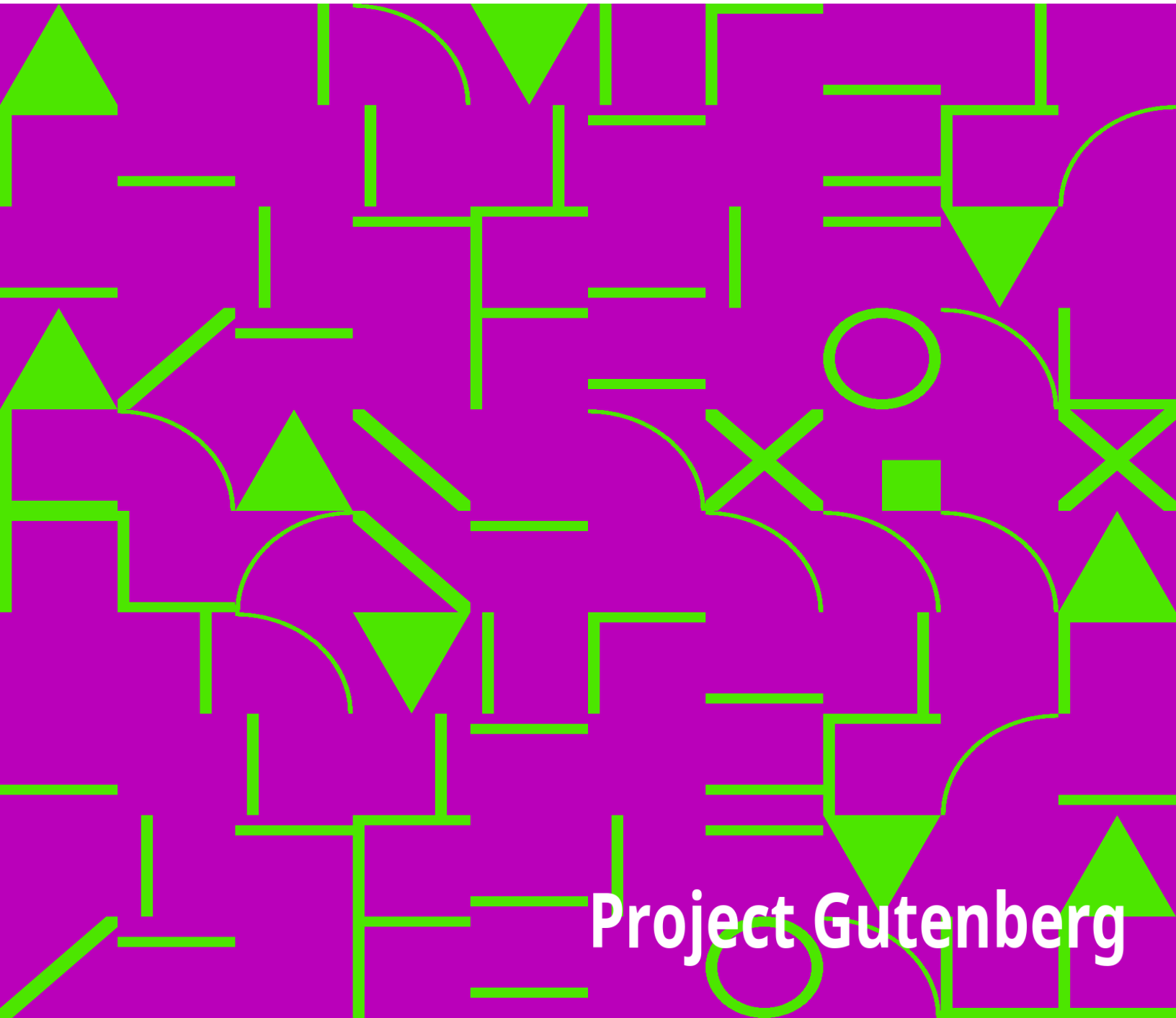
A History of the Four Georges and of William IV, Volume III

Justin McCarthy and Justin H. McCarthy



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A HISTORY OF THE FOUR GEORGES AND OF WILLIAM IV.

by

JUSTIN MCCARTHY and JUSTIN HUNTLY MCCARTHY

In Four Volumes

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{1}

A HISTORY

OF

THE FOUR GEORGES.

CHAPTER XLII.

"SUPREME IRONIC PROCESSION."

For six and forty years England had been ruled by German princes. One Elector of Hanover named George had been succeeded by another Elector of Hanover named George, and George the First and George the Second, George the father and George the son, resembled each other in being by nature German rather than English, and by inclination Electors of Hanover rather than Kings of England. Against each of them a Stuart prince had raised a standard and an army. George the First had his James Francis Edward, who called himself James the Third, and whom his opponents called the Pretender, by a translation which gave an injurious signification to the French word "pretendant." George the Second had his Charles Edward, the Young Pretender who a generation later led an invading army well into England before he had to turn and fly for his life. A very different condition of things awaited the successor of George the Second. George the Second's grandson was an English prince and an Englishman. He was born in England; his father was born in England; his native tongue was the English tongue; and if he was Elector of Hanover, that seemed an accident.

The title was as unimportant and trivial to the King of {2} England as his title of King of France was unreal and theatrical. The remnant of the Jacobites could not with truth call the heir to the throne a foreigner, and they could not in reason hope to make such a demonstration in arms against him as they had made against his grandfather and his great-grandfather. The young King came to a much safer throne under much more favorable auspices than either of the two monarchs, his kinsmen and his namesakes, who had gone before him.

[Sidenote: 1760—Accession of George the Third]

The young King heard the first formal news of his accession to the throne from the lips of no less stately a personage than the Great Commoner himself—the foremost Englishman then alive. George the Third, as he then

actually was, had received at Kew Palace some messages which told him that his grandfather was sinking fast, that he was dying, that he was dead. George resolved to start for London. On his way, and not far from Kew, he was met by a coach and six, which, from the blue and silver liveries, he knew to be that of Mr. Pitt. George received the congratulations of his great minister—the great Minister whom, as it was soon to appear, he understood so little and esteemed so poorly. Then Pitt, turning his horses' heads, followed his sovereign into London. Never perhaps in English history was a young king welcomed on his accession by so great a minister. Among the many auspicious conditions which surrounded the early days of George the Third's reign not the least auspicious was the presence of such a bulwark to the throne and to the realm. For the name of Pitt was now feared and honored in every civilized country in the world. It had become synonymous with the triumphs and the greatness of England. Pitt was the greatest War Minister England had yet known. He was the first English statesman who illustrated in his own person the difference between a War Minister and a Minister of War.

Truly this journey of the King and the Prime Minister from Kew to London was what George Meredith calls a "supreme ironic procession, with laughter of gods in the background." The ignorant, unwise young King led the {3} way, the greatest living statesman in England followed after. One can hardly imagine a procession more supremely ironic. Almost all the whole range of human intellect was stretched out and exhausted by the living contrast between the King who went first and the Minister who meekly went second. Pitt had made for young George the Third a great empire, which it was the work of George the Third not long after to destroy, so far as its destruction could be compassed by the stupidity of a man. Pitt had made the name of England a power all over the civilized world. Rome at her greatest, Spain at her greatest, could hardly have surpassed the strength and the fame of England as Pitt had re-made it. George, from the

very first, felt a sort of coldness towards his superb Minister. He had all the vague pervading jealousy which dulness naturally shows to genius. It was a displeasure to him from the first that Pitt should have made England so great, because the work was the inspiration of the subject and not of the sovereign. No one can know for certain what thoughts were filling the mind of George as he rode to London that day in front of William Pitt. But it may fairly be assumed that he was not particularly sorry for the death of his grandfather, and that he was pleasing his spirit with the idea that he would soon emancipate himself from Mr. Pitt. "Be a king, George," his mother used to say to him. The unsifted youth was determined, if he could, to be a king.

At the time of his accession George was in his twenty-third year. He was a decidedly personable young Prince. He had the large regular features of his race, the warm complexion of good health, and a vigorous constitution, keen attractive eyes, and a firm, full mouth. He was tall and strongly made, and carried himself with a carriage that was dignified or stiff according to the interpretation of those who observed it. Many of the courtly ladies thought him extremely handsome, were eagerly gracious to him, did their best to thrust themselves upon his attention, and received, it would seem, very little notice in return for their pains. If George showed himself {4} indifferent and even ungallant to his enthusiastic admirers, his brother Edward was of a different disposition. But though Edward, like his brother, was an agreeable-looking youth, and keen to win favor in women's eyes, he found himself like Benedict: nobody marked him because he was not the heir to the throne.

In some illustrated histories of the reign two portraits of George the Third are placed in immediate and pathetic contrast. The one portrait represents George as he showed in the first year of his reign—alert, young, smiling, with short-cut powdered hair, a rich flowered coat, and the star and ribbon

of the Garter on his breast. So might a young king look called in the flower of his age to the control of a great country, pleased, confident, and courageous. The other picture shows how the King looked in the sixtieth year of his reign. The face is old and wrinkled and weary; the straggling white locks escape from beneath a fur-trimmed cap; the bowed body is wrapped in a fur-trimmed robe. The time of two generations of men lay between the young king and the old; the longest reign then known to English history, the longest and the most eventful.

[Sidenote: 1760—George's qualifications for King]

George the Third started with many advantages over his predecessors of the same name. He was an Englishman. He spoke the English language. It was his sincere wish to be above all things English. He honestly loved English ways. He had not the faintest desire to start a seraglio in England. He had no German mistresses. He did not care about fat women. He was devoted to his mother—perhaps a good deal too devoted, but even the excess of devotion might have been pardonable in the public opinion of England; certainly it was only his own weakness and perversity that made it for a while not pardonable. He was of the country squire's order of mind; his tastes were wholly those of the stolid, well-intentioned, bucolic country squire. He would probably have been a very respectable and successful sovereign if only he had not been plagued by the ambition to be a king.

It is curious to remember that the accession of George {5} the Third was generally and joyfully welcomed. A hopeful people, having endured with increasing dislike two sovereigns of the House of Hanover, were quite prepared to believe that a third prince was rich in all regal qualities; in all public and private virtues. It would, perhaps, have been unreasonable on the part of any dispassionate observer of public affairs to anticipate that a third George would make a worse monarch than his namesakes and immediate

predecessors. The dispassionate observer might have maintained that there were limits to kingly misgovernment in a kingdom endowed with a Constitution and blessed with a measure of Parliamentary representation, and that those limits had been fairly reached by the two German princes who ruled reluctantly enough over the fortunes of England. This same dispassionate observer might reasonably, assuming him to possess familiar knowledge of certain facts, have hazarded the prediction that George the Third would be a better king than his grandfather and his great-grandfather. He was certainly a better man. There was so much of a basis whereupon to build a hope of better things. The profligacy of his ancestors had not apparently vitiated his blood and judgment. His young life had been a pure life. He was in that way a pattern to princes. He had been, which was rare with his race, a good son. He was to be—and there was no more rare quality in one of his stock—a good husband, a good father. He was in his way a good friend to his friends. He was sincerely desirous to prove himself a good king to his people.

