mother never to speak to his father about his debts. The poor Duchess, who managed the household and paid the bills, could never make up her mind to ask the Duke for the full amount required, lest her management might be called in question. The result was, that when she died, it was found that bills were owing which the Duke thought had been paid month by month in accordance with his wishes. As I *know* these facts I put them on record, to vindicate that noble being from the only blot which has ever —with any semblance of truth—been brought against him. It is true that he seldom conversed with his wife. Whenever he did so he had cause to regret it, owing to some indiscretion on her part. It seemed to be the one object of her life to pose as the cruelly neglected wife. Unfortunately she succeeded in making that impression upon her eldest son.

The Duchess was the slave of her boys when they came home for the holidays. I have seen her carrying their fishing nets, their bats, balls and stumps, apparently not perceiving how bad it was for them to regard a woman, far less their mother, as a simple drudge, fit only to minister to their pleasures. In consequence her sons pitied without respecting her. Poor thing! during her long illness she at last learnt to know her husband better.

The Duke had ever required the greatest respect to be shown towards her by everyone who went to Strathfield

Saye. He made it a rule always to send her a list of the company *d'avance*, and, with military habits, he directed where they were to be lodged. The Duchess considered this an act of unkindness, but how could it have been otherwise?"

Mrs. Arbuthnot was naturally delighted when the Duke became Prime Minister: "I have no doubt he will acquit himself in his new position with his usual tact and talent," she said. "But it will be a difficult game to play. Though you may call him of no party, all the world knows he has been in a Tory Cabinet for nine years, and that his conduct in that cabinet as the opponent of Liberalism and the upholder of all our ancient institutions has done him *more real honour*, and given him ten times more power in the country than all his brilliant victories in Spain."

The Duke of Rutland confirmed this rather odd view of the Duke. "Everyone must see that a Government of whose principles the Duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel are the guarantors commences under the most gratifying auspices for the country. But I say this rather of the Duke than of Mr. Peel, because I know more of the principles of the one than of the other. They tell me that Peel is a Liberal, and I am so decided an enemy to Free Trade principles, *until* our country is in a state to compete with foreign nations in the cost of production of various articles, that I never can unite unreservedly with those who are advocates of the principles of Free Trade."

Free Trade, as it happened, was not to agitate his world while Prince William Henry was alive, but that estimate of Peel as a Liberal perhaps explained why the Tories did not altogether trust him. He was, of course, on the wrong side; he should have been among the reformers; he was not altogether happy among the Tories. Lady Shelley unconsciously explains: "I saw the celebrated Mr. Peel for the first time. I met him with two prejudices, one strongly in his favour—which was inspired by his superior talents, and by the enthusiasm with which my friends spoke of him—and the other of his birth, which ran as strongly against him. At first sight he displeased me. He spoke of shooting and country pursuits in a condescending manner, and his parade of good breeding and attention, a parade to which an Englishwoman is unaccustomed in a man of talent, disappointed me. . . . I have since satisfied myself that, so far from Mr. Peel's manner being unpleasant, he reminds me more of Metternich than any Englishman

I have encountered. He has a foreign *tournure de phrases* which I delight in, and yet in an Englishman it had at first displeased me. An observation of Mr. Peel's as to Englishwomen's tendency for satire, threw new light upon me; for I could not deny that I had met Mr. Peel with a determination to criticise rather than to admire him."

Mr. Creevey called him "The Prig" and "The Spinning Jenny," but Canning said he was "the best Home Secretary this country had ever known." He was, in fact, an entirely new type of politician. He had been at school with Byron: "I was always in scrapes and he never," said the poet. Was that why Creevey and others found him a prig; they were all in scrapes at times.

Peel got a first in mathematics as well as in Classics; perhaps that was what chiefly distinguished him from his predecessors; he was precise, exact, and prepared his way beforehand. He brought those qualities and *knowledge* to his job; he was, indeed an excellent type of the Civil Servant, who had not yet arrived. He was professional while the rest were amateurs.

Peel was to be Gladstone's idol, and his work in reforming the iniquitous penal laws showed a liberality to which neither Whig nor Tory had before aspired. But Peel was "acutely conscious of the selfishness of average human nature and terribly afraid of imposing too great a strain upon the loyalty of the rank and file of his party. The reforms which he liked to undertake were safe reforms, reforms which would not give his enemies a handle, or leave any large section of his followers with a grievance." Such reforms he introduced and carried: the reform of the criminal laws relating to theft, the institution of the New Police, the abolition of capital punishment where such was obviously not needed as a deterrent. He was not bold, but he was always eager to undertake reform which would not clash with powerful interests. He was, in fact, though a complete politician, a man who had principles, and who was reluctant to set them aside to play a merely party game. He knew, and was anxious to persuade others, that "as times change, so principles must be modified"; when party clashed with principles, however, party generally won. He had not the Duke's transparent integrity, nor the ardent Tory faith of Sir Charles Wetherell, nor the magic of Pitt.

"He has great oratorical gifts," said most people; but "he has got an awkward way of thrusting out his hands

when he talks," said Greville. "They say he is not a good debater," reported Lady Shelley, and she wondered, "will he rise to superiority, or will he give up public life?"

The question had point.

Like Grey he was only really happy in his family circle; his ambition was at war with a passion for domestic life. He was willing to give so much time to Parliament, but only so much; if the House threatened to keep him too long from the side of his wife, it was the House which must be sacrificed.

He always had the appearance in public of being unsympathetic and cold, yet he wrote to his wife:

"The simplicity of my expressions proceeds from feelings the very opposite of cold ones. I should think it a profanation of such feelings to write about them to others who could never understand or enter into them."

His feelings, nevertheless, if deep and ardent, ran in a very narrow channel; he owns in another letter to his Julia, at a later date, that his real affections never stray outside his family and home; there is room for no one else in his heart.

Canning was right, and the Tories, as usual, had the ablest man. The Whigs, just as a matter of form, abused him as a prig and a humbug, but they admired him mightily all the same. On all momentous occasions it was: "What will Peel do?" Greville said he was universally regarded as the ablest man in Parliament. It was odd that the Tories *always* had the ablest man.

Even Peel had his lighter moments: "I did laugh at a caricature called 'Peeling a Charley' in which I was represented stripping one of the old watchmen of his great coat."

CHAPTER VI

THE LORD HIGH ADMIRAL

At the clubs there had long been animated betting whether George would survive Fred, or Fred George. They both had magnificent constitutions, and had both played tricks with them, but the Duke of York could learn a lesson, while King George IV could not. The Duke had arranged a mode of life which suited him very well; his Duchess was amiable, paid his debts, asked no questions, and invited him to her house for week-ends. His heart was as susceptible as his brother's, but the affair of Mary Anne Clarke hit him very hard. He lived it down in time, and gave no further cause for serious scandal; many people had affection for him; he had some real friends. He was, on the whole, a Tory, but some of the Whigs liked him very well, Coke of Norfolk, for instance. Charles Greville was intimate with him, and in spite of himself, drew almost an affectionate portrait of his master. The only real complaint about him in his later years concerned his debts, which, in spite of the efforts of the Duchess, continued to be a scandal. He had a certain rough common sense and some principles. Lady Shelley has a story about him which illustrates the former, though it throws no light on the latter quality. A madman tried to assassinate Lord Palmerston in 1819, and then had an interview with the Duke of York.

"People are telling lies about me," said the man.

"And who is doing that?" inquired the Duke.

"It is God Almighty, sir, I know it for a fact," said the man excitedly.

"If that is so," said the Duke soothingly, "it is not to me that He has said it, for I have no communication with that Personage at all."

The man, quite calmed, departed satisfied.

The Duke was, in fact, rather a religious man. He was an

ardent Protestant, and made a famous speech against the Catholic Relief Bill of 1825.

The honest Protestants of Cheshire thought he deserved some reward, and sent him a fine cheese weighing 160 lbs. Praed celebrated the gift.

> "And what reward did men devise
> For such a peroration,
> Which saved their lives and liberties
> From transubstantiation?
>
> A long address, filled full of beauties,
> Expressive of their love and duties;
> And also a prodigious cheese
> As heavy as Sir Harcourt Lees—
> Solid men of Cheshire."

The Duke died in January 1827, sitting in his chair in his old grey dressing-gown, and the public revived all the old scandals, but his friends were sad.

"I, perhaps, more than every other human being have cause to deplore the loss which we have all sustained," said the Duke of Rutland.

The King was said to be much affected, and the Duke of Sussex wrote for his brother a very just epitaph:

"On all occasions when his heart had to decide a question he acted right, but alas, when the head is wanted to act, I fear that sometimes he was betrayed into discussions which should have been avoided, as people judge often from matters of fact, without the possible consideration of the *peculiar education of the individual.*"

The day of the funeral was bitterly cold. The Duke of Wellington caught a chill; Sir John Shelley developed the gout; Canning caught a cold, of which, in fact, he died, though it took some months to kill him. It was a most melancholy affair, not at all an impressive funeral, and yet so long drawn out that all the mourners were in misery.

"In the cold aisle, on the flags without a mat or piece of green baize to cover them, we waited, the Dukes of Clarence, Sussex and Gloucester among the rest, three-quarters of an hour, to the imminent danger of old men like the Chancellor, just r covered from an illness," said Peel. "He took my advice and put his cocked hat under his feet and stood on the silk which was put round it."

Tom Moore heard of that hat:

"Think of that night, that fearful night,
When through the steaming vault below,
Our master dared, in gout's despite
To venture his podagric toe.

At sea there's but a plank, they say,
'Twixt seamen and annihilation;
A hat, that awful moment, lay
'Twixt England and Emancipation."

The Duke of Clarence was not very decorous in his behaviour at the funeral, Peel reported. He spoke to everyone much as usual and "inquired of Lord Hertford how many head of game he had killed at Sudburn."

It certainly sounded rather unfeeling. Clarence was always much affected at first when death removed a member of his family, but, as long as his children were all right, his sorrows slipped from him easily. He was doubtless sorry for poor Fred, though he never cared for Fred as he did for George, but he could not be blind to the difference it made in his prospects; why! he was the next heir, and, except for gout and asthma, his health was uncommonly good; a regular and abstemious life made it fairly certain that he would outlast poor George.

The Crown dangled in front of his eyes and excited him a little. Report said that he had remarked to the Duke of Norfolk at the funeral "that he hoped before long to see him in the House of Lords." Not in George's time, naturally. Norfolk denied the occasion, but confessed that the Duke of Clarence had said something of the kind to him in the House of Lords. It *did* seem as if he were contemplating a speedy succession: "But I ought to add that he said precisely the same thing to me at the Coronation and then voted against us at the very first opportunity. So our Billy is a wag, is he not?" asked Mr. Creevey.

Mr. Creevey, who was "more passionately attached to party every day" and was "certain that without it nothing can be done," was hardly likely to grasp the fact thus early that the Duke of Clarence was not a party man, and would vote for measures regardless of party.

Creevey was indignant that Billy had his salary put up by £9000 a year, and was disgusted with Lord Holland for canvassing for his "dear and illustrious connexion."

Canning thought that the Duke needed something more than an increase of salary. Mr. Canning was something more than a politician and a wit; he had vision and fore-

sight. As Prime Minister he felt that he had a great opportunity; the King's health, though fluctuating, was on the whole uncertain; no one without a magnificent constitution "of iron and cable ropes" could survive his manner of life for a month. The Duke of Clarence, on the contrary, might live to a good old age, though at Brooks's they were betting that "Billy would be in a strait-waistcoat before George died."

Canning noted his excitability, and was not disturbed by it; the poor man had a bad attack of asthma and hay fever, which might cause any man to be excitable. The Duke, Canning thought, was a good creature, but needed training for the office he was likely to fill; an introduction to responsibility would be good for him, and—Canning was very human for a politician—this elderly pupil should also belatedly enjoy what he had longed for in his youth. He had always wished to be a sailor; Canning was in a position to gratify that wish. He revived the office of Lord High Admiral which had been in abeyance since Anne's husband died.

It was meant, of course, to be an office more decorative than active; the Duke was to have the title and some ornamental duties, but a Board of Admiralty, under Sir George Cockburn, was appointed to do the work.

Clarence was enchanted; the Duchess, regretfully, was transplanted from her garden to the Admiralty to entertain a large, and very mixed, company; for the Duke at once gave rein to his natural bonhomie, and invited to his receptions every naval officer of whom he had ever heard. The Duchess, who had organised the household at Bushey so admirably, found the household at the Admiralty quite out of control.

Madame von Bülow sympathised with her: "Whole families might be seen parading the crowded rooms arm-in-arm amid a press so great that I could hardly cling to my husband's arm, and the men in despair put on their hats. . . . After vainly searching for the Duchess in several rooms we gave up trying to present ourselves to our hostess. . . . We found the Duke in a little room where they were washing up the china."

Unfortunately the Duke could not resign himself to being purely ornamental. He had always wanted to be a sailor; well, now he was the top sailor of the lot. He hoisted his flag and sailed away on a cruise. His vessel was the *Royal Sovereign* yacht, and the Duchess, who did not care

for the sea, promenaded along the line of the coast, being entertained at the great houses as she followed the ship.

The Admiralty was a little distracted at this behaviour of its chief, but his tour was fortunately (this was the Admiralty point of view) interrupted by Mr. Canning's funeral, which the Royal Tar hastened back to attend.

Canning might have been able to handle his royal friend tactfully, but Canning died almost before his hand was on the wheel, and the Duke of Wellington was not remarkable for tact where Service matters were concerned. The Duke of Clarence had a profound, almost adoring, admiration for the Duke of Wellington, but the Beau, it is to be feared, did not reciprocate. He was, of course, a soldier, and it was not to be expected that he could see eye to eye with a sailor. He also, regrettably, forgot that he was a soldier and imagined that he was a politician. Politicians, it appeared, thought that the Admiralty was a department for exercising political influence, chiefly Scottish, whereas the Duke of Clarence persisted in regarding the Admiralty from a naval point of view, which was carrying eccentricity beyond bearable limits. The poor, simple creature thought that promotions should be given for merit, instead of for Parliamentary influence. Mr. Greville was quite indignant about it:

"The Duke of Clarence wants to promote deserving officers, but they oppose it on account of the expense; and they find in everything great difficulty in keeping him in order."

He even had the folly to ask for money, a not very large sum, to pension off old officers so as to promote younger men. The Treasury, naturally, refused. Neither did the Lord High Admiral regard Sir George Cockburn[1] with that reverence which he had for the Duke, so he ventured to quarrel with him, and quarrelled very explosively indeed.

They had a preliminary breeze about a commission on gunnery which the Lord High Admiral had arranged without consulting his Council. Sir George Cockburn pointed out, quite accurately, that the Duke of Clarence had exceeded his powers; his patent enjoined that in every step he took

[1] The Duke of Clarence was not the only person who failed to admire Sir George Cockburn. He was much criticised for his conduct during the war with America (1812) and Commodore Rogers, President of the Board of Naval Commissioners at Washington, spoke to Mr. Fearon of Admiral Cockburn's "disgraceful conduct."

he should be advised by two members of his Council. William decided to remove his commission out of reach of the Admiralty. He issued a proclamation :

" It is my directions that the members of the Committee on Gunnery now sitting at the Admiralty, proceed to Portsmouth, ready to wait upon me there by Monday morning, the 14th instant, and that they be prepared to remain at Portsmouth if I shall think proper. Given under my hand, on board the *Royal Sovereign* yacht this 10th day of July 1828.

WILLIAM."

Once more the flag was hoisted, and once more the Lord High Admiral sailed away without permission from Sir George. Sir George protested, and the Lord High Admiral answered from his yacht :

SIR,

Your letter does not give me *displeasure* but *concern*, to see *one* I had *kept* when appointed to this situation of Lord High Admiral *constantly* opposing what I consider *good* for the King's service. In this free country everyone has a *right* to have *his* opinion and I have therefore to have *mine*, which differs totally from *yours*. The *only* part of *your* letter which I *can* approve is where *you* mention *expense*, and being now under weigh I have only to say I shall *for the present* leave the order *you so improperly* object to in your hands till I return, when I shall talk the matter over with you deliberately. . . . But I cannot conclude without repeating *my* Council is *not* to dictate but to give advice.

Sir George, knowing himself to be in the right, was upset, but replied :

ADMIRALTY,
11th July, 1828.

SIR,

It is impossible for me adequately to express to your Royal Highness the pain and disappointment I feel at observing by your Royal Highness's letter of yesterday's date in reply to mine of the same date, that your Royal Highness remains with an impression that in my humble but best endeavours to discharge my duty towards your Royal Highness conscientiously and efficiently, I have evinced a disposition to oppose whatever your Royal Highness has deemed necessary and for the good of the service, etc.

The Admiralty appealed to the Duke of Wellington. The Lord High Admiral opened negotiations with His Grace.

Royal Sovereign Yacht, off the North Foreland.
10*th July*, 1828, 4 *a.m.*

DEAR DUKE,

Finding by the *continued* and *serious* difference between me and Sir George Cockburn on points of the utmost consequence concerning His Majesty's naval service, it will not be to the advantage of the public good that Sir George should continue *one of my* Council. I am to request your Grace humbly to submit to the King *in my* name that Rear-Admiral the Honourable Sir Charles Paget may be appointed a member of my Council in the room of Sir George Cockburn. At the same time I submit to your Grace that the sooner this measure takes place the better, in order that, if possible, Sir Charles Paget may be returned to Parliament *before* this session is concluded. . . .

Wellington forwarded this to the King, who did not want to be bothered with William's vagaries, and wrote to the Lord High Admiral to tell him that he had exceeded his duty and that Sir George had only done his:

"I am convinced your Royal Highness is too well acquainted with the principles of military discipline and subordination not to be aware that your Royal Highness cannot hoist the flag of the Lord High Admiral for the purpose of exercising a military command and power which neither your Royal Highness's patent nor the law enables your Royal Highness to exercise unless by the special command of His Majesty, which would, of course, limit the extent of such command."

Wellington also thought that "this course cannot be pursued without creating public discussion and giving much annoyance to the King and the Lord High Admiral himself."

The Lord High Admiral disagreed with this. He declined to hold any communication with Sir George Cockburn since he had applied for his dismissal. The other members of the Council said that if Sir George were dismissed they would resign.

It was about this time that the Clubs revived their wagering that the Duke of Clarence would be in a strait-waistcoat before the King died.

The Duke of Wellington tried to reason with the Lord High Admiral; that head of the Navy continued at sea, flying his flag. The Prime Minister carried the case to the King. George wrote placably to his brother:

ROYAL LODGE,
Tuesday night, July 11th, 1828.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

My friend the Duke of Wellington, as my first Minister has considered it his duty to lay before me the whole of the correspondence that has taken place with you upon the subject relating to yourself and Sir George Cockburn. It is with feelings of the deepest regret that I observe the embarrassing position in which you have placed yourself. You are in error from the beginning to the end. This is not a matter of opinion but of positive fact; and when the Duke of Wellington so properly calls your attention to the words of your patent, let me ask you how Sir George Cockburn could have acted otherwise?

You must not forget, my dear William, that Sir George Cockburn is the King's Privy Councillor, and so made by the King to advise the Lord High Admiral. What becomes of Sir George Cockburn's oath, his duty towards me, his sovereign, if he fails to offer such advice as he may think necessary to the Lord High Admiral? Am I, then, to be called upon to dismiss the most useful and perhaps the most important naval officer in my service for conscientiously acting up to the letter and spirit of his oath and his duty? The thing is impossible. I love you *most truly*, as you know, and no one would do more or go further to protect and meet your feelings; but on the present occasion I have no alternative; you must give way, and listen to the affection of your best friend and most attached brother,

G. R.

William was quite unconvinced, and as for Sir George: "He *cannot* be the *most useful* and the *most important* officer in your Majesty's service who *never* had the ships *he* commanded in *proper* fighting trim."

The Lord High Admiral was not vindictive, however; he sent word to Sir George "that if he would *retract*, all might be well." Sir George found it necessary to stick to his guns.

The Lord High Admiral set off for London to see the Duke of Wellington.

WILLIAM HENRY, DUKE OF CLARENCE, LORD HIGH ADMIRAL

From an old print.

On July 18th the Duke interviewed the combatants and arranged a truce.

The King must have his mind set at ease :

ADMIRALTY,
July 18th.

SIR,

By the letter I had the honour of sending your Majesty yesterday from Portsmouth, it must be evident I came up with a determination of having a full explanation with the Duke of Wellington.

It has taken place, and I therefore hope, considering the anxious desire I must have to give your Majesty's Government as little trouble as possible, I may yet be of use to my sovereign in the situation I now hold from your Majesty's gracious kindness to me, and I have in consequence to inform your Majesty that I return to-morrow to Portsmouth to continue my inspection of the outposts, and to exercise for a few days with the three deckers. . . .

The incident appeared closed, but, before a fortnight had gone, news came to the Admiralty that the Lord High Admiral had again put to sea.

The King had to be disturbed once more : " I am sorry to tell your Majesty," said the Duke of Wellington, " that I received accounts this day that the Lord High Admiral sailed from Plymouth on July 30th in the *Royal Sovereign* yacht, which bore his flag as Lord High Admiral, with the squadron of ships and vessels."

The ships' officers must have been loving it ; all their lives they longed to flout the Admiralty, and here was someone doing it in fine style ; it was not their responsibility ; they had only to do as the Lord High Admiral commanded and watch the fun.

Lord Ellenborough, a notable wag, reported the proceedings at a Cabinet Council : " No one knows where the Lord High Admiral is gone. . . He has ordered pilots . . . the orders are to be secret. . . . He says he may not have an opportunity of writing again till he returns to the Admiralty. . . . His last order about the vessel going to Copenhagen looks like madness, but it seems it is to take George Fitzclarence there for his pleasure. The letters will be laid before the King, but nothing done yet."

The King groaned and wrote irritably : " If the Lord High Admiral cannot make up his mind to fill his station

according to the laws of his country, it will be quite impossible for the King to retain him in his present situation."

The Duke of Wellington sent a stern rebuke. The Lord High Admiral came sulkily back to town; he was determined not to yield, and wrote to the Duke:

DEAR DUKE,

On my arrival this morning I found your Grace's letter of yesterday which has surprised me not a little. . . .

He grew more and more surprised; the Duke was adamant —and the Lord Chancellor, whom he invited to "come and shake him by the hand and discuss the matter with him." The Duke of Wellington sent the whole correspondence to the King, and George told his brother irritably to submit or resign.

Lord Ellenborough, who had followed these manœuvres with great amusement, said caustically: "I cannot help thinking that NOW or very soon the Lord High Admiral will resign. Spencer his secretary urges him forward. His family are afraid the fatigue will kill him. He is now and then mad, or very nearly so. The King would be glad to oust him, thus removing from a prominent situation a brother of whom he is jealous, and creating ill-blood between the Heir Presumptive and his Ministers—a thing all Kings like to do."

The King, very bored with the whole business, wrote to the Duke of Wellington:

ROYAL LODGE,
August 11, 1828.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have read with the most careful attention your further correspondence with the Lord High Admiral.

I will repeat to your Grace the words that I used to my brother when I had occasion to write to him on this painful subject, namely, "That he was in error from beginning to end."

I now desire distinctly to state, once for all, that I most entirely approve of all that you, in the exercise of your bounden duty towards me as my First Minister, have communicated to the Lord High Admiral on the subject now before me. When I appointed my brother to the station of Lord High Admiral I had reasonably hoped that I should have derived comfort, peace, and tranquillity from such an

appointment; but from what has hitherto taken place, it would seem as if the very reverse were to happen.

Can the Lord High Admiral suppose that the laws are to be infringed, the rules of true discipline (which he knows so well how to uphold) are to be broken in upon? and that these things are to pass without notice or remonstrance by the responsible advisers of the Crown? Can the Lord High Admiral suppose that his best friend and his sovereign is to have no feeling under the circumstances? I am quite aware that I am drawing fast to the close of my life; it may be the will of the Almighty that a month, a week, a day, may call the Lord High Admiral to be my successor. I love my brother William; I have always done so to my heart's core; and I will leave him the example of what the inherent duty of a King of this country really is. The Lord High Admiral shall strictly obey the laws enacted by Parliament, as attached to his present station, or I desire immediately to receive his resignation.

Such are my commands to your Grace.

Ever your sincere friend,

G. R.

The Prime Minister sent this letter to the Lord High Admiral and, the same day, heard from the rebel:

BUSHEY HOUSE,

August 11, 1828, 9 *p.m.*

MY DEAR DUKE,

Your Grace's letter of this day, enclosing a letter from His Majesty, also of this day, accepting in its contents my resignation of the office of Lord High Admiral, together with copies of your Grace's letters to the King of the 8th and 10th instant, have just reached me.

I have very little, under the present circumstances, to observe to your Grace, except that I trust in God, from the bottom of my heart, that our justly beloved and gracious sovereign may be spared to govern us all for many and many a day. However others might feel at the resignation of so high an office, I can with equal truth and satisfaction declare that I retire from this situation with the most perfect satisfaction to my mind, as conceiving that, with the impediments thrown and intended to have been thrown, in the way of the execution of my office, I could not have done justice either to the King or to my country.

I remain, yours sincerely,

WILLIAM.

William, who did not mind writing letters as much as his brother did, also wrote to George:

DEAREST BROTHER, *August 11th*, 1828. 9 *p.m.*

I have just received from the Duke of Wellington your most kind acceptance of my resignation of the office of Lord High Admiral, for which I thank you from the bottom of my heart. As the sovereign you could not have done otherwise, because *the King must support his Ministers.* I have my story and facts to relate, whenever you can give me an hour's interview. . . .

Dearest Brother,
Yours most affectionately and unalterably,
WILLIAM.

He then wrote to the Lord Chancellor and told him there was no need for the suggested consultation as he had resigned his office.

Resignation was not, in fact, what anybody wanted; they all wanted submission, and a promise that he would reform the error of his ways.

The Duke wrote to Peel on the 13th August that the Lord High Admiral "behaved very rudely to Cockburn, in short laid him aside altogether, sending his orders to the Council through Sir Edward Owen. I saw Cockburn and Croker on that afternoon and next morning and both agreed in stating that the machine would no longer work. . . ."

The Duke went on to propose Lord Melville for the Admiralty. He agreed with Peel that the resignation was very unfortunate, and that he hoped the King would prevail on him to withdraw it. The Duke of Clarence, however, had made up his mind that they must choose between Cockburn and himself. They chose Cockburn, and the office of Lord High Admiral went into abeyance once more.

There were many more explanations and a great deal more correspondence. The ex-Lord High Admiral was not to be moved; if he stayed, Cockburn must go.

All this argument was bad for William; he went to the Admiralty looking very excited and made what Mr. Creevey would have called a very "excursive" speech—"very confused," said Mr. Croker. The Admiralty was delighted to get rid of him, but: "His resignation will be very unpopular in the Navy," said Charles Greville, "for his

system of promotion was more liberal and impartial than that of his predecessor, whose administration was one perpetual job, and who made the patronage of the Admiralty instrumental to governing Scotland."

Madame de Lieven had a word to say on the subject: "The Duke of Clarence cannot put up with the rough ways of the Prime Minister, who wishes to control the naval patronage. The royal Prince desired to give promotion only to those who had earned it without reference to their Parliamentary influence. It remains to be seen whether in this business Ministers will gain as much in patronage as it causes them to lose in popularity; for the nation was especially glad to see the Navy kept outside political influence. I am sufficiently cross-grained to be highly diverted by all this squabbling, for I really do not like this Clarence; he is very ill-disposed towards Russia."

So, while the official correspondence makes it appear that the difficulties arose entirely from the Duke of Clarence's breach of discipline and dislike of Cockburn, it is quite clear that the underlying cause was his objection to jobbery at the Admiralty, in which Sir George may, or may not, have been concerned.

That was not the end of the matter, however. The Duke's insistence that his resignation was due to the personal opposition of Sir George led that gentleman to inform the Duke that he did not stand alone, for if he had been forced to retire, three others, including Mr. Croker, would also have done so; it is impossible to see Mr. Croker's name in such a connexion without scenting jobbery, but the information had a surprising effect on William. He sent for Sir George and said that this information made a vast difference, that he no longer had any enmity to him and begged him to shake hands. Then he sent for the other gentlemen involved, applauded Sir George in front of them for "his manly conduct" and begged them all to come and dine with him at Bushey. Mr. Croker was left out.

The Duke of Wellington and the King put down his waywardness to the score of his secretary, Captain Spencer, but then the Spencers were Whigs. Mr. Croker was very spiteful about the whole business.

The Duke of Clarence finally departed from the Admiralty in a shower of promotions which much annoyed Mr. Croker, who wrote to the Duke of Wellington on August 29th:

" I am sorry to tell your Grace that his Royal Highness is going on with promotions to an extent which alarms even Captain Spencer. . . ."

The Duke of Clarence bore no malice towards anybody; he distributed silver inkstands, handshakes and invitations to Bushey, which the Duchess did not second; she never forgave those who had treated William so insultingly, not even the Duke of Wellington.

The ex-Lord High Admiral went back to his quiet life at Bushey, but the man who returned was not quite the same as the man who had gone away. Canning, whether in words or by implication, had expressed a belief that the heir to the throne should be trained for his future duties. The Duke of Clarence thought this over and agreed. If he were going to be King, and it seemed likely, he would at least have a clear idea of what a King ought to be and do. Pacing up and down, as he had paced his quarter-deck, he began to think about it.