The youth of George the Third had passed under somewhat agitated conditions. George the Second's straight-forward hatred for his son's wife opened a great gulf between the Court and Leicester House, which no true courtier made any effort to bridge. While the young Prince knew, in consequence, little or nothing of the atmosphere of St. James's or the temper of those who breathed that atmosphere, attempts were not wanting to sunder him from the influence of his mother. Some of the noblemen and clergymen to whom the early instruction of the young {6} Prince was entrusted labored with a persistency which would have been admirable in some other cause to sever him not merely from all his father's friends but even from his father's wife. There was indeed a time when their efforts almost succeeded in alienating the young Prince from his mother. The wildest charges of Jacobitism were brought against the immediate servants of the Princess, charges which those who made them wholly failed to substantiate. The

endeavor to remove the Prince from the tutelage of his mother was abandoned. The education of the Prince was committed to more sympathetic care. The change had its advantage in keeping George in the wholesome atmosphere of Leicester House instead of exposing him to the temptations of a profligate Court. It had its disadvantages in leaving him entirely under the influence of a man to whose guidance, counsel, and authority the Princess Dowager absolutely submitted herself.

[Sidenote: 1760—Lord Bute]

Observers of the lighter sort are pleased to insist upon the trifles which have the most momentous influence upon the fortunes of peoples and the fates of empires. A famous and facile French playwright derived the downfall of a favorite and of a political revolution from the spilling of a glass of water. There are times when the temptation to pursue this thread of fancy is very great. Suppose, for instance, it had not chanced to rain on a certain day at Clifden, when a cricket match was being played in which Frederick, Prince of Wales, happened to be interested. A fretted Prince would not have had to retire to his tent like Achilles, would not have insisted on a game of whist to cheer his humor. There would have been no difficulty in forming a rubber. There would have been no need to seek for a fourth hand. No wistful gentleman-in-attendance seeking the desirable would have had to ask the aid of a strange nobleman perched in an apothecary's chariot. Had this strange nobleman not been so sought and found, had the apothecary not been wealthy enough to keep a chariot, and friendly enough to offer a poor Scotch gentleman a seat in it, it is possible that the {7} American Colonies might yet form portion and parcel of the British Empire, that Chatham's splendid dreams might have become still more splendid realities, that the name of Wilkes might never have emerged from an obscurity of debauch to association with the name of liberty. For the nobleman who made the fourth hand in the Prince of Wales's rubber was

unfortunately a man of agreeable address and engaging manners, manners that pleased infinitely the Prince of Wales, and cemented a friendship most disastrous in its consequences to England, to the English people, and to an English king. The name of the engaging nobleman was Lord Bute.

At the time of this memorable game of whist Lord Bute was thirty-six years old. He was well educated, well read, tall of body, pleasing of countenance, quick in intelligence, and curious in disposition. These qualities won the heart of the Prince of Wales, and lifted the young Scotch nobleman from poverty and obscurity to prominence and favor. The Prince appointed Bute a Lord of the Bedchamber and welcomed him to his most intimate friendship. The death of the Prince of Wales two years later had no disastrous effect upon the rising fortunes of the favorite. The influence which Bute had exercised over the mind of Frederick he exercised over the mind of Frederick's wife and over the mind of Frederick's heir. Scandal whispered, asserted, insisted then and has insisted ever since, that the influence which Lord Bute exercised over the Princess of Wales was not merely a mental influence. How far scandal was right or wrong there is no means, there probably never will be any means, of knowing. Lord Bute's defenders point to his conspicuous affection for his wife, Edward Wortley Montagu's only daughter, in contravention of the scandal. Undoubtedly Bute was a good husband and a good father. Whether the scandal was justified or not, the fact that it existed, that it was widely blown abroad and very generally believed, was enough. As far as the popularity of the Princess was concerned it might as well have been justified. For years no caricature was so popular as that which displayed the Boot and the {8} Petticoat, the ironic popular symbols of Lord Bute and the Princess.

By whatever means Lord Bute gained his influence over the Princess of Wales, he undoubtedly possessed the influence and used it with disastrous effect. He moulded the feeble intelligence of the young Prince George; he

guided his thoughts, directed his studies in statecraft, and was to all intents and purposes the governor of the young Prince's person. The young Prince could hardly have had a worse adviser. Bute was a man of many merits, but his defects were in the highest degree dangerous in a person who had somehow become possessed of almost absolute power. In the obscurity of a private life, the man who had borne poverty with dignity at an age when poverty was peculiarly galling to one of his station might have earned the esteem of his immediate fellows. In the exaltation of a great if an unauthorized rule, and later in the authority of an important public office, his defects were fatal to his fame and to the fortunes of those who accepted his sway. For nearly ten years, from the death of Frederick, Prince of Wales, to the death of George the Second, Bute was all-powerful in his influence over the mother of the future King and over the future King himself. When the young Prince came to the throne Lord Bute did not immediately assume ostensible authority. He remained the confidential adviser of the young King until 1761. In 1761 he took office, assuming the Secretaryship of State resigned by Lord Holdernesse. From a secretaryship to the place of Prime Minister was but a step, and a step soon taken. Although he did not occupy office very long, he held it long enough to become perhaps the most unpopular Prime Minister England has ever had.

[Sidenote: 1760—Hannah Lightfoot and Lady Sarah Lennox]

The youth of George the Third was starred with a strange romance. The full truth of the story of Hannah Lightfoot will probably never be known. What is known is sufficiently romantic without the additions of legend. Hannah Lightfoot was a beautiful Quaker girl, the daughter of a decent tradesman in Wapping. Association with the family of an uncle, a linendraper, who lived near the {9} Court, brought the girl into the fashionable part of the town. The young Prince saw her by accident somehow, somewhere, in the early part of 1754, and fell in love with her.

From that moment the girl disappears from certain knowledge, and legend busies itself with her name. It is asserted that she was actually married to the young Prince; that William Pitt, afterwards Earl of Chatham, was present at the marriage; that she bore the Prince several children. Other versions have it that she was married as a mere form to a man named Axford, who immediately left her, and that after this marriage she lived with the Prince. She is supposed to have died in a secluded villa in Hackney. It is said that not only the wife of George the Third but the wife of George the Fourth believed that the marriage had taken place. We must not attach too much importance to a story which in itself is so very unlikely. It is in the last degree improbable that a statesman like Pitt would have lent himself to so singular a proceeding. Even if an enamoured young Prince were prepared to sanction his affections by a marriage, he would scarcely have found an assistant in the ablest politician of the age. The story of the Axford marriage is far more probable. If Hannah Lightfoot had been married to George she would have been Queen of England, for there was no Royal Marriage Act in those days.

Another and more famous romance is associated with the youth of George the Third. Lady Sarah Lennox, the youngest daughter of the second Duke of Richmond, was one of the most beautiful women of her time. The writers of the day rave about her, describe her as "an angel," as lovelier than any Magdalen by Correggio. When she was only seventeen years old her beauty attracted the young King, who soon made no secret of his devotion to her. The new passion divided the Court into two camps. The House of Lennox was eager to bring about a marriage, which was not then obstructed by the law. Henry Fox, one of the most ambitious men of that time or of any time, was Lady Sarah's brother-in-law, and he did his best to promote the marriage. On the other hand, the {10} party which followed the lead of the Princess Dowager and Lord Bute fought uncompromisingly against the scheme. The Princess Dowager had everything to lose, Lord Bute had

everything to lose, by such an alliance. The power of the Princess Dowager over the young King would vanish, and the influence of Lord Bute over the Princess Dowager would cease to have any political importance. Lord Bute did all he could to keep the lovers apart. Henry Fox did all he could to bring the lovers together. For lovers they undoubtedly were. George again and again made it plain to those who were in his confidence that he was in love with Lady Sarah, and was anxious to make her his queen; and Lady Sarah, though her heart is said to have been given to Lord Newbottle, was quite ready to yield to the wishes of her family when those wishes were for the crown of England. On the meadows of Holland House the beautiful girl, loveliest of Arcadian rustics, would play at making hay till her royal lover came riding by to greet her.

But the idyll did not end in the marriage for which Fox and the Lennoxes hoped. It is said that the King was jealous of Lord Newbottle; it is said that a sense of duty to his place and to his people made him resolve to subdue and sacrifice his own personal feelings. He offered his hand and his crown to the Princess of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. Lady Sarah lost both her lovers, the King and Lord Newbottle, who, in the words of Grenville, "complained as much of her as she did of the King." But she did not remain long unmarried. In 1762 she accepted as husband the famous sporting Baronet Sir Thomas Charles Bunbury, and nineteen years later she married the Hon. George Napier, and became the mother of an illustrious pair of soldier brothers, Sir Charles Napier, the hero of Scinde, and Sir William Napier, perhaps the best military historian since Julius Caesar. Lady Sarah died in 1826, in her eighty-second year. In her later years she had become totally blind, and she bore her affliction with a sweet patience. At her death she is described by the chroniclers of the time as "probably the last surviving {11} great-grand-daughter of King Charles the Second." A barren honor, surely.

[Sidenote: 1760—Princess Charlotte Sophia]

The young Princess whom George married was in many ways well and even excellently qualified to make a good queen. It is said that she was discovered for her young husband after a fashion something resembling a tale from the "Arabian Nights." The Princess Dowager, eager to counteract the fatal effect of the beauty of Lady Sarah Lennox, was anxious to have the young King married as soon as possible. Her own wishes were in favor of a daughter of the House of Saxe-Gotha, but it is said that fear of a disease hereditary in the family overruled her wishes. Then, according to the story, a Colonel Graeme, a Scotch gentleman upon whose taste Lord Bute placed great reliance, was sent on a kind of roving embassy to the various little German Courts in search of the ideal bride. The lady of the quest was, according to the instructions given to Colonel Graeme, to be at once beautiful, healthy, accomplished, of mild disposition, and versed in music, an art to which the King was much devoted. Colonel Graeme, with this pleasing picture of feminine graces ever in his mind, found the original of the portrait in Charlotte Sophia, the second daughter of Charles Lewis Frederick, Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz.

There is another version of the manner of George's wooing which nullifies the story of Colonel Graeme's romantic mission. According to this other version George fell in love with his future queen simply from reading a letter written by her. The tale sounds as romantic as that of the Provencal poet's passion for the portrait of the Lady of Tripoli. It is true, however, that the letter of Charlotte Sophia was something of the nature of a state paper. The Duchy of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, of which the Princess Charlotte's brother was the sovereign, had been overrun by the troops of the King of Prussia. The young Princess wrote a letter to the Prussian King, which came to George's notice and inspired him, it is said, with the liveliest admiration for the lady who penned it. Whatever the actual reason, whether the report of Colonel Graeme or the {12} charms of her epistolary style, the certain thing is that George was married, first by proxy and afterwards in due form,

to the young Princess in 1761. The young Princess was not remarkably beautiful. Even the courtiers of the day, anxious to say their strongest in her praise, could not do much more than commend her eyes and complexion and call her "a very fine girl," while those who were not inclined to flatter said her face was all mouth, and declared, probably untruly, that the young King was at first obviously repelled by the plainness of his wife's appearance. If she was plain, her plainness, as Northcote, the painter, said, was an elegant, not a vulgar plainness, and the grace of her carriage much impressed him. Walpole found her sensible, cheerful, and remarkably genteel, a not inconsiderable eulogy from him. She was fairly educated, as the education of princesses went in those days. She knew French and Italian, knew even a little English. She had various elegant accomplishments—could draw, and dance, and play, had acquired a certain measure of scientific knowledge, and she had what was better than all these attainments, a good, kindly, sensible nature. The marriage could hardly be called a popular marriage at first. Statesmen and politicians thought that the King of England ought to have found some more illustrious consort than the daughter of a poor and petty German House. The people at large, we are told from a private letter of the time, were "quite exasperated at her not being handsome," beauty in a sovereign being a great attraction to the mass of subjects. The courtiers in general were amused by, and secretly laughed at, her simple ways and old-fashioned—or at least un-English—manners.

[Sidenote—1761—The Coronation of George the Third]

After the wedding came the coronation, a very resplendent ceremony, which was not free from certain somewhat ludicrous features, and was not denied a certain tragic dignity. It was enormously expensive. Horace Walpole called it a puppet-show that cost a million. Loyal London turned out in its thousands. Surprisingly large sums of money were paid for rooms and scaffolds from which the outdoor sight could be seen, and much larger

were paid {13} for places inside the Abbey. It was very gorgeous, very long, and very fatiguing. The spectator carried away, with aching senses, a confused memory of many soldiers, of great peers ill at ease in unbecoming habits, of beautiful women beautifully attired, of a blaze of jewels that recalled the story of Aladdin's mine, and of the wonderful effect by which the darkness of Westminster Hall was suddenly illuminated by an ingenious arrangement of sconces that caught fire and carried on the message of light with great rapidity. The heralds in whose hands the ceremonial arrangements lay bungled their business badly, causing fierce heartburnings by confusions in precedence, and displaying a lamentable ignorance of the names and the whereabouts of many wearers of stately and ancient titles. When the King expressed his annoyance at some of the blunders, Lord Effingham, the Earl Marshal, offered, for amazing apology, the assurance that the next coronation would be conducted with perfect order, an unfortunate speech, which had, however, the effect of affording the King infinite entertainment. The one tragic touch in the whole day's work may be legend, but it is legend that might be and that should be truth. When Dymoke, the King's Champion, rode, in accordance with the antique usage, along Westminster Hall, and flung his glove down in challenge to any one who dared contest his master's right to the throne of England, it is said that some one darted out from the crowd, picked up the glove, slipped back into the press, and disappeared, without being stopped or discovered. According to one version of the incident, it was a woman who did the deed; according to another it was Charles Edward himself, the Young Pretender—now no longer so very young—who made this last protest on behalf of his lost fortunes and his fallen House. It is possible, it is even probable, that Charles Edward was in London then and thereafter, and it seems certain that if he was in London King George knew of it and ignored it in a chivalrous and kingly way. The Young Pretender could do no harm now. Stuart hopes had burned high for a moment, fifteen years earlier, when a handsome young

{14} Prince carried his invading flag halfway through England, and a King who was neither handsome nor young was ready to take ship from Tower Stairs if worse came of it. But those hopes were quenched now, down in the dust, extinguished forever. No harm could come to the House of Hanover, no harm could come to the King of England, if at Lady Primrose's house in St. James's Square a party should be interrupted by the entrance of an unexpected guest, of a man prematurely aged by dissipation and disappointment, a melancholy ruin of what had once been fair and noble, and in whom his amazed and reverent hostess recognized the last of the fated Stuarts. There were spies among those who still professed adherence to Charles Edward and allegiance to his line, spies bearing names honorable in Scottish history, who were always ready to keep George and George's ministers posted in the movements of the unhappy Prince they betrayed. George could afford to be magnanimous, and George was magnanimous. If it pleased the poor Pretender to visit, like a premature ghost, the city and the scenes associated with his House and its splendor and its awful tragedies, he did so untroubled and unharmed. It was but a cast of the dice in Fortune's fingers, and Charles Edward would have been in Westminster Hall and had a champion to assert his right. But the cast of the dice went the other way, and George the Third was King, and his little German Princess was Queen of England.

[Sidenote—1761—The London gayeties of the time]

It is probable that those early days in London were the happiest in the little Queen's long life. She had come from exceeding quiet to a great and famous city; she was the centre of splendor; she was surrounded by splendid figures; she was the first lady of a great land; she was the queen of a great king; she was the fortunate wife of a loyal, honorable, and pure-minded man. She was young, she was frank, she was fond of all innocent pleasures, keenly alive to all the entertainment that Court and capital could

offer her. She crammed more gayeties into the first few days of her marriage than she had dreamed of in all her previous life. The girl, who had never seen {15} the sea until she took ship for England, had never seen a play acted until she came to London. Mecklenburg-Strelitz had its own strong ideas about the folly and frivolity of the stage, and no Puritan maiden in the sternest days of Cromwellian ascendency, no Calvinist daughter of the most rigorous Scottish household, could have been educated in a more austere ignorance of the arts that are supposed to embellish and that are intended to amuse existence. She went to playhouse after playhouse, alarmed at the crowds that thronged the streets to see her, but fascinated by the delights that awaited her within the walls. She attended the opera. She saw "The Beggar's Opera," which may have charmed her for its story without perplexing her by its satire. She saw "The Rehearsal," and did not dream that twenty years later the humors of Bayes, which she probably did not understand, would be eclipsed forever by the fantasies of Mr. Puff. She carried the King to Ranelagh, to that amazing, enchanting assembly where all the world made masquerade, and mandarins, harlequins, shepherdesses, and much-translated pagan divinities jostled each other through Armida's gardens, where the pink of fashion and the plain citizen, the patrician lady and the plebeian waiting-maid made merry together in a motley rout of Comus, and marvelled at the brilliancy of the illuminations and the many-colored glories of the fireworks.

The London to which the little Princess came, and which she found so full of entertainment, was a very different London from the city for which the first of the Georges had quitted reluctantly the pleasures of Hanover and the gardens of Herrenhausen. The Hanoverian princes had never tried, as the Stuart sovereigns had tried, to stop by peremptory legislation the spread of the metropolis. London had been steadily spreading in the half-century of Guelph dominion, eating up the green fields in all directions, linking itself with little lonely hamlets and tiny rustic villages, and weaving them close

into the web of its being, choking up rural streams and blotting out groves and meadows with monuments of brick and mortar. Where {16} the friends of George the First could have hunted and gunned and found refreshment in secluded country ale-houses, the friends of George the Third were familiar with miles of stony streets and areas of arid squares. London was not then the monster city that another century and a half has made it, but it was even more huge in its proportion to the size of any of its rivals, if rivals they could be called, among the large towns of England. The great city did not deserve the adjective that is applied to it by the poet of Chevy Chase. London was by no means lovely. However much it might have increased in size, it had increased very little in beauty, and not at all in comfort, since the days when an Elector of Hanover became King of England. It still compared only to its disadvantage with the centres of civilization on the Continent; it still was rich in all the dangers and all the discomforts Gay had celebrated nearly two generations earlier. And these dangers and discomforts were not confined to London. The world beyond London was a world of growing provincial towns and increasing seaports connected by tolerable and sometimes admirable highways, and of smaller towns and villages reduced for the most part to an almost complete isolation by roads that were always nearly and often quite impassable. To travel much in England in those days was scarcely less adventurous even for an Englishman than to travel in Africa to-day; for a foreigner the adventure was indeed environed by perils.

[Sidenote: 1761—Fashions under George the Third]

Dress and manners had changed in the Hanoverian half-century, though not as much as they were to change in the fifty years that were still in futurity. Extravagance of attire still persisted, though the extravagance had changed its expression. The gigantic hoops in which ladies had delighted had diminished, had dwindled, and gowns were of a slender seemliness. But

reformed below, fantasy rioted above. The headdresses of women in the early days of the third George were as monstrous, as horrible, and as shapeless in their way as the hideous hoops had been in theirs. Vast pyramids of false hair were piled on the heads of fashionable ladies, were pasted together with pomatums, {17} were smothered in powder and pricked with feathers like the headgear of a savage. These odious erections took so long to build up that they were suffered to remain in their ugly entirety not for days but for weeks together, until the vast structure became a decomposing mass. It is rather ghastly to remember that youth and beauty and grace allowed itself to be so loathsomely adorned, that the radiant women whose faces smile from the canvases of great painters, and whose names illuminate the chronicles of the wasted time of the reign of George the Third, were condemned to dwell with corruption in consenting to be caricatured. Till far on in the lifetime of Queen Charlotte the fashion in women's wear oscillated from one extreme to another, the gracious of to-day becoming the grotesque of yesterday, and mode succeeding mode with the confusion and fascination of a masquerade.

The men were no less remarkable than the women for the clothes they wore, no less capricious in their changes. A decided, if not a conspicuous, turn of public taste had done much since the accession of the first George to minimize if not to obliterate the differences between class and class. Men no longer consented readily to carry the badge of their calling in their daily costume, and the great world came gradually to be no longer divided sharply from the little world by marked distinction of dress. But still, and for long after 1760, the clothes of men were scarcely less brilliant, scarcely less importunate in their demands upon the attention of their wearers, than the clothes of women. Men made a brave show in those days. A group of men might be as strong in color and as vivid in contrast as a group of women; the neutralization of tone, the degradation of hue, did not begin till much later, and only conquered in the cataclysm of the birth-throes of two

republics. Blue and scarlet, green and yellow, crimson and purple, orange and plum-color were the daily wear of the well-to-do; and even for the less wealthy there were the warm browns and murreys, the bottle-greens and clarets, and lavenders and buffs which made any crowd a thing to please a painter in the eighteenth century. In all the {18} varying breeds of beaux and macaronis and dandies, of bucks and fribbles, into which the fine gentlemen of the age allowed themselves to be classified, the one dominant feature, the one common characteristic, was the love for gold and silver and fine laces, for gaudiness of color and richness of ornament, for every kind of exquisite extravagance, every refinement in foppishness. There was a passion for the punctilio of dress, for the grace of a gold-headed cane and a chased sword-hilt, for the right ribbon, the right jewel, the right flower, and the right perfume, for the right powder in the hair and the right seals on the fob and the right heels and buckles on the shoes. There was an ardent appreciation, an uncompromising worship of the fine feathers that make fine birds.