Though he had had little affection for his father he had respected him; he was fond of his brother George, but he could not respect him at all; none of his immediate ancestors fulfilled his idea of what a King should be. He went back, over the earlier Georges, to Queen Anne's time. Anne, it appeared, was a pretty good sovereign, not so much on account of her own merits as because she had good men to advise her. Who? Harley? Bolingbroke? Had not Bolingbroke written a pamphlet on *The Idea of a Patriot King?*

The Duke sat down to read it, read on and committed some of it to memory. Bolingbroke's ideas were his.

" It came into my mind . . . to delineate . . . the duties of a King to his country; of those Kings particularly who are appointed by the people, for I know of none who are appointed by God, to rule in limited Monarchies. . . . I am not one of those oriental slaves, who deem it unlawful presumption to look their Kings in the face."

" Our Constitution is brought, or almost brought, to such a point, a point of perfection I think it, that no King who is not, in the true meaning of the word, a patriot King, can govern Britain with ease, security, honour, dignity, or indeed with sufficient power and strength."

" The ultimate end of all governments is the *good* of the *people, for whose sake* they were made, and *without whose*

consent they could not have been made. In forming societies, and submitting to government, men gave up part of that *liberty* to which they are all born, and all alike. But why? Is Government incompatible with a full enjoyment of *liberty?* By no means . . . popular liberty without government will degenerate into *licence*. . . ."

"The good of the people is the ultimate and the true *end* of government."

"Many of their subjects imagine that the King and the people in free governments are *rival powers* who stand in *competition* with one another, who have *different interests*, and must of course have different *views*, that the *rights* and *privileges* of the people are so many *spoils* taken from the *right* and *prerogative* of the Crown; and that the rules and laws, made for the exercise and security of the former, are so many *diminutions* of their dignity, and *restraints* on their power. . . . A *patriot King* will see all this in a far different and much truer light. . . . The *constitution* will be reverenced by *him* as the *law of God* and of *man*. . . ."

CHAPTER VII

THE END OF THE COMEDY

"THE weather exceeds everything that ever was known—a constant succession of gales of wind and tempests of rain, and the sun never shining. The oats are not cut, and a second crop is growing up, that has been shaken out of the first. Everybody contemplates with dismay the approach of winter, which will probably bring with it the overthrow of the Corn Laws, for corn must be at such a price as to admit of an immense importation.—So much for our domestic prospect." It was not a cheerful one.

Prospects grew no brighter as the autumn of 1829 drew on. King Tom was quite dismayed that his son-in-law got only fourpence a pound for his beef, and said he had better eat it at home.

Though provisions were cheap, distress was widespread. Those in authority took steps to deal with it. Even the King interested himself. "It appears that everything will reduce. Meat OUGHT as the King has made HIS butchers lower, I think his subjects may exact the same from theirs."

Mrs. Stanhope wrote optimistically to her daughter-in-law: "Soup shops will, I hope, be established everywhere for the poor before the pressure of the distress comes on, for there is every prospect, with all these extraordinary joys, of a severe winter, when it may be too late to begin to offer relief for the starving, who will think they have a right to take it."

They did get some such idea into their heads. The late and bad harvest was followed by the severest winter experienced for sixteen years, and a series of outrages was committed by the distressed operatives, especially by the silk weavers in the East of London, and the mill hands of the Midlands. It was shocking that they should be so discontented when people were so kind: "We hear of nothing but distress and starvation; the state of the poor in London

is said to be dreadful. Hugh went yesterday to the Mendicity Office and saw a handsome young Lord distributing flannel petticoats to the crowds without."

In Huddersfield a committee of masters stated as a fact that there were 13,000 individuals who had not more than twopence-halfpenny a day to live on.

England did not face the winter over-cheerfully, to say nothing of Ireland: "There is excitement enough in that wretched country, and every effort is made to keep it up at its highest pitch; the Press on each side teems with accusations and invectives."

"From what I hear," said Charles Greville, "it is probable that Lord William Bentinck will be speedily recalled from India. His measures are of too liberal a cast to suit the taste of the present Government."

Not all the world was miserable, fortunately; "Black Eyed Susan" at the Surrey was drawing crowds of both sexes to cry.

The King had always disliked work; quite soon after his accession Lord Lauderdale reported that when the Ministers had papers for the King to sign they wrote to Bloomfield begging him to get the King's signature; Bloomfield had to solicit Du Paquier, His Majesty's valet, to seize a favourable opportunity, but that after all the operation was the most difficult possible to get accomplished; so that in the end it appeared to be the King's valet who ruled England.

By 1829 George's abhorrence of business had became acute; his indolence was so great that it was reported to be next to impossible to get him to attend to the most urgent business. Sir William Knighton was the only person, at that date, who could deal with him. George loathed Knighton but feared him, and the Duke of Wellington had to beseech the Secretary in order to get anything at all done by the King, whose habits of procrastination nearly drove the Prime Minister out of his mind.

The King was growing very blind, but he was still interested in horses and in gossip. "He is the greatest master of gossip in the world and his curiosity about everybody's affairs is insatiable," said Greville, who was a rival in those arts.

The country gentlemen returned to London after Christmas, all with the same story of the universal distress. Reform of Parliament, which had been rather out of fashion,

began to be a topic of conversation once more; the illusion that Parliament could remedy distresses was evidently one that would never die.

Lord Lansdowne brought young Mr. Macaulay into Parliament that spring, much to the annoyance of Brougham, who thought his friend Denman should have had the seat. The ensuing coolness between Brougham and Macaulay was not without consequences; neither of them was a safe person to annoy.

Mr. Macaulay made his first speech on April 5, 1830, on Mr. Robert Grant's Bill for the Removal of Jewish Disabilities: "The power of which you deprive the Jew consists in maces, and gold chains and skins of parchment with pieces of wax dangling from their edges. The power which you leave the Jew is the power of principal over clerk, of master over servant, of landlord over tenant. As things now stand a Jew may be the richest man in England. He may possess the means of raising this party and depressing that—of making members of Parliament. . . . We have to do with a persecution so delicate that there is no abstract rule for its guidance. You tell us that the Jews have no legal right to power, and I am bound to admit it; but in the same way, three hundred years ago they had no legal right to be in England, and six hundred years ago they had no legal right to the teeth in their heads. But if it is the moral right we are to look at, I hold that on every principle of moral obligation the Jew has a right to political power."

His speech was approved; his arguments were acknowledged to be full of sense, yet they had to be repeated for thirty-six more years before they convinced the House of Lords:

> "Then, too, those Jews, I really sicken
> To think of such abomination.
> Fellows who won't eat ham with chicken
> To legislate for this great nation!"

As the spring advanced the King's illness became the chief topic of conversation.

"Someone must sign poor Prinney's name for him," said Mr. Creevey, remembering that old intimacy at the Pavilion before George had thrown over the Whigs. "We were all on the course at Epsom yesterday and saw poor Prinney's horse, 'The Colonel,' win the Craven Stakes."

The gossips found time to talk of the heir: He hated the Duke; no, he detested the Whigs; he was a good easy

man who would submit to anything for a quiet life; he was an inquisitive, meddlesome little nuisance, who would have a finger in every pie; he was governed by his children; he was entirely in the hands of his wife; he would be in a strait-jacket before George was buried; he was quite a reformed character, and was all for Reform elsewhere.

Gossip flitted elsewhere for a moment; Prince Leopold had declined the throne of Greece: "At Brooks's they say he has a good case, but I rather think this Regency business which is to come on the instant the King dies (to exclude the Duke of Cumberland) has a great weight with him; in fact, through his sister, he would be almost King here, which he considers better fun than losing 50,000 sovereigns to gain ONE, and following the steps of 'Fleet-footed Achilles.'"

The King was worse; there was no chance of his recovery. Lady Jersey went to call on the Duchess of Clarence, and was not admitted, but the Duke of Clarence was reported, rightly, to have exchanged letters with the Duke of Wellington.

George was dying at Windsor; with him would die an era. The Conservative feared, the Liberal hoped. No one loved the man, but many, who hated and despised him, had a sneaking admiration for his grandiose ideas of monarchy—even the mob; that was the kind of King whom it would be a pleasure to knock down, the tumble would be so terrific. Those who looked up to the monarchy dreaded the future, but the mass of the people, and all the moralists, looked forward with hope. Virtue was to take the place of brilliance, earnestness the place of wit. The candles had faded; the "nest of singing birds" was empty; the poets of the new era would not soar ecstatically with the skylark, but, realising that "life is real, life is earnest," look downward at the sands of time.

On a June day Mr. Creevey began a letter: "So poor Prinney is really dead—on a Saturday, too, as was foretold."

Early on that June morning Sir Henry Halford, George's physician, and known as "The Eel-backed Baronet," had carried the news to Bushey. He found William—it was seven o'clock—already abroad, in his old green coat and white beaver hat.

When Sir Henry had given his news, he hurried away to carry it to others; King William went in to see his Queen.

His own feelings were mixed, excitement predominating, but the new Queen burst into tears, for she knew that her happy life of seclusion and simplicity was at an end. William

comforted her, and she saw that he was cheerful about the prospect, almost too excited in fact, and each time he showed signs of excitability the malicious set about stories that he was as mad as his father; no one knew better than Queen Adelaide that it was utterly untrue; still, his occasional attacks of feverish excitement were disconcerting, even to his friends.

The Duke of Wellington and the Ministers came driving in haste from Windsor to report the news officially. The King received them very graciously; the Duke, mindful of that little commotion over the Lord High Admiral and remembering his late master's vindictiveness, was rather nervous. King William set him at his ease; there would be no vindictiveness from *him*; there was not one atom of rancour in his nature. He made it quite plain that his personal devotion to the Duke was as great as ever.

The King, dressed as an Admiral, bustled to Town on the heels of the Duke. There was just one matter; he would like to be known as Henry IX, not as William IV, Henry IX having been the Jacobite style of Cardinal York. The Duke said that the Spiritual lords opposed this title; there was an old superstition:

> "Henry VIII pulled down monks and cells
> Henry IX would pull down Bishops and bells."

So William IV was proclaimed, and showed his spiritual tolerance by making the Duke of Norfolk a Privy Councillor.

Mr. Creevey heard all about it an hour or two later and passed the news on:

"Tankerville says the difference in manner between the late and present sovereign upon the occasion of swearing in the Privy Council was very striking. Poor Prinney put on a dramatic, royal, distant dignity to all; Billy, who in addition to living out of the world has become rather blind, was doing his best in a very natural way to make out the face of every Privy Councillor as each kneeled down to kiss his hand. In Tankerville's own case, Billy put one hand above his eyes and at last said in a most familiar tone: 'Oh, Lord Tankerville, is it you? I am very glad to see you. How d'ye do?' It seemed quite a restraint to him not to shake hands with people. After reading his declaration, very favourable to the ministry—to the Council he treated it to a little impromptu of his own, and great was the fear of Wellington lest Billy should take too *excursive*

a view of things; instead of which it was merely a little natural and pretty funeral oration over Prinney, who, he said, had always been the best and most affectionate of brothers."

Greville was abroad when George died; he returned on July 6th and waited ten days to look about him before he reported on the new King. His comments, when they came, were neither flattering nor quite accurate; unfortunately they have coloured posterity's view of William in a quite unwarrantable way. Mr. Creevey, being a notorious jester, never expected to be taken seriously, but Greville was so portentous that his judgments had the weight of an oracle.

"His life has been passed hitherto in obscurity and neglect, in miserable poverty, surrounded by a numerous progeny of bastards, without consideration or friends, and he was ridiculous from his grotesque ways and little meddling curiosity. Nobody ever invited him into their house, or thought it necessary to honour him with any mark of attention or respect; and so he went on for above forty years till Canning brought him into notice by making him Lord High Admiral at the time of his grand ministerial schism. In that post he distinguished himself by making absurd speeches, by a morbid official activity, and by a general wildness which was thought to indicate incipient insanity, till shortly after Canning's death, and the Duke's accession, as is well known, the latter dismissed him. He then dropped back into obscurity, but had become by this time somewhat more of a personage than he was before. . . .

King George had not been dead three days before everybody discovered that he was no loss, and King William a great gain. The new King began very well. Everybody expected he would keep the ministers in office, but he threw himself into the arms of the Duke of Wellington with the strongest expressions of confidence and esteem. . . .

His first speech to the Council was well enough given, but his burlesque character began even then to show itself. Nobody expected from him much real grief, but he does not know how to act it consistently. He spoke of his brother with all the semblance of feeling in a tone of voice properly softened and subdued, but just afterwards, when they gave him the pen to sign the declaration, he said in his usual tone: 'This is a damned bad pen you have given me!'"

How most unbrotherly!

However, His Majesty presided very decently, and "looked like a respectable old Admiral."

The Duke of Wellington was delighted with him: "If I had been able to deal with my late master as I do with my present," said he, "I should have got on much better. He is so reasonable, and tractable, that I have done more business with him in ten minutes than with the other in as many days."

The King was equally delighted with the Duke, George Fitzclarence reported.

His Majesty at once began to do good-natured things; promotions and extra grog for the Navy, and all those out of royal favour to be brought back into the fold. There was never anything like the enthusiasm with which he was greeted. George, shut away in Oriental seclusion, had almost been forgotten, both by enemies and friends, but here was a friendly little man trotting about with his umbrella under his arm, and a mob, "patrician as well as plebeian," at his heels.

King George IV was buried to the music of a popular holiday. King William, though he did his best, was not able to look consistently mournful in the midst of a party who "were merry as grigs."

All the Town was full of good stories about the King. Kate Molyneux, Lord Sefton's daughter, told Lady Shelley the latest: she said that at the funeral there was a line of Admirals and a line of Generals and that the King kept saying, "Generals! generals! keep step; and Admirals! admirals! keep step."

Madame de Lieven heard all about him from the Ministers, and added a comment or two: "A quaint King indeed. A *bon enfant*—with a weak head. At times I think he is likely to lose it, so great is his pleasure at being King. He changes everything except what he ought to change—his Minister."

The Duke of Wellington, once "perfect," was out of favour with the Princess: "He prefers the trickiness of M. de Metternich to the straightforwardness of the Emperor." The Duke was sceptical about that straightforwardness.

"The activity of the King astonishes everybody," said the *Gentleman's Magazine*. "He appears to inherit all the early and temperate habits of his father. He rises at six o'clock, at which hour all the messengers from the different

Government offices are expected to be in attendance, he gets through the dispatches with incredible celerity."

"He changes the uniform of the Army and Navy," said Madame de Lieven, "and makes everybody cut off their mustaches."

It was not quite as bad as that. There was an order for the Army: "By the command of His Majesty the following alterations are to take place—uniform of the officers of the Regular Forces to be laced in gold. The cap lines and tassels worn on the caps of the infantry to be abolished and the feather shortened. The Cavalry to be dressed in red and their mustachios abolished."

A minor tragedy or two followed:

"When William IV shaved the cavalry," said Harry Keppel, "Cornet Jack Spalding, the greatest dandy I ever saw, left his pet regiment rather than part with his mustache."

King William was no dandy. Neither was he an epicure. He disliked luxury and magnificence, said he had always slept in a cot and proposed to continue the habit. He eyed George's French cooks and sent them away, engaging English servants in their stead.

"Dear, dear," said Lord Dudley, at dinner, thinking aloud, as was his embarrassing habit. "What a change to be sure, cold *pâtés* and hot champagne."

"He strolls about the streets and gossips with the passers-by," said Madame de Lieven. "He goes to the guardroom and shows the officers his ink-stained fingers."

On all occasions he made speeches, generally about the excellence of the Queen. The Great World tittered, but the simple world admired.

The day after the funeral he arrived at Windsor Castle "perched outside a small carriage, in which were the Queen and his two bastard daughters." He had never been to Windsor before, except as a guest, and he trotted all over it and liked it very well. It was certainly magnificent. "The plate is, I believe, the finest in Europe," said Lady Lyttelton. "There are £65,000 worth of knives and forks and spoons, besides thirty-six dozen of plates, proportional dishes and a perfect load of ornaments for the table (four among these, by no means the best, cost £11,000 each) all of richly gilt silver, besides the shield of Achilles in gold, and a heap of candelabra, one of them weighing three hundredweight. All in this room was silver gilt, looking

like pure gold. The next room contained cups of crystal, mounted in diamonds and rubies, chased vases of Benvenuto Cellini's work. A huge tiger's head, entirely of pure gold, as large as life and finely sculptured, and a peacock, of good size, entirely of diamonds, rubies, emeralds and sapphires, upraised train, and all which last belonged to Tippoo Sahib and was taken at Seringapatam."

William was rather awed at all this splendour after his modest quarters in St. James's Stable Yard. He was attached to those quarters, all the same, and detested Buckingham House.

"He says that both he and the Queen find it inconvenient to be obliged to move all their books, papers, etc., out of their own sitting-rooms upon every Levee day and Drawing Room, because their rooms are wanted," reported Mr. Creevey. "He never ceases to confess that all he and the Queen wish for is to be comfortable. That as for moving to Buckingham House, he will do so if the Government wish it, though he thinks it a most ill-contrived house; and if he goes there he hopes it may be PLAIN, and no gilding, for he dislikes it extremely. But what he would prefer to anything would be living in Marlborough House. Billy says if he might have a passage made to unite this house with St. James's he thinks he and the Queen could live there very comfortably indeed. Now was there ever so innocent a sovereign since the world was made?"

Creevey agreed with the King in not liking Buckingham House: "Never was there such a specimen of wicked, vulgar profusion," he said. "It has cost a million of money and there is not a fault that has not been committed in it. . . . I observed that instead of being called Buckingham Palace, it should be the Brunswick Hotel. . . . The costly ornaments of the State rooms exceed all belief in their bad taste, and every species of infirmity. Raspberry coloured pillars without end and that quite turn you sick to look at."

Having settled his London residence, William flitted down to Brighton to have a look at the Pavilion, and planned some alterations to that unfortunate building. The *Brighton Herald* hailed him with joy: "The King, who looked extremely well and was in the highest spirits, acknowledged the loyal gratulations and respectful obeisances with which he was, on both sides, saluted, frequently bending to the elegant and beautiful females who filled the balconies and

National Portrait Gallery

SECOND EARL GREY
After Lawrence.

windows, waving their handkerchiefs as he passed. . . . Never was a monarch more heartily and joyfully welcomed than was William IV, on Monday last by the inhabitants of this town."

And this was in poor Prinney's own town!

"His Majesty," the *Herald* went on, "as early as nine o'clock the next morning after his arrival, attended by Sir Frederick Watson and Mr. Nash, walked from the Palace grounds to the gravelled space outside the south gate of the Palace, fronting East Street, where he continued some time, familiarly conversing, and marking the ground with his stick, evidently suggesting certain alterations. . . . It is conjectured that the unsightly boards, which hide from public view the western front of the Palace, and the beautiful grounds, will be removed."

The Pavilion was altered and added to according to the King's instructions, the chief addition being stables for the Queen, whose pleasure was always the first thought in the King's mind.

Nothing could exceed the King's friendliness. He invited himself to dinner with the Hollands, and with Leopold, where he expressed a wish to meet Earl Grey. Of course he went to dine with the Duke of Wellington. It was at a ball at the Duke's that Washington Irving saw him and remarked: "His Majesty has an easy and natural way of wiping his nose with the back of his forefinger, which, I fancy is a relic of his old middy habits."

It was something to do with this engaging habit which changed the familiar name of "midds" to "snotties."

The King was not unpopular with his brothers; the Duke of Sussex supported him with great friendliness, but the sinister Duke of Cumberland presented something of a problem. Lady Lyndhurst was making a great to-do about him, and telling a story which convulsed the town; Lady Lyndhurst's reputation for gallantry was not much inferior to the Duke's. One might ignore his social peccadilloes, but politically he could not be ignored. He had often been the power behind the throne in George's time; George had been afraid of him, if only because of his power to wound by ridicule. Cumberland's jeers were hardly likely to upset William, who was quite used to ridicule, but the King distrusted him; he believed he had sinister designs, if not on *his* throne, on that of the little girl at Kensington who would in all probability succeed him, and whose interests

he intended to safeguard as firmly as if they were his own. If there must be a Regency, he wanted the Regent to be the Queen; he had a boundless, touching faith in his wife's integrity and tact. Parliament allotted the office to the Duchess of Kent, whom William disliked, but that was better than the Duke of Cumberland.

The King, quite unafraid of him, took away his Gold Stick from Ernestus the Pious; he said, politely, that the Duke's rank was too high for him to perform the functions which belonged to that office, and, less politely, ordered the Duke's horses to be taken out of the royal stables which he had appropriated. "They were wanted for the Queen," said the King.

When he heard that Ernestus was grumbling he gave a toast to: "The country, and let those who do not like it leave it."

Ernestus wrote very politely about the Queen.

The Town was full of stories of the King's good nature and simplicity, which, of course, appeared grotesque to such sophisticated gentlemen as Charles Greville and Lord Sefton. William saw no need to give up the manners of a country gentleman, and no occasion to give up more of the habits than could be helped. Sir John and Lady Gore lunched as they used to do at Bushey, and when they went away the King handed Lady Gore to her carriage as he always had done, and stood at the door to see them off. Most comical!

When Lord Howe, a lifelong friend of the family, came to see him William said cheerfully: "The Queen is going out driving and will drop you at your door."

"Dropping people, indeed!" sneered Greville. That, in another sense, was just what the King would not do; he treated his friends, who, according to Greville, were non-existent, just as he had always done.

Everything was to be English; which delighted the people, but alarmed the modish world. Already politics in France had interfered with bonnets.

"So busy are the French with their own politics that even the milliners have left off making caps," grumbled Lady Cowper. "Madame Maradan complained that she could get no bonnets from Paris."

There would be a Court again, Drawing Rooms; Almack's would be deprived of some of its power. The ladies tried to emulate their menfolk in spreading funny tales about the King and Queen.

The King thought, expensive as it was, that he ought to keep the stud; horse-racing was a thoroughly English institution; besides, the Queen liked horses and he would do anything to please the Queen.

The English fashionable world was presented with the amazing spectacle of a King who respected and loved his wife. Indeed! he went further; he respected the estate of matrimony, even when it appeared in doubtful guise. He would not have his own servants in mourning, but he sent the Duke of Sussex to Mrs. Fitzherbert, desiring that George's widow should put hers in mourning. It struck the observers as very strange, although she and the Clarences had always been great friends. He whisked her off to Brighton to stay with them, in that Pavilion which had once been her home.

There was also the question of George's papers. The King left these to Mrs. Fitz and the Duke. Curious as he was, he was not inquisitive about things which did not concern him; those old love letters were not his affair. So, with the exception of a few really important documents, Mrs. Fitz and the Duke of Wellington destroyed the faded remnants of romance.

The King was busy in other directions; he had all the muffles off the drums, and the scarfs off the regimentals, and a grand parade, to which he went himself. The King said he was commanding officer of his own Guards; the Colonel was doubtful.

"All odd and people are frightened," said Greville. "But his wits will at least last till the new Parliament meets."

Even of that, however, Greville began to grow doubtful. The King was incredibly energetic; it was particularly disturbing after the lethargic George. He developed a passion for soldiers. He inspected the Guards, dressed, for the first time in his life, in a military uniform "with a great pair of gold spurs half-way up his legs like a game cock, though he was not to ride, for, having chalk stones in his hands, he can't hold the reins."

For an instant attention was diverted to the Duke of Gloucester, who was enjoying his increased importance, George having always kept him in his place. He was bowing to the company very impressively, but no one took any notice of him except Greville, who remarked that "Nature must have been merry when she made this Prince, and in the sort of mood that certain great artists used to exhibit in their

comical caricatures; I never saw a countenance which that line in Dryden's M'Flecknoe would so well describe:

'And lambent dullness plays around his face.'"

The review only whetted the appetite of the energetic King. He held a Court, very full, "much nobility with academical tagrag and bobtail," a Council where a great many officers were sworn in.

Then, instead of sitting down to rest like a sensible creature, he must needs put on plain clothes and start on a ramble about the streets all alone. In Pall Mall he met a friend, and taking his arm turned with him up St. James's Street, a mob at his heels, making an uproar. When he got near White's a woman ran up and kissed him. This was all very well, but the bawling and the shouting and kicking and applause alarmed the Queen.

"When I have walked about a few times they will get used to it and take no notice," said the King.

The Queen was severe with him, and said he must only walk in the early morning or in some less public place.

George Fitzclarence was run off his silk-stockinged legs, trotting about on his father's errands. The Fitzclarence children were not very pleased that more had not been done for them. The King did what he could; he made George Earl of Munster, and gave the girls the rank of Earl's daughters; he had already found very respectable husbands for most of them. King George's friends considered the Court a scandal; Lord Mount Charles, who had lived so placidly at Windsor while his mother lay on that uncomfortable bed that she had made for herself, could not bear the shocking conditions at Windsor and refused to be Lord of the Bedchamber.

Any small job in his household that might be vacant the King picked up for stray Admirals, of whom he always had a store.

His brother-in-law, the King of Wurtemburg, rather a favourite of his, was not allowed to ride with him in the state coach when he went to the House of Lords, but the King took him driving afterwards and "dropped him at his tavern." Greville snorted.

He received the Freemasons with a cheery "Gentlemen, if my love for you equalled my ignorance of everything concerning you, it would be unbounded."

Even King William sometimes grew tired: "Now, ladies

and gentlemen," he said, dismissing his guests, or so Greville reported, "I wish you good night. I will not detain you any longer from your amusements, and shall go to my own, which is to go to bed; so come along, my Queen."

Greville, of course, ferreted out the domestic arrangements of the royal household; he learned how the King and Queen slept, and all about the King's washing, and other arrangements, and that admirable regularity of habit, with which nothing was allowed to interfere and which would have enchanted Arbuthnot Lane.

The Duke of Wellington was still pleased with him, but *did* wish that the King would not make so many speeches. He would speak on any and everything with the utmost simplicity and at inordinate length; he prefaced a long and astonishing speech on foreign affairs with: "I don't know whether etiquette demands that I should speak sitting or standing, but I have long been used to speak on my legs and shall do so now." Fortunately most foreigners could not follow his rambling remarks.

"England is quite a new world," said Madame de Lieven.

Wellington remarked, "This is not a new reign but a new dynasty."

"The late King is entirely forgotten," said the Russian. "Or if remembered it is only to criticise his morals, so true is it that what a nation most *appreciates in its sovereign* is domestic virtue. The present King shows himself everywhere with the Queen, he puts her forward upon every occasion; he is always surrounded by other members of the royal family."

Everything was so pleasant at home that William was only too anxious that it should be equally so abroad.

"As regards foreign politics everything that the King says or does shows his desire to be on friendly terms with everybody."

There were numbers of injustices to redress; William hastened to redress them. Sir Robert Wilson, who had been dismissed at the time of Queen Caroline's funeral, was reinstated; the ban against Brougham and Denman, the Counsel at her trial, was lifted. A light job was found for Beau Brummell who languished in exile at Calais; he was appointed H.B.M. Consul at Caen, with a salary of £400 a year.

"I am doing all I can to make all parties satisfied with me," said the Beau. "I condole with the outs and agree

with the ins; as to my own nation, I have called upon all who are worthy of such compliment. I shake hands and gossip with the fathers and mothers and pat all their dirty-nosed children upon the head and tell them they are beautiful."

This was not Brummell's *milieu*. He found himself in prison for debt, and King William gave a hundred pounds from his private purse towards the fund to release him.

There were rewards not only for those who had annoyed his brother but for those who had annoyed himself. He appointed his old enemy, Sir George Cockburn, to the American station; Sir George was told that he was indebted for it SOLELY to the earnest wish and interference of the King; the Lords of the Admiralty would never have appointed him themselves.

There was one odd exception to this benevolence. One of William's first remarks on becoming king was to express a wish to see his old friend, Coke of Norfolk, whom he said he was "proud to call the First Commoner in his kingdom." Coke came, in his boots, and shook the King's hand warmly instead of kissing it. The King did not mind, and he and Sussex laughed heartily over it in private. There was an earldom ready for Coke, when that rash gentleman "upset the apple-cart." Insults to himself and insults to his brother were pardonable, but insults to William's father were not. Coke, in refusing to drink George III's health, made a rather unfortunate speech about which there was a great uproar. King Tom wrote to the Duke of Sussex that his remarks had been made rather against the King's government than the King's person. Sussex took the letter to William, and wrote to Coke: "I hope in the course of the day to have a few words of conversation with the King, who is a kind-hearted, reasonable man. His observation was: 'I can understand it may have arisen from a confusion of the government and the reign, and this I really believe is the true story, for, like you, I am an Enemy to war, and had I possessed a vote in Parliament during the American War it would have been given to put an end to it.'"

The King and his brother gave Coke a new nickname—"*Lapsus Linguae*"—and forgave him, but there was no earldom for King Tom.

Sometimes King William's private prejudices revived for a moment; he spoke impetuously of "that infamous scoundrel, the Duke of Orleans." Wellington reproved him,

and he "pinched his lip" and held his tongue when others spoke of France. Oh! a *bon enfant*, Madame de Lieven.

"What a totally different spectacle the court presents," said that lady. "And what a completely different nation are the English of to-day. From grave and depressed they have become possessed of a gaiety, a vivacity and a movement which makes them scarcely recognisable."

Life was full of fun for the King, and of most agreeable, titillating gossip for Greville and Creevey, but in the meantime there were signs and portents. There was a General Election; Brougham came in for Yorkshire. Reform was the popular cry again, and on that and the abolition of negro slavery Brougham was returned.

"The event was regarded by all England as the herald of coming change," wrote Lord Ellenborough. "Yorkshire was an enormous constituency, extremely expensive to canvass, as many great landowners had found to their cost. Brougham's supporters, of course, paid his expenses. The Duke of Wellington said disgustedly, "No gentleman could bear the expense. The middle classes had it all to themselves."