[Sidenote: 1761—The wine-drinking propensities of the age]

The social system of the polite world had been slowly changing with the successive Georges. The familiar events in the lives of the well-to-do classes were growing steadily later. The dinner hour, which was generally at noon or one in the reign of Queen Anne, had crept on to three o'clock under the first, and to four o'clock under the second George. Under the third it was to grow later and later, until it made Horace Walpole rage as if the world were coming to an end because among fashionable folk it had settled itself at six o'clock. In the country, indeed, for the most part people lived the quiet lives and kept the early hours of Sir Roger de Coverley. But, however, London lived, and whatever London chose to do, England's simple honest King and England's simple honest Queen would have no concern with the follies of fashion and the luxuries of late hours. However much the rashness

and wrong-headedness of his public policy forced him to accept the services and prime the pockets of a gang of drunkards and debauchees who called themselves and were called the King's friends, the evil communications had not the slightest influence upon the royal good manners, and did not alter by one jot the rigid frugality of George's life and that of his royal consort. The King's friends were only the King's jackals; they never were suffered for a moment to cross the line which severed the {19} sovereign's private life from his public actions. Indeed, it may be assumed that few of the hard-drinking, hard-living, gambling, raking ruffians who battened on the King's bounty, and who voted white black and good bad with uncompromising pertinacity and unappeasable relish, would have welcomed the hard seats at the royal table, the meagre fare on the royal platters, the homely countrified air the royal couple breathed, and the homely countrified hour at which the royal couple took up their candles and went to bed. George the Third would be long asleep at an hour when his friends would be thinking of paying a visit to Ranelagh, or preparing to spend a pleasant evening over their cards, their dice-box, and their wine.

Especially their wine. The one great characteristic of the gentility of the day was its capacity for drinking wine. "Wine, dear child, and truth," says a Greek poet, naming the two most admirable gifts of life. Truth was not always very highly prized by the men who set manners and made history in the second half of the eighteenth century, but to wine they clung with an absolutely unswerving and unalterable attachment. If the great Oriental scholar who adorned the age had been more fortunate in his studies, if Sir William Jones had chanced to make acquaintance with a Persian poet who has since become very famous among Englishmen, he would have found in the quatrains of Omar Khayyam the very verses to please the minds and to interpret the desires of the majority of the statesmen, soldiers, divines, lawyers, and fine gentlemen of the day. It is as impossible to imagine the men of the eighteenth century without their incessant libations of wine as it

is impossible to imagine what the eighteenth century would have been like if it had been for the most part abstemious, sober, or even reasonably temperate. As we read the memoirs of the day, and if we believe only a part of what they tell us, making the most liberal allowance for the exaggeration of the wit and the satire of the cynic, we have to picture the political and social life of the time as a drunken orgy. Undoubtedly there were then, as always, men of decent behavior and discreet life, men who would {20} no more have exceeded in wine than in any other way. But the temper of the age and the tone of the fashionable world was not in tune with their austerity. Wonder at the frequency with which men of position got drunk then is only rivalled by wonder at the amount which they could drink without getting drunk.

[Sidenote: 1761—Unpropitious time for the King's rule]

The cry of the Persian nightingale to the Persian rose, "wine, wine, wine," was the cry to which hearts responded most readily in all the Georgian era. Walpole the father made Walpole the son drink too much, that he might not be unfilially sober while his father was unpaternally drunk. A generation later the younger Pitt plied himself with port as a medicine for the gout. The statesmen of the period, in the words of Sir George Trevelyan, sailed on a sea of claret from one comfortable official haven to another. The amount of liquor consumed by each man at a convivial gathering was Gargantuan, prodigious, hardly to be credited. Thackeray tells, in some recently published notes for his lectures on the four Georges, of a Scotch judge who was forced to drink water for two months, and being asked what was the effect of the *régime*, owned that he saw the world really as it was for the first time for twenty years. For a quarter of a century he had never been quite sober. This man might be taken as a type of the *bons vivants*, the *buveurs très illustres* of the eighteenth century. They were never quite sober all through their lives. They never saw the world as it really was. They

pleaded, preached, debated, fought, gambled, loved, and hated under the influence of their favorite vintage, saw all things through a vinous fume, and judged all things with inflamed pulses and a reeling brain. But it must not be forgotten that the population of the country was not entirely composed of corrupt, hard-drinking politicians, profligate, hard-drinking noblemen, and furious, hard-drinking country gentlemen. If these were, in a sense, the more conspicuous types, there were other types very different and very admirable. Apart from the great mass of the people, living their dull daily lives, doing their dull daily tasks, quiet, ignorant, unconscious that they {21} could or should ever have any say in the disposition of their existences, there were both in town and country plenty of decent, sober, honorable, and upright men and women who had nothing in common with the fine gentlemen and the fine ladies who fill the historical fashion plates. If, unfortunately, Squire Western and Parson Truliber were true pictures, at least Parson Adam and Sir Roger de Coverley still held good. None the less a young, self-willed King, not too intelligent and not too well educated, could scarcely have come to his sovereignty at a time less like to be fruitful of good for him or for the country that he was resolved to govern.

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CHAPTER XLIII.

GEORGE AND THE DRAGONS.

[Sidenote: 1760—George the Third as a "Briton"]

The King was not lucky in his first act of sovereignty. In his speech at the opening of Parliament on November 18, 1760, he used a form of words which he, and some of those who advised him, evidently believed to be

eminently calculated to advance his popularity. "Born and educated in this country, I glory in the name of Briton," the King said; and the words would seem to suggest such an intimacy of association between the King and the kingdom as must needs knit the hearts of ruler and of ruled more closely together. Yet the choice of words gave offence in certain quarters, and for two quite distinct reasons. Many of the adherents and admirers of the late King—for even George the Second had his admirers—were indignant at the contrast which the new King seemed deliberately to draw between himself and his grandfather. In accentuating the fact that he was born and bred in England, George the Third appeared by imputation to be casting a slur upon the German nature and German prejudices of George the Second. This boast, however much it might offend the feelings of the friends of the late King, was not at all calculated to affect the mass of the public, who had little love for George the Second, and whose affection for the new King was based mainly on the hope and the assumption that he would prove to be as unlike the old King as possible. But there was another interpretation to be put upon the royal words which was likely to cause a wider impression and a wider hostility. It would seem that some of the King's advisers wished him to write that he gloried in the name of Englishman; it would even seem that the King had actually used this word in the written draft of his speech. {23} Lord Bute, it was said, had struck out the word "Englishman," and had induced the King to accept the word "Briton" as a substitute. The difference would not be quite without moment now: it appeared very momentous to many then, who read in the word chosen a most convincing proof of the Scotch influence behind the throne. The King's pride in styling himself a Briton was taken to be, what indeed it was, evidence of his affection for the Scotch peer who had been so lately sworn into his Privy Council; and the alarm and indignation of all who resented the Scotch influence was very great. The Duke of Newcastle in especial was irritated by the use of the word "Briton," and the evidence it forced upon him of his own waning

influence and the waxing power of Bute. He even went so far as to wish that some notice should be taken of the "royal words" both in the motion and the address; but in the end he and those who thought with him felt that they must submit and stifle their anger for the time, and so the King, unchallenged, proclaimed himself a Briton.

Whatever else George had learned in the days of his tutelage, he had learned to form an ideal of what a king should be and a determination to realize that ideal in his own rule. The old idea of the personal authority of the sovereign seemed to be passing away, to be dropping out of the whole scheme and system of the English Constitution along with the belief in the theory of the Divine right of kings. The new King, however, was resolved to prove that he was the head of the state in fact as well as in name; that with his own hands he would restore to himself the power and authority which his grandfather and his great-grandfather had allowed unwisely to slip through their fingers. The difficulties in the way of such an enterprise might very well have disheartened any being less headstrong, any spirit less stubborn. There were forces opposed to him that seemed to overmatch his puny purpose as much as the giants overmatched the pigmy hero of the nursery tale. St. George in the chivalrous legend had but one dragon to destroy; the young royal St. George set himself {24} with a light heart to attack a whole brood of dragons—the dragons of the great Whig party.

When George the Third came to the throne the government of the country was entirely in the hands of the Whigs. The famous stately Whig Houses, the Houses of Cavendish, of Russell, of Temple, of Bentinck, of Manners, of Fitzroy, of Lennox, of Conway, of Pelham, of Wentworth, were as little subservient to the sovereign as the great Frankish nobles who stood about the throne of the Do-nothing kings. The Tory party was politically almost non-existent. No Tory filled any office, great or little, that was at the disposal of the Whigs, and the Whigs had retained their ascendency for

well-nigh half a century. Jacobitism had been the ruin of the Tory cause. All Tories were not Jacobites, but, roughly speaking, all Jacobites were Tories, and there were still, even at the date of George's accession, stout-hearted, thick-headed Tory gentlemen who believed in or vaguely hoped for a possible restoration of a Stuart prince. It is curious to find that, though the Whig ranks stood fast in defence of the House of Hanover, had made that House, and owed their ascendency to their loyalty to that House, the latest Hanoverian sovereign not only disliked them, but dealt them blow after blow until he overthrew their rule. The Tories, who sighed for a Stuart prince over the water, suddenly found to their astonishment that they had a friend in the Hanoverian Guelph, whose name they hated, whose right to the throne they challenged, and whose authority they derided, when they dared not despise.

[Sidenote: 1761—The corrupt methods of the Whig party]

It cannot be denied that the Whigs had often abused, and more than abused, the privileges which their long lease of power had given to them. All political parties ruled by corruption during the last century. The Whig was not more corrupt than the Tory, but it can hardly be maintained that he was less corrupt. The great Whig Houses bought their way to power with resolute unscrupulousness. A majority in either House was simply a case of so much money down. The genius of Walpole had secured his own pre-eminence at the cost of the almost total degradation {25} of the whole administrative system of the country. When George the Third came to the throne the Whigs were firmly established in a powerful league of bigotry and in tolerance, cemented by corruption, by bribery, by purchase of the most uncompromising, of the basest kind. George the Third had fostered through youthful years of silence those strong ideas of his own about the importance of the kingly office which he was now to proclaim by his deeds. In the way of those strong ideas, in the way of the steadfast determination to

be King in fact as well as in name, stood the great Whig faction, flushed with its more than forty years' debauch of power, insolent in the sense of its own omnipotence. George was resolute to show that the claim to omnipotence was a sham, and, to do him justice, he succeeded in his resolve.

At the head of the Whig party in the House of Lords was the Duke of Newcastle. At its head in the House of Commons was William Pitt. These two ministers seemed fixed and irremovable in their supreme authority. While Newcastle lavished the money of the state in that spacious system of bribery which welded the party into so formidable a mass, it was the proud privilege of Pitt to illuminate its policy by his splendid eloquence at home and by the splendor of his enterprises abroad. Both the ministers were an enormous expense to the country. Newcastle never counted the cost so long as there was a county member to be bought or a placeman to be satisfied. Pitt never counted the cost so long as he could add another trophy of victory to the walls of Westminster Abbey and inscribe another triumph on England's roll of battles. The sordid skill of Newcastle and the dazzling genius of Pitt seemed between them to make the Whig party invulnerable and irresistible. There was no opposition in Upper or Lower House; there had been for many years no hint of royal opposition. Everything promised a long continuance of the undisputed Whig sway when suddenly the secret determination of a young King and the secret instigations of a Scotch peer dissipated the stately fabric that had endured so long.

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The fixed purpose of Lord Bute was to get rid of Pitt. The fixed purpose of Lord Bute created the fixed purpose of the King, and the hours of Pitt's administration were numbered. After a season of rare glory, of resplendent triumph, Pitt found himself face to face with a formidable coalition of

interests against him, a coalition of interests none the less formidable because it was headed by a man for whose attainments, opinions, and ability Pitt must have felt, and scarcely concealed, the greatest contempt. Pitt had not made himself an object of personal affection to those with whom he was brought into immediate contact. In the time of his supremacy he had carried himself with a haughty arrogance, with an austere disdain which had set the smaller men about him raging in secret antagonism. The King, driven on by his own dreams of personal authority, disliked the great minister. Bute, drunk with the wild ambitions of a weak man, seems to have believed that in succeeding to Pitt's place he could also succeed to Pitt's genius. Pitt soon became aware of the strength of the cabal against him. While some of his colleagues were disaffected, others were almost openly treacherous. Bute's manner waxed more arrogant in Council. The King's demeanor grew daily cooler. The great question of war or peace was the question that divided the Cabinet. On a question of war or peace Bute triumphed and Pitt fell.

Pitt was all for carrying on the war, which had thus far proved so successful for the British flag. But Pitt was not powerfully supported in his belief. If he had his brothers-in-law James Grenville and Lord Temple on his side, he had ranged against him a powerful opposition formed by Henry Fox and George Grenville, by Lord Hardwicke and the Duke of Bedford. On the side of the peace party Bute ranged himself, bringing with him all the enormous weight that his influence with the King gave him. The case of the peace party was a simple, straight-forward case. Why, they asked, should we continue to fight? Our sweet enemy France is on her knees and ready to accept our terms. Let us enforce those terms and make {27} a triumphant peace instead of further bleeding our exhausted treasury in the prosecution of a war from which we have now nothing more to gain. Chance gave the peace party their opportunity. Pitt had become cognizant of the treaty between France and Spain known as the "Family Compact," the

secret treaty which we have already fully described, by which the two Bourbon princes agreed to make common cause against England. Pitt straightway proposed that the hostile purposes of Spain should be anticipated by an immediate declaration of war against Spain and the immediate despatch of a fleet to Cadiz. Bute promptly opposed the proposal in the Cabinet, and carried the majority of the Council with him in his opposition. Pitt instantly resigned.

[Sidenote: 1761—Pitt's probity]

A curious thing had happened at the coronation ceremony. One of the largest jewels in the royal crown got loose and fell from its place. This was looked upon at the time by superstitious people as a sinister omen. These now saw the fulfilment of their forebodings in the loss to the state of the services of the great minister. The King himself had no sense that his regal glory was dimmed in its lustre by the resignation of Pitt. He was so delighted at having got rid thus easily of the great obstacle to his own authority that he could readily consent to lend to the act of parting a gracious air of regret. Much was done to lighten Pitt's fall. Very liberal offers were made by the King, offers which seemed to many to mask a hope, and more than a hope, of undermining the popularity of the great leader. Pitt declined several offers that were personal to himself, but expressed his readiness to accept some signs of the royal favor on behalf of his wife and his family. A barony was conferred upon Pitt's wife and a pension of three thousand a year upon Pitt for three lives. There was nothing unworthy in Pitt's action. He was notoriously poor; he was no less notoriously honest; it was perfectly certain that, in an age when a successful politician was for the most part a peculator, no shilling of public money had ever stuck to Pitt's fingers. If he was instantly attacked by libels and pamphlets that were {28} probably paid for by Bute, or that at least were inspired by a desire to please Bute, the attacks did Pitt more good than

harm. They produced a prompt reaction, and only had the effect of making Pitt more dear to the people than before. His pictures had an enormous sale, and his partisans on the press poured out caricatures and lampoons upon Bute and his Scotchmen in greater volume and with greater violence than ever.

Bute was not content with the overthrow of Pitt. He wished to stand in isolated splendor, and to accomplish this Newcastle too must go. The great briber of yesterday had to give way to the great briber of to-day, and Bute stood alone before the world, the head of the King's Ministry, the favorite of the King, the champion of a policy that promised peace abroad and purity at home, and that resulted in a renewal of war under conditions of peculiar disadvantage and a renewed employment of the basest forms of political corruption. Bute had gained the power he longed for, but Bute was soon to learn that power need not and did not mean popularity. "The new Administration begins tempestuously," Walpole wrote on June 20, 1762. "My father was not more abused after twenty years than Lord Bute is after twenty days. Weekly papers swarm, and, like other swarms of insects, sting." Bute affected an indifference to this unpopularity which he did not really feel. It is not flattering to a statesman's pride to be unable to go abroad without being hissed and pelted by the mob, and it is hard for a minister to convince himself of the admiration of a nation when a strong bodyguard is necessary to secure him from the constant danger of personal attacks. Bute's character did not refine under the tests imposed upon it. His objectionable qualities grew more and more unpopular. The less he was liked the less he deserved to be liked. Adversity did not magnify that small soul. In his mean anger he sought for mean revenge. Every person who owed an appointment to the former ministry felt the weight of the favorite's wrath. Dismissal from office was the order of the day, and Whig after Whig was forced to leave his place or office open for {29} some Tory who was ready to express an enthusiasm for the statesmanship of Bute.

[Sidenote: 1762—Bute's foreign policy]

Bute's idea of a foreign policy was to reverse the policy of Pitt. He abandoned Frederick of Prussia to his enemies by cutting off the subsidy which Pitt had paid him, on the ground that the time agreed on for the subsidy was up, and that as England only granted it for her own purposes, and not to benefit Frederick, she was justified in discontinuing it whenever it suited her. Only a chance saved the Great Frederick from what seemed like inevitable ruin. The Czarina, Elizabeth of Russia, died, and was succeeded by Peter the Third. With the change of sovereign came a change in the purposes of Russia. The Russian army, which had fought with Austria against Frederick, now received orders to fight with Frederick against Austria. The war with Spain that Pitt had predicted Bute was obliged to wage. The conduct of Spain made it impossible for him not to declare war, and, aided by Pitt's preparations, he was able to carry on the war with considerable success. But the credit for such success was generally given to Pitt, and when Bute made peace with Spain and France it was generally felt that the terms were not such as Pitt would have exacted after so long and splendid a succession of victories. There was, indeed, a good deal to be said for the peace, but at the time those who tried to say it did not get a very patient hearing. It was well that the long Continental war was ended. Few of those engaged in it had gained much by it. Prussia, indeed, though it left her wellnigh bankrupt and almost ruined by the enormous burdens she had sustained, was better in position. She came out of the struggle without the loss of a single acre of territory, and with what Frederick especially coveted, the rank of a first-rate Power in Europe. If Prussia, which had been so long England's ally, had gained, England had not lost. Undoubtedly Pitt's war was popular; no less undoubtedly Bute's peace was unpopular, and the unpopularity of the policy intensified the unpopularity of the minister. In the eyes of the bulk of the English people Lord Bute, as a Scotchman, was {30} a foreigner, as much a foreigner as if he hailed from France or the

Low Countries. Lord Chesterfield was finely disdainful of the popular opposition to Bute on account of his nationality. "If the vulgar are ever right," he said, "they are right for the wrong reason. What they selected to attack in Lord Bute was his being a Scotchman, which was precisely what he could not help." But it was not Bute's nationality, so much as his flagrant partiality to his fellow-countrymen, that made him unpopular. His affection for his own countrymen, however admirable and even touching in itself, was resented fiercely by the English people, who found themselves threatened by a new invasion of the Picts and Scots. Across the Border came a steady stream of Bute's henchmen, men with names that seemed outlandish and even savage to the Londoner, and every Scotchman found, or hoped to find, through the influence of Bute his way to office and emolument. The growing hatred for Bute extended itself as rapidly as unjustly to the nation from which Bute came.

The story of Bute's Ministry is a story of astonishing mistakes. The Tories, who for five-and-forty years had inveighed against the political corruption which, fostered by Walpole, seemed to have culminated under Newcastle, now boldly went in for a system of flagrant bribery which surpassed anything yet essayed by the most cynical of Whig ministers. The Paymaster's Office became a regular mart where parliamentary votes were bought and sold as unblushingly as humbler folk bought and sold groceries across a counter. A Ministry weakened by an unpopular peace, and only held together by such cynical merchandise, was not likely to withstand a strong storm, and the storm was not long in rising.

To swell the exchequer, the Ministry proposed to raise revenue by a tax on cider and perry. It was resolved to levy an imposition of four shillings per hogshead on the grower of the apple wine and the pear wine. The cider counties raised a clamor of indignation that found a ready echo in London. Pitt, Beckford, Lyttelton, Hardwicke, Temple, all spoke against the

proposed measure and {31} denounced its injustice. George Grenville defended the bill.