But while they talked of the Yorkshire election, while the writs were undelivered and the candidates on the road to their constituencies there came the news that Paris was in revolt. By the evening of July 29 France had turned out the Bourbons and set up a *bourgeois* king, that Duke of Orleans whom the King of England had called an "infamous scoundrel." William was not likely to think him less of a scoundrel for taking his cousin's throne, but the second French revolution was, on the whole, so quiet and so decorous that not even the Ultra-Tories could engineer a panic.

Wellington was shaken; he stood so completely alone in his own party that it was generally supposed that he was more intimate with Prince Polignac than with any of his own colleagues. A whisper began and spread that Wellington must follow Polignac.

"A skipping king" in England and a *bourgeois* king in France! The reformers were enchanted, and attacked the borough-mongers with a sense of relief that revolutions *could* be made without a repetition of the scenes of 1792. In peaceable England a *threat* of arms would be enough, *if* constitutional means failed.

The elections went merrily; the Whig "Shadow Cabinet" debated problems of the future. Brougham was not the

least of these problems; the Yorkshire election seemed to have turned his head; he was reported to be negotiating with the Canningites, with a view to having a different Opposition, with himself at its head. That odd man, Durham, was reported to be acting as peace-maker between Brougham and Lord Grey. The great difficulty in the way of an alliance with the Canningites was removed when poor Huskisson was killed by the first railway train. Men only stopped talking of the accident to remember that it left Palmerston, Melbourne, and the Grants without a leader, and very reluctant to prop up the tottering ministry of Wellington.

Revolutions might be going on elsewhere, but in England "the English Ministers have taken themselves off for their holidays, notwithstanding the serious state of affairs all over Europe. Partridges pass before politics," said Madame de Lieven. "The King is at Brighton, bathing and promenading."

Belgium followed France, drove out the Dutch garrison and decided that she would like another kind of government, no kind of interference from Holland, and a King of her own. People, however, who had hesitated about interfering with the internal affairs of France had no such scruples about Belgium.

"Who had ever heard of such people as the Belgians?" asked Madame de Dino haughtily, and stared when the answer came, "Cæsar, Madame."

The English were delighted with their new king; they were delighted with little else. On the Continent there stalked a spirit of unrest: trouble in Spain, trouble in Portugal, a revolution in France, a revolution in Belgium, Greece and Turkey quarrelling, Metternich looking on sardonically, and on the outskirts a predatory Russia, ready to pounce. At home the prospect was not more agreeable—an unsettled after-the-war lassitude in Parliament, trouble in Ireland, sporadic outbreaks in India, commercial and financial stress, speculation, crushing taxes, war profiteers riding the storm and war victims being killed by it, over-production and falling prices, too much outdoor relief and abuse of the Poor Laws, starvation and dishonesty, speculative bubbles, and learned arguments about the relative value of notes and gold—a world very much like the world of a hundred years later, but with one great difference—a remedy in which the bulk of the population

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VISCOUNT ALTHORP

believed, a magic remedy which, like Aaron's rod, was to put forth blossoms, a remedy from which every unit of the community, except the borough-mongers, was to draw immeasurable benefits—Reform of Parliament, in fact.

The King had long ceased to entertain the town when Belgium revolted. He was very worried by all this unrest and disrespect for crowned heads; he violently disliked Louis Philippe; he was not at all charmed with Monsieur de Talleyrand, whom Louis Philippe had sent to represent him at St. James's. The King's distrust of France was fundamental and profound. He had a confidential chat with Madame de Lieven and asked her what she thought of Talleyrand, and was not at all surprised to find that she thought him a dreadful old man.

Princess Lieven thought that King William looked old and much broken; he was suffering from gout, and also, doubtless, from a repression of bad language, for she found that he had become very moderate in his opinions of late and careful in his language; he said very flattering things about Russia, and was sure that a misunderstanding between the two countries was quite impossible. The King went up in her estimation for his very sound opinions; the Duke of Wellington, on the contrary, went down when he assured her that *he* thought M. de Talleyrand a thoroughly honourable man, or "in any case that he endeavoured to appear so, and wished to be what he seemed, and that this desire was in itself worthy of praise."

"In this object of his ambition M. de Talleyrand has so far been unfortunate," answered the Princess drily.

Wellington, of course, thoroughly disapproved of revolutions. Some of his friends suggested a little war or two as the best means of rallying the old Tory party (cleft in twain by the Catholic Relief Bill) round the Government.

"The Belgian Revolution is the most senseless and unintelligible in the history of the world," said Lord Aberdeen.

Or, if England did not interfere in Belgium there was the trouble between Greece and Turkey in which she might take a hand.

The Duke was not in the mood for wars. All this talk of reform at home, though he did not believe in it or consider that the bulk of the English people desired anything so silly, worried him.

The autumn shooting over, at the end of October, 1830,

all the political world of England came posting back to town for the opening of Parliament.

On November 2nd the Whigs were hopeful, though Lord Grey had a dreadful cold, and the Tories were steeped in gloom. Their gloom deepened as they listened to the Duke: "The Legislature and the system of representation possess the full and entire confidence of the country. I will go still further, and say that if at the present moment I had imposed upon me the duty of forming a legislature for a country like this, in possession of great property of various descriptions, I do not mean to assert that I could form such a legislature as you possess now, for the nature of man is incapable of reaching such excellence at once; but my great endeavour would be to form some description of legislature which would produce the same results." He thought the existing constitution was not only practically efficient but theoretically admirable; in short, he not only proposed to bring forward no Reform Bill but he would oppose any such Bill brought forward by others."

The Duke sat down in a silence which surprised him. He turned to Lord Aberdeen in astonishment.

"I have not said too much, have I?"

"You'll hear of it," was the reply.

He did. All England had something to say. His bewildered colleagues could only remark that their leader was deaf, and wish that everyone else had been deaf, too. The country gentlemen who had come to London for the opening of Parliament could talk of nothing except the Duke's speech; all day and all night they talked at Crockford's and at Brooks's. Holland House could discuss nothing else, and many converts were swept into the bosom of the Holland House Whigs. Under the polite crust of Society the revolutionary spirit of those who were unconvinced of the adequacy of talk crackled and thundered.

The Duke, it appeared, was not only deaf but blind: He maintained "an impassive demeanour, was wholly undisturbed, even gay and cheerful. This is to me unintelligible," said Madame de Lieven.

It could only be supposed that the Duke kept his sight and his hearing as much muffled as possible. Madame de Lieven, who was not less of an aristocrat than the Duke, saw the streets of London and the country roads filled with poor wretches in rags, starving, while the nobles rolled past in their carriages. The fate of the aristocracy of France was

very fresh in her mind, but the Duke remained impervious. "The English do not like shedding blood," he had said of English soldiers. "Robbery, now, that is different." The Russians must have wondered how robbery on a national scale could occur without the shedding of blood.

In Kent and Sussex the labourers, having a prejudice against dying of starvation under hedges, had the impudence to band together and march about the country demanding a "living wage of half a crown a day." They even went so far as to say that "they would rather do anything than encounter such a winter as the last." One, a Peninsular veteran, with one leg, so far forgot gratitude as to compare his situation on 9d. a day with that of the Duke of Wellington, "whose skin was whole and whose pension was £60,000 a year." Even worse than this turbulence and ingratitude of the poor was the fact that many respectable people sympathised with it.

London, too, was restless. Peel's New Police were, quite unjustly, unpopular. The Londoners who had had such a long and enjoyable career of rioting when they were displeased with things, secure in the knowledge that the authorities never cared greatly for bloodshed and would hesitate to call out the troops, found themselves checked by an efficient civil police force, always on the spot and exasperatingly difficult to elude. "Peel's Bloody Gang," "Raw Lobsters," "Blue Devils," were some of the names they were called. The affectionate name of "Bobbies" did not become theirs until many years had passed.

Even Raw Lobsters could not achieve perfection at once, however, and Londoners could still enjoy a little sporadic hooting and window-breaking. The Duke was hooted, and his horse "started a little"; the Duke himself remained undisturbed. He did not mind unpopularity but, like the starving peasantry, he objected to an unpleasant death. He heard he was to be assassinated at the Lord Mayor's banquet, and "by the boldest act of cowardice," according to his brother Wellesley, decided neither to go himself nor allow the King to go without him.

The King was peevish, but obedient. Panic reared its head; the Funds fell, jewellers sent their goods to the banks, merchants barricaded their shops and armed their clerks.

The Whigs seized on this opportunity to hammer a few more nails into the coffin of the Tory Administration. The

theme of the Duke's unpopularity was embroidered with many touching details of a tender-hearted King yearning to meet his people and being forcibly restricted by the tyrannous Duke.

"The King takes very little part in public affairs," said the Lieven.

The King, in fact, was exceedingly annoyed. He loved these little excursions, with the novel pomp of State and excitement of his people's enthusiasm. Possibly he was only restrained, and that with difficulty, by the reflection that a bullet meant for the Duke might hit the King instead; he was not ready to leave his throne yet, certainly not until the little girl at Kensington was old enough to wield her sceptre for herself; there would be no Regency if he could help it, with the sinister Cumberland and the detestable "Swiss Governess" struggling for effective power.

The political situation was at least clarified; the Ultra-Tories, disgusted with the Duke since his right-about turn on the Catholic question, stood aloof; the Canningites, who had once flirted with the idea of joining him, took their stand under the Whig banners; Peel, as usual, though with him, was cool. There was a stronger feeling for Reform than he had supposed; Brougham was known to be concocting a scheme of moderate reform which he was to introduce on November 15th. Mr. Peel saw the inevitable end and preferred to risk defeat on a minor issue, a question arising out of the Civil List, but the Duke was still sanguine—without justification.

Colonel, Mrs. and Miss Clitherow were dining at St. James's. The King had a note which he opened, and left the room, but soon returned. Colonel Fred Fitzclarence came in and told the Queen of it in German. . . . Nothing transpired—not a comment—"It's the great secret at Court to smile and be cheerful and attentive to the circle round you when the heart is sad, and it was exemplified this evening."

The Tories were out, and, though it was not known how the King would feel about it, it was known that the Queen would be in despair. They made no sign.

It was a dinner to personal friends, and there were present the Duke of Dorset, Lord and Lady Mayo, the Archbishop and Mrs. Howley, the Duke of Sussex, and the family. The Queen's new band was playing beautifully all the evening. (It was a very small affair after George's, which had cost

£18,000 a year, and been dismissed to be replaced by English performers, many of them young.)

Queen Adelaide sat on a sofa and called Mrs. Clitherow to sit beside her. The King sat on the other side at a French table. Two boxes were placed before him, and he said to Miss Fitzclarence:

"Amelia, I want pen and ink."

Away she went and brought a beautiful gold inkstand, and he signed his name, I'm sure a hundred times, passed the papers to Mrs. Clitherow, and she to the Queen who put them on the blotting-paper, then folded them neatly and put them in their little case to enable them to pack into the boxes again, conversation going on all the time. When the business was over, the King took my brother to a sofa and chatted a long time, inquiring into the state of the neighbourhood, policemen, etc.

The Queen had on a particularly elegant white dress, and all English manufacture. She made us observe her blond was as handsome as Lady Mayo's French blond.

"I hope all the ladies will patronise the English blend of silk," she said.

Miss Clitherow, who recorded all this, thought the Queen had a very pretty figure and her dress was so moderate, sleeves and head-dress much less than the hideous fashion.

That was the night of Wellington's defeat. "It was a bombshell," said Miss Clitherow, but the King said nothing.

Early on Tuesday, November 16, 1830, the Duke resigned. The King, then, was very agitated. He asked the Duke his opinion of Earl Grey.

"What sort of a man is he?"

The Duke said he really did not know. He had the reputation of being an ill-tempered, violent man, but he knew very little of him. The Duke, however, fired a parting shot into the Whigs: they had one man of supreme ability and only one.

"Mr. Brougham as Master of the Rolls, Sir, would be too powerful for any Government."

This was hardly reassuring, but the King, pale and distressed, had no other thought than that of doing his duty. Between three and four o'clock that afternoon he sent for Earl Grey.

The Duke went to dine with Mr. Peel, where he met Madame de Lieven.

"Well!" he said, coming up to her.

She found nothing better to return than " Well ? "

" Bad business, bad business," said the Duke.

" But Duke," she said, " why did you let it come about unless you wished it to end there ? "

" The Devil take me, no," he replied. " I was absolutely surprised when they came and told me we were beaten. I will tell you all about it. I had five parties against me in the lower house, the Jacobins, the Whigs, the Tories, the Canningites *and my own.*"

Madame de Lieven questioned Peel.

" For the last year the Government has been tottering and has not progressed," said he. " We have alienated the Tories without conciliating the Whigs. It was obvious that the collapse of the Government was imminent. The Duke by his declaration against any sort of Reform hastened the catastrophe. The Head of the Government ought never to allow his secrets to be penetrated." Prudent Mr. Peel !

" The Duke," he went on, less prudently, " has the misfortune to be surrounded by women of the most mediocre ability. No man has any influence with him ; he is led by women, the foolish ones envelop him with incense, and he has fallen a victim to this weakness and to his own vanity." Mr. Peel sounded piqued.

So passed the last Tory Prime Minister. When the party came into power again it was under Peel's leadership and had become " Conservative."

Greville had a comment on the King : " The King seems to have behaved perfectly throughout the whole business, no intriguing or underhand communication with anybody. The fact is he turns out an incomparable King, and deserves all the encomiums lavished on him. All the mountebankery which signalled his conduct when he came to the throne has passed away with the excitement which caused it, and he is as dignified as the homeliness and simplicity of his character will allow him to be."

The curtain had rung down on the comedy ; a drama was about to begin.

TRAGIC INTERLUDE

It seemed at first as if the drama might be pure tragedy. While politicians talked, men starved and died.

Madame de Lieven seemed to know more about the state of England than the Whigs:

"The wrongs of the lower orders need a remedy," said she. "The aristocracy rolls in wealth and luxury while the streets of London, the highways of the country swarm with miserable creatures covered with rags, barefooted, having neither food nor shelter. The sight of this contrast is revolting and in all likelihood were I one of these thousands of poor wretches I should be a democrat. How is it that no government seems ever to have been able to find a remedy for this evil? The Poor Laws raise funds for them, a pauper goes to the parish for relief; if he marries he gets twice as much, so he gets married, begets ten children, draws double relief for himself, and allows his children to die of starvation."

The Poor Laws were so peculiar that it was easier to manage to live if one had a large family than if one had a single child. Under those circumstances Mr. Malthus might indeed have been preaching in the wilderness. The population increased and multiplied. But it was even more profitable to marry the mother of illegitimate children, for the parish guaranteed the contribution for which a legal father would be liable.

"If I had one more bastard child," said a woman with four, "I should be very comfortable."

The effect of this odd arrangement on villages was remarkable. "The eighteen-penny children will eat up this parish in ten years more," said a witness before the Poor Laws Commission.

Even with a really flourishing illegitimate family it was not possible, however, to live in luxury. Mr. Cobbett, taking rural rides, observed much wretchedness.

"Their dwellings are little better than pig beds, and their looks indicate that their food is not nearly equal to that of a pig. These wretched hovels are stuck upon little beds of

ground on the roadside, where the space has been greater than the road demanded. In many places they have not two rods to a hovel. . . . In my whole life I never saw human wretchedness equal to this, no, not even among the free negroes of America."

The hovels of the villagers were made of mud and straw, bits of glass or old cast-off windows, with wretched boards tacked together to serve for a table, floor of broken pebble or of bare ground."

Mr. Malthus objected to the public building of cottages; if a stimulus were given to the building of cottages, there would be no check on the increase of population, said he.

The gentlemen in Parliament thought that the poor ought to adapt themselves, change their diet from white bread and tea to brown bread and water, accept contentedly their "inevitable and hereditary lot" on the extravagantly generous wages—of 7s. a week—which their employers paid them, be thrifty and remember

> "The rich man in his castle,
> The poor man at his gate,
> God made them high and lowly
> And ordered their estate."

Some eccentric landowners, Lord Winchelsea for instance, were not quite at ease.

"Four harvest labourers were found dead under a hedge of starvation," he announced in the House of Lords. "And this is not an exceptional case."

"The cause of distress is excessive population," said the governing class. "The true solution is the removal of surplus labourers to the colonies."

So they proceeded to tranship large numbers of sturdy rogues who had snared a rabbit, or netted a pheasant to the penal settlements in Australia, and then imported Irish labourers, who would work for smaller wages than Englishmen. Not all the landowners were like this, of course; there was, in rare instances, peace and content, though never plenty. No complaints came from Howick, or Althorp, or Bushey, or Windsor; it was not always hearts that were at fault; it was an iniquitous principle and an unsound system.

In August, 1830, in Kent, where the trees bent low with cherries and the hops climbed up their poles, some of those poor, ragged, starving creatures who had once been "the

Commons of England," the proud " men of Kent," suddenly revolted against misery and hunger, burned a farmer's rick, and destroyed a threshing-machine.

The farmers discussed both the outrage and the prevailing distress. " Ah ! I should be well pleased if a plague were to break out among them, and then I should have their corpses as manure, and right good stuff it would make for my hops," said one of them with a rough laugh.

It was not the general feeling, and it may have been no more than a brutal jest, but the labourers did not think so ; his ricks went up in flames.

The Commons of England were at last in revolt. The trouble spread from Kent to Sussex, from Sussex to Hampshire and Wiltshire, westwards to Dorset, and turned northwards to Berkshire and Buckinghamshire. The rioters smashed threshing-machines, demanded a living wage of half a crown a day, and asked at some houses for contributions and for beer.

There was panic in London, every drawing-room twittered with fear ; the Revolution had begun, these desperate savages had " completely cowed " the magistrates (the magistrates were more often than not in sympathy, at least in the early stages of the trouble).

A desperado who signed himself " Swing " wrote threatening letters. Among other people who received them was Sir Timothy Shelley, whose son had written :

> " Men of England, wherefore plough
> For the lords who lay you low ? "

Like others of the letters it was signed with the picture of a knife with " Beware of the fatel daggar " written on it.

A hardened criminal, Mary Ann Johnson, aged ten, was involved, and could, if she would, impart information ; she refused to answer questions and went to jail for three moñths.

One of a party of " desperate savages " stole an umbrella and was ducked in the canal for it by the leader of his band. They demanded beer of a farmer's wife, and when she refused it the desperate savages went home without the beer. One hopeless character, aged eighteen, threw a hammer and smashed a landowner's hat. The " terrible hosts of armed and desperate men " were weak and ill-fed labourers, with sticks and stones as weapons, who wanted a " living " wage of 12s. a week.

They smashed threshing-machines, burned ricks, destroyed a workhouse, but neither seriously threatened nor took a life. Such disturbances had to be checked, even punished, of course, but a handful of firm magistrates who would have listened and seriously considered grievances could have settled the matter out of hand.

The French Revolution had destroyed such a possibility; panic reigned. Every county wanted soldiers, but soldiers were rather scarce. The Duke of Wellington, Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, relieved of his duties as Premier, set out to repress revolt.

"I induced the magistrates to put themselves on horseback," said he, "each at the head of his own servants and retainers, grooms, huntsmen, gamekeepers, armed with horsewhips, pistols, fowling-pieces, and what they could get, and to attack in concert, if necessary, or singly, these mobs, disperse them, destroy them, and take and put in confinement those who could not escape. This was done in a spirited manner, in many instances, and it is astonishing how soon the country was tranquillised, and that in the best way, by the activity and spirit of the gentlemen."

"Not at all astonishing, my lord Duke," Mr. Cobbett might have said, "considering that the revolutionaries were half starved, entirely without leadership, and armed with nothing but sticks and stones which they seldom used."

My lord Duke sat on the bench at the Winchester Assizes. Not only the prison but the whole town was crowded; enterprising tradesmen did very well out of letting beds and providing meals—at a price. There were three hundred prisoners, most of them charged with breaking machinery or demanding money with threats. They went into the dock in batches.

"We do not come here," said Mr. Justice Alderson, "to inquire into grievances. We come to decide the law."

George Steel, aged eighteen, was sentenced to transportation for life for demanding a shilling, when he was in liquor, from Jane Neale; George Clerk, aged twenty, for taking threepence down and a promise of beer at the "Greyhound," was sentenced to death, but on a recommendation to mercy by the jury was instead transported for life. Some of them only demanded, without receiving, money; they were transported just the same.

Henry Cook, that desperate lout of eighteen, who had smashed Mr. Bingham Baring's hat with a hammer, was

hanged for it; he was a singularly unattractive ploughboy, who had been earning 5s. a week. *The Times* special correspondent, who was hardly prejudiced in favour of the criminals, since he said that "the prisoners by contradicting the witnesses with confidence and want of common courtesy," showed signs of "a very low state of moral intelligence," said, when the sentences were published:

"The scenes of distress in and about the jail are most terrible. The number of men who are to be torn from their homes and connexions is so great that there is scarcely a hamlet in the country into which anguish and tribulation have not entered. Wives, sisters, mothers, children beset the gates daily, and the governor of the jail informs me that the scenes he is obliged to witness at the time of locking up the prison are truly heart-breaking."

"You will have heard before this of the petitions which have been presented to the Home Office . . . praying for an extension of mercy to all the men who now lie under sentence of death. . . . It is signed by the clergy of the Low Church, some of the bankers, and every tradesman in the town without exception. Application was made to the Clergy of the Cathedral for their signatures, but they refused to give them, except conditionally, upon reasons which I cannot comprehend. . . ."

The petition was so far successful that only two men were left for execution, of whom one was that Henry Cook who had damaged Mr. Baring's hat. But, lest they should get wrong ideas of leniency into their heads, all the prisoners who had been condemned had to watch the hanging. There were occasions when a hanging was a public holiday, but this was not one.

The Times correspondent cast his eyes down into the felons' yard and "saw many of the convicts weeping bitterly, some burying their faces in their smock frocks, others wringing their hands convulsively, and others leaning for support against the wall of the yard and unable to cast their eyes upward."

Not to be outdone in the keeping of order by the Tory Duke of Wellington, the Whig Lord Lansdowne sat on the Wiltshire Bench. The evidence at Salisbury was very similar to the evidence at Winchester; both prisoners and crimes were much the same—and sentences. The three brothers William, Thomas and John Legg were sentenced to death for taking half a crown; they had gone to the

kitchen door of Mrs. Montgomery and asked her manservant for money for beer. The man gave them half a crown and they thanked him civilly and went away.

Salisbury was more merciful than Winchester in that all those sentenced to death were reprieved, but 154 men and boys were sentenced to transportation, 33 for life, and the rest for 7 or 14 years.

"Such a total prostration of the mental faculties by fear," wrote *The Times* correspondent, "and such a terrible exhibition of anguish and despair I never before witnessed in a Court of Justice."

Some examples were made in the other disturbed counties, but panic was receding and mercy reviving; it is even permissible to see uneasiness in the heart of the Home Secretary.

"The Special Commissions," he explained in Parliament, "had been set up to expound the law and to bring home to the ignorant the gravity of their crimes against social order."

No life had been lost, no very valuable property destroyed, and the gravity of their crimes was brought home to six men who were hanged, 457 who were transported and about 400 who were imprisoned at home, to say nothing of the wives and families of the criminals, who sailed away for New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land in the *Eleanor*, the *Proteus* and the *Eliza*.

The Governor of Van Diemen's Land sent home news of the voyagers on the *Eliza*: "Of the rioters who arrived by the *Eliza* several died almost immediately from disease, induced apparently by despair; a great many of them went about dejected and stupefied with care and grief, and their situation after assignment was not for a long time much less unhappy."

Very few of them ever came home. Return passages were not paid, and how could convicts obtain money?

The Duke of Wellington put the whole of the trouble down to the French; Lords Camden and Eldon took the same view. Lord Melbourne, the Home Secretary, undeceived them. Some people thought it was due to smugglers, some to mysterious gentlemen who drove about furiously in gigs and called themselves "Captain Swing." The Duke of Richmond drily reminded his brother peers that there had been some distress in the country districts, that there had been a flood of petitions representing the

sufferings of the poor and that the House of Lords had paid not the slightest attention to them. The House of Commons had been equally sleepy.

A pitiable business! The only excuse for them all was panic and lack of understanding, and it was a poor excuse. Grey and Holland and Althorp had always preached peace and inveighed against the cruel repressions of the Tories; even Brougham, "with all his half Scotch crochets has at any rate no blood about him," Cobbett had said. Yet Cobbett had been, except for the half-hearted *Times*, the only influential protester against the vindictive sentences.

So elated were the Government at crushing the conspiracies that they thought they would try Cobbett for inciting to sedition. The tragedy ended in farce, for the accused became the accuser, and the Prime Minister, the Lord Chancellor, Lords Melbourne, Palmerston, Durham and Goderich, subpœnaed as witnesses, listened sheepishly while Cobbett reviewed some rather peculiar aspects of their behaviour.

The jury disagreed and Cobbett was discharged.

The Whig Government was at last able to turn its attention to Reform. Some reform was, it appeared, needed.

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III

THE BILL FOR GIVING EVERYBODY EVERYTHING. 1831–1832

"What a stirring moment it is to live in. It seems to me as if life were breaking out anew with me."

WASHINGTON IRVING.

THE BILL

WITH the Wellington Ministry there vanished also the royal comedian; with the coming of Grey there emerged the Patriot King. Now and again, of course, William said or did something silly; but rarely. A breathless drama had opened and he had to play a great and serious role. The Whig historians, naturally, take all the credit in the business for the Whigs.

The Tories blamed the King for weakness; the Whigs clamoured that he was under Tory thumbs. The two accusations explain the situation; the King conceived that the chief duty before him was to hold the balance between the two. Brougham once tried to thrust the correspondence of George III and Lord North upon him to show him what constant and valuable support his father gave his Ministers.

"George III was a party man, which I am not in the least," was all William said.

From a hundred memoirs and letter-bags it is possible to collect a full, and generally amusing, running commentary on William's behaviour over the Reform Bill, but this is an occasion on which posterity is the better judge; they were all prejudiced on one side or the other. From contemporaries come the details, but the only just source for the heart of the matter is the correspondence of the King with Earl Grey; this read side by side with the Wellington correspondence, illuminates all the dark corners; the King's letters were always without guile and may be trusted;

Grey's should be compared with his private comments to Althorp or Durham, to whom he thought he might speak all his mind.

From Wellington's letter-bag comes the truth about the silly, unintentionally mischievous rôle played by Lord Howe, who, judged by the Grey correspondence alone, would appear to have been unjustly treated; Howe wrote silly gossip to the Duke, and tried to sow distrust of Sir Herbert Taylor. From the Wellington correspondence, too, can be gathered the true source of the leakage of private information for which the Whig press, and some of the Ministers, blamed the Queen.

Earl Grey's son, Lord Howick, editing the correspondence between the King and his father, long after the noise of the battle had died down and both Grey and William were dead, does the King justice:

"As to the King, I think no impartial reader of his correspondence can fail to form from it a higher estimate of his character than that which is commonly received. His earnest desire to do what he believed to be his duty, his readiness to listen to those in whom he placed confidence, and to consider their arguments, even when most opposed to the opinions of his early life, are constantly shown in his letters. His determination never to allow his personal convenience or predilections to stand in the way of any arrangements proposed by his Ministers, his consideration for them, and desire to spare them unnecessary labour, and to facilitate the performance of their duties; his disinterestedness . . . it will be seen that his anxiety was never for his personal interests, but for the dignity and authority of the Crown. For maintaining those he considered himself responsible, not only to his successors but also to the nation. . . . Above all his perfect honesty and truthfulness, and the sense he uniformly showed of its being his duty as a constitutional King to give his unreserved support to his Ministers so long as they continued in his service, yet without becoming a partizan, are worthy of all admiration, especially when it is remembered that before his accession to the throne, this duty had been by no means distinctly recognised even in principle and had often been very openly disregarded in practice . . . and considering what were the ideas and opinions which his education, his early years passed in the Court of George III, and his whole subsequent life, were calculated to form, it is a matter of just surprise

that he should have been found so equal to the arduous duties of Royalty in the very different times in which he was called upon to undertake them, that so much good sense should be displayed in his remarks upon public affairs; and that he should so generally *have been right in the final judgment* upon the practical questions he was required to decide."

CHAPTER I

THE WHIGS IN POWER

REFORM had been in the air for a very long time. It had become a party cry of the Whigs as far back as 1782, when the Foxites and followers of Rockingham had put an end to the personal government of the King, and had taken the first step, in Burke's "Economic Reform Bill," towards putting an end to jobbery. It was a very small step, of course, and occasioned quite an outcry from good Whigs like Horace Walpole and his friends, who saw their pretty little sinecures being swept away. Still, any reform was an acknowledgment that some kind of reform was needed in Parliament.

So strongly was this felt that Mr. Pitt himself, doubtfully it is true, introduced a Reform Bill in 1785; this came to nothing, but the idea of reform stayed in his mind until the Fall of the Bastille showed him that there was other work for him.

The French Revolution put an end to all that; reform, from being a little favoured by all reasonable men, became an abyss over which all the Tories and more than half the Whigs looked with hostile eyes at the Foxites. Burke, fearful of democracy in action, shocked at its excesses, had gone over to the Tories, firm in his theory "that the British Constitution was not only perfect but unalterable," and that anyone who suggested alteration was a subject for "criminal justice." This must have been a little baffling to the Whigs, who were rather given to talking as if they had invented the British Constitution for the benefit of William of Orange.

Charles Grey, a Foxite, in 1792, defiantly gave notice of the motion for a Reform of Parliament to be introduced. Between the notice and the introduction the September Massacres had intervened. England, for half a generation, shuddered at reformers, who publicly approved of revolution

in France. Nine-tenths of England slipped back into the Tory camp and stuffed their ears.

The other tenth was sometimes vocal. The Foxites, of course, continued to talk. In the theatres both sides came to make demonstrations, but "God Save the King" easily drowned "Millions be free," and the warblers of the latter went down under the fists of those who preferred the former tune.

The tide of war turning in Spain in 1809 allowed party politicians to breathe comfortably once more. It would be safe to goad the Pittites now that the war was as good as won. Lady Sarah Spencer sent a report on politics to her brother in that year:

"Everyone now is either an alarmist or a reformer. I almost regret the old humdrum way, for at least formerly one set of people were happier than kings, enjoying their places and kicking the world before them, and the others had the satisfaction of grumbling by profession, and the happy prospect of some day having a corner of the bed of roses to themselves. But now everybody is in a constant fury. Your true alarmist, generally possessing a snug, sinecure place, or a tight little pension in a corner, keeps on screaming and howling over the danger of the nation; revolutions beginning, a set of young hot-headed boys attacking every part of the Constitution, and all sorts of phantoms of danger, death or dread are always swimming before his eyes; and he would have everything hushed up, smothered and forgotten, always excepting the payment of his salary. Your reformer, on the contrary, is poking into all the dirty corners, routing out corruptions and abuses, till of course he gets into such a rage of disgust that he stops at nothing and would be, like our friend Dr. Kerr, for breaking open the head, taking out the brain in a spoon, sifting it thro', and then packing it back again, while the miserable patient might die ten times over during the operation. . . . To tell you the truth I am dead sick of parliamentary reform discussions and had rather never hear it mentioned again. We shall have, my Grandmother Lucan says, with one of her gloomy political looks, 'A Revolution, a scarcity, and a Siberian frost and snow.'"

At the same time Lord Holland was correcting the excessive idealism of that promising pupil of his, Lord John Russell: "The influence of property must exist," said he. "And it is by no means to be deplored. Sinecures are an

evil, but an evil which is grossly over-rated; a sinecure is simply a bad, uneconomical and uncertain method of rewarding public services. A good Whig ought to feel a certain inclination to reform the House of Commons and other abuses. He should always aim at reducing the National expenditure. But such aims and inclinations should not be carried to extremes. Things are not so bad as they seem to the young and uninstructed."

They certainly seemed extremely bad when the war was ended.

"There has been a great cry for Parliamentary Reform," said Mr. Lyttelton in 1822, "and the question has gained ground, but I don't think it will ever be carried quietly and I don't think it worth the risk of a violent change."

"For my part," said his wife, who had been Sarah Spencer, "I always WISH, like a baby, for a change, merely for the FUN of it. It would, I know, divert me quite beyond anything else, perhaps not altogether creditably, to see the scrambling and jolting and squabbling and wriggling for places among our own *particular* friends." She knew her Whigs.

There was not much chance of the Whigs coming in at the moment; George IV would have preferred a revolution to a ministry under Grey; all the Whigs had offended him for the part they had taken at the trial of Queen Caroline, but Grey had offended most of all.

The question of reform flitted in and out of Parliament like a glow-worm, sometimes bright and sometimes dim.

A waggish versifier, supposed to be Canning, sang about it:

"Fair Reform, celestial maid,
Hope of Britons, Hope of Britons,
Calls her followers to her aid,
She has fit ones, she has fit ones.

Lambton heads the patriot van,
Noble fellow, generous fellow,
Quite the dandy of the clan,
Rather yellow, rather yellow.

Lawyer Brougham is next in rank
Prates like Babel, prates like Babel;
He has never ate or drank
At Brib'ry's table, Brib'ry's table."

It was useless to attempt anything while George was at Windsor; some intrigue always overset their plans. A hopeless inertia tied the hands of the Whigs and their

leader; they hardly knew for what they waited, except George's death, and that they, in a way, dreaded, for they could not see beyond it with any clearness. Clarence was quite an unknown quantity, probably negligible, and therefore a tool of the Duke, whom he was known to admire. William, in any case, was not likely to live long; beyond him was the little girl at Kensington, in the hands of a cautiously Whiggish uncle and mama. But beyond her again was the terrible Cumberland, and who knew what sinister means he might take to secure power.

They planned, but they hardly hoped, and then, like a miracle, the Duke was delivered into their hands, and King William told Grey "that he looked upon him as embarked in the same boat with himself."

The scramble for places, from which Lady Sally had anticipated so much entertainment, began.

Lord Grey formed his Ministry and discussed it with Madame de Lieven: "In the composition of my Ministry I have had two essential objects in view," said he. "The first to show that in these times of democracy and Jacobinism it is possible to find real capacity in the high aristocracy. Not that I wish to exclude merit if I should meet with it in the commonalty," he condescended. "But, given an equal merit, I admit that I should select the aristocrat, for that class is a guarantee for the surety of the State and of the throne. The second, that I have no wish, like my predecessor, to shine at the expense and to the extinction of my colleagues."

"A fair portrait of the speaker," was the Russian's comment.

It was rather a stiff portrait; Earl Grey unbent to talk scandal with Madame de Lieven. They discussed the antics of the Duke of Cumberland and his rage because he found he had no influence with *this* king. They talked of the King, who had gone to Brighton, delighted with his Ministry, particularly with Earl Grey.

"Grey adores his master," the Russian Ambassadress reported. "But he distrusts France and the thought of troubles in Piedmont gives him the stomach-ache. . . . Lord Grey continues to pay me his daily visit and to listen to what I say."

"I am certain it will be possible to manage them," she went on jubilantly, describing the new Ministers to her brother. "Russia will certainly have cause to think well

of Lord Palmerston. Palmerston is *perfect* in every way. Lord Melbourne is clever, charming, supple, very lazy. Lord Durham is clever, disagreeable, a violent Whig."

Holland House, having helped Earl Grey to form his Ministry, expected to hear what the King thought of it.

"Nothing could be more satisfactory than everything the King said," Lord Grey reported. "Peace, Reform, and Economy the acknowledged principles of the new Government. *Carte blanche* as to all offices both in Government and the Household *but Brougham. Brougham is the difficulty, and it really is the only one with the King.* I saw him this morning and he positively refused the Attorney Generalship. What is to be done with him?"

What indeed! Brougham had set his heart on the Rolls. He foresaw a pleasant life in the Commons, domineering over the Ministry, and independent of it; for the Master of the Rolls held a life appointment, a non-ministerial place, but compatible with a seat in the Commons, where his peculiar talents could glitter unchecked by fear of a fall. Lord Grey admired him and said he was "the first man this country has seen since Burke's time"; his brilliance, his energy were boundless—and incalculable. Someone applied to him the description of another politician:

> "A man so various that he seemed to be
> Not one, but every man's epitome."

The Whigs, on the whole, admired but distrusted him. Lord Grey believed in him and was quite willing that he should have the Rolls, but was not, it appeared, so set on it that he must overcome the King's objection, for William, firm in his determination to be a constitutional king, would have yielded; Grey cannot have pressed the point unduly.

Brougham, who was already very sore at having been forced to postpone his notice on Reform because of the Ministerial crisis, was not soothed by being thwarted in his life's ambition. In a rage he informed the House on two successive days that he had no intention of taking office. The House was sceptical. The Whigs smiled.

They were pleased with the way things were going.

"Everything except the Brougham business going on smoothly," wrote the Earl of Sefton to Mr. Creevey. "*That* is, I assure you, very difficult, but must end in the Rolls. He is really in a state of insanity, complains to everybody that he is neglected, and threatens to put an

extinguisher on the new Government in a month. In the meantime he keeps swearing he will not take anything, that he ought to be offered the Seals, though he would kick them out of the window rather than desert his Yorkshire friends by taking a peerage. All this, however, will subside in the Rolls, where being lodged for life and quite beyond control I don't envy the Government with such a chap ready to pounce on them unexpectedly."

Lord Sefton voiced the general opinion of the Whigs; the King must not be pressed to yield the point; Grey must "manage" the Archfiend. Grey "managed"; Brougham should have the Seals; he did not kick them out of the window.

So the King, acting on Wellington's warning, did the Whigs a service. Brougham, his claws cut, went reluctantly to the Upper House, nursing a grievance, and knowing, in his heart, that he had destroyed his own power. Since he was undoubtedly aware of what he was doing, his consent must have been due to loyalty and patriotism quite as much as to ambition: "If he refused office his act would bring in the Tories again," he was told.

The new Lord Chancellor selected his title, "Lord Brougham and Vaux," and he was quite capable of originating the witticism which greeted the choice—"Vaux et praeterea nihil." He would "drop on the Woolsack as on his political deathbed."

Madame de Lieven reported: "Brougham Lord Chancellor—democrat transformed into an aristocrat, a tiger whose claws are cut, of wise resolve, although at first apparently violent. He will be dangerous no longer." So they all thought.

Brooks's hummed with comments on the sensational appointment.

"Such a day at Brooks's! Who could have foreseen it," wrote John Campbell, who knew his Brougham. He must have smiled when Brougham told him gloomily that the Great Seal was the only thing he could take, and it would then be thought that his conduct was sordid.

"At Brooks's," said Hobhouse, "our friends were handing about a list of the new Administration. Brougham, Lord Chancellor! Reform of Parliament! Anti-Slavery! Law Reform! Useful Knowledge Society! Edinburgh Review! Sublime Society of Beefsteaks! hail and farewell! But it is believed, and people seem glad to get rid of my learned

friend from the House of Commons. He came. We set up a shout, and he went away again."

"By God! Brougham is Chancellor," Lord Sefton wrote to Creevey. "It is supposed he will be safer there, because if he don't behave well, he will be turned out at a moment's notice, and he is then powerless. What a flattering reason for appointing him."

Brougham drew such gratification as he could from his new honours. Lord Dacre had a confidential chat with Mr. Creevey.

"Do you know, Creevey, how Brougham came to take the title of Vaux? Because, you know, it is *my* title, but as I don't care much about such things, I have never said or done anything about it. The title, however, is *mine*."

Lord Brougham and Vaux, nevertheless, had his arms engraved upon his carriage, and Sydney Smith, seeing him drive down to the House of Lords, said there was a "B" upon the coach and a wasp inside.

The Whigs were in high spirits; Lord Sefton gave a small dinner-party for the new Prime Minister, and the host marched out from the dining-room in mock procession before the new Lord Chancellor, carrying the fire-shovel for a mace.[1]

Grey was very cheerful that things had fallen out so well, and that his master was so obliging: "His Majesty wishes it to be clearly understood that he will never suffer any engagement or his convenience to interfere with the attention which he considers to be due to public business," said his last letter.

"Did you ever!" said Mr. Creevey.

It is very pleasant to notice that Earl Grey, in the midst of serious affairs, remembered Mr. Creevey, and, being in office to abolish jobbery, gave the last sips of honey to his friends. Mr. Creevey had managed, since his wife's death, to lead a very agreeable life on £200 a year or less. The £1200 a year attached to the office of Treasurer of the Ordnance, with charming quarters in the Tower, was almost like Aladdin's cave to the industrious gossip and letter writer, and not even the most rigid of political purists could have the heart to grudge it to him, for he was a most entertaining companion during his lifetime, and posterity owes him the same kind of debt that it does to Pepys. The letters he wrote were worth every penny of the £1200 a year.

Lord Grey also, of course, found posts for his relations

[1] Mr. Beckett might consider this!

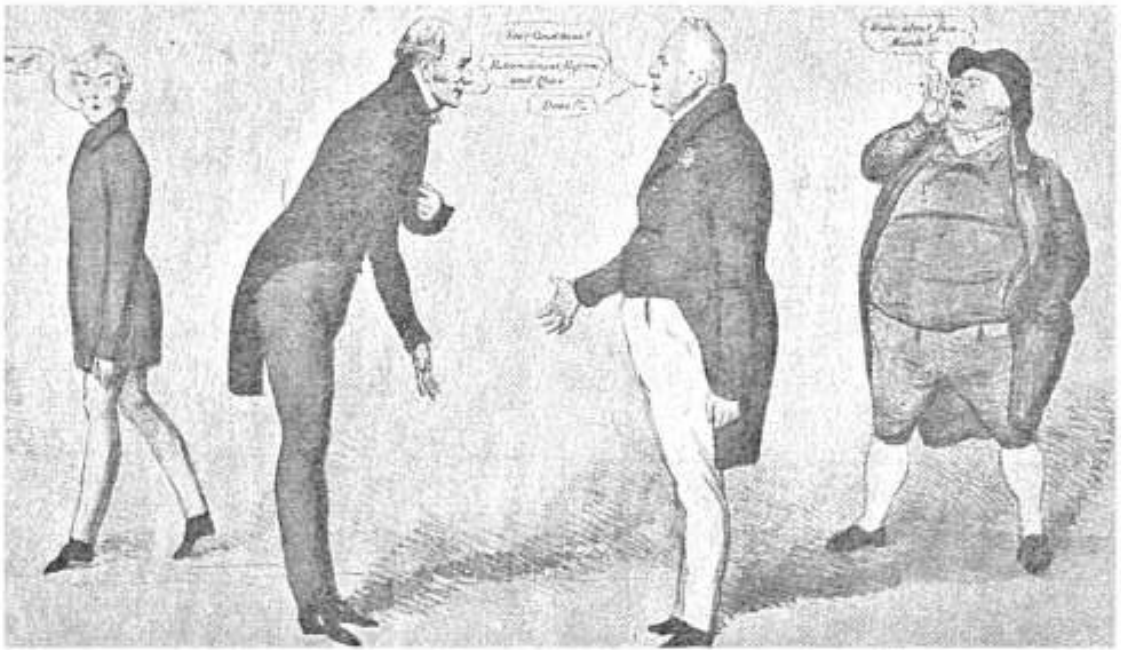
and friends in the good old Whig way. Sydney Smith was appointed Canon Residentiary of St. Paul's with an income of £2000 a year; but Lady Holland was not able to make him a Bishop.

Madame de Lieven was rather disappointed that she had not had a finger in the Cabinet pie; she had to console herself with the thought that she was "managing" Grey.

It is extraordinary how often that word "manage" occurs. Everyone with an axe to grind, legitimate or illegitimate, was "managing" or attempting to "manage" someone else. They had "managed" the House of Commons and foreign powers quite frankly by bribes in Pitt's days; the art had grown a little more delicate since then. They "managed" George IV through his mistress, or his secretary, or his physician, or his valet. Madame de Lieven was always "managing" someone. They "managed" Brougham, with fluctuating success. The party, even Grey, thought they were going to "manage" King William in some kind of way—through his secretary, Sir Herbert Taylor, probably. It was most disconcerting to find that neither the King nor Sir Herbert lent themselves to management at all. If a matter were approached in the most delicate of corkscrew fashions the reply was as crudely direct as an arrow from the bow. Grey discovered that he could only "manage" his master by character and tact, nothing that was not quite straightforward appealed to him at all. It was fantastic, but true, that the King thought that political matters might be conducted as honestly as any others.

The King believed in Earl Grey's integrity and reasonableness; in spite of some early misgivings about the Radical tendency of some of his Ministers he was prepared to travel in the same boat with Grey almost all the way. King William wrote to his Prime Minister on January 12th, 1831, that "he reposed confidence in his integrity, his judgment and decision, and in his experience, and assured him that the manner in which he has discharged the duties of the important situation which His Majesty called upon him to fill, has amply realised the expectation which he had formed." This was very cheering for the Prime Minister. Nothing could be more cordial than the approval that was extended to Palmerston and Melbourne. There was an ominous silence about the Lord Chancellor and Lord Durham.

His Majesty was being encouraged to display considerable enthusiasm for Parliamentary Reform as he grew convinced



H.R.

EXAMPLES OF THE LACONIC STYLE

Wellington. *Grey.* *King William.*

that his Whig Ministers were not hand-in-glove with the extreme Radicals and anxious to push him off his throne. "Reform from within would save revolution from without," they assured him. Reform was all right as long as it did not interfere with the Constitution. King William, on the whole, and in spite of his forgiving disposition, was not sufficiently enthusiastic about his aristocratic subjects, who had so often been rude to him in the days when he was merely a Duke, to worry about their threatened privileges, as long as the ORDER of nobility was unharmed. But reform did not mean encouragement of rioting among the lower orders; neither Grey nor the King considered the sentences of the Bloody Assize at Winchester at all excessive. They were grieved because their hearts were kind but discipline was essential to good order; any resolution to raise wages "would inevitably appear to be dictated by fear and would operate as a premium to violence," wrote Grey. Lord Brougham had not turned his attention to the reform of matters so humble as those affecting labourers; he was otherwise engaged.

The new Government at first did not seem a great improvement on the old. They had, like so many new Governments, promised Retrenchment, and found vested interests too strongly entrenched.

"These damned pension lists," said Mr. Creevey, "are a cursed millstone about the neck of the Government. Grey was almost crying when he talked to Sefton of the difficulty and misery of depriving so many people of their subsistence. . . . Our Vaux is not so tender-hearted in his department. By his reform (of the Law Courts) he is to spread desolation by wholesale amidst the profession. I KNOW that the Beau said yesterday, "I am very glad that Brougham is Chancellor. He is the only man with courage and talent to reform that damned Court."

The Ministry was feeling its lack of experience in governing. Lord Althorp's Budget was a failure. A wit quoted from Luttrell's "Advice to Julia":

> "Oh! that there might in England be
> A duty on Hypocrisy,
> A tax on humbug, an excise
> On solemn plausibilities.
> No income tax, if these were granted
> NEED be endured, or COULD be wanted;
> Nay, Althorp with o'er'flowing chest
> Might soon abolish all the rest."

Dissension already was spoiling the harmony of the Cabinet; the Archfiend, regretting the Commons, was too busy elsewhere; his colleagues believed that he was tampering with the Press.

Brougham's connexion with *The Times* was close but mysterious. There was a violent scene between Durham and Brougham. Lord Grey, distressed, declared that he believed Brougham's denial of the authorship of *The Times*' articles which attacked himself and lauded the Chancellor.

Lord Brougham's conscience certainly seemed at ease. Mr. Creevey met the Archfiend at Lady Grey's "weekly" and found him in his accustomed overflowing glee. They had some very pretty amusement with Viscount Melbourne, whose indolence was proverbial, but who was very agreeable. Lord Grey would have liked the matter to be dropped, but Lord Sefton attacked the Archfiend on the subject. Mr. Creevey, of course, heard the story from Sefton.

"The Archfiend asked me if I had seen *The Times* this morning."

"No," I said, "not to-day, but I have read it with great uneasiness for three or four days, and I want of all things to talk to you about it." I then opened my case, stated the deliberate attack made upon Grey by that paper, coupled with its constant panegyrick upon Brougham, made it necessary for him to summon the editor and to insist upon these attacks being discontinued. As his influence over the paper was notorious to all, and his brother William was known to write for it, it could not fail to beget suspicion that he had no objection to these attacks. . . . Nothing could equal the artificial rage into which he flung himself. He swore like a trooper that he had no influence over *The Times*, that he had never once seen Barnes the editor since he had been in office, and that William had never written a line for it."

"Did you ever!" murmured Mr. Creevey.

"He then fell upon Durham," Sefton went on. "And said all this came from him . . . that if he went on as he did he must break up the Government and that he, for one, would never submit to his influence. This storm being over, I collected from him distinctly that he had seen Barnes PERHAPS once or twice, that brother William might PERHAPS —tho' quite unknown to him—have written an article or two in this paper. In fact never was culprit more clearly proved guilty than he was out of his own mouth. . . . At

all events he pledged himself that he would get at Barnes."

The Times had two leading and very powerful articles in favour of the Government next day.

It was early in December 1830 that Lord Durham wrote to Lord John Russell with a request that he would call upon him at his house in Cleveland Row. When Lord John arrived, he was told that Durham had received a commission from Lord Grey to ask for his assistance in forming a Committee to prepare a plan of Reform.

"We then agreed to invite Sir James Graham and Lord Duncannon to be with ourselves members of that Committee," said Lord John in 1834. "In a short time I proposed to the Committee the heads of a plan of reform. I have it now among my papers with the words 'Lord J. Russell's Plan of Reform,' written in Durham's handwriting on the outside."

CHAPTER II

THE MEN WHO PASSED THE BILL

EARL GREY was the inevitable head of any Government formed to carry Parliamentary Reform; he had been introducing and advocating measures for that purpose, first in the House of Commons and then in the Upper House, since 1792. He had been the friend of Fox and had inherited Fox's mantle; he had been forty-four years in Parliament, and, while the members of the party behind him advanced and retreated, Grey had remained a consistent Whig of the old school.

Mr. Charles Grey, whose tastes were those of the ordinary eighteenth-century young gentleman of fashion, travel, gallantry, sport, came into politics under the wing of the Duchess of Devonshire. He was an ardent admirer of Duchess Georgiana, indeed rumour said that one of that bevy of children at Devonshire House—but then gossip will say anything. At Devonshire House Grey certainly fell into a more lasting love—for Charles James Fox, and as, after his marriage, in 1794, he became the model whom all less-adored wives than Mrs. Grey held up to their husbands as an example, his devotion to the Duchess may have been no greater than that she received from all the world.

Mr. Grey was one of the more respectable of Mr. Fox's friends, but he could drink more heavily than Sheridan, and sat up many feverish nights with the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York.

"I well remember the only day he was ever tipsy in my presence," his wife told Mr. Creevey. "When he returned from dining with the Prince of Wales, nothing would satisfy him but dressing up in a red turban and trying to dance like Paripol." He carried his liquor amiably, but Mr. Creevey saw him drunk on other occasions, and classed him completely with Fox's band of "shattered debauchees,"

which was unjust, as Creevey himself would have been the first to own in later years.

Grey was in one or two political scrapes as a young man, but his devotion to Fox was consistent and genuine, though he was indolent in the way of practical support. Fox had often been exasperated by his excuses for remaining out of town:

"I must still maintain that Mrs. Grey being to be confined in March was no reason why the family should not come up in November." Charles was always pleading Mrs. Grey's health as an excuse for idleness, but Mrs. Grey protested that he would treat her as an invalid when she was in the best of health.

He was a domestic man; he liked to make a sudden swift sally into battle and then retire to his own hearth once more. He was only intermittently a leader, and was temperamentally quite unsuited to the daily round. Mr. Creevey, in his less enthusiastic days, was driven to cry: "There is nothing approaching this damned fellow in the kingdom when he mounts his best horse." Mr. Creevey came, in time, to regard him with the nearest thing to awed admiration that that volatile critic ever felt for anyone, but to the end it was difficult to make Grey "mount his best horse."

Charles Greville did not think much of him: "A more overrated man," said he, "never lived, or one whose speaking was so far above his general abilities, or who owed so much to his oratorical plausibility."

The Duke thought him bad-tempered, but owned that he knew very little of him. Sir Francis Burdett had a shrewd criticism: "Lord Grey is always thinking of himself and of his failures in life," but Grey, naturally, had little affinity with a Radical, even a milk and water Radical like Burdett. His strength in his own time, as it appeared a defect in a later, lay in his aristocratical prejudices.

"If we are to have *Whiggism*, give me the aristocratical Whiggism of Lord Grey," said the Tory Duke of Rutland.

He was a handsome man, but "that patrician thoroughbred look" that Byron had doted on was the first thing that struck observers; some thought him supercilious, but he knew how to charm.

"The very type of the *grand seigneur*," said the Earl of Malmesbury, who also noted the taste of the whole Grey family for argument; they were always in a state of heated discussion about points which might have been verified long

before. He was at his best in his country home; and always hated London. His taste for politics seemed more often to ebb than flow; indeed, from his own letters and Creevey's, it is impossible not to draw the conclusion that only his wife's urgency kept him at the wheel. The Grey ladies were far more violently political than Grey himself; you remember how they snatched his "Wellington" coat from his back.

Grey was a pessimist in public life, though a happy man at home; there he was full of fun and good-humour; his children ran wild instead of going to school, and, in a formal age, addressed their parents impudently by their Christian names. There were none of the discomforts at Howick that annoyed Creevey at Lambton, not far distant, but neither the eldest Grey daughter, who went from her own happy home to Lambton as its owner's second wife, nor her father learned how to manage King Jog. Neither could they manage Mr. Brougham, whose self-confidence much amused them, particularly when Grey took him over a ford with a casual: "Can you swim?"

"I have never swum," Mr. Brougham reassured him. "But I have no doubt I could if I tried."

Madame de Lieven's opinion of people varied according to their subordination to her influence. In 1829 Lord Grey had been "One of my most intimate acquaintances in England—a man of the highest honour, in whom I have that confidence which an honourable man inspires. *He is at present everything we could wish with regard to our policy.*" She still liked him after he became Prime Minister.

"I am certain it will be possible to *manage* this ministry," she said. She evidently found that she had made a mistake, for two years later "I shall continue to cultivate Lord Grey, although he bores me not a little," said the Russian peevishly.

Grey confided in Madame de Lieven rather unwisely, but he did not confide in that astute lady as much as she had hoped he would; he learnt from her much that he wanted to know, while she supposed that she was successfully hoodwinking him. Grey, like Wellington, liked the ladies, but they influenced him less, perhaps because he was a happy husband. Nevertheless he called to see Madame de Lieven daily, which now seems a little odd, and he wrote to her frequently as well.

The Prime Minister was more susceptible where men were concerned; having withdrawn himself in dudgeon from his

Canning-allied party he returned to the leadership in a mood to hunt with Lambton and Russell rather than with Holland and Lansdowne; pique, rather than conviction, threw him into the arms of the more Radical Whigs. He was never an ardent reformer of the new school, fanatically devoted to reform at all costs, yet he allowed himself to be pushed into a measure of reform of a magnitude which he had never contemplated in his youth. He permitted himself to be greatly influenced by his son-in-law, Durham, though he knew Durham's intractable temper; fortunately he checked Durham's extravagances by the opinion of the man who made his Government possible, John Charles Spencer, Viscount Althorp, leader of the party in the Lower House.

A great authority has said that to understand the power of Althorp would be to understand the English people. He had, apparently, no gifts, and yet was indispensable; even Brougham fell under his spell, and yet Campbell wrote "there is a better speaker than Althorp in every vestry in England."

His mother had been one of the brilliant stars of the late eighteenth century; she found her eldest son a little stupid and slow. In his childhood he was generally left in the care of servants; indeed it was his mother's Swiss footman who taught him to read. At the mature age of eight he was sent to Harrow, where he found himself in the company of Lord Byron, Viscount Duncannon and Robert Peel. What he lacked in brilliance he made up in certainty, and was no worse educated than many a brighter boy.

He went to Cambridge in 1801 and greatly improved his skill in hunting, racing and boxing, which were his passions. He came into Parliament in April 1804 as one of the supporters of Pitt, but he rarely voted, and never spoke. When he was obliged to attend the House he had relays of horses waiting for the return journey, so that he could blow away the foul air of the House by a rousing day with the Pytchley.

His sister, Lady Sarah Spencer, gives vivid glimpses of him in his youth. "Grandmother Spencer expresses herself as being totally puzzled by Althorp and his way of getting on through life. For my part, I certainly think it uncommon, but can't see anything so very strange in it. Instead of being fond of a noisy society, as most men are at his age, he happens to be fond of a quiet solitude, and has been spending this summer just after his own heart, with a little hunting

to keep him in constant supply of exercise and eagerness, a great deal of study, good useful, serious study to prevent his mind from growing quite rusty, and the bore of a friend *tête-à-tête* with him, which must have kept his temper supplied with that gentle, constant degree of rubbing down, and keeping in, so indispensable."

In December 1808, she reported on him: "He is a complete country gentleman of the most respectable sort. An active magistrate, a good-humoured companion, and, what very few indeed of the squirearchy are, a sensible, well-read, well-informed man."

Lady Sally spent a good deal more of her time in the fashionable world than did her brother, so that she might be considered a good judge of young gentlemen. She did not care much for this passion for sport, but she could be sympathetic: "Long frost. Poor Althorp is obliged to hunt for a cock in Nobottle Wood; he is not able to hunt.

She smiled mischievously when at dinner somebody said that "in a chase, first in rank comes the fox, next the hound, next the horse and last the man."

She watched her brother's habits with amusement: "In comes Althorp. He goes, of course, first to the hounds, is well jumped upon by all the dirty puppies, and then comes back to the house, one sheet of mud in consequence. There he stays, walking the quarter-deck in the library."

Fortunately there were other diversions for the young lady than hunting gossip, and "Althorp is as usual *keeping himself down* for his hunters by dancing most perseveringly."

But a few days later "Poor Althorp has for the fourth time put his shoulder out; he is very busy contriving a bandage for it which may enable him to hunt safely."

In spite of his tastes duty oppressed him, and other distractions than a dislocated shoulder kept him from hunting in the latter part of that winter.

"Politicks, politicks and more politicks that's all one hears at present," groaned Lady Sally. "Althorp is torn to pieces by his zeal in wriggling out Ministers on one hand and his longing to profit by the thaw in Northamptonshire on the other. . . . Wherever one goes one hears of the *awful crisis* of affairs, the *gloomy prospects* of the poor country, and all the other doleful stories which ever since long before I was in the world, have formed the daily talk of the poor inhabitants of London."

Lord Althorp's admiration for Fox had long inclined him to the Whigs; a queer, unhereditary sympathy with those odd reformers, Whitbread and Romilly, completed his conversion; he made his maiden speech in 1809 in the attack on the Duke of York and became a whole-hearted Whig.