[Sidenote: 1763—George Grenville's characteristics]

Grenville was one of those honorable and upright statesmen who do not contrive to make either honor or rectitude seem lovable qualities. He had first made himself conspicuous as one of the Boy Patriots who rallied with Pitt against Walpole. His abilities ran with swiftness along few and narrow channels. He was desperately well informed about many things, and desperately in earnest about anything which he undertook. Blessed or cursed with a solemnity that never was enlivened by a gleam of humor, a ray of fancy, or a flash of eloquence, Grenville regarded the House of Commons with the cold ferocity of a tyrannical and pompous schoolmaster. A style of speech that would have made a discourse upon Greek poetry seem arid and a dissertation upon Italian painting colorless—if it were possible to conceive Grenville as wasting time or thought on such trifles—added no grace to the exposition of a fiscal measure or charm to the formality of a phalanx of figures. He was gloomy, dogged, domineering, and small-minded. His nearest approach to a high passion was his worship of economy; his nearest approach to a splendid virtue was his stubborn independence. He abandoned Pitt for Bute because he detested Pitt's prodigal policy, but Bute was the more deceived if he fancied that he was to find in Grenville the convenient mask that he had lost in Newcastle; and the King himself had yet to learn how indifferent the dry, morose pedant and preacher could be not merely to royal favor, but even to the expression of royal opinion. It was truly said of him by the greatest of his contemporaries that he seemed to have no delight out of the House except in such things as in some way related to the business that was to be done within it. The "undissipated and unwearied application" which he devoted to everything

that he undertook was now employed in exasperating the country. The time was not yet ripe for it to be employed in dismembering the empire.

In his support of the cider tax Grenville managed to {32} make it and himself ridiculous at the same time. In his defence he kept asking, over and over again, "Where will you find another tax? tell me where." Pitt, who was listening disdainfully to his arguments, followed one of these persistent interrogations by softly singing to himself, very audibly, the words which belonged to a popular song, "Gentle shepherd, tell me where." The House took the hint with delight, and the title of Gentle Shepherd remained an ironical adornment of Grenville for the rest of his life.

Bute's disregard of public opinion was contrasted to his disadvantage with the conduct of Sir Robert Walpole, who bowed to the demonstration against his far wiser system of excise. Bute forced his tax forward in defiance of the popular feeling, and then, apparently alarmed by the strength of the spirit he had himself raised, he answered the general indignation by a sudden and welcome resignation on April 8, 1763. This was the end of Bute's attempt to be the recognized head of a government, though he still hoped and believed that he could rule from behind the throne instead of standing conspicuously at its side. To his unpopularity as a foreigner, to his unpopularity as a favorite, public hostility added a fresh, if a far-fetched and fantastic reason for detesting Bute. It was pointed out that he had Stuart blood in his veins, that an ancestor of his had been the brother of a Scottish King. Any stick is good enough to strike an unpopular statesman with, and there were not wanting people to assert, and perhaps even to believe, that Bute had entertained insidious schemes for raising himself to the throne. Bute is said to have declared that he resigned in order to avoid involving the King in the dangers with which his minister was threatened. If he did feel any fears for the King's safety he had certainly done his best to make those fears reasonable. It has not often been given to

any statesman to hold the highest office in the state for so short a time, and in that time to accomplish so large an amount of harm. And the immediate harm of that year and a half was little as compared with the harm that was to follow, a fatal legacy, {33} from the principles that Bute advocated and the policy that Bute initiated.

[Sidenote: 1763—The retirement of Bute]

With Bute retired two of his followers, Dashwood and Fox. Dashwood went to the Upper House as Lord Le Despencer; Fox accompanied him as Lord Holland. The disappearance of Dashwood from the Commons was a matter of little importance. The disappearance of Fox marked the conclusion of what had been a remarkable, of what might have been a great career. From this time Fox ceased to take any real part in public business, and if his presence lent no lustre to the Lords, his absence made the character of the Commons more honorable. Fox, with all his faults, and they were many and grave, had in him the gifts of the politician and the capacity of the statesman. Dashwood was a vulgar fool, who, as Horace Walpole said, with the familiarity and phrase of a fishwife, introduced the humors of Wapping behind the veil of the Treasury. But Fox was a very different type of man. Had he been as keen for his own honor as he was eager in the acquisition of money, had he been as successful in building up a record of great deeds as he was successful in building up an enormous fortune, he might have left behind him one of the greatest names in the history of his age. But he carried with him to the Upper House the rare abilities which he had put to such unworthy uses, and he lives in memory chiefly as the father of his son. In having such a son he rendered the world a good service, which he himself labored with infinite pains to make into an evil service.

A young, inexperienced, and headstrong King found himself suddenly the central figure of perhaps as singular a set of men as ever were gathered

together for the purpose of directing the destinies of a nation. A famous caricature of the period represents the front of a marionette-show, through an aperture of which the hand of Bute pulls the wires that make the political puppets work, while Bute himself peeps round the corner of the show to observe their antics. No stranger dolls ever danced around a royal figure to the manipulation of a favorite's fingers. At {34} a time when political parties as they are now familiar to us did not exist, when Whiggism was so dominant that Opposition in the modern sense was unknown, when the pleasures and the gains of administration were almost entirely reserved for a privileged caste, and when self-interest was the rarely disavowed spur of all individual action, it is scarcely surprising to find that the vast majority of the statesmen of the day were as unadmirable in their private as they were unheroic in their public life. For then and long after, the political atmosphere, bad at its best, was infamous at its worst, and by an unhappy chance the disposition of the King led him to favor in their public life the very men whose private life would have filled him with loathing, and to detest, where it was impossible to despise, the men who came to the service of their country with characters that were clean from a privacy that was honorable. Many, if not most, of the leading figures of that hour would have been more appropriately situated as the members of a brotherhood of thieves and the parasites of a brothel than as the holders of high office and the caretakers of a royal conscience. There were men upon the highway, rogues with a bit of crape across their foreheads and a pair of pistols in their holsters, haunting the Portsmouth Road or Hounslow Heath, with the words "Stand and deliver" ever ready on their lips, who seem relatively to be men of honor and probity compared with a man like the first Lord Holland or like Rigby. There were poor slaves of the stews, wretched servants of the bagnios, whose lives seem sweet and decorous when compared with those of a Sandwich or a Dashwood or a Duke of Grafton. Yet these men, whose companionship might be rejected by Jack Sheppard, and whose example

might be avoided by Pompey Bum, are the men whose names are ceaselessly prominent in the early story of the reign, and to whose power and influence much of its calamities are directly due.

[Sidenote: 1763—The Duke of Grafton]

It is not easy to accord a primacy of dishonor to any one of the many statesmen whose names degrade the age. Possibly the laurels of shame, possibly the palms of infamy {35} may be proffered to Augustus Henry Fitzroy, third Duke of Grafton. When George the Third came to the throne the Duke of Grafton was only twenty-five years old, and had been three years in the House of Lords, after having passed about twice as many months in the House of Commons. Destined to live for more than half a century after the accession, and to die while the sovereign had still many melancholy years to live, the Duke of Grafton enjoyed a long career, that was unadorned by either public or private virtue. There is no need to judge Grafton on the indictment of the satirist who in a later day made the name of Junius more terrible to the advisers of King George than ever was the name of Pietro Aretino to the princes whom he scourged. The coldest chronicle of the Duke's careers, the baldest narrative of his life, proves him to have been no less dangerous to the public weal as a statesman than he was noxious to human society as an individual. He had not even the redeeming grace that the charm of beauty of person lent to some of his companions in public incompetency and private profligacy. His face and presence were as unattractive as his manners were stiff and repellent. His grandfather, the first Duke, was an illegitimate son of Charles the Second by the Duchess of Cleveland, and the Duke's severest critic declared that he blended the characteristics of the two Charles Stuarts. Sullen and severe without religion, and profligate without gayety, he lived like Charles the Second, without being an amiable companion, and might die as his father did, without the reputation of a martyr.

Grafton did not die the death of his royal ancestor. He lived through seventy-six years, of which less than half were passed in the fierce light of a disgraceful notoriety, and more than half in a retirement which should be styled obscure rather than decent. The only conspicuously creditable act of that long career was the patronage he extended to the poet Bloomfield, a patronage that seems to have been prompted rather by the fact that the writer was born near Grafton's country residence than by any intelligent appreciation of literature. His curious want of taste {36} and feeling allowed him to parade his mistress, Nancy Parsons, in the presence of the Queen, at the Opera House, and to marry, when he married the second time, a first cousin of the man with whom his first wife had eloped, John, Earl of Upper Ossory. If his example as a father was not admirable, at least he showed it to a numerous offspring, for by his two marriages he was the parent of no fewer than sixteen children.

[Sidenote: 1763—Rigby and the Duke of Bedford]

Perhaps the prize for sheer political ruffianism, for the frank audacity of the freebooter, unshadowed by the darker vices of his better-born associates, may be awarded to Rigby. Not that Rigby redeemed by many private virtues the unblushing effrontery of his public career. It was given to few men to be as bad as Dashwood, and Rigby was not one of the few. But his gross and brutal disregard of all decency in his acts of public plunder—for even peculation may be done with distinction—was accompanied by a gross and brutal disregard of all decency in his tastes and pleasures with his intimate associates. Richard Rigby sprang from the trading class. He was the son of a linen-draper who was sufficiently lucky to make a fortune as a factor to the South Sea Company, and who was, in consequence, able to afford his son the opportunity of a good education, and to launch him on the grand tour of Europe with every aptitude for the costly vices that men in those days seemed to think it the chief object of travel to cultivate, and with

plenty of money in his pocket to gratify all his inclinations. Rigby did not take much advantage of his educational opportunities. His Latinity laid him open to derision in the House of Commons, and there were times when his spelling would have reflected little credit upon a seamstress. But he was quite capable of learning abroad all the evil that the great school of evil was able to teach a willing student. He returned to England, and began his life there with three pronounced tastes: for gambling, for wine, and for the baser uses of politics. His ambitions prompted him to adhere to the party of the Prince of Wales, and his ready purse won him a welcome among the courtiers of Leicester House. The Prince of {37} Wales did little to gratify his hopes, and Rigby would have found it difficult to escape from the straits into which his debts had carried him if his gift of pleasing had not procured for him a powerful patron. The Duke of Bedford had been attracted by the remarkable convivial powers of Rigby, powers remarkable in an age when to be conspicuous for conviviality demanded very unusual capacity both of head and of stomach. To be admired by Bedford was in itself a patent of dishonor, but it was a profitable patent to Rigby. The Duke, who was accused at times of a shameful parsimony, was generous to profusion towards the bloated buffoon who was able and willing to divert him, and from that hour Rigby's pockets never wanted their supply of public money.

There were few redeeming features in Rigby's character. It was his peculiar privilege to be false to his old friends and to corrupt his young ones. In an age when sobriety was scorned or ignored he had the honor to be famous for his insobriety. A sycophant to those who could serve him and a bully to those who could not, Rigby added the meanness of the social parvenu to the malignity of the political bravo. At a time when men of birth and rank came to the House of Commons in the negligence of morning dress, Rigby was conspicuous for the splendor of his attire, and illuminated the green benches by a costume whose glow of color only faintly attenuated

the glowing color of his face. There were baser and darker spirits ready for the service of the King; there was no one more unlovely.