Since politics kept him in town more often than he wished he learnt "to draw horses and dogs, and it is really quite surprising how he has improved. He began only able to make a wretched monster standing on four sticks, and a head like a battering ram, and now by copying good prints, and by endless perseverance, he draws horses and dogs remarkably well."

His sister was in constant anxiety about his heart. "I should not much wonder if some clever angler, some sea nymph with a very imperceptible net, should contrive to entrap his prudent Lordship. Oh! I think I could give some few very few, bits of advice on the shortest way to do it, which would soon make any young lady mistress of the art—and of the heart too—and a good, steady, solid possession that heart would be, well worth catching I am sure."

He fluttered round Miss Tylney Long for a time, but he married Miss Esther Acklom, daughter of Richard Acklom of Wiseton Hall, Nottinghamshire, in 1814, and was extremely happy with her. She died a few years later, "having never got over the death of Princess Charlotte." Lord Althorp was heart-broken; some odd quality in him made him give up hunting because "it seemed to him wrong to be as happy as he must always be in following the hounds over hill and dale while she was lying cold in her grave."

He turned his attention seriously to farming; it was indeed his only extravagance, and he was supposed to lose £3000 a year at it.

"Althorp is more eager than ever after his present hobby of cows, sheep and pigs, and enjoys nothing so much as a day spent in handling them. It is to be sure the best employment for anybody who lives so much alone as he does, for nothing else can make out of doors work for every day in the year, and accordingly I never knew any person who knew as well how to get on by himself, without being more or less unfitted for society."

He did not entirely lose his vanity, however, for he dieted to keep himself from getting fat, and was a fervent disciple of Dr. Banyan.

Like all honest men he smoked a pipe, particularly at

Holkham, where he was always welcome and where they called him "Fidèle Jack," which, of course, soon became "Fiddle Jack." He was deeply, consistently and intelligently interested in agriculture. He was one of the founders of the Yorkshire Agricultural Society, and, in 1825, became President of the Smithfield Club, which was in great difficulties. In a year or two it was on its feet again through his efforts; *he* would work all day in his shirt-sleeves getting beasts into their stalls on the day before a show.

Parliament grew on him; he was becoming quite an animated debater when his wife died. Then, for a time, he appeared to lose all interest in everything, but his withdrawal from Society gave him, in fact, a great deal of time to read, and his reading appears to have consisted largely of Parliamentary debates. Into his slow-moving brain filtered ideas on taxation, trade and law. He was so eccentric as to recommend economy as a means of relieving taxation: the "bits and pieces" character of the Whig party left him free to follow his own judgment, and though he was lamentably liberal in his ideas he was not unfriendly to the Duke of Wellington. When the Whig party suddenly came to life again in 1830 Althorp was chosen as its leader in the Commons. No one supposed that he had any ability, but he was so good-tempered that he was obviously the best person to pour oil on the troubled waters when the storms caused by less easy tempers ruffled them. The fantastic Brougham, the irritable Grey, the quarrelsome Durham, the half-hearted Graham could all be soothed by Althorp's magic touch.

It *was* magic, inexplicable, yet it affected everybody. The King, too, succumbed.

Althorp hated office, absolutely refused Grey's suggestion that he should form and head the Ministry, and only consented to lead the party in the Commons when Grey said that on no other terms would he attempt to form a Government at all. He was shy, unambitious, almost tongue-tied, yet he became "the very best leader of the House of Commons that any party ever had."

His first Budget was a failure. What else, it was asked, was to be expected when "a respectable country gentleman . . . is all of a sudden made leader in the House of Commons, without being able to speak, and Chancellor of the Exchequer without any knowledge, theoretical or practical, of finance," sneered Greville.

Greville wrote of him in February, 1831, as "wretched" and "doing a great deal of harm," "leading the House of Commons without the slightest acquaintance with the various subjects that came under discussion."

By September of the same year Greville was changing his mind: "Althorp now appears to be an excellent leader and contrives to speak decently upon all subjects; this is a proof of what practice and a pretty good understanding can do."

Little Johnny Russell, in his fanatical passion for his Bill, practically usurped Althorp's place as leader, but in spite of this and of some difference of opinion over the provisions of the Bill itself, they remained close friends. When Johnny retired, worn out, Althorp took up "his child" and nursed it through Committee.

"I go down to the House of Commons as if I was going to execution," said he. But he went on, unruffled in temper by his terrible fatigue.

"Lord Althorp has the temper of Lord North with the principles of Romilly," said Macaulay in 1831.

To his Parliamentary duties was presently added the difficult and dreadful task of keeping the peace between Grey and Durham. Everyone pinned his faith to Althorp.

The quarrelsome Croker tried to trip him up. Lord Althorp rose and observed quietly, "that he had made some calculations which he considered entirely conclusive in refutation of the Hon. Member's arguments, but unfortunately he had mislaid them, so that he could only say that, if the House would be guided by his advice they would reject the amendment." The House was guided.

"It was Althorp carried the Bill," said Sir Henry Hardinge. "His fine temper did it."

When it was all over he prepared, as he said, "to expiate the great fault of my life, having ever entered into politics." He rode off to a nursery garden and spent happy hours buying plants for Althorp, and drawing plans for a new garden there.

Not the least of Althorp's difficulties was Durham's temper. Creevey is full of tales of it.

"What a victim of temper poor Lambton is. He has been complaining to me of his unhappiness. I observed that he had a good many of the articles men in general considered as tolerable ingredients for promoting happiness."

"I don't know that," replied Lambton, "but I DO know

that it's damned hard that a man with £80,000 a year can't sleep."

"He has not much merit but his looks, his property and his voice and power of public speaking," wrote Creevey. "He has not the slightest power or turn for conversation, and would like to live exclusively on the flattery of toadies."

Mr. Creevey did not always think of him so sourly. He had been having a little political misunderstanding with Mr. Lambton and kept out of his way. Lambton for once, however, displayed a forgiving temper, and wrote to him:

You have already smote me on one cheek, and I now, in the true spirit of scriptural precept, offer you the other. . . . You promised to come to our races. I kept a room for you until the second day, altho' beds are as scarce as honest men. Don't talk to me about politics. I have done with them. If you can tell me anything respecting the Leger, if you have any dark horse who is not spavined, I shall listen to you with attention, but as to Verona, the Bourbons, Reform, Spain, the Pirates, etc., throw them to the dogs; I'll have none on't.

Yours, in the true spirit of Christian feeling,

J. G. LAMBTON.

That was Lambton at his best; generally he lived under a shadow.

In 1827 he was clamouring for a peerage, and contended that it should not be a simple Barony, for it would be no promotion for the first Commoner of England to be made the last Baron. He implored Brougham not to let him be less than an Earl. Brougham sent the letter on to Sefton with the comment that *he* was a man of family at least two centuries older than that of Lambton. Sefton and Creevey were mighty merry over it. "Now, really, was there ever?"

Mr. Lambton was created Baron Durham on January 29, 1828, but later he received his Earldom.

He married Louisa Grey and so was drawn into the inner councils of Whigdom, but his father-in-law thought his views too extreme. In the North they called him "Radical Jack."

At no time would the term "Jacks in office" have been more appropriate, for little Johnny Russell presently earned the name of "Finality Jack." It was a pity, for the gaiety of letter writers, that Johnny was a bachelor at the time of

the Reform Bill; a year or two later he married the widowed Lady Ribbesdale and was known as "The Widow's Mite." Mr. Creevey, of course, fell on the name with rapture and embroidered the theme.

"My ears were much gratified by hearing the names Lord and Lady John Russell announced; and in came the two little things, as merry looking as they well could be, but really much more calculated, from their size, to show off on a chimney-piece than to mix and be trod upon in company."

Perhaps it was Lord John's diminutive size which made him seem so much younger than his colleagues; he was certainly younger than most of them, but was born in the same year as Sir James Graham, in 1792, the year in which Charles Grey had introduced his first motion for Reform. His air of youthfulness, no doubt, had something to do with his size, but more with his enthusiasm, almost fanaticism, which his colleagues lacked and which Lord Holland had done his best to moderate. Delicate, puny Johnny had been his mother's darling, but school corrected all that; when little John dropped his mutton under the table, he had to pick it up and eat it, dirt and all.

He came into Parliament "a little white-faced boy" whom Creevey liked because he was a Russell, and "all the Russells are excellent, and there is nothing in the aristocracy to be compared with this family."

A Tory Russell was unimaginable; they were like rocks in their Whiggism: "If you wanted to convince a Russell," said Sydney Smith, "you had to trepan, not argue."

The Duke of Bedford was, of course, a good Whig, but a very odd member of a party which leant towards Radicalism; the Duke could not bear to take his meals in company which was not of the bluest blood.

Lord John wrote an entertaining pamphlet on political bribery: "A gentleman from London goes down to a borough of which he scarcely before knew the existence. The electors do not ask his political opinions. They do not inquire into his private character. They only require to be satisfied of the impurity of his intentions."

This found its way into *The Times*. Obviously he knew something about his subject.

When Earl Grey announced his Government there were many who were surprised that little Lord John was not in the Cabinet. There was other work for him to do. When

Grey gave the task of drafting the Bill to Durham, Russell was the obvious person to help. The other members of the committee were not meant to take much part.

Sir James Graham was a Cumberland landowner. He was tall and handsome, had the manner of a dandy, and was stiff and pompous in style. He was cold and unsympathetic, but not quarrelsome. His oratory had brilliant flashes but he never made a great speech; he was too pompous. He described himself as "always shuddering on the brink of a torrent." He was too much of a Whig to make a good Tory, and too much of a Tory to make a good Whig.

Lord Duncannon had a remarkably calm and unruffled temper, and very good sound sense; he was as sweet-tempered as Althorp, and his work on the committee was to keep his more difficult colleagues at peace.

They all, doubtless, had a hand in the drafting, but in the end it was Lord John Russell's Bill.

CHAPTER III

THE PASSING OF THE BILL

PARLIAMENT adjourned over Christmas; the Ministers dispersed to their country homes; the Court moved to Brighton. The King was still happy; his children and his grandchildren were with him, and his youngest daughter, Amelia Fitzclarence, was about to make a good match with Lord Falkland. Her friend, Mrs. Norton, who had been Caroline Sheridan, old Sherry's pretty granddaughter, saw Amelia in her wedding-dress, "which was lace over satin with a veil to match, very pretty. She was in very high spirits and looked handsomer than ever. The "Falkland Isles" was full of poetical forebodings and assurance that he would govern. They were hooked-and-eyed this morning (December 27th) and are gone to Cumberland Lodge. I gave the creatures my blessing."

The King gave his blessing, too; and the Queen, perhaps, heaved a sigh of relief. All the King's daughters were safely married, her responsibility ended; she had spared no care in the upbringing of these stepchildren, but she had had many anxious moments lest they should not turn out well. There had been no disaster, and, except for a little discontent that their father had not done more for them, they seemed to settle down very well.

It was a gay winter at Brighton; even Ernestus the Pious was pleased. In the latter half of January, 1831, the Cabinet met to discuss the proposals of the committee of four. It was extraordinary how well their secret had been kept. Grey himself was startled at the sweeping nature of the reforms proposed. Brougham was cantankerous; his exclusion from the committee had been most marked; the people still believed him to be THE champion of reform, whereas he had not even been consulted, and now could not approve.

"He will throw us over with the King," thought Lord Grey.

The Committee set themselves to overcome Brougham's objections, and to instil some enthusiasm into Lord Grey.

The Prime Minister was not ardently enthusiastic about anything; certainly not about his Ministry. He criticised his colleagues indiscreetly: "Lord John Russell very obstinate, very pert, and can be very rude. Abercromby a perfect humbug. Everybody told me there was nothing to be done without the two Grants, and they have never been worth a farthing."

"It is not usual," said Mr. Creevey, "to amuse a Prime Minister by jokes upon members of his Cabinet." Creevey, however, chose that form of entertainment with complete success. They were particularly merry over the forgetfulness and unpunctuality of the Grants. Some wit had said of them that if you asked Charles to dine with you at six on Monday you were very likely to have Robert at seven on Tuesday.

Creevey, intimate as he was with the Prime Minister, was not told the secret of the Bill. The only people, outside the Cabinet, who were told were the Grey ladies who were to take the place of clerks and industriously make copies of the draft.

On January 30, 1831, Grey posted down to Brighton to see the King, his plan of reform under his arm. His heart must have been in his mouth when he presented it.

"A ticklish operation this," said Creevey, who knew that he had gone, "to propose to a sovereign a plan for reducing his own power and patronage."

Lord Holland went with Grey, and the same day sent back a letter to Lord John:

DEAR JOHN,

You will naturally be anxious about a child in the begetting of which you took so active a part. It flourishes and is Royally and nobly adopted. All that matters and indeed all that depends on our host goes on admirably.

Lord Grey amplified this news in a conversation with Creevey.

"The King's conduct was *perfect*, not in giving an unqualified assent as a constitutional King might to any Minister who happened to be so at the time; but he bestowed much time and thought in going over every part of the plan, examined its bearings, asked most sensible

questions and, being quite satisfied with everything I urged in its support, pledged himself irrevocably to do the same."

The Whigs heaved a sigh of relief; the King had not been angry or alarmed at the proposal to reduce his own power; they could cut off his prerogatives in other directions.

"The King is well and in good spirits, notwithstanding the week's company of the Duke of Cumberland," William's son-in-law, Charles Fox, reported a few days later.

"The Queen was better with me, too," said Grey thoughtfully. He confided in Creevey that her manner to him at first was distant and reserved, so that he could not help concluding that the change of Government was a subject of regret to her. This he found an appalling reflection for a reforming Ministry, but he had satisfied himself that she had no influence over the King, and that, in fact, he never mentioned politics to her, much less consulted her. Her influence over him as to his manners had been very great and highly beneficial, but there it stopped.

He persuaded himself that there was no danger to be feared from the Queen, but he could not persuade either his colleagues or his wife.

The Queen's attitude, in reality, was simple. She remained, as she had always been, conservative; to her reform and revolution meant the same thing. She continued, in spite of her efforts to adapt herself, a German still; she had no understanding of the people of England; but, though she allowed her feelings to be known, with her usual discretion, she did not interfere or give advice. The Whigs, however, did not trust her, and, when a scapegoat was wanted, her known sentiments were enough for them. The Queen was busy reforming the Court and some susceptibilities were hurt.

"You know the Queen would not let old Mother St. Albans (relict of the late Tos. Coutts, and late Harriet Mellon) come to her ball at the Pavilion, though there were 830 people there."

The Duchess of St. Albans might not be an enemy of much importance, but a really dangerous one was Lady Grey: the Queen detested her, a feeling which Lady Grey as heartily returned. This did not, fortunately, sow trouble between Grey and the King, at least in the early months of the Ministry.

The Press campaign against the Queen and the Tory members of the royal household began as early as January

12, 1831. Earl Grey forwarded an anonymous letter which confirmed a conversation of which he had heard, in which Mr. Croker and Mr. Theodore Hook seemed to have taken part.

"It has also been reported to me," he said, "that several times there have appeared in *John Bull* (a paper which I never see) details respecting the arrangements that were going on, which could not have been obtained except from persons who have accurate information respecting them."

The anonymous letter said:

MY LORD,

Your Lordship ought to know that two members of the King's household are in *constant communication* with Messrs. Croker and Hook, and that everything going on in the King's family, or Court, is made known to these editors of *John Bull*. It is a matter of surprise . . . that you should not have removed such persons from the household.

AN OLD FOXITE.

Sir Herbert Taylor not only indignantly denied these aspersions, and gave reasons for the denial, but added drily: "There never was any Court from which and of which so little could be told. . . . Their Majesties are accessible at all hours; the apartments are open to everyone; there is no seclusion, no mystery, nothing to conceal. Politics," he went on, "are never the subject of conversation at dinner or at evening parties; indeed, His Majesty professes not to allow it, and he never touches on the subject with the Queen, who, indeed, does not seem at all disposed to break through a rule so essential in such a society."

Sir Herbert seemed to be a man of sense. Earl Grey thought it would be a good idea to "manage" the King through him. It was convenient and permissible to write direct to Sir Herbert, to avoid the formality necessary in letters to the King; "it was not always necessary that the King should see these letters," Earl Grey hinted; "could not Sir Herbert give him some idea, privately and confidentially, of the King's mind?"

The Secretary would have none of it; every letter and every answer of importance was submitted to the King; Sir Herbert was as little inclined to intrigue as the King. The days of Carlton House politics were over; Earl Grey, reluctantly and not at once, gave up the time-honoured

method of indirect approach. Sir Herbert was quite willing to keep Earl Grey informed, but the King must see each letter that he wrote.

"If any sovereign can hope to stem the revolutionary torrent I think the King may," Sir Herbert wrote. "He is free from fancies and prejudices; he possesses firmness without obstinacy, and is therefore quite open to conviction upon points on which he may be advised by those whose judgment and principles he rightly appreciates. . . . The general view he takes of subjects is disinterested, and at all times guided by an anxious desire to discharge correctly and honourably the duties of his high station."

The Prime Minister heartily agreed with the Secretary.

The King had ceased to regret his dear Duke and had come to feel a sincere regard for Grey. At the same time, in listening to his Prime Minister's advice, personal feeling had no weight with him; it was his fixed idea of the King's duty which was the deciding factor. He turned the pages of his *Bolingbroke:*

"Our Patriot King . . . must fix at once the *general principles* and *ends* of all his actions, and determine that his whole conduct shall be regulated by them and directed to them. When he has done this he will have turned, by one great effort, the bent of his mind so strongly towards the perfection of a Kingly character, that he will exercise with ease, and as it were by natural determination, all the virtues of it.

"A Patriot King is the most powerful of all Reformers, for he is himself a sort of standing miracle. . . .

". . . as to the second point, that of calling to his administration such men as he can assure himself will *serve* on the *same principles* on which he intends to *govern*, there is no need to enlarge much upon it. A good prince will no more chuse ill men, than a wise prince will chuse fools . . . every man here, who stands forward enough in rank and reputation to be called to the councils of his King must have given proofs beforehand of his patriotism as well as of his capacity, if he has either, sufficient to determine his general character."

Yes, Grey had given proof of patriotism and capacity. He had told the King that reform from within was better than revolution from without; that one or the other seemed inevitable. The King could see it for himself.

His personal friends, and most members of his family,

were Tories; he refused to listen to them while the Whigs were in power by the wish of the people. To check the dangerous activities of the Radicals it was essential to give the country this "aristocratical measure" and so save the aristocracy and the throne. The King gave Grey his cordial approval.

On March 1, 1831, Lord John Russell introduced his Reform Bill. Of the members who flocked to hear him not more than two in three could find seats. The House was ill-ventilated, ill-lit, uncomfortable, and over-full; there was a breathless silence.

Little Lord John's head rose above the table and his "cool, small" voice unrolled the secret which had been so well kept. It was incredible. The Radicals, who had hoped so little of it, cheered in amazed delight as he read the list of the 110 boroughs which were condemned. The Tories, particularly those whose seats were to be abolished, laughed derisively. The Whigs themselves were rather quiet, a little dazed at the magnitude of "the revolution from within" that they had authorised their leaders to prepare.

Peel said nothing. If he could have achieved brilliance at that moment he might have rallied all the forces against the Bill. He could not act on impulse, could not shine in an extempore speech; he sat silent and chilled his followers. Sir Robert Inglis led the attack on the measure, which he characterised as a "Revolution in the form of a Statute." Sir Charles Wetherell roused himself from his stupor of surprise to oppose the Bill with all his eloquence and might.

Astonishment in the country was no less than astonishment in the House.

"I was absolutely stupefied when I learnt the extent of the Reform Bill. The most absolute secrecy had been maintained until the last moment," said Madame de Lieven.

"I have kept my word with the nation," said Earl Grey.

"Well, what do you think of our Reform plan?" asked Mr. Creevey. "My raptures with it increase every hour and my astonishment at its boldness. Here is a little fellow not weighing above eight stone, Lord John Russell by name —who, without talking of law or anything else, creates in fact a perfectly new House of Commons, quite in conformity to the original formation of that body. . . . What a coup it is; it is its *boldness* that makes its success so certain. . . . There is no end to the fun and confusion that this measure scatters far and near into by far the most corrupt,

insolent, shameless, profligate gang that this country contains."[1]

The country hailed the measure with amazement and joy; this was better than their highest hopes.

The next day Mr. Macaulay made the first of his Reform speeches: ". . . Now, while the heart of England is still sound, now, while old feelings and old associations retain a power and a charm which may too soon pass away, now, in this your accepted time, now in this your day of salvation, take counsel, not of prejudice, not of party spirit, not of the ignominious pride of a fatal consistency, but of history, of reason, of the ages which are past, of the signs of this most portentous time. Pronounce in a manner worthy of the expectation with which this great debate has been anticipated, and of the long remembrance which it will leave behind. Renew the youth of the State. Save property, divided against itself. Save the multitude, endangered by its own ungovernable passions. Save the aristocracy, endangered by its own unpopular power. . . ."

It made a great sensation; the names of Fox, Burke and Canning were in every mouth.

The Tories, too late, determined on opposition.

"What will Peel do?" was, as usual, the universal question.

Peel had missed his chance. Sir Charles Wetherell was the spokesman of the Tories; Sir Charles hated Reform with all his conservative soul.

When he said it was the herald of Revolution, he believed what he said. He was eloquent, he was witty, and, above all, he was sincere.

[1] The system that needed reforming has been explained as follows: "All the power was in the hands of a few great landowners. The majority of the House of Commons was elected by less than 15,000 persons: 70 members were returned by 35 places with scarcely any votes at all; 90 members were returned by 46 places with no more than 50 voters; 37 members by 19 places with no more than a 100 voters; 52 members by 26 places with no more than 200 voters. The local distribution of the representation was flagrantly unfair. . . . Cornwall was a corrupt nest of little boroughs whose vote outweighed that of great and populous districts. At Old Sarum, a deserted site, at Gatton, an ancient wall sent two representatives to the House of Commons. Big towns, Birmingham for instance, were unrepresented.

Eighty-four men actually nominated 157 members for Parliament; 154 patrons returned 307 members."

The Bill was drawn on broad and simple lines and struck at the root of these abuses. Its twofold basis was a liberal extension of the suffrage with a very large distribution of seats.

(Brodrick, *Political History of England.*)

The Times put a poem into his mouth :

THE BROKEN BOROUGH'S LAST LAMENT

By Sir Charles Wetherell, Knight

Tune: "London Bridge is broken down."

"Borough-bridge is broken down,
Stock-bridge is torn from the Peers ;
In Sea-ford, and Or-ford, and Camel-ford,
We are swamped over head and ears.

Callington is as good as gone ;
Bramber is evil entreated ;
They are making sad work with Aldborough in York,
And Aldburgh's Suffolkated.

Neither to Wareham nor to Old Sarum,
Has this bill been in any way civil ;
Death has opened its jaws to swallow St. Mawes,
And Saint Michael has gone to the Devil.

Poor old Romney none will now come nigh ;
Appleby none will taste ;
Poor old Fowey has lost its joy
And Peter's field is a waste."

Sir Charles was witty, but he was also slovenly ; that gap between his waistcoat and his breeches which had become famous during the Catholic Relief Bill was not likely to escape remark now, when his excitement was, if possible, even greater. The "interregnum" became the banner of the Tory party—or so said the Whigs.

"Of all the misfortunes as yet brought to pass
By this comet-like bill, with its long tail of speeches,
The saddest and worst is the schism which, alas,
It has caused between Wetherell's waistcoat and breeches."

The Tories were furious with Grey ; he had deceived them ; this was not the mild measure for which they had been prepared ; this was *revolution*.

Revolution had a nasty sound in Tory ears. Someone revived that old story of Grey's ghostly visitor, a headless man who had come to warn him of the fate in store for revolutionaries. The Greys were very reticent about their ghost ; Lady Georgiana had seen it as well as her father. The ghost appeared at Talleyrand's new house ; M. de Talleyrand was interested, but sceptical.

Caricaturists seized on the theme and it became the talk of the town. Caricaturists, on the whole, found meagre

food for malice in these new respectable times, and sighed for the old days of the Regency. "H. B.," though his drawing was better, lacked the spice of Gillray.

Brougham, who had been so much opposed to the Bill when he first heard of it, was now wildly enthusiastic; one might have supposed that he had drafted it himself. Also, since he was not to reform Parliament, he would, as dramatically, reform the Law.

"I fear Vaux must go crazy," said Mr. Creevey cheerfully. "He is like Wolsey. As he has not enough upon his hands he has opened his batteries in *The Times* against Lady Jersey, who is mad against our Reform. . . . I saw our Brougham chased by Lord Eldon in their carriages to the door of the House of Lords. There is going to be a pitched battle between them on one of Brougham's legal reform bills. I'll bet upon our Archfiend." It was not the first pitched battle between the old and the new Lord Chancellor.

"The Seventy Commissioners of Bankrupts do not like Lord Brougham's Bill," commented the *Sunday Times*. "We must confess we do not like one part of it that applies to them. They object to its depriving them of office; we disapprove of its giving them compensation for that loss."

The Press, except *John Bull* and the *Quarterly*, was very much for Reform.

The country expressed no surprise at the King's part in the business; it had expected nothing else from Sailor William. The King had his private troubles. He lost one of his sons-in-law in March, which grieved and distressed him.

"We have no dinner to-day and don't go to the Opera, because that is pleasure," said the King. "But we shall go on with the levee to-morrow because that is duty."

"A very pretty distinction, I think, for a King to make," said Creevey. There were other things to disturb the King. A Committee of the House of Commons was interfering with his personal expenditure in what he considered an unwarrantable manner; certainly in a manner in which they had never dared to interfere before.

"It is an intolerable impertinence that the King should be deprived of a right which the least of his subjects enjoys," he protested.

The Law-Officers of the Crown decided "that these Committees had exceeded and were exceeding the powers which they are warranted to exercise."

The King was pacified. " It really is quite free from personal object or feeling (this matter regarding the prerogatives of the Crown)," Sir Herbert Taylor wrote to Earl Grey. All the same his good humour seemed to encourage impertinences of that kind.

Almost at once there was a fresh cause of worry. Earl Grey wanted the promise of a dissolution if the Bill did not pass at once. The King objected, and Grey, tired and irritable, wrote to Taylor:

" There is no practice, either fair or foul, of giving effect to the opposition we have not to encounter. An account has just been brought to me, that a report is industriously circulated of a letter having been written to me by the King putting an absolute veto on dissolution. Whether any private information has been obtained of the fact, I know not; but if it is pure invention, AS I BELIEVE, the inventor has certainly shown some sagacity in divining the truth."

Grey did, in fact, believe that there was a leakage of confidential information from the Court to the Tory camp. On the same day he gave the King a gentle rap, begging for " the careful exclusion of every person not acting as one of your Majesty's confidential advisers from all knowledge of what passed."

Sir Herbert did not believe that the King chattered: " He is extremely reserved on all political questions," he told Lord Grey.

Grey was worried; there WAS a leakage. If the King did not chatter, how did Croker and Hook obtain their news? Did someone listen at keyholes? Brougham blamed the Queen; they all desired Grey to dismiss her Chamberlain, Lord Howe.

The King did not talk politics, even with his family, but conclusions could be drawn from the expression on his face, from silences, from incautious answers to leading questions. Lord Grey apparently never discovered the source of the information which reached his opponents or he would not have allowed the attacks upon the Queen. The solution can be found in the Duke of Wellington's correspondence. Lord Howe was a foolish chatterer, but he knew nothing; the definite information was supplied neither by him nor by the Queen. Of the King's children only Lady Mary Fox was with the Whigs, the rest were Tories, and both Lord Munster and the Sidneys were in communication with the opposition camp. Hurried, secret

MASTER LAMBTON
After Lawrence.

little notes from Munster and the Sidneys found their way to the Duke of Wellington, generally by way of Lord Strangford, who wrote: "I do not hesitate to confide to your Grace, in the strictest secrecy, that the writer of the enclosed is Sidney. SHE is, if possible, yet more urgent than he is and her opportunities of knowing the *carte de pays* make her opinions of some value."

Lord Munster's communications reached Wellington through the Duke of Buckingham. The poor King, apparently, never suspected that his children were betraying him; all his attention was taken up with defending his Queen from an accusation which he knew to be false.

Lord Althorp's sweet temper was needed very early in the fight for the Bill. Durham was very difficult directly any check appeared. He said, when he heard of the King's objection to a dissolution, that if he were not actually an obstructionist he was half-hearted and insincere towards the Bill.

"He never alludes to what will be the effect of the rejection of the Bill, if unaccompanied by a dissolution. . . . One could imagine that he fancies the country would quietly acquiesce in the rejection," wrote Durham to Grey.

The King had no such fancy; he imagined that the Opposition, if once more in power, would introduce a similar, if slightly trimmed, measure. He had seen the Duke of Wellington "turn and tack" before, over the Catholics, and every member of the outgoing Ministry, except the Duke himself, had assured him of the absolute necessity for some measure of reform. The King, in fact, was at least as statesmanlike as Durham, for the latter had not seen, as the former had so clearly, that a collision between the two Houses was inevitable. A dissolution and a new Parliament would pass the Bill without a hitch, thought Durham wrongly, enraged with the King. If the Tories introduce the Bill, or a similar bill, it will go through the Lords without trouble, thought the King, irritated with Durham.

Durham's quarrelsome manner did not impress His Majesty favourably. Grey complained that the King's manner to him had "not been marked with the same kindness that he had shown to his other servants."

William accounted for this very reasonably: "Lord Durham appears shy and reserved and his manner does not encourage free intercourse."

The Bill was read for the second time in the Commons on

March 22nd. Mr. Creevey, being out of Parliament, went to the Opera and then to Crocky's to await the results.

"There were quantities of people in the same mind, friends and foes," said he, "but we were all as amicable and merry as we could be. A little before five o'clock our minds were relieved by the arrival of members without end—the same good temper and fun visible on both sides.

Majority for our Bill

[illegible] 1 [illegible]

Devilish near, was it not?"

Mr. Macaulay wrote an account of the scene in the House which cannot be improved upon.

March 30th, 1831.

DEAR ELLIS,

. . . The majority of one does not appear to me, as it does to you, by any means inauspicious. . . . Such a scene as the division of last Tuesday I never saw, and never expect to see again. If I should live fifty years, the impression of it will be as fresh and sharp in my mind as if it had just taken place. It was like seeing Cæsar stabbed in the Senate House, or seeing Oliver take the mace from the table, a sight to be seen only once, and never to be forgotten. The crowd overflowed the House in every part. When the strangers were cleared out, and the doors locked, we had six hundred and eight members present—more by 55 than ever were in a division before. The Ayes and the Noes were like two volleys of cannon from opposite sides of a field of battle. When the Opposition went out into the lobby, an operation which took up twenty minutes or more, we spread ourselves over the benches on both sides of the House, for there were many of us who had not been able to find a seat during the evening. When the doors were shut we began to speculate on our number. Everybody was desponding.

"We have lost it. We are only 280 at most."

"I do not think we are 250."

"They are 300."

"Alderman Thompson has counted them; he says they are 299."

This was the talk on our benches. . . .

As the tellers passed along our lowest row on the left-hand side the interest was insupportable—291—292—293—we were all standing up and stretching forward, telling with the

tellers. At 300 there was a cry of joy; at 302 another, suppressed, however, in a moment; for we did not know yet what the hostile force might be. We knew, however, that we could not be severely beaten.

The doors were thrown open and in they came. Each of them as he entered, brought some different report of their numbers. . . . It must have been impossible, as you may conceive, in the lobby, crowded as they were, to form any exact estimate. First we heard that they were 303, then that number rose to 310, then went down to 307. Alexander Barry told me that he had counted and that they were 304.

We were all breathless with anxiety, when Charles Wood, who stood near the door, jumped up on a bench and cried out:

"They are only 301."

We set up a shout that you might have heard to Charing Cross, waving our hats, stamping against the floor and clapping our hands. The tellers scarcely got through the crowd, for the House was thronged up to the table, and all the floor was fluctuating with heads like the pit of a theatre. But you might have heard a pin drop as Duncannon read the numbers. Then again the shouts broke out, and many of us shed tears. I could scarcely refrain. And the jaw of Peel fell; and the face of Twiss was as the face of a damned soul; and Herries looked like Judas taking his necktie off for the last operation. We shook hands and clapped each other on the back, and went out laughing, crying and huzzaing into the lobby. And no sooner were the outer doors opened than another shout answered that within the House. All the passages and stairs into the waiting-rooms were thronged by people who had waited till four in the morning to know the issue. We passed through a narrow lane between two thick masses of them; and all the way down they were shouting and waving their hats till we got into the open air. I called a cabriolet, and the first thing the driver asked was:

"Is the Bill carried?"

"Yes, by one."

"Thank God for it, sir."

And away I rode to Gray's Inn.

The country, it appeared, really *did* want Reform; it was something rather different from the ordinary party cry.

On April 19th the Government was defeated and a dissolution, the Whigs said, was imperative. The King's objections were very great, and entirely dictated by the fact that the country seemed very unsettled and that a General Election at this stage might throw it into a tumult. He was anxious to delay the Bill until a new Census could be taken, owing to the inaccuracy of any calculations based on the Census of 1821. He cannot have hoped that the Census would show any violent swing to Toryism, but he certainly hoped that in the necessary interval the more obstructionist among the Tories could be induced to see reason; not being a party man he did not, of course, appreciate the rage of party to which reason is no more than a bubble; though the more moderate among the Tories were fully aware of the need for some reform they had no intention of allowing the Whig measure to pass.

The King was bewildered by such tactics; he had the odd idea that the welfare of the country should come first.

Lord Grey thought it unwise to wait for a Census. The Tories showed no disposition to yield.

"Dissolution or Resignation," said the Whigs.

The King took a night to think it over; the darkness brought decision.

"A dissolution would be the lesser of two evils," said the King. "Because I attach the greatest and an almost paramount importance to the stability of my Government and to the maintenance of a fixed system of policy."

Lord Grey showed his relief, but remarked on the inconvenience of proroguing by commission.

"I will go at once," said the King. "I am always at single anchor."

Lord Albemarle, the Master of the Horse, complained that there would be no time to plait the manes of the cream ponies, that the State coachman and the horseguards were not ready. The King brushed them all aside.

"My Lord," he said to Grey, "I'll go if I go in a hackney coach."

At two o'clock the Lords assembled in a state of excitement, the Whigs triumphant, the Tories mad with rage. No one had believed that the King meant to dissolve; everyone was still infected with the virus of the bad old days, every rumour from crooked sources was believed, but no one had yet learned to rely on the integrity and good sense of the King.

"He is influenced by a camarilla at Court," was the persistent cry. There was no evidence that he was influenced by it at all except to be made uncomfortable and unhappy.

The Lords were in a tumult. Grey was still with the King. The Lord Chancellor in his excitable way rushed in and out of the House, "bounced up and down on the Woolsack," shouting that "the Commons had refused supplies."

The Lord Chancellor was hooted. The Duke of Richmond, usually so dignified, provoked his old friends the Tories like a rude little boy. Lord Londonderry rushed at him in a frenzy, brandishing clenched fists, and was held back by his coat-tails. The House of Commons at its liveliest seldom witnessed scenes like this.

The cannon boomed, heralding the approach of the King, and were hardly heard through the uproar; above the boom of the cannon rose the frantic cheering of the King's people:

"God save the King. God save the King."

The cream ponies had come out without their hair in curl.

Richmond and Londonderry were still shouting and scuffling, the Lord Chancellor was still bouncing up and down on the Woolsack, crying: "The Commons have refused supplies. The Commons have refused supplies," when the great doors were thrown open and the King came trotting in, very determined, his crown perched precariously on one side of his head, behind him Lord Grey, "balancing the great two-handed sword of State like a mediæval headsman, and looking like the King's executioner and theirs," the despairing Tories thought.

"My Lords and Gentlemen," said the King in the sudden silence. "I have come to meet you for the purpose of proroguing this Parliament, with a view to its immediate dissolution. I have been induced to resort to this measure for the purpose of ascertaining the sense of my people."

The sense of his people, in London at all events, was for illuminations. The Tories refused to illuminate, so all the windows of their houses were broken by the mob, "and they were forced to sleep in fresh air. This is a nice state of things."

Indeed it was, for the Tories, naturally, did not share the King's new-fangled notions about liking fresh air.

The King went to Windsor for a rest; he was looking tired and pale. The Clitherows, not being politicians, were invited for the week-end and all went to church on Sunday.

"I am sorry to say *that* service wants reform," said Miss Clitherow. "We were two hours and a half, the service very ill-read, the music wretched, and no one could hear the service because the Dean was dreadfully mumbling. The Queen, who likes to keep her thoughts on religion and could not hear a word, read a sermon which she held low, out of sight."

After church she took her guests walking, over the model dairy, round the farms and gardens—a three hours' round, walking a good pace. There was only a carriage or two for those who really could not walk. The children came running out to her from the cottages, and all had a pat on the head and a kind word.

"The King is ten years older since he wore the Crown," Miss Clitherow reflected sadly.

Princess Augusta talked to the guests and assured them that politics were never mentioned in the family circle.

"The poor King is so harassed with business," said she. "We try to draw his mind to trifles, to the farm and things like that." "The Queen is like my good mother," she added. "Never interferes or gives any opinion. We *may* think; we *must* think; we *do* think, but we need not speak."

After dinner the King signed papers, his sister Augusta blotting and folding them for him. "Three times he was obliged to stop and put his hand in hot water," noted Miss Clitherow. "He had the cramp so severe in his fingers."

When he signed the last he exclaimed, "Thank God it is done." He turned to his guest. "My dear Madam, when I began signing I had 48,000 signatures my poor brother should have signed. I did them all, but I made a determination never to lay my head on my pillow till I had signed everything I ought on the day, cost me what it might. It is cruel suffering, but thank God 'tis only cramp; my health never was better."

The Queen and Princess came and stood by him but said nothing. When he was in pain he liked perfect quiet and to be left alone.

The Queen went to London to hold a Drawing Room.

"Twelve hundred people were there," said Lady Bedingfeld, who stood on the second step of the throne behind the Duchess of Leeds. The Court lasted two and a half hours. The Queen confessed to her Woman of the Bedchamber that she had put a bandage round her knee to lessen the pain of bending it so often. Like the King she made no

complaint, though she sighed for the peaceful days at Bushey, which seemed a lifetime ago.

Lady Gore said, rather viciously, that she would rather be excluded from every place than that the least Etiquette should be omitted, "alluding to the Spirit of the time," said Lady Bedingfeld.

Monsieur de Talleyrand was there.

"Whenever I see Talleyrand I expect to smell sulphur and brimstone," said Lady Gore, who was evidently a very firm Tory.

With Talleyrand, of course, came the Duchesse de Dino, his charming niece—or was she his niece? Lord Glenbervie had said some rather shocking things about her years before, when she received her new title.

"Dino, if made two words of, Di-no, means, in French 'Say no,'." he explained, rather unnecessarily and incorrectly to a French-speaking generation, and the joke (if one) is that she has not been much used to say "No."

Queen Adelaide, who was making efforts to sort English sheep from English goats, could not investigate the morals of Ambassadresses. The Duchesse de Dino went to the Drawing Room and found it so long and fatiguing that "Mexico, Spain and Naples were successively placed *hors de combat*. The diplomatic ranks were so much thinned by these ladies fainting one after the other that one had to exert oneself more than usual. Madame de Lieven boldly seated herself on the steps of the throne, whence she passed into the King's room, where she had lunch. When she came back she told us she was neither tired nor hungry. She all but added that our legs should be rested because hers were, and our stomachs satisfied because hers had been stayed."

Madame de Dino, without a quiver, watched the Queen deal with the English "goats." Certain ladies had been told that they could not be received, but they stood on their rights as Peeresses.

"This is what happened," said the Duchesse. "I must observe that even in this the Queen showed her kindness of heart, for she pretended to be in a conversation with Princess Augusta. She did not interrupt her conversation as the ladies passed, and it was possible to think that they had passed unperceived and not insulted. I thought it very nice of the Queen."

The King looked pale and harassed, but he did not forget his old friends.

"I think there ought to be a collection made of all the sayings of our beloved Sovereign," said Creevey. "The King, you know, at the Queen's Drawing Room gives every lady two kisses, one on each cheek. A lady who used to live near them at Bushey was to present her daughter to the Queen. The girl who was following her mother was so frightened that she took no notice of the King, upon which he laid hold of her and taking her by the hand said:

'Oh! ho! is this the way you treat your country friends?'" and gave her two kisses.

"Billy also went to the Opera," Creevey gossiped. "And was everything one could wish; a more Wapping air I defy a King to have—his hair five times as full of powder as mine, and his seaman's gold lace cock and pinch hat was charming. He slept most of the Opera, never spoke to anyone or took the slightest interest in the concern. Victoria was in a box with the Duchess of Kent. She looked a very nice little girl indeed."

The King was terribly tired. He was also upset at receiving some marked copies of a *Penny Paper for the People*, which contained a recommendation to the Poles to assassinate the Emperor of Russia. He did not like the Emperor, but neither did he like assassination. He wished some of his Ministers were less Radical. He urged them to *reflect* upon their Bill and when they introduced it again to introduce such changes as "*without any essential departure* from the principle of the measure shall be calculated to conciliate the opponents of the Bill." "The times," he added mournfully, "are awful; and they seem to me to call upon those who love their country, and are attached to its constitution, to lay aside party feeling and prejudice."

He would have urged the same reflection on the Tories, but he was not allowed to hold any communication with his dear Duke. Grey was alarmed when he said that he "was unable to view the Bill as a great panacea—God grant it may be" but he could only "view it as an experiment."

"He is weakening. The camarilla is influencing him against the Bill," said the Radicals.

"It is the Queen and Lord'Howe," said Brougham.

Sir Herbert Taylor wrote to Earl Grey, "His Majesty is by no means well. This is the season at which his health is in general more or less affected."

Gout, a swelling in the neck, nervous depression, gave

him "an appearance of weakness and helplessness and of dejection."

Poor old Admiral! this was not at all what he had bargained for when he skipped so happily upon his throne. *John Bull* also disturbed him, for, to Lord Grey's annoyance, he always read that disreputable rag.

The King and Lord Grey were able to condole with each other, for Grey had "a pain in the head and face." He was also having as much trouble with his Cabinet as the King was having with his household.

"I paid a visit to Lady Grey in her opera-box," said Creevey. "She is always shy of giving political opinions except when alone, but upon my observing that from what I heard Bruffam must be in his tantrums at present, 'I believe,' she said, 'he is mad.'"

Grey turned for consolation to the King.

"When I said to Grey," Creevey went on, "that everything I heard of his royal master raised him higher in my opinion, he said:

'He *is* a prime fellow, is he not?'"

The Ministers hurried off to the country. Little Lord John went down to Devonshire. Sydney Smith saw him at Exeter where the people had assembled along the road to see him pass. They were terribly disappointed because he was so diminutive.

Sydney reassured them. "He was much larger before the Bill was thrown out, but was reduced by excessive anxiety about the people." This brought tears to their eyes, or so Sydney said.

The elections went to the Whigs. The Ministers came back professing to be delighted with the "enthusiasm" of the mob; the Tories were inclined to call this enthusiasm "violence." The King followed the course of events closely; he was disposed to agree with the Tory word as he read the newspaper accounts.

He detested violence; he saw more clearly than ever that there was bound to be a serious clash between the Commons and the Lords, and he dreaded and deplored it. He knew that Reform was necessary, but then so did the Tories; why should it not be a matter for negotiation rather than a fight? The idea of a coalition always appealed to him; it seemed so much the most sensible way to arrange important affairs.

His kindness and confidence in Grey had not weakened,

indeed he chose this moment to press the Garter on him, but he wanted him to try conciliation. Grey found him "out of spirits and uneasy" when he returned to town; he was disturbed at the extreme views expressed by some members of the Cabinet; the Lord Chancellor, of course, always worried him, but his particular anxiety was on account of Durham, for Durham had so much influence with Lord Grey.

The King wrote to his Prime Minister urging alterations in the Bill to conciliate the peers.

The Cabinet said that conciliating the Peers would mean losing the Commons.

Grey began to find the King difficult to "manage." Durham was more difficult still; in common with most of his colleagues his health was suffering through the constant strain; he was tormented with neuralgic pains in his head; he had some chronic liver trouble. His temper grew unbearable; he shouted his grievances to anyone who would listen; he had been wronged, neglected, the Privy Seal was an office unworthy of him; he ought to be raised from a Baron to an Earl.

Princess Lieven said, "They will try to worry Lord Grey to death with pin-pricks, and they might be physically successful, for he is the most *sensitive* man I know."

But Grey was gentle with Durham and excused his bitterness, for, in addition to his own ill-health, he was watching the fading of a dying child, that exquisite "Master Lambton" of Sir Thomas Lawrence's picture. Master Lambton was Grey's own favourite grandchild, the son of his most dearly loved Louisa, but Grey, having put family before duty most of his life, now thought that the magnitude of the task they had undertaken demanded that duty should come first; private grief must be pushed into the background.

The debates in the House were endless and wearing. Peel was furious at being kept from his wife; the opposition was not led by him; "I cannot go on staying here to fight the tedious battle," he said to his Julia. "They must choose some other leader if the House is to go on sitting much longer. I cannot remain to conduct the battle. I will abandon the Bill to its fate."

Sir Charles Wetherell was prepared to go on indefinitely; it seemed as if sheer staying power might defeat the Bill. The Tory poets took heart:

"Come listen, come listen, I'm going to sing,
A song that's much newer than 'God save the King,'
All about what I think of this wonderful Bill
Which hasn't passed yet. Can you guess when it will?
Derry down.

I hear it's to work us more wonders some day,
Than Harlequin's wand ever did in the play;
It's to make Kings and Queens out of Jack and of Jill;
Will it ever do this? Why! I don't think it will.
Derry down.

It's to make us new clothes, as I've heard people tell,
A shirt for myself and a bonnet for Nell;
A bonnet with ribbands, a shirt with a frill.
Will it come to be true? I'll be hanged if it will.
Derry down.

It's to heal all disorders, wherever it goes,
In the feet, in the hands, in the eyes, in the nose.
It's to cure gout and ague, instead of a pill.
Some folks say it won't, but Lord John says it will.
Derry down.

And now here's success to the ancient old cause,
Of the King and the People, the Land and the Laws;
And the Devil fly away with the Whigs and the Bill.
(Don't say I said it) I fancy he will.
Derry down."

Madame de Lieven made some curious comments: "On the Continent," she said, "the source of all Radical ideas are the schools, the universities and their students propagate republicanism; while in this country the only resistance which the proposals for reform have met with come from the three universities of the Empire, Oxford, Cambridge and Dublin."

The Duke wrote to her: "If those who guide us do not know how—or are unfortunately not able—to stop themselves, there will ensue troubles such as the world has never yet seen, and will in the end submerge everything."

It was not Madame de Lieven's trouble, but she concerned herself a good deal over it: "I could not forbear to say to Lord Grey that he would long for his enemies when he found himself face to face with his new friends."

It was very probable. The debates in the House dragged on through a hot summer "making people very impatient and irritable," said Peel.

The King had one agreeable day, at least; on June 18th he received from his dear Duke that little silken flag which

he paid as rent for Strathfield Saye. In return William gave his hero a sword "ornamented with devices the most elegant and appropriate." George would have given his own picture; William presented swords; Nelson had had one, and Collingwood, and now there was one for the hero of Waterloo. On the evening of Waterloo day, politics or no politics, the King went to dine with the Duke.

By July little Lord John looked ill, and "Aberdeen like death—an undoubted case of the English cholera."

As if there were not already plenty to bother the King, the cholera had come to England, stealing out from Russia through the Baltic ports. The Government had taken some precautions when the first cases occurred at Newcastle, but the doctors had not enough knowledge to do more than check its spread. By July it was in London, and panic was in the air.

Lady Holland was "in a terrible taking" about it, refused to eat any ice because someone had said that it was bad for cholera. She described all the precautionary measures she had taken, the baths, the apparatus for fumigation, the blankets, the mustard plasters, the drugs of every sort.

"You have forgotten the only thing that would be of any use," said Rogers.

"What is that?"

"A coffin."

Lady Holland fainted.

In the House they were still talking, but even the House must be disinfected, especially the terrible smoking-room:

> "The room, but I think I'll describe it in rhyme
> That smells of tobacco and chloride of lime.
> The smell of tobacco was always the same,
> But the chloride was brought since the cholera came."

As the weather grew hotter tempers grew worse.

"The rage of faction at the present moment exceeds anything that has been known in our day," said Macaulay. "Lord Mahon said to me yesterday that friendships of long standing were everywhere giving way, and that the schism between the reformers and the anti-reformers was spreading from the House of Commons into every private circle. . . . The scene of Tuesday night beggars description—a tremendous storm. Towards 8 in the morning the Speaker was almost fainting. Old Sir Thomas Baring sent for his razor, and Benett, the member for Wiltshire, for his night-

cap; they were both resolved to spend the whole day in the House rather than give way. If the Opposition had not yielded, in two hours half London would have been in Old Palace Yard."

The exhausted members of the Government exchanged confidences; Lord Althorp, who had once had horses waiting to carry him away as soon as the House rose, said mournfully that he never took exercise now; from his getting up till four o'clock he was engaged with the business of his office; at four he dined, went down to the House at five, and never stirred till the House rose, which was always after midnight. When he reached home he took a basin of arrowroot with a glass of sherry in it and went to bed, where he always dropped asleep in three minutes.

Stanley laughed at Althorp's arrowroot, and recommended his own supper, cold meat and warm negus.

Althorp said that he had only just got over his timidity about speaking.

Stanley said, "My throat and lips when I am going to speak are as dry as those of a man who is going to be hanged."

Preparations for the Coronation had to be made. The King thought he might very well do without the ceremony; the Prime Minister thought not.

"Let it be cheaper than the last," said the King with a sigh.

It WAS cheaper, but the people, who should have been pleased with their economical King, were not; they called it a "Half Crownation" and considered that they had been cheated of a free show. The Navy enjoyed it; all hands got extra grog.

It was not a very impressive affair; the King lacked dignity, but "the Queen," said everyone, "was PERFECT." The Duke of Devonshire looked as if he came to be crowned instead of his master.

"I never saw so princely a manner and air," said Macaulay. "The Chancellor looked like Mephistopheles behind Margaret in the church. The ceremony was much too long and some parts of it carelessly performed. The Archbishop mumbled."

The Coronation provided a new subject of conversation, however, which was a merciful change from the perpetual talk about the Bill; Madame de Dino was heartily glad of it.

"The only news in London," said she on September 11th,

" is that on the occasion of the Coronation the King allowed the Bishops to lay aside their ugly wigs. This has made them quite unrecognisable for the last week, for they were in such a hurry to avail themselves of the permission that they did not allow time for their hair to grow again. The result was that they cut a very odd figure, and were the delight of all the guests at the King's dinner. Everyone is still talking of nothing but the Coronation; the Duke of Devonshire's return on foot, all splashed with mud; the acts, words and appearance of everyone are discussed, embellished, distorted and reviewed with more or less charity; that is to say with no charity at all. The Queen alone is left untouched; everyone says that she was perfect and they are quite right."

" A very odd people, the English," Madame de Lieven and Madame de Dino were agreed.

Conversation soon veered back to the Bill. On September 22nd Creevey wrote: " Johnny has taken up his child in his arms, and followed by a rare tribe of godfathers old Brougham approached us with the proper dignity and taking it into his arms carried it to his place and told their lordships the name given to it by the Commons."

The debates in the Commons were no more than trivial skirmishes compared with the battle which now opened in the Lords.

Earl Grey's beloved grandchild was being buried when he rose to move the second reading of the Bill, on October 3, 1831, in one of the " most memorable speeches ever delivered in the House of Lords." Grief, and despair for Durham, did not turn him one inch from his path.

Brougham's speech was almost as memorable, a masterpiece of oratory which enthralled his audience, until he reached the climax: " I warn you, I implore you, yea, on my bended knees, I supplicate you. Reject not this Bill."

He sank upon his knees. The House stared. Campbell said: " He continued for some time as if in prayer, but his friends, alarmed for him, lest he should be suffering from the effects of the mulled port, picked him up and placed him safely on the Woolsack."

The debate dragged on as it had done in the Commons.

" What will the peers do? " asked all England. At Crockford's, in the supper-room, at the French hazard table, at Boodle's and at White's, and, of course, at Brooks's, at the Travellers' and at the Athenæum, before Apsley

House and in the City, up and down the roads and in the villages echoed the question: "What will the Peers do?"

The Tories were gloomy. "There will be a creation of peers," said the Whigs. Mr. Macaulay fathered a little squib:

> "What though now opposed I be
> Twenty peers shall carry me.
> If twenty won't, thirty will,
> For I am His Majesty's bouncing Bill."

"The King's Bill. God bless him! God bless the two Bills," said the people of England.

In the Upper House eloquence had never reached so high a pitch. About six in the morning of October 8th the Lords went to the fateful division.

"I stood in a group with Grey and Holland," said Campbell. "The latter was a little excited, but Grey was tranquil and smiling, as if they had been dividing on a road bill.

There was no cheering as with us in the Commons upon a great division, and no stranger would have imagined that a measure was decided that might occasion the land to be deluged in blood."

There was a majority of forty-one against the Bill.

The Lords trooped quietly out into the dull morning. Lord Grey sent a note to the King.

King William answered: "The majority of forty-one was so great as to preclude the possibility of a creation of peers to carry the Bill, but that he earnestly desired the Ministers to remain in office."

The week after the rejection of the Bill was alarming. The Funds fell at once; the journals appeared in mourning borders; in many towns the shops were shut and the bells were tolled.

The ladies, those not too deeply engaged in politics, were vastly entertained.

"Majesty (Coke of Norfolk) vowing vengeance against the Lords and Tories," Eliza Coke wrote to her husband. "Then ending with a prayer of Christian charity for their forgiveness. So delighted with O'Connell's saying, 'It was of no use for a Tory to read History as they never profited by it.' . . . I, even I, actually read the Debates for my amusement, they are so ineffably absurd. Poor Little Lord John ready to cry, quoting Johnson's dictionary in his defence; Sir Charles Wetherell re-quoting Dr. Johnson's assertion that 'he believed the Devil was the first Whig,'

and that vulgar Hume, in a rage, assuring them that he 'had forgotten more Latin than any of the Honourable Members had ever known.' It is really too disgraceful to have both Houses of Parliament wrangling like a set of silly schoolboys at such a moment. They require some ladies to teach them DIGNITY."

The people of England did not want dignity; they wanted the Bill. In London there was a little of the usual window breaking, but Peel's "Bloody Gang" kept order. In the rest of the country there were no "Bobbies," and the people of England were mad with rage. The Tory peers went in danger of their lives, but the chief fury of the mob was directed against the Bishops. "Those villains of the Church," as Creevey had called them on another occasion.

The Bishop of Exeter (that villain Phillpotts) got a grim enjoyment out of being burnt in effigy on Guy Fawkes' day. Sydney Smith said that His Grace of Exeter was so like Judas Iscariot that he now firmly believed in the Apostolic succession.

The Duke of Wellington received an anonymous placard which he sent to the Secretary of State:

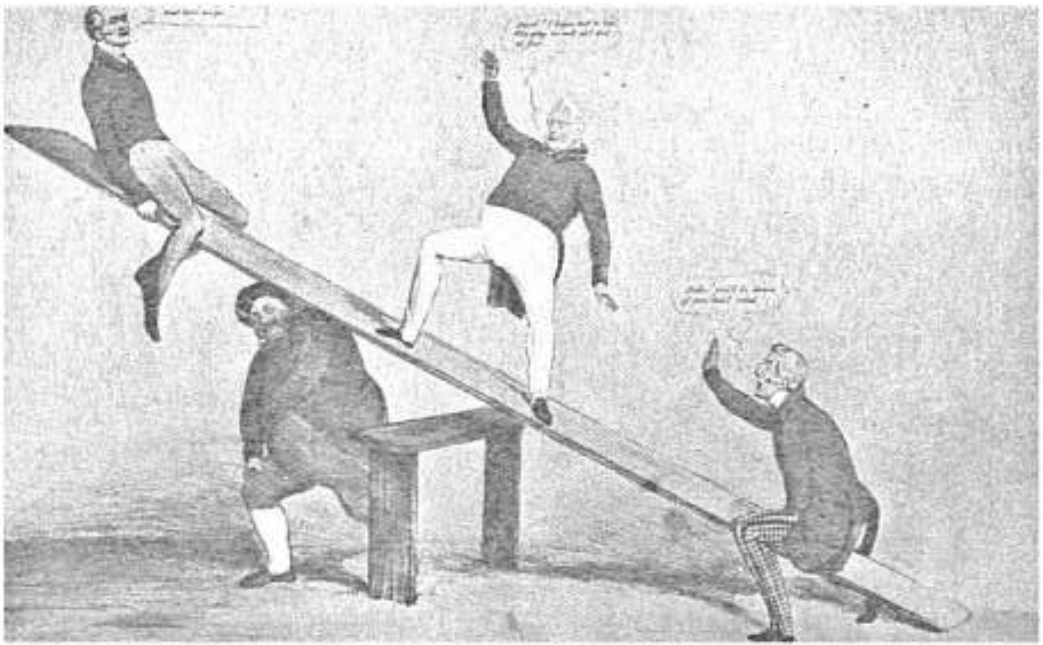
"WHAT OUGHT TO BE DONE WITH THE THINGS CALLED LORDS.

. . . It may be said that the whole body of titled noodles and noble usurpers are not opposed to Reform, and that only 199 are the enemies of the People. Ye blind, humbugged fellow citizens who dream such a dream, believe us when we tell you that everything called Lord is inimical to Reform."

Tom Moore overheard the *Musings of an Unreformed Peer*.

> "Of all the odd plans of this monstrously queer age
> The oddest is that of reforming the peerage;
> Just as if we, great dons, with a title and star,
> Did not get on exceedingly well as we are,
> And perform all the functions of noodles, by birth,
> As completely as any born noodles on earth."

The placards were even more uncomplimentary to the Bishops. . . . "Those holy knaves are, and always have been, the props of villainy. They are pestiferous members of Society. . . . They must be unmitred and sent to preach the Gospel at Botany Bay."



H.R.

UP AND DOWN OF POLITICAL SEE-SAW

Grey. King William. Wellington.

Sydney Smith, who could never be a Bishop because of his witty tongue, put Taunton into a good humour by pointing out the resemblance between the Duke of Wellington and Mrs. Partington, who swept back the Atlantic with her mop.

"The Atlantic was roused; Mrs. Partington's spirit was up. But I need not tell you that the contest was unequal. The Atlantic Ocean beat Mrs. Partington."

The Press and cartoonists sent the merry tale to less good-humoured districts, but some of them could not be calmed, even by laughter. At Birmingham a hundred thousand voices sang:

"God is our Guide. No swords we draw.
We kindle not war's battle fires,
By union, justice, reason, law,
We claim the birthright of our sires."