Rigby's patron was as unadmirable as Rigby himself. He was fifty years old when George the Third came to the throne, and he had lived his half a century in the occupation of many offices and through many opportunities for distinction without distinguishing himself. He had still eleven years to live without adding anything of honor or credit to his name, or earning any other reputation than that of a corrupt politician whose private life was passed chiefly in the society of gamblers, jockeys, and buffoons. He had been Governor-General of Ireland, and had {38} governed it as well as Verres had governed Sicily. He had been publicly horsewhipped by a county attorney on the racecourse at Lichfield. His career, always unimportant, was ignominious when it was not incapable, and it was generally both the one and the other.

All the statesmen of the day were not of the school of Grafton. There were numerous exceptions to the rule of Rigby. The Graftons and the Rigbys gain an unnatural prominence from the fact that then and later it was to such tools the King turned, and that he always found such tools ready to his hands. There were many men who, without any show of austerity or any burden of morality, were at least of a very different order from the creatures whom the King did not indeed delight to honor, but whom he condescended to employ. The Earl of Granville, with the weight of seventy years upon his shoulders, carried into active political life under his fourth sovereign the same qualities both for good and evil that adorned or injured the name of Carteret. He accepted Lord Bute's authority, and he did not live long enough to witness Bute's fall. He accorded to the peace brought about by Bute "the approbation of a dying statesman," as the most honorable peace the country had ever seen. He died in the January of 1763, leaving behind him the memory of a long life which had always been lived to his own advantage

but by no means to the disadvantage of his country. He left behind him a memory of rare public eloquence and graceful private conversation, of an elegant scholarship that prompted him to the patronage of scholars, of a profound belief in his own judgment, and a no less profound contempt for the opinions of others. His public life was honest in an epoch when public dishonesty was habitual, and the best thing to be said of him was the best thing he said of himself, that when he governed Ireland he governed so as to please Dean Swift.

[Sidenote: 1763—Dr. Samuel Johnson]

At a time when the King was surrounded by such advisers as we have seen, the King's chief servant and most loyal subject was a man no longer young, who had nothing to do with the courts or councils, and who yet was of {39} greater service to the throne and its occupier than all the House of Lords and half the House of Commons. Long years before George the Third was born, a struggling, unsuccessful schoolmaster gave up a school that was well-nigh given up by its scholars and came to London to push his fortune as a man of letters. When George the Third came to the throne the schoolmaster had not found fortune—that he never found—but he had found fame, and the name of Samuel Johnson was known and loved wherever an English word was spoken or an English book read. The conditions of political life in England in the eighteenth century made it impossible for such a man as Samuel Johnson ever to be the chosen counsellor, the minister of an English king. The field of active politics was reserved for men of family, of wealth, or of the few whom powerful patronage served in lieu of birth and aided to the necessary opulence. Johnson was one of the most influential writers of his day, one of the strongest intellectual forces then at work, one of the greatest personalities then alive. But it would no more have occurred to him to dream of administrative honors and a place in a Ministry than it would have occurred

to George the Third to send one of his equerries to the dingy lodgings of an author with the request that Dr. Johnson would step round to St. James's Palace and favor his Majesty with his opinion on this subject or on that. It is not certain that the King would have gained very much if he had done anything so unusual. Dr. Johnson's views were very much the King's views, and we know that he would have been as obstinate as the King in many if not most of the cases in which the King's obstinacy was very fatal to himself.

When Queen Anne was still upon the throne of England, when James the Second still lived with a son who dreamed of being James the Third, and when George the First was only Elector of Hanover, people still attributed to the sovereign certain gifts denied to subjects. They believed, for instance, that the touch of the royal fingers could cure the malady of scrofula, then widely known in consequence of that belief as the King's Evil. In obedience to that {40} belief, in the spring of 1712 some poor folk of Lichfield travelled to London with their infant son, in the hope that Queen Anne would lay her hand upon the child and make him whole. There were days appointed for the ceremony of the touch, and on one of those days the Johnsons of Lichfield carried their little Samuel into the royal presence, and Queen Anne stroked the child with her hand. For more than seventy years a dim memory remained with Johnson of a stately lady in black; for more than seventy years the malady that her touch was thought to heal haunted him. When the man who had been the sick child died, the third prince of a foreign house was seated on the throne of England, and the third of the line owed, unconscious of the debt, no little of his security on his throne and no little of his popularity with the mass of his people to the struggling author who had received the benediction of the last Stuart sovereign of England.

Samuel Johnson was born at Lichfield, in Staffordshire, on September 8, 1709. His father was a bookseller, perhaps too fond of books to be a good

dealer in them. But his crowded shelves were a paradise to his son when at the age of sixteen he came home from the last of many schoolings, each of which had taught him much. For two years he read his way recklessly, riotously, and joyously through his father's migratory library. He took the advice of the varlet in "The Taming of the Shrew," and studied what he most affected. His memory was as vast as his head was huge and his body bulky. He read what he liked, and he stored his mind with as miscellaneous a mass of knowledge as ever was heaped up within the pent-house of one human skull. That youthful zeal and fiery heat of study remained youthful with him to the end of his many days; the passion for learning never burned low in that mighty brain. The man who in his old age studied Dutch to test the acquiring powers of his intellect, and still found them freshly tempered, acted in his ebullient boyhood as if, like Bacon, he had taken all knowledge to be his province. The man who in his old age found an exquisite entertainment in reading a Spanish romance of chivalry, in his eager {41} boyhood found the Latin poems of Petrarch sweeter than apples. The great Italian who counted the sonnets to which he owes his immortality but as the clouds of a dream, and who built his hopes of fame upon that "Africa" which the world has been willing to forget, found the reader he would have welcomed and the student he would have cherished in the ungainly youth who pored over him in a garret. The boy Johnson, bent over the great folio, forgot that he was poor, forgot that he was ill-clad, under the spell of the stately lines that their poet believed to be not less than Virgilian. He had set out on an errand even more trivial than that of Saul the son of Kish, and he had found the illimitable kingdom of dreams.

[Sidenote: 1728—The college days of Dr. Johnson]

Chance sent the student of Petrarch to Pembroke College, Oxford, where he passed two years eating the bitter bread of poverty in the bitter pride of youth. He was hungry, he was ragged, he was conscious of his great

knowledge and his great gifts, and he saw all around him men in high places whose attainments he despised, and men seeking the same goal as himself whose happy ease of circumstances he affected to disdain and was compelled to envy. His wild soul rose in rebellion at the inequalities of life. He passed for a mutineer.

His college days were bitter and rebellious; days of hunger and thirst and ruined raiment. Some well-meaning person, moved to pity by the sight of Johnson's shabby shoes, patched and mended till they were past all wholesome cobbling, placed a new sound pair at Johnson's door in nameless benevolence. Johnson cast them from him with fury, too proud to be shod by another man's bounty. He drifted through his few and gloomy college days deriding and despising those in authority; seemingly wasting his time and yet not wasting it; translating Pope's "Messiah" into such noble Latin that Pope, moved by honest admiration, declared that future times would be unable to tell which was the original and which was the translation. Johnson could be nowhere without learning, and he learned something at Oxford; but in any case his stay was short, and he drifted back to Lichfield, leaving on the {42} banks of the Isis an amazing memory of a sullen savage creature, brimmed with the strangest miscellaneous learning. In Lichfield his father's death, following hard upon his return from Oxford, left him lonelier and poorer than ever, troubled by the grim necessity to be fed, clothed, and sheltered, and by the uncertainty how to set about it. He did set about it, earnestly, strenuously, if not very fruitfully.

[Sidenote: 1737—Johnson and his work]

He was ready to do anything, to turn to anything, to write, to translate, to teach. He fell in love with an amazing woman more than twenty years his senior, monstrously fat, monstrously painted, monstrously affected and absurd; he fell in love with her, and he married her. She had a little money,

and Johnson set up an academy for the instruction of youth. But youth would not come to be instructed. One youth came, one of the very few, a soldier's son and a grandson of a Huguenot refugee, named David Garrick. The master and the pupil became friends, and the friendship lasted with life. Master and pupil resolved to make the adventure of the town together. The eyes of aspiring provincials turned always to the great city, every ambitious provincial heart beat with desire for the conquest of London. The priest of letters and the player of parts, the real man and the shadow of all men, packed up bag and baggage and came to London to very different fame and very different fortune. The great city had one kind of welcome to give to the man who desired to speak truth and another to the man who proposed to give pleasure. The chances for men of letters and for players were very unlike just then. The two strands of life ran across the web of London, the strand of Johnson iron-gray, the strand of Garrick gleaming gold. Through long years Johnson hid in dingy courts and alleys, ill-clothed, ill-fed, an uncouth Apollo in the service of Admetus Cave and his kind, while the marvellous actor was climbing daily higher and higher on the ladder of an actor's fame, the friend of the wealthy, the favored of the great, the admired, the applauded, the well-beloved. Garrick deserved his fame and his fortune, his splendid successes and {43} his shining rewards; but the grand, rough writer of books did not deserve his buffets and mishaps, his ferocious hungers, his acquaintanceship with sponging-houses, and all the catalogue of his London agonies. His struggle for life was a Titan's struggle, and it was never either selfish or ignoble. He wanted to live and be heard because he knew that he had something to say that was worth hearing. He needed to live for the sake of his ardent squalid affections, for the sake of the people who were always dependent upon his meagre bounty, for the sake of the wife he loved so deeply, mourned so truly when she died, and remembered with such tender loyalty so long as life was left to him. Miserably poor himself, he always had about him people more miserable and more poor,

who looked to him for the very bread and water of their affliction, dependents whom he tended not merely generously, but, what was better still, cheerfully. Under conditions of existence that would have seemed crushing to men of letters with a tithe of Johnson's greatness of soul, Johnson fought his way inch by inch in the terrible career of the man who lived by his pen, and by his pen alone. He wrote anything and everything so long as it was honorable to write and promised to make the world better. But it was not what Johnson wrote so much as what Johnson did that commanded his age and commands posterity. In the truest sense of the word, he lived beautifully. "Rasselas" and "The Idler," "London" and "The Vanity of Human Wishes," "The Rambler" and the "Sessions of Lilliput," and the "Lives of the Poets," and even the famous "Dictionary," only claim remembrance because they were done by a man who would be as interesting a study and as ennobling an example if he had never written a line of the works that bear his signature in every sentence of their solemn, even their portentous majesty. Johnson had the kindest heart wrapped in a rugged hide. One of the noblest of the many noble stories about him relates how he and a friend, whose name of Burke was not then famous, found a poor woman of the streets houseless, hungry, and exhausted in the streets. Burke had a room which he could {44} offer the poor creature for a night's shelter; but Burke could not get the woman there. Johnson had no room—his dependents swarmed over every available space at his command—but he had the strength of a giant, and he used it as a giant should, in carrying the poor wretch in his arms to the roof that Burke could offer her. Long years later, another man of letters, hungry, homeless, and friendless, sick almost unto death, found a kind friend and gentle nurse in a woman of the streets. In succoring De Quincey we may well think that Anne was repaying something of the debt owed by one of her unhappy class to two of the glories of literature and of humanity.