They bound themselves by a declaration that unless the Bill passed they would pay no taxes.

The Duke of Wellington was told that they were marching on London. "Where will they get shoes?" he asked.

At Nottingham the mob burned the castle; at Derby they besieged the jail and released the prisoners. At Darlington Lord Tankerville narrowly escaped with his life; Lord Londonderry was attacked and left for dead. The Bishops were invisible; but the Bishop of Worcester at least heard of the epithets chalked upon his walls.

The country, amazed and shaken from end to end, seemed indeed on the brink of revolution; even the Tories were begging the Whigs to stay in office and try to calm their supporters.

The King was reported to have burst into poetry, a couplet produced, doubtless, with as much pain as one of Rogers's:

"I consider Dissolution
Tantamount to Revolution."

Sir Charles Wetherell posted down to Bristol, of which turbulent city he was Recorder. Bristol, to a man, was for Reform, and Sir Charles, because of his breeches as much as because of his eloquence, was in the forefront of the Tories. Bristol revolted; the Mansion House was burnt, and the Recorder prudently vanished through a window, and stole quietly out of the city. But there was no appeasing the

mob now; they overturned the constables; the soldiers were called out, but showed no zeal in the Tory cause, and were sent back to their barracks. The rioters broke into Bridewell, the new city jail, the county jail, and released the prisoners, and set fire to the buildings. The Bishop's Palace, the Custom House, the Excise Office went up in flames. The Cathedral was in danger, but was saved by a staunch band of volunteers.

A night which Bristol was long to remember closed down on the city, a Sunday night, wet and cold; the soldiers were invisible, were reported to be on the side of the rebels; the streets were full of rioters; in Queen's Square they were drinking as at a fair; the criminals were free and the flames and smoke of the fired buildings were hanging over the city like a pall. The civil authorities were powerless; the soldiers seemed paralysed, and there was, here in Bristol, something which England had never witnessed before, a crowd of sober, honest citizens, to whom law and order had always been household gods, watching a city go up in flames and not lifting a finger to prevent it—a Revolution indeed!

The anarchy lasted three days, and then the soldiers restored order, when their Colonel had been pushed aside by a volunteer of junior rank. The authorities heard with relief that only twelve lives had been lost, and even the rioters were frightened.

Bristol was all the Revolution there would be, but the cry of the People was not silenced.

"The Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill."

Some of the Tories wavered; negotiations opened, advances were made by some of the more moderate men, Lords Harrowby and Wharncliffe, instigated, it would appear from his memoirs, by no less a person than Charles Greville. Perhaps they believed that success might crown their efforts; the King certainly did, but neither Earl Grey nor the Duke of Wellington shared his faith, and into his pleasant relations with the Prime Minister and the Duke of Wellington there stole impatience and irritation. He was a reasonable man, why could not they be reasonable, too?

Lord John Russell widened the gap between Grey and his King. A report reached William that Lord John had written to the Birmingham Political Union a letter in which he said: "It is impossible that the whisper of a faction should prevail against the voice of a nation."

The King was angry; he was daily preaching conciliation to his Ministers; he believed that, with patience, the waverers could be won.

He quoted Bolingbroke in his letter to Grey of October 17, 1831: "As every new modification in a scheme of Government and of national policy is of great importance, and requires more and deeper consideration than the warmth and hurry, the rashness of party conduct admit, the duty of a Prince seems to require that he should render by his influence the proceedings more *orderly* and more *deliberate*, even when he approves the end to which they are directed."

The negotiations with the waverers came to nothing; the Tories had been as sceptical as the Whigs. The Duke of Wellington wrote to Lord Falmouth on December 4th: "At length the negotiation has been broken off. I never knew exactly upon what points it turned, nor do I know for what reason it has been broken off. I believe that it was undertaken to satisfy the King, and I think it most probable that it will be followed by a creation of Peers. . . . The King never reads. . . ."

The King was reading his *Patriot King*:

"When parties are divided by different notions and principles concerning some particular ecclesiastical or civil institutions, the constitution which should be their rule, must be that of the Prince. He *may* and he *ought* to show his dislike or his favour, as he judges the constitution may be hurt or improved, by one side or the other."

This rioting, this encouragement of rioting by the Whigs was endangering the constitution. The King was very worried indeed. He turned over a page:

"To espouse no party, but to govern like the common father of his people, is so essential to the character of a *Patriot King* that he who does otherwise forfeits the title. It is the peculiar privilege and glory of this character, that princes who maintain it, and they alone, are so far from the necessity, that they are not exposed to the temptation, of *governing by a party*; which must always end in the government of a faction; the faction of the *Prince* if he has ability, the faction of his *ministers* if he has not, and either one way or other in the oppression of the people. For *faction* is to *party* what the *superlative* is to the *positive*; *party* is a political evil, and *faction* is the worst of all parties. The true image of a free people, governed by a *Patriot King* is that of a patriarchal family where the head and all the

members are united by one common interest, and animated by one common spirit. . . .

Instead of *abetting* the divisions of his people, he will endeavour to *unite* them, and to be himself the centre of their union; instead of putting himself at the head of *one party* in order to govern his *people*, he will put himself at the head of his *people* in order to govern, or more properly to subdue *all parties*."

THAT was the King's ideal of Government. The Whigs would sacrifice *anything* to party. Why could not Lord Grey modify his Bill sufficiently to induce the Tories to let it pass? There was the Catholic Bill, the Tories had been induced to let that pass. The Whigs were in too much of a hurry; also, and this was more alarming, Grey was allowing himself to be stampeded against his own judgment by the wild men of his party. He took up the last letter from Grey:

"From the want of timely correction of many causes of just complaint the Government has been driven to concessions to public feeling which may be found very inconvenient in future."

Driven to? What kind of a Prime Minister was this?

Conciliation was the right method; the King was sure of it. He had the Archbishop of Canterbury to stay, to see if a little personal influence could lessen his hostility to the Bill; he found the Archbishop "afraid of committing himself." The Bishop of Worcester was also told that the King wished the Bill to pass.

There was, regrettably, some ill-temper at home to add to the King's worries. The Whigs had insisted on a scapegoat to pay for the leakage of information from the Court; they had chosen the Queen's Chamberlain, Lord Howe. Queen Adelaide was attached to him; she said he was invaluable to her as a guide on points of etiquette; he was, besides, a lifelong friend of the royal family; his office was in no way a political one; his dismissal would be an insult to a personal friend as well as to the Queen. The King pointed it out to Lord Grey, who, regretfully, was firm.

The ladies of the royal family and of the Court, who had been silent for so long, grew vocal; into the King's ears they poured their grievances and their Tory views. The Queen, possibly, expressed herself with some freedom about the behaviour of Lady Grey. The Fitzclarences tattled;

the Press took up the tale: "The Poor King was being bullied by his German *frow*."

The King, who had been so magnanimous about all attacks upon himself, was enraged at this insult to the Queen. The attacks upon her in the papers, notably *The Times*, did nothing to calm him. Brougham was responsible, he was sure.

He spoke to Grey on the subject and the Prime Minister promised to use his influence with the Chancellor and *The Times*—but, though the abuse abated, it did not cease.

The Queen found herself increasingly unpopular when she drove abroad; once her carriage was stopped and surrounded by a shouting mob. She was much agitated; she was sure her fate was to be that of Marie Antoinette; the King heard the tumult and hurried to meet her, deeply concerned on her account and enraged at this unmerited attack upon an innocent woman. The Queen WAS NOT ALLOWED to talk politics to him. The Whigs, though they were told so by everyone about the Court, were sceptical.

The King was beginning to dislike the Whigs; the Duke would not have allowed these attacks upon the Queen to pass unpunished. Still, he clung to his determination to be neutral, and, having sent a message to Lord Howe to "regulate his opposition to the Bill as not to compromise the King and Queen," told Grey that he had done so.

Next morning *The Times* stated: "A certain Earl has received a severe rebuke from the King on account of his continued meddling and universal chatter against the Reform Bill . . . a sign of His Majesty's own decided adherence to this great measure."

The King was not only enraged but distressed; he had imagined that Grey, though a politician, was a gentleman; this evidence of his connexion with the revolutionary Press moved the King to tears.

Still, he was determined that his personal feelings should not influence him in a public matter. Since someone, he could guess who, had inflamed the Whig press against the Queen because of her Tory Chamberlain, he would give her enemies no handle of complaint. Howe, in a friendly manner, was induced to resign his office, though not his friendship.

The latter was fatal; it was one of the few occasions when the Queen showed herself indiscreet. Without salary or official position Earl Howe continued to attend her. The

King thought this compromise should satisfy everyone; he would have been at once amused and indignant had he known what people were saying. The Queen seemed such an unlikely subject for scandal.

Subtle minds could not comprehend simplicity; Brougham distrusted her, and Princess Lieven distilled the same poison for Earl Grey:

"The Queen is a far cleverer woman than people suppose," said she. "She has great determination."

Since Princess Lieven and the Grey ladies were so much occupied with politics, they could not believe that the Queen did not share that interest of theirs. Madame de Lieven did not dislike the Queen, but the Grey ladies did, and were treated with an icy chill when they went to Court.

The Queen's friends were very indignant at the insults she received. "We are often annoyed at the unaccountable falsehoods put about of our dear Queen," said Miss Clitherow. "The world now says that she and the King are on such bad terms that she is going to Germany. To Princess Augusta, however, she said, 'I am very unwell, my mother is ill, and my sister not coming, but my comfort and consolation is the extreme kindness of the King. Nothing can exceed it.' She spoke much of the insult to her of dismissing Lord Howe, but what hurt her most was her fear that the King should be blamed."

"I do believe her excellent and good," added Miss Clitherow. "She said, 'I must have my own opinion but I do not talk to the King about it. It would only make him unhappy and could do no good.'"

The ladies of the Reform party allowed themselves to talk of the Queen with a freedom in which their rage outran their discretion; even some of their own party were horrified, notably Lady Cowper, to whom Madame de Lieven wrote:

"Do you know that Lady Grey is a very horrid woman, passionate, bitter, Jacobinical, anything you like to say bad. She hates the Queen and says all the ill of her she can; she nearly quarrelled with me because I would not believe that Lord Howe was *too* devoted to her. She says that Lady Howe is always in tears. First of all it is ridiculous, secondly it is infamous. The wife of a Minister of the King trying to force a foreign Ambassadress to believe that the Queen is unworthy of respect. . . . When she saw that I did not believe her, she told me to ask my servants. I replied that I never gossiped with them."

These women! It might be Lady Grey's fault, but the Queen's manner to Lord Grey was so chilly that the poor King made a point of keeping them apart.

The Court was "rather pensive" at the dismissal of Lord Howe, according to Lady Bedingfeld, who was in waiting. There is not much sign of depravity in the scene which she paints:

"The evenings are very pleasant and social. The Queen and the ladies work. There is one card table and the Princess Augusta often plays on the piano the whole evening, always by heart; she is an excellent performer and plays every old air and every new one that can be asked for. She has composed several very pretty things. Lady Mary Taylor sings some things very agreeably, but her voice is not certain, often out of tune, and the King amuses himself with making Lord Mayo sing Irish songs; he has no voice and sings quite out of tune, but the King likes to play upon him, tho' he looks very grave all the time."

If the shade of Prinney haunted Windsor he must have been enchanted!

There was only one alarming item in the news these guileless ladies sent from Windsor: "Lady Sophia Sidney sat by the King and talked a great deal as she usually does."

From the Sidneys the news went from Windsor to the Tories. A note from her reached Wellington, by way of Lord Strangford: "The game is not *yet* lost."

The Duke was not very hopeful about the King; he wrote to the Duke of Buckingham early in January, 1832: ". . . The great mischief of all is the weakness of our poor King, who cannot or will not see his danger, or the road out of it when it is pointed out to him, and who allows himself to be deceived and trifled with by his Ministers."

The Queen agreed with him but did not say so; she liked Lord Howe but she was entirely occupied with her husband. In one year he seemed to have aged ten, so heavily did responsibility weigh upon him. Her whole endeavour was, not to influence him, but to divert his mind from politics.

"Nothing," said the King irritably, when Grey came with fresh complaints and innuendoes, "could be more cautious and guarded than the Queen's conduct for months past. You must know the tricks of the papers too well to be affected by their allegations."

If Grey were not himself in league with *The Times*, he

knew who was and could have stopped the leakage of private information to the Press. It is improbable that Grey was personally involved in the persecution of the Queen but with his usual indolence he took no effective steps to prevent it, and with his misplaced sense of humour, his tendency to prattle in the drawing-rooms of clever women and, injudiciously, to private friends like Creevey, who *could* not keep things to themselves, he was probably the source of many of the ridiculous stories which were abroad. The Grey ladies never lost an opportunity of poking fun at the Queen.

The King found, to his delight, that there were still chivalrous gentlemen in Parliament. The Earl of Winchelsea, an eccentric, of course, since he had ideas of improving the lot of the poor, and had country estates which might have served as models, made an indignant speech in the Lords.

"The Queen's private character has gained, as it justly entitles her to, the esteem and attachment of this great nation. Would to God I knew who this vile slanderer is . . . the cowardly detractor should never live to utter another vile slander."[1]

Tempers were running very high. The Whiggish Duke of Gloucester grew nervous.

"This Bill will certainly be the means of depriving you of your Crown," he said unhappily.

"Very well, very well," said the King irritably.

"But, sir, your Majesty's head may be in it," wailed the Duke.[2]

The new Reform Bill, which differed in no essential from the first one, was carried in the Commons and went to the Upper House. Would they throw it out again? Grey feared so. There *must* be new peers.

On January 3rd, 1832, Earl Grey had a momentous interview with the King, in which he said that he had very little hope of the Bill passing, and put before him the horrid alternatives—revolution, destruction of the House of Lords, perhaps of the throne.

"I saw nothing left but a creation of peers," said the harassed Prime Minister, "though I considered this in itself as a great evil exposed to great and weighty objections."

This was hardly reassuring; the King was extremely prejudiced against the suggestion of making new peers

[1] *Morning Herald*, October 5, 1831. [2] J. W. Croker.

and so was Grey himself. There *must* be some alternative to so great an evil.

"IF such a creation were made," said the King, "it must be regulated in this manner; first by calling up eldest sons, next collateral heirs, and third, Scotch and Irish peers, so that the whole peerage should not be augmented." Nothing would induce him to consent to the advancement of persons "who had been forward in agitating the country," and, in any case, he reserved his decision. In the meantime he requested each member of the Cabinet to present his own opinion in writing and his own reasons for the step.

The King was not unreasonable; he knew that many members of the Cabinet agreed with him. Grey himself acknowledged that: "It is a question which goes to the absolute destruction of the House of Lords, an event which I certainly did not contemplate in endeavouring to reform the House of Commons."

Lansdowne objected to the step and so did Palmerston; Melbourne, in his lazy way, was averse to it.

The King worried himself into illness; he had a cold; he did not sleep well. His drowsiness exceeded anything Grey had seen before. He was tormented to death by all the people around him. He would not, knowingly, listen, but the Tory clamour penetrated his attention against his will. Their arguments *were* sound.

The Duke of Wellington had said: "I have no notion that the House of Lords will escape. The Bill will overturn the Constitution; and if the destruction of the House of Lords does not precede its becoming the law of the land, it will follow it. I prefer that the Bill should be carried by a *coup d'état* to the degradation of the House of Lords by the change of opinion of its members."

The King did not want a *coup d'état*; he wanted some of the Tories, not to change, but to *modify* their opinions.

He invited some moderate Tories to the Pavilion to meet Earl Grey.

"The party at the Pavilion to meet Grey," wrote Lord Lyndhurst, who could hardly be considered a "moderate," "consists of the Bristols, the Wharncliffes, the Beverleys ! ! ! a very happy arrangement. Rumour says that '*les bâtards*' are *all* to be included in the peers, but you know how to value the rumours of Brighton."

The King could not persuade the Tories to be conciliatory, any more than he could move the Whigs to give way. He

was full of despair that they all put party before the country and the constitution which he was intent on safeguarding as a Patriot King should do. Once more he set aside his private prejudices, and, intent on acting as a constitutional King, gave a qualified assent to his Prime Minister's proposal to create the necessary number of peers though he contested that " the character and integrity of the higher branch of the Legislature are thus sacrificed to the Reform of the Lower."

The Whigs were jubilant and celebrated their victory by fresh encroachments on the liberty of the King. Earl Grey hinted that he should refrain from receiving such of his private friends as were *suspected* of having Tory sympathies. He was to have less liberty than any man in his realm.

The Queen's detestation of Whig violence was at last undermining her discretion. Earl Howe wrote to the Duke of Wellington, enclosing a letter he had received from the Queen, and, in a covering letter, talking of " his unfortunate master," and " Is it not frightful to see him acting as he does, while at the same time he detests his agents."

The Queen said: " His eyes are open and see the great difficulties in which he is placed. . . . How far he is right or not I cannot pretend to say, for I do not understand these important things."

Earl Howe was certainly not a discreet person to occupy an important position in so harassed a Court. He tried to poison the Duke of Wellington's mind against Sir Herbert Taylor, of whom he was obviously jealous. Nothing could exceed the exquisite discretion of Sir Herbert's share in the Grey correspondence. He was supposed to be against the Bill, but it would be impossible to deduce the fact from his letters. It was reported that George III had said to him when he first received his appointment:

" Remember, sir, you are to be my pen and my eye, but nothing else. That if you should presume but once to remember what you hear, read or write, to have an opinion of your own, or to give any advice, we should part for ever."

Things had altered a little since then, but even under an easier King, Sir Herbert remembered his instructions: " He still keeps up the appearance of the greatest reserve and the most profound discretion," said the Duchesse de Dino.

No doubt Earl Howe was given to jealousy and tattle.

Sir Herbert Taylor very justly explained the King's situation:

"His Majesty's society and intercourse are indiscriminate, and in his own family (I mean among his children) there is much difference of opinion. Others have approached him lately who would not scruple to say that His Majesty appeared low, and to view with alarm the present state of things, and that some expression dropped (and made the most of) betrayed his apprehension. All this may, and would naturally, have its effect; but I do not see how it can be avoided; and I am quite certain that His Majesty *has* not, upon one occasion, uttered a word that could be construed into want of confidence in his Ministers, or to justify a doubt of their sincerity."

If Tory influence was being brought to bear upon the King, influence, equally alarming, was being brought to bear on Earl Grey by the Holland House circle. To a letter of Grey's of February 10th his son appends a note:

"I well remember how very strong was the pressure about this time put upon him to induce him to have immediate recourse to a large creation of peers. . . . Sydney Smith, after urging that my father should either immediately create Peers or resign, declares it to be the general opinion of his friends that this is the course he ought to take, and says: 'Mackintosh, Whishaw, Robert Smith, Rogers, Luttrell, Jeffrey, Sharpe, Ord, Macaulay, Fazakerley, Lord Ebrington—where will you find a better jury or one more able and more willing to consider every point connected with the honour, character and fame of Lord Grey?'"

Government by reviewers and poets? Who should be the best judge of his own honour? Both the King and Lord Grey might with equal justice ask the same question: "Who is governing the country?"

Tempers were growing frayed; the King was very "low"; poor Sir Herbert was suffering from constant headaches; Grey was "perfectly unequal to any exertion."

The King was trying to believe in Grey. On March 16th Sir Herbert wrote to Earl Grey: "that the King was very pleased that in a private letter to a friend (Althorp) which he had been shown 'you gave him credit for the firm, unequivocal and uncompromising support which he had given you throughout.'"

In that same letter to Althorp Grey had said, "I confess my extreme repugnance to the measure (of creating peers)

makes me distrust my own judgment. . . . It is a measure of extreme violence; there is no precedent for it in our history, the case of Queen Anne's Peers not being in point; it is a certain evil, dangerous itself as a precedent, and with all these objections in my opinion very uncertain of success."

Yet this was the measure he was urging upon the King, the King being quite aware of these sentiments of his; is it any wonder that the King objected to it?

Throughout April there was a growing note of exasperation. At first twenty-one peers had been suggested. The number had now grown to fifty or sixty. The Cabinet agreed to accept the reservations insisted upon by the King in January, yet on April 6th Grey calmly sent lists of prospective peers which contained the names "of commoners who would make a permanent addition to the Peerage" which he acknowledged "not to be consistent with the condition which your Majesty had prescribed as irrevocable."

His Majesty, after reading the lists, wrote, on April 7th, "It is impossible that His Majesty should not be very much struck by the extraordinary difference in the lists of the eldest sons now submitted to him and those communicated to him on the 9th of January last."

Lord Grey replied that names had been withdrawn (1) because they could not be depended upon, (2) their opinions were averse, (3) their fathers objected. His own son, Howick, came under the last (*a*) because he wished him to learn his business in the Commons, (*b*) because he could not afford to give him what would be necessary as a Peer.

The King replied drily that as to (3) "he has a right to expect from others a sacrifice of feeling or scruples, or pride, corresponding with that which he has himself made."

On April 16th the King's cordiality to his Minister dropped to zero. Lord Munster sent one of his secret, hurried little notes to the Duke of Wellington: "I have just seen the King and he had *not* any answer yet from Lord Grey, and nothing whatever passed between him and the King. Pray, for God's sake, have Peel ready."

It was not the Bill which had tried the King's patience to breaking point, but a matter of foreign policy and the King's constant dislike of France and fears that England would be drawn into too close a connexion with her and involved on her account in disputes with other nations; the King did not want continental complications to add to

complications at home. His Ministers, at least his Foreign Minister, kept important letters from him; he thought he ought to be shown *all* letters of importance which dealt with foreign affairs; he was quite in the dark as to what Palmerston was doing.

Lord Grey professed to be astonished and pained at this *sudden* lack of confidence. The King said it was not sudden; he had written on the subject to Lord Palmerston several times before. Taylor confirmed that, but owned that the King was suffering from "nervous excitement."

The papers made the most of it. On April 19th Taylor wrote to Grey:

"His Majesty is perfectly aware of the assiduity and the malice with which reports of a change of opinion and others injurious to himself and prejudicial to his Ministers are circulated, and equally aware of the mischievous paragraphs which are introduced into the papers, *many of which are too absurd to merit notice*. . . . His Majesty cannot prevent this and he believes this evil to have prevailed at all times and under all circumstances more or less. . . . However he may regret and may admit the inconvenience of such a state of things, and its consequences, His Majesty cannot prevent them nor place restrictions on the inventive powers of some of those who may approach him, although he may take good care to give them no ground for their assertions. . . . I have read the King the paragraph from the *Standard*. . . . His Majesty would be surprised at their impudence, if he had not long since ceased to consider the press (the newspaper family) in any other light than as the vehicle of all that is false and infamous."

It seemed as if a crisis might be averted in spite of all these cross-currents of irritation; the Waverers decided to vote for the Bill. It passed its second reading in the Lords on April 14th by a majority of nine, but on May 7th, Lord Lyndhurst's amendment in committee to postpone the consideration of the disenfranchising clauses of the Bill till after the enfranchising clauses had been taken upset "the apple cart."

The amendment was carried by 35.

Lord Grey was enraged. He considered it a plot of Lords Harrowby and Wharncliffe concocted with Lyndhurst and Ellenborough and sanctioned by the Duke, and "The Bishop of Worcester voted against us," he added bitterly almost as if he blamed the King for the Bishop's misdeeds.

A minute of Cabinet, the Duke of Richmond alone dissenting, said bluntly "Peers or Resignation."

Grey and Brougham posted down to Windsor to urge the King to make new peers—fifty of them.

The King had stiffened in his resistance; this was a matter of principle; to swamp the Lords to please the Commons was not his idea of the duty of a Patriot King; it was unconstitutional; it was without precedent; Grey himself said that it was very uncertain of success; there *must* be compromise and conciliation; Grey was a weak man, allowing himself to be overruled by extremists—Durham and Lord John.

The King was not the only person who thought Durham was exercising too much influence.

"For the moment Durham governs England," Madame de Lieven wrote to her brother. "The man's vanity is proverbial; he is the haughtiest aristocrat, only yesterday he assured me that he traced his descent from the Kings of England. . . . The King in speaking of him never alludes to him otherwise than as Robert le Diable."

Robert le Diable was usurping the Prime Minister's office and seemed quite ready to usurp the King's. The King decided that he would not abdicate for Durham; there should be no peers except those named in his original letter of consent.

Munster sent off a note: "My dear Duke, Pray *depend* upon the King. He said in reference to something I said, 'Why you know very well, George, as well as I do, that I never will make Peers.' He is buoyed up with the hope of Peel's aid in case of difficulty. I only write this because the Duke of Buckingham says the partisans of the Whigs are going about saying the King has 'given way.'"

The King would rather lose his crown than tamper with the Constitution: "A Patriot King will defeat party in defence of the constitution on some occasions; and lead men from acting with a party spirit to act with a national spirit on others," said Bolingbroke. The King wished he were not so old and so tired; he never cared much for politics or politicians; give him men of action like Nelson and the Duke—those he could understand and trust.

Though he did not give an absolute refusal to his Prime Minister and Lord Chancellor, the King's manner was distinctly cold. He even forgot his usual hospitality; the

Prime Minister and Lord Chancellor turned their faces back to London—unwarmed and unfed.

Lord Grey might have forgone his dinner, but not the Lord Chancellor. They dined at an inn at Hounslow, on mutton chops. Brougham demanded kidneys, but Lord Grey murmured that he did not care for kidneys.

For some odd reason this dinner almost crowded the King's letter out of the public interest next day; the newspapers and the cartoonists were enchanted with it; Lord Brougham was pictured demanding kidneys while Lord Grey mournfully ate his mutton chops.

The King's letter arrived next day. His Majesty, after giving due consideration, came to "the painful resolution of accepting their resignations," but he requested that "they will respectively continue in the discharge of their official functions until he shall be enabled to make due arrangements for the public service, and that they will thus relieve him from the immediate difficulty in which he is placed by an event for which he was altogether unprepared."

Accompanying the official letter was a note to Grey dropping the formal mode of address:

"My dear Lord," William said, "I cannot answer the minute of Cabinet which you left with me yesterday afternoon, without expressing to you individually, the sincere and heartfelt regret with which I have made up my mind to an alternative which must have the effect of depriving me of your valuable services and of interrupting that intercourse from which I have derived so much satisfaction, etc. etc.

I am, my dear Lord,
Yours very sincerely,
WILLIAM, R."

There was no such cordiality for the Lord Chancellor.

Mr. Creevey was upset:

"Ladies, I have lost my Tower. *C'en est fait de nous.* Dead as mutton every man John of us, so help me Jingo," he wrote mournfully to his stepdaughter. "Our beloved Billy cuts a damnable figure in this business. He permitted the Duke of Cumberland to tell his friends that he would make no peers, and then the rats were in their old ranks again. . . . Our perfidious Billy was the outside of graciosity to Lord Grey at the Levee, and said that George II could not have felt more bitterly at parting from Sir Robert Walpole

than he did at parting from Lord Grey. Bruffam said the King had implored him not to leave him. Bruffam said it was most distressing to his feelings to be urged to separate himself from Lord Grey, with whose fate his own was irrevocably fixed."

Grey must have been extremely astonished to hear about this. The kidneys at Hounslow must have stimulated the Lord Chancellor's imagination to even more than its customary flights.

It was known that the King had approached the Tories; Lord Lyndhurst had been with him. The Duke was quite willing to introduce some measure of reform; he had grown resigned to the idea—indeed for some months past he had seemed more concerned about the Game Laws[1] than about Reform.

He wrote to Lady Shelley: "The Game Act has produced exactly the effect that I expected it would. Poaching all over the country has increased ten-fold, particularly poaching with violence. . . . I certainly will no longer preserve game. What do your political economists, who discovered that poaching would be prevented because gentlemen would undersell poachers, say, now that the poulterers in London refuse to buy pheasants killed by the gun? They must have been snared in order to suit their customers! Very soon they will require that they should all be hen pheasants snared, and soon after that they will have none at all!"

The Duke of Rutland mournfully endorsed this view: "The whole Act is based on a false philanthropy," said he.

The Tories were jubilant when they heard that the Grey Government had fallen. "I can't make out what *The Times* means by turning against its darling Bill," said one.

All the same it was quite evident that there must be some kind of reform.

"Unless some kind of Reform Bill is passed this autumn, a bill which *ought to satisfy* those who don't want plunder, it is all over. . . . In this part of the country (Sussex) no one is for the Bill, I believe," said Lady Shelley to Mrs. Arbuthnot. "Yet all are in favour of *some* reform. Apropos of this Reform Bill, I have received the following:

[1] The Game Act of 1831 abolished the qualifications for the right to kill game and extended the rights of selling it.

PRINCESS VICTORIA AND HER MOTHER THE DUCHESS OF KENT, 1834

After Hayter.

'Mankind has long disputed at the Cape
About the Devil's colour and his shape;
The Englishman declared him black as night;
The Hottentot, of course, declared him white;
But now they split the difference and say
They feel *quite certain* that Old Nick is Grey.'

As England had asked many times before, it asked again, 'What will Peel do'?"

The answer came . . . " . . . and then, in the midst of it all, Peel goes out of town."

Peel would not undertake an impossible task; the Duke might, if he could, and if he thought his reputation could stand a second right about turn. The Duke did; at least he did not care a farthing about his reputation; he thought the King ought to be helped out of his scrape. The King, he knew, had no intention of throwing over the Bill, but he thought the Duke could carry it when Grey could not.

The public were incredulous. They remembered the Duke's unquestionable integrity and forgot his adaptability and gift for reasoning in spirals. Even Peel could not follow his twists. It was beyond the conception of anyone except the King and Wellington and the Whig Ministers that the Duke seriously proposed to pass the Bill unaltered.

Grey was delighted at the thought of shifting his heavy burden on to the Duke's strong shoulders, but the Commons could not swallow the outrageous plan. " A Harlequin farce " Lord Holland called it.

The country settled down grimly to prepare for Revolution, while the Duke tried, and failed, to form a Government.

News came in from all over the country; Grey shivered; these preparations for revolt were not make-believe.

The impossible situation came to an end when a Tory, Mr. Alexander Baring, rose in the House of Commons and suggested that the " breach between the King and his Ministers might not be irreparable, and that they might withdraw their advice to create a large number of peers if an assurance were given them that the House of Peers did really intend to pass Schedule A."

This was taken to mean that the requisite number of peers was prepared to allow the Bill to pass.

The King was eager to regard it as a provisional offer, and wrote to Earl Grey on May 15th:

" In consequence of what passed last night in the House of

Commons His Majesty is induced to communicate to Earl Grey his hope and expectation that the difficulties which have arisen may be removed without resorting to any change of Administration."

Grey and Brougham went across the Park to St. James's Palace where the King was awaiting them. He was in great distress, but still he would not, could not, comply with this demand for peer making. Grey reasoned; Brougham's magic oratory dazzled his listeners. The King looked back upon his reign; he had set before himself the standard of duty incumbent on a Patriot King whose desire was to safeguard the Constitution; he had tried to act up to his ideal, setting his private feelings entirely aside. They were right; the alternative seemed to be Revolution; he could not let his country be drowned in blood. He took up his pen and wrote the famous words:

"His Majesty authorises Earl Grey, if any obstacle should arise during the further progress of the Bill, to submit to him a creation of Peers to such extent as shall be necessary to enable him to carry the Bill."

He hoped the threat would be enough; he hoped the Tories would see that further opposition would be useless and dangerous, and that they would withdraw gracefully from their impossible position. He had ordered Sir Herbert Taylor to draw up a circular letter and send it to the Duke of Wellington and other Tory Peers:

ST. JAMES'S PALACE,
May 17, 1832.

MY DEAR LORD,

I am honoured with His Majesty's commands to acquaint your Lordship that all the difficulties to the arrangement in progress will be obviated by a declaration in the House to-night from a sufficient number of peers, that, in consequence of the present state of affairs, they have come to the resolution of dropping their further opposition to the Reform Bill, so that it may pass without delay and as nearly as possible in its present shape.

I have the honour, etc.,
HERBERT TAYLOR.

Some of the Tory lords retired gracefully, some of them excelled themselves in virulence in their speeches of May 17th and left the House without the desired declaration,

which left Grey, as he truly said, in a position of extreme embarrassment, since he had no assurance that they would not return in a body, as they had left, and wreck the Bill once more. As the Peers were leaving the House, Lord Strangford said to somebody near him: "You see, Sir Herbert Taylor's famous letter did no good."

The Duke of Wellington explained his own attitude in a letter to Taylor:

I told the King that, as an individual Peer, I would not attend the further discussion of the Reform Bill. Lord Lyndhurst did the same. We both propose to act accordingly. But I confess that I don't think that I can declare in the House of Lords what my course will be, as a condition that the Minister should refrain from his recommendation that Peers should be created to carry the Bill, without making myself a party to his proceeding.

WELLINGTON.

The Tories would not be gracious about it, but other Peers had indicated their intention of following Wellington's example; the King considered that, although it was disappointing to him that they had refused to make a public declaration of their intention, still, their assurances to him should be enough.

The Whigs, it appeared, were more cynical than the King; they declined to take the word, given in private conversation, of the Honourable Members of the Opposition.

"Peers! Peers!" the Cabinet still cried.

Sir Herbert Taylor wore himself to a shadow writing letters and interviewing Peers to induce them to refrain from voting against the Bill; he told them drily that they "had before them the alternative of the Reform Bill with an addition to the Peerage, or the Reform Bill without it," and he spoke, they knew, for the King.

Opposition could do no more; even they saw that the Bill must pass now.

On May 26th Mr. Creevey surveyed the situation:

"One more day will finish the concern in the Lords, and that this should be accomplished as it has against a great majority of peers and without making a single new one must always remain one of the greatest miracles in English History. . . .

This is the third great event of my life at which I have

been present and in each of which I have been to a certain extent mixed up . . . the Battle of Waterloo, the Battle of Queen Caroline, and the battle of Earl Grey and the English nation for the Reform Bill. If the Conservative Press is aware that the Master in Chancery who carried this Bill from the Lords to the Commons was Harry Martin, lineal descendant of Harry Martin the regicide, what a subject it will be for them to-morrow."

Poor old "Bags" Eldon wrote mournfully: "All my feelings satisfy me that my time is very short . . . if the Bill passes, the monarch and the peers of the realm will not, as such, survive me long."

The Opposition was beaten; when the Bill came up for its third reading on June 4, 1832, the Tory benches were empty; the Bill was carried by 106 to 22.

On June 5th, Sir Herbert Taylor, doubtless much relieved, wrote to Grey: "The King has ordered me . . . to say that he rejoices that your labours and anxiety on this subject have been brought to a close, and that he hopes you may now have a little leisure to recruit your health. . . ."

Not a word about the Bill! He by this time disliked it so violently that no entreaties from Brougham and Grey could induce him to give his assent in person. The Bill was passed by commission on June 7th.

It had destroyed his peace, caused distress to his wife, strained his relations with his family, his friends, his dear Duke and his Ministers, and injured his own health. He had had to do what he thought right and stand alone with the balance held justly; the task had been too much for a peace-loving, inexperienced old man, who liked friendliness and small jokes, and the straightforwardness of sailors; yet it was as much the King's Bill as Lord Grey's; in fact, that "miracle" of which Mr. Creevey spoke was only accomplished by the King's neutrality; a "party" man would have precipitated war.

To Brougham, and perhaps to Grey, it was incredible that the King's wife and the King's sisters, notoriously Tory, were not constantly engaged in undermining the King's Whiggism, and the King—in spite of the evidence they still believed it—was a man with a weak head. They were as mistaken about the King as they were about the feminine influence. The King was not weak at all; he was troubled, but not at all uncertain about the main point, that he was going to do what he thought right unmoved by any argument.

He had underrated the importance of the Bill at the beginning; that was all. The Crown was saved by the King's determination to act constitutionally, and his conduct was quite correct. He kept his head and avoided vain expedients. He believed that Revolution would be inevitable if conflict broke out between the two Houses; "swamping the Peers" appeared to him to be unconstitutional. The Crown was the referee, not to interfere while the game was played according to the rules, but to give the final decision unheated by "Party." The Whigs and the Whig historians took the credit for themselves, accused the King of weakness and vacillation. On the evidence the best part seems the King's; he put the country first.

POSTSCRIPT

NEWS OF THE REFORMERS

By the passing of the Bill power passed from the old landed nobility to the new and practically landless middle-class, people who, according to the old-fashioned Tories "had no stake in the country"; indeed, the power passed from the country to the town, from the landowner to the manufacturer; yet, actually less than five hundred thousand voters were added to the lists, and fewer changes than seemed possible after all this commotion were apparent on the surface of the country's life.

The people, very speedily, were disappointed. The Bill for giving everybody everything had given them very little, it appeared. Sydney Smith had warned them in a speech at Taunton in May 1832:

"There will be mistakes at first, as there are in all changes; all young ladies will imagine, as soon as the Bill is carried, that they will be instantly married; schoolboys believe that Gerunds and Supines will be abolished, and that currant-tarts must ultimately come down in price; the Corporal and the Serjeant are sure of double pay, bad poets are sure of a demand for their epics; fools will be disappointed as they always are; reasonable men, who know what to expect, will find that a very serious good has been obtained."

As is not unusual with Parliamentary Bills, very few people were able to interpret the measure. On October 23, 1832, the *Morning Post* had a lament by Praed:

"They say Lord Brougham has power to teach
All sorts of puzzling things,
From alphabets and parts of speech,
Down to the crimes of Kings.
If yet, in pamphlets and reviews,
He loves young minds to drill,
Some day, perhaps, he will diffuse,
Some knowledge of the Bill."

"People are beginning to discover the truth, viz., that the Reform Bill *as to benefit* is a humbug," said the Duke of Wellington in November.

The Reformers were resting.

Lord Durham, for the sake of peace, had been sent off on a special mission to Russia.

"Thank God! we've got rid of him for some months," said the King, with a sigh of relief, echoed by many, no doubt.

"That is all very well, sir," said Madame de Lieven peevishly. "But why should it be at our expense?"

"Well, madame, take my word, this may be turned to good account," said the King. "He has so much vanity that he will make up his mind to please and to succeed, and with very small marks of attention, you will gain him over and this will be most fortunate for both empires."

And it was so. The despotic Emperor and the Radical Durham got on admirably, and Durham came back devoted to the Emperor and Russia.

"He displays his Russomania in a thousand ways and makes himself very amusing. He wishes to live *à la Russe* —drinks *shale*, dines at five o'clock as in our country, enters the room in single file as at Court—in a word he is a delightful dear of an Englishman," reported the converted Ambassadress.

There was not much news of little Lord John; he was probably wooing his widow, for he presently appeared as "The Widow's Mite."

Lord Grey, in December, lost that one front tooth which had so long upheld his upper lip.

Lord Palmerston's secretary, Mr. Sulivan, sent Lady Shelley news of the Reformers:

"According to Lord Brougham we may hope in less than a century to see black peers and chancellors, but it will take many centuries to give *niggers* a relish for operas. The Ministers are all gone to the country, with the exception of my master. Lord Althorp is fattening his live stock in Northamptonshire, which he has been doing so well that he has already won a gold medal for a fat ox and a silver one for a fat pig. Lord Grey is making preparations for the threatened visit of the Lievens. I should think they would not be pleasant people to have in a house *en partie carrée*. . . . I cannot tell you what Lord Brougham has been doing, but his brother has written a letter to one of the papers to

inform the public that he neither drinks port wine nor eats opium, and is not given to sleeping on a journey."

The King gave a grand dinner to some Guardsmen and to some old Admirals, and, as a matter of course, became somewhat tipsy. Old recollections came over him, and he made them a long speech, in which he talked about going to war; and expressed a hope that if they were obliged to draw their swords it would be "against our natural enemy, France." This, of course, rather astonished the company. After dinner it occurred to His Majesty that he had made himself a little ridiculous, so he went up to Sir George Scott, who was an old friend of his, and putting his hands upon Sir George's shoulders, he whispered to him:

"You damned rascal, it was all your fault; if you had not made me drink so much grog, I should not have made such a fool of myself."

"Did you ever!" as Mr. Creevey doubtless said.

I had almost forgotten Mr. Creevey; he lost his snug little seat in Parliament, of course, under the Reform Bill, but not his Tower; not even the most hardened reformer would have had the heart to take it from him:

> "Here's the bower, the darling Tower,
> The Tower that Rufus planted;
> Dear Norman King 'twas the just thing,
> The thing that Creevey wanted."

And the Bill?

From the heart of Whigdom, from Frederick Lamb, brother of Lord Melbourne and of Lady Cowper, came the verdict:

"The curse of representative governments is the power they throw into the hands of people who can talk, and are fit for nothing else. . . . It appears to me as if all the faculties of all England were now absorbed in vote counting, . . . Does anyone cast away a thought on Canada, Africa? Not one—they are calculating the votes of the trimmers. It don't strike me as a good symptom, nor do I like to see it. Oh! for one hour of Mr. Pitt."

Tom Moore had a remedy:

> "As Whig reform has had its range,
> And none of us are yet content,
> Suppose, my friends, by way of change,
> We try a FEMALE PARLIAMENT.
> And since, of late, with *he* M.P.'s,
> We've fared so badly, take to *shes*.

Petticoat patriots, flounced John Russells,
Burdetts in blonde, and Broughams in bustles.
The plan is startling, I confess—
But 'tis but an affair of dress;
Nor see I much there is to choose,
'Twixt ladies (so they're thoroughbred ones)
In ribands of all sorts of hues,
Or Lords in only blue or red ones."

CHAPTER IV

THE ADMIRAL REACHES PORT

THE King's pleasure in reigning had been damped by his anxieties over the Reform Bill, and his faith in the integrity of politicians had vanished. His irritation with the Whigs, not because they were Whigs but because of their disgraceful disregard for the Constitution as he conceived it, and their unscrupulous connection with the revolutionary and scurrilous press in its attacks upon the Queen, grew stronger as time passed. He clung to his conviction that a coalition, a " National Government," was essential in " these awful times." As early as January 1828 Mr. Croker had been entertained by this ridiculous notion, and had noted a conversation of H.R.H. " who is for a Government founded on a union of parties. He says the names Whigs and Tories meant something a hundred years ago but are mere nonsense nowadays."

The battle of the Reform Bill had merely confirmed the King in this absurd conviction that the nation was more important than parties; he still cherished the illusion that the Constitution provided for government by " King, Lords and Commons," whereas the Whigs knew very well that the Constitution intended government by Whigs, whom, just as a matter of form, they identified with the People. Lord Grey, of course, did not altogether share this idea; neither did Lord Melbourne, who presently, owing to a complicated little intrigue within the party, stepped into Lord Grey's shoes.[1] The King's personal liking for these two and for Lord Althorp continued, but he had the greatest possible distrust of most of the Whig ministers. He knew, as all the country knew, that their councils were divided, that they had no confidence in each other and that the country had no confidence in them.

[1] The remainder of King William's reign is thus briefly dismissed because it is covered by another book by the same author which is now in course of preparation.

It was safest, the discreet concluded, to avoid politics as a topic of conversation with the King.

His health had been permanently injured by his conscientiousness; his friends said sadly that he had aged ten years in one. His natural energy was curbed by periods of alarming drowsiness, his attacks of asthma became more violent and left him with declining strength. His spirits, which had been so singularly cheerful, flagged over everything which had to do with public affairs. He dreaded the visits of his ministers; he was alternately listless and irritable with them; he was often rude to the members of his Cabinet whom he disliked, though not to Melbourne, to whom he was attached. It seemed to the King that his Cabinet went out of its way to thwart his wishes, to humiliate him and to encroach on the lawful prerogative of the Crown; powers which had been taken as a matter of course in his father and brother were snatched from him without apology or explanation. He wanted a reorganisation of the militia; the Home Secretary refused on the score of expense. He was very alarmed about Canada, and in an indiscreet outburst to the newly-appointed Governor, said sharply: "Mind what you are about in Canada. By God! I will never consent to alienate the Crown lands, nor to make the Council elective."

The King was weary of his sovereignty, and at a dinner party at the Pavilion burst out regretfully that he was sorry he had not been born a free, independent American, so much did he respect that nation which had given birth to Washington, the greatest man that ever lived.

He recovered his energy in the company of old friends, particularly at Brighton, where the sea air did him good. He walked on the Steine and greeted old acquaintances, with a hearty clap on the back for naval friends of long ago, who were pressed to come and take a bite at the Pavilion; there were cold patties and hot champagne for those who liked such fripperies, but he was a plain man who still drank sherry and liked simple food.

The Court spent the Christmas of 1833 very happily at Brighton, and the King celebrated the New Year by dancing a country dance with old Lord Amelius Beauclerck as his partner; the King and the old Admiral going down the middle hand in hand was "the most royally extravagant farce that ever was seen," but they did not care; hadn't they acted Falstaff and Prince Hal together in the cockpit fifty years before?

Both at the Pavilion and at Windsor there was always a bevy of children, who romped up and down the corridors; Madame von Bülow's children played there very happily with the Fitzclarence grandchildren, and they clamoured round the skirts of their "dear Queeny" while the kind old King trotted past them and patted their heads.

There was one child who never romped at Windsor, a prim, sedate little girl whose eyes sometimes dwelt wistfully on other children. The Queen loved her dearly and the King had a feeling of affection for his heir, but the Duchess of Kent would not allow her daughter to mix with the company which might be found at Windsor; the Duchess, it was almost universally considered, gave herself very ridiculous airs.

"Her obstinate conduct towards the Fitzclarences is small-minded of her," said the Duchesse de Dino. "To explain it she affects a ridiculous prudery. I know that in answer to the remonstrances of Lord Grey she said, stupidly enough, 'But, my lord, you would not have me expose my daughter to hear people talking of bastards and having her ask me what it meant?'

'In that case, Madam,' replied Lord Grey, 'do not allow the Princess to read the history of the country which she is destined to rule, for the first page will teach her that William of Normandy was called the Bastard before he was called the Conqueror.'"

The Duchess of Kent was much annoyed with Lord Grey, who attributed her behaviour to the influence of Sir John Conroy, whose influence over her was a livelier and more recent scandal than the King's liaison with Mrs. Jordan.

The Duchess of Kent was intolerably rude to the Queen, whom she kept waiting in her ante-rooms and sometimes refused to see at all.

The King was excessively irritated when he heard of her royal progresses through the country with the little Victoria sitting meekly at her side, when mayors and aldermen met them in state and presented addresses, and the Duchess flew the Royal Standard. The King's anger at her insolence burst out at last in a disgraceful scene at Windsor after the King had refused to allot the Duchess some rooms at Kensington which she coveted, and the lady, in defiance of his orders, took possession of them.

The King stormed: "I trust in God that my life may be spared nine months longer after which period, in the event of my death, no regency would take place."

The Duchess retired in dudgeon ; the little Victoria burst into tears.

The King had said the same thing more soberly to Lord Melbourne at an earlier date.

" I cannot expect to live very long, but I hope that my successor may be of full age when she mounts the throne. I have great respect for the person upon whom, in the event of my death, the Regency would devolve, but I have a great distrust of the persons by whom she is surrounded. I know that everything which falls from my lips is reported again, and I say this thus candidly and publicly because it is my desire and intention that these my sentiments should be made known."

The King wished that his wife might have had the care of the girl, and the Regency in the case of his death ; he thought of insisting, but he remembered poor Charlotte who had been made a bone of contention, and he looked at his niece's firm little chin, and decided that she had a will of her own and would set her detestable mother in her rightful place, if only he could manage to live long enough to avoid a regency. He detested the Coburgs ; no one knew better than he how Uncle Leopold, from Brussels, was instructing his niece in the methods of governing England ; fortunately Leopold's good sense counteracted the antics of his sister. Leopold proposed to choose another Coburg as a husband for Victoria : that, at least, the King would endeavour to prevent.

When he heard that the Princes Ernest and Albert of Coburg were to visit the Duchess of Kent he invited the Prince of Orange and his two sons on a visit and said that the Coburgs should not be allowed to land. Tact demanded that a clash between Coburgs and Oranges should be avoided, for, as the Prince of Orange said truly and bitterly of King Leopold : " Voilà un homme qui a pris ma femme, et mon royaume."

King Leopold wrote injudiciously to his niece :

" I am really astonished at the conduct of your old Uncle the King : this invitation of the Prince of Orange and his sons, this forcing him upon others is very extraordinary. . . . Not later than yesterday I got a half official communication from England, insinuating that it would be highly desirable that the visit of *your* relatives should not take place this year—*qu'en dites-vous ?* "

The King always sounded fiercer than he was and the

Coburgs were allowed to visit Kensington. The Duchess of Kent celebrated her victory by a fresh outbreak of excessive rudeness to the Queen. The young princes were invited to Windsor; the Duchess replied that they had not time; the Queen, who had the curiosity to look up in the newspaper the account of their doings, found that they went to the Zoological Gardens on that day. The King was incensed.

Uncle Leopold's approval of his nephews was quite enough to turn the young Victoria's thoughts in the right direction; the visit, from her point of view, was a tremendous success:

". . . I must thank you, my beloved uncle, for the prospect of *great* happiness you have contributed to give me in the person of dear Albert. Allow me, then, my dearest uncle, to tell you how delighted I am with him, and how much I like him in every way. He possesses every quality that could be desired to render me perfectly happy. . . ."

When the King's health was known to be failing Uncle Leopold was busy choosing the members of her establishment for Victoria; he instructed Baron Stockmar and sent him across the Channel to be at her elbow. Leopold was extremely discreet in his references to his sister, and Victoria kept her opinion of her mother to herself. Her uncle urged her to avoid a breach with her when the King of England offered the young Princess an establishment for herself, independent of her mother. Princess Victoria showed such firmness in this matter that King William's anxiety must have been relieved on her account; the matter of this establishment was never settled, but the Princess at once avoided a breach with her mother and a dispute with the King. It began to be whispered that the young lady had a will of her own. But the nation knew nothing of her; Mr. Creevey's judgment was the vague one of the world at large: "Little Vic seems a nice little girl." The heiress was ruled from Belgium, that fact alone was known and resented. If it had not been that her immediate successor in the line of the inheritance, he with the mustaches, as Leopold so cautiously described him, was so fanatically hated in England there might have been less enthusiasm for King Leopold's niece.

On a May morning in 1837 the Princess Victoria received affectionate greetings on her eighteenth birthday from her Uncle and Aunt at Windsor. The King was delighted that his heir had safely attained her majority and that there would be no regency. He sent her a grand piano and

arranged a great Ball for her at St. James's Palace, but neither he nor the Queen attended it. He would not have the child's pleasure spoilt by a postponement, though he was feeling very ill. His daughter Sophia had died in April and the blow had shaken him badly; though his children had caused him much grief he had always loved them most tenderly. After her death he was often found in tears, and was languid and very weak.

He roused himself to make one of his excursive speeches on the Navy and the history of England at a Service dinner party which he gave on the anniversary of the battle of La Hogue, but the effort proved too much for him; next day he had no appetite and complained of dizziness. He was not well enough to attend the Ascot races, but he insisted that the Queen should go. He refused to allow bulletins to be issued, but the Queen realised that he was failing fast and sent her guests away.

"As long as I am able to attend to business I will not have the public alarmed on my account," protested the King. When bulletins were inevitable he wrote them himself.

He was too weak to walk, but, wheeled in a chair, he continued to attend to all matters of State, to give orders as usual, to see his Ministers, to sign papers with his crippled fingers which gave him so much pain.

Lord Melbourne was sceptical when the doctors said the King might recover. There was a stir in the Cabinet when precedents were examined in preparation for the new sovereign. Old rumours about the sinister designs of the Duke of Cumberland were revived. The country was on tiptoe with expectation, but there was no rejoicing; for the first time for centuries the passing of a King of England was being mourned.

Madame von Bülow, on a visit to Germany, was full of grief for the dear old King. . . . "The pleasure which he took in his new and beautiful possessions had to my mind a great charm," she said. "He was altogether such a *cheerful* king. I always liked that characteristic of his, for you rarely nowadays meet with people of high or low degree who own to being contented with their lot."

Obituary notices were being prepared: "Party is forgotten and all mourn, if not so deeply, quite as unanimously as they did for Princess Charlotte. . . . Who would have thought that he would have died more loved, more lamented than any of his predecessors on the throne?"

Lord Melbourne, genuinely moved, forgot his many irritations: "I am deprived of a most gracious master and the world of a man—I would say one of the best of men—a monarch of the strictest integrity that it has ever pleased Divine Providence to place over these Realms."

The King's old enemy, *The Times*, was at least consistent in its depreciation:

"The events of his life afford no fit material for the biographer; they partake so much of the commonplace of history. The simplicity of William the Fourth's career before his accession to the Crown corresponds with that of his original mind and disposition. There was no involution or complexity in either. He met with no adventures on a wide scale; he displayed no gross, nor great, nor memorable attributes. There was little guile in his nature nor obliquity in his course."

Croker and Greville found a little grudging praise for him and Creevey said kindly: "Poor dear King William's last act was signing pardons."

The young Victoria's heart pricked her a little when the end was in sight; she wrote to Uncle Leopold:

"Poor old man! I feel sorry for him; he was always personally kind to me and I should be ungrateful and devoid of feeling if I did not remember this."

The King was dying as cheerfully as he had lived, though he wished that he might have lasted a little longer.

"I wish I could live ten years for the sake of the country. I feel it my duty to keep well as long as I can."

"I have had some quiet sleep," he comforted the Queen. "Come and pray with me and thank the Almighty for it."

He was often in great pain, but no murmur escaped him. His cheerfulness, though they were accustomed to it, surprised even his friends. Day and night the Queen was at his side; his children came in and out continually; his wife said wistfully that she was never alone with him.

The Archbishop of Canterbury came to read prayers and administer the Sacrament.

"God bless thee, dear excellent man, a thousand, thousand thanks," murmured the King.

The old man awoke next morning feeling better, and remembered that it was the anniversary of the battle of Waterloo.

"This is the 18th of June. I should like to live to see the

sun of Waterloo set. Try if you cannot tinker me up to last over it."

The doctor protested that he might live to see many suns set.

"Oh! that is quite another thing," said the King, in a familiar phrase which meant dissent.

He tried to rise. "I must get up once more to do the business of the country." The Queen was alarmed and sent for the Archbishop to read the morning prayers. The King looked tranquilly out at the world he was leaving. The Queen held his hand, and, sobbing, bowed her head.

"Bear up, oh come, bear up, bear up," the King said softly, and rested his crippled hand on her bent head. Who would have thought that from such an unpromising beginning such a tender affection and comradeship could have come into being. He had been a most happy man.

Sir Herbert Taylor was summoned.

"Give me your hand," said the King cheerfully. "And now get the papers ready."

Sir Herbert reminded him that it was Monday and there was no post.

"Ah! true. I had forgot."

It was Waterloo Day, but he would not be at the Duke's dinner; he wished he could have kept enough strength for that. The Duke would have postponed it, but the King would not hear of it. Nelson and Wellington! how he had admired them both. The Duke's little silken flag, that was the rent for Strathfield Saye, had been brought to him; he watched it now, its folds stirred by the summer breeze that came in through the open window. He dozed, and woke to murmur drowsily to the Archbishop:

"Believe me, I am a religious man."

The Queen resumed her vigil with his hand in hers.

APPENDIX

The Game Laws

The only persons qualified under the law (of Charles II) to shoot game were those who possessed a freehold estate of at least £100 a year, or a leasehold estate of at least £150 a year, or the son or heir apparent of an esquire or peer of higher degree.

The Acts passed to protect Game were almost incredible in their ferocity. In 1803 Lord Ellenborough's Act provided that any persons who presented a gun or tried to stab or cut, with intent to obstruct . . . *or their accomplices* . . . should suffer death as a felon."

In 1816 a new Act provided that " a person who was found at night *unarmed but with a net for poaching* . . . should be punished by transportation for seven years."

In three years, 1827–1830, there were 8502 convictions for poaching, many of the criminals being under 18.

Cobbett asked a young man who was breaking stones on the road how he managed to live on 2s. 6d. a week.

" I don't live upon it," said he.

" How do you live then ? "

" Why," said he, " I Poach ; it is better to be hanged than starved to death."

(*Political Register*, March 29, 1823.)

The Enclosures

The open commons system which existed before the eighteenth century was very far from perfect, no doubt, but it " provided opportunities for the humblest and poorest labourer to rise in the village. Every village had its ladder, and nobody was doomed to stay on the lowest rung."

Under the rule of the oligarchy which began in 1688 this system gradually disappeared. The open fields and commons on which the humble villagers might graze their sheep and their cows, and cut furzes, were " enclosed " by the great landowners, occasionally to improve the land, but more often to benefit the landowner. It was done quite legally, of course, after many specious arguments

in Parliament, but it reduced that fine type "the Commons of England" to a state of misery and degradation which could not be paralleled in pre-revolutionary France. It is not possible to read the history of the enclosures without being appalled at the bitter injustice inflicted by them on the villagers, and the lamentable results to a class of the community which had been sturdy and independent.

(See Hammond, *The Village Labourer*. Wilhelm Hasbach, *History of the English Agricultural Labourer*.)

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The Letters of Lady Lyttelton (Lady Sarah Spencer)—Whig.
The Letter Bag of Lady Elizabeth Spencer-Stanhope (Miss Eliza Coke) is particularly useful, for Miss Coke was brought up in the Whig coterie, thought all politics a farce and very thankfully married into a Tory family.

The section on The Bill is drawn from :

Political History of England. Brodrick.
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Previous Biographies of King William IV.

King William IV has not hitherto been provided with an adequate "Life." The fullest, that by Percy Fitzgerald, contains a great deal of information but loses most of its value by not indicating sources and dates. The D.N.B. says that the best Life is that by William Harding; this is small praise since the Life contains very little information and is, indeed, little more than an obituary notice, though a very fair and unprejudiced one. There are "Lives" by J. Watkins and Wright which contain contemporary gossip and much scandal but which were, according to Huish, built almost entirely on his work.

Robert Huish remains William IV's chief biographer. Superior persons sneer at Huish; he was, in fact, an industrious collector of gossip, scandalous and otherwise, and seldom indicates the source of his information, so that it is impossible to know whether it was likely to be reliable or not. He made a hobby of writing the Lives of royal persons, and as, in another age, he would have worn the

reddest of red ties, he had little that was good to say of them. He left no shred of reputation to George IV and very little goodness in George III, but out of ordeal by Huish William IV comes uncommonly well; since Huish can find no worse to say of him, it is very improbable that there is anything worse to say; since Huish gives him so much credit, it is probable that he deserved a little more. Charles Greville is largely responsible for the small esteem in which William has been held; Greville found him not only comical, which he undoubtedly often was, but a regular buffoon, which he was not.

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Index

"THE FIRST GENTLEMAN," by GRACE THOMPSON.

(Jonathan Cape, 12/6.)

SOME PRESS OPINIONS

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