Slowly and surely Johnson's fame spread. The "Dictionary," massive fruit of many vigils, reward of many supplications, made him illustrious. It might have been dedicated to Chesterfield, if Chesterfield had shown to the struggling author the courtesy he was eager to extend to the established writer. Chesterfield need not be blamed if he was reluctant to welcome a queer ungainly creature whose manners were appalling, and of whose genius no one save himself was assured. But he was to be blamed, and he deserved the stern punishment he received in Johnson's stinging letter of repudiation, for attempting, when Johnson was distinguished and beyond his power to help, to win the great honor of a dedication by a proffer of friendship that came too late. Johnson needed no Chesterfield now. London had learned to reverence him, had learned to love him. His friends were the best Englishmen alive; the club which Johnson established bore on its roll the most illustrious names in the country; at the home of the Thrales Johnson tasted and appreciated all that was best in the home life of the time. He had a devoted friend in the person of a fussy, fantastic, opinionated, conceited little Scotch gentleman, Mr. James Boswell of Auchinleck, who clung to his side, treasured his utterances, cherished his sayings, and made himself immortal in immortalizing his hero. It is good to remember that when George the Third came to the throne a man like Johnson was alive. It is not so good to remember how seldom he found himself {45} face to face with the King, whom he might have aided with his wisdom, his counsel, and his friendship.

[Sidenote: 1763—Johnson's influence on literature]

Johnson's presence adorned and honored four-and-twenty years of a reign that was to last for sixty years. He was the friend or the enemy of every man worthy to arouse any strong emotion of love or scorn in a strong spirit. He had the admiration of all whose admiration was worth the having. The central figure of the literary London of his lifetime, he exercised something

of the same social and intellectual influence over all Londoners that Socrates exercised over all Athenians. The affection he inspired survived him, and widens with the generations. In the hundred years and more that have passed since Johnson's death, his memory has grown greener. The symbol of his life and of its lesson is to be found in what Hawthorne beautifully calls the sad and lovely legend of the man Johnson's public penance in the rain, amid the jeering crowd, to expiate the offence of the child against its father. Johnson was the very human apostle of a divine righteousness.

{46}

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE "NORTH BRITON"

[Sidenote: 1763—John Wilkes]

One of the most beautiful places on one of the most beautiful rivers in the world is Medmenham on the Thames, hard by Marlow. In the awakening of spring, in the tranquillity of summer, or the rich decline of August, the changing charm of the spot appeals with the special insistence that association lends to nature. Medmenham is a haunted place. Those green fields and smiling gardens have been the scenes of the strangest idyls; those shining waters have mirrored the fairest of frail faces; those woods have echoed to the names of the light nymphs of town and the laughter of modish satyrs. It was once very lonely in its loveliness, a ground remote, where men could do and did do as they pleased unheeded and unobserved. Where now from April to October a thousand pleasure-boats pass by, where a thousand pleasure-seekers land and linger, a century and a half ago the spirit

of solitude brooded, and those who came there came to a calm as unvexed and as enchanting as the calm of Avallon. They made strange uses of their exquisite opportunity. They profaned the groves whose very winds breathed peace; they polluted the stream that a poet would have found sacred. The remains are there of a Cistercian abbey, the ruins of a ruin, twice fallen into disuse and decay. It was a ruin in the eighteenth century when a member of Parliament, who was also a baronet and a Chancellor of the Exchequer, took it into his evil head to repair it. Under the care of Sir Francis Dashwood it was restored for a new and altered life. The abbey rose again, and once again was associated with a brotherhood of monks. But where the quiet Cistercians had lived and prayed a new {47} brotherhood of St. Francis, named after their founder, devoted themselves to all manner of blasphemy, to all manner of offence. In a spot whose beauty might well be expected to have only a softening influence, whose memories might at least be found exalting, a handful of disreputable men gathered together to degrade the place, and, as far as that was possible, themselves, with the beastly pleasures and beastly humors of the ingrained blackguard.

The Hell-Fire Club was dead and gone, but the spirit of the Hell-Fire Club was alive and active. The monks of St. Francis were worthy pupils of the principles of the Duke of Wharton. They sought to make their profligacy, in which they strove to be unrivalled, piquant by a parody of the religious ceremonies of the Christian faith. The energy and the earnestness which other men devote to the advancement of some public cause, to the furtherance of their country's welfare, or even to the gratification of their own ambitions, these men devoted to a passion for being pre-eminent in sin, conspicuous in infamy. If they succeeded in nothing else, they succeeded in making their names notorious and shameful, they succeeded in stirring the envy of men no better than they, but less enabled by wealth or position to gratify their passions. They succeeded in arousing the loathing not merely of honest men, but even of the knaves and fools whose rascality was not so

rotten and whose folly was not so foul as that of the noblemen and statesmen who rioted within the walls of Medmenham.

It is curious and melancholy to record that the leading spirits of this abominable brotherhood were legislators in both Houses of Parliament, men of old family, great position, large means, men holding high public office, members of the Government. Their follies and their sins would scarcely be worth remembering to-day were it not for the chance that gave them for companion and ally one of the most remarkable men of his age, a man whose abilities were in striking contrast to those of his associates, a man who might almost be called a man of genius.

{48}

John Wilkes was the son of a rich distiller and of a Presbyterian mother. He had received a good education in England and at Leyden, where so many of the Englishmen of that day went as students. He had travelled much in his youth upon the Continent. On his return he was induced by his father, he being then only two-and-twenty, to marry a lady who was exceedingly rich, but who had the misfortune to be at least ten years older than her husband. It is scarcely surprising to find that the marriage did not turn out happily. Wilkes was young, fresh from the bright Continental life, delighting in pleasure and the society of those who pursued pleasure. How far a happier marriage might have influenced him for good it were idle to consider. His marriage he regarded always and spoke of always as a sacrifice to Plutus, not to Venus, and he certainly was at no pains to make it any more of a sacrifice than he could help. His wild tastes, his wild companions soon sickened and horrified Mrs. Wilkes. The ill-matched pair separated, and remained separate for the rest of their lives.

Wilkes was delighted to be free. He was at liberty to squander his money unquestioned and unchallenged in the society of as pretty a gang of

scoundrels as even the age could produce. No meaner, more malignant, or more repulsive figure darkens the record of the last century than that of Lord Sandwich. Sir Francis Dashwood ran him close in infamy. Mr. Thomas Potter was the peer of either in beastliness. All three were members of Parliament; all three were partially responsible for the legislation of the country; two were especially so responsible. All three were bound at least to a decorous acknowledgment of the observances of the Church; one was in especial so bound. Sir Francis Dashwood and Lord Sandwich were, then or thereafter, members of the Government. Sir Francis Dashwood was remarkable as having been the worst and stupidest Chancellor of the Exchequer known to history. Lord Sandwich was made First Lord of the Admiralty. As for the third in this triumvirate of blackguards, Mr. Thomas Potter was a son of the Archbishop {49} of Canterbury, and he was soon afterwards made Vice-Treasurer for Ireland. Into such honorable hands were the duties of government delivered less than a century and a half ago.

[Sidenote: 1763—Wilkes's profligacy]

In this society Wilkes was made very welcome. He brought to their filthy fooleries something resembling wit; he brought an intelligence as far above that of his companions as that of the monkey is above that of the rabbit. While he had money he spent it as royally as the rest. If he rivalled them in their profligacy, he outstripped them by his intellect. They were conspicuous only by their vices; he would have been a remarkable man even if it had pleased Providence to make him virtuous. It had not pleased Providence to make him attractive to look upon. There were few uglier men of his day; few who lost less by their ugliness. But though we are well assured that his appearance was repulsive, he redeemed his hideousness by his ready tongue and witty mind. He said of himself, truly enough, that he only wanted half an hour's start to make him even with the handsomest man in England.

Wilkes flung his money and his wife's money about recklessly, while he played his part as a country gentleman upon the estate at Aylesbury which his unhappy wife had resigned to him when they separated. Of this money some eight thousand pounds went in an unsuccessful attempt to bribe his way into the representation of Berwick, and seven thousand more went in the successful attempt to buy himself the representation of Aylesbury. It is probable that he hoped to advance his failing fortunes in Parliament. His fortunes were failing, failing fast. He made an ignoble attempt to bully his wife out of the miserable income of two hundred a year which was all that she had saved out of her wealth, but the attempt was happily defeated by that Court of King's Bench against which Wilkes was to be pitted later in more honorable hostility.

It was perhaps impossible that Wilkes could long remain content with the companionship of men like Dashwood and Sandwich; it was certainly impossible that men {50} like Dashwood and like Sandwich could for long feel comfortable in the companionship of a man so infinitely their superior in wit, intelligence, and taste. The panegyrists of Sandwich—for even Sandwich had his panegyrists in an age when wealth and rank commanded compliment—found the courage to applaud Sandwich as a scholar and an antiquarian, on the strength of an account of some travels in the Mediterranean, which the world has long since willingly let die. But the few weeks or months of foreign travel that permitted Sandwich to pose as a connoisseur when he was not practising as a profligate could not inspire him with the humor or the appreciation of Wilkes, and a friendship only cemented by a common taste for common vices soon fell asunder. There is a story to the effect that the quarrel began with a practical joke which Wilkes played off on Sandwich at Medmenham. Sandwich, in some drunken orgy, was induced to invoke the devil, whereupon Wilkes let loose a monkey, that had been kept concealed in a box, and drove Sandwich into a paroxysm of fear in the belief that his impious supplication had been answered. For

whatever reason, Wilkes and Sandwich ceased to be friends, to Wilkes's cost at first, and to Sandwich's after. Sandwich owes his unenviable place in history to his association with Wilkes in the first place, and in the next to his alliance with the beautiful, unhappy Miss Ray, who was murdered by her melancholy lover, the Rev. Mr. Hickman, at the door of Covent Garden Theatre. The fate of his mistress and his treason to his friend have preserved the name of Sandwich from the forgetfulness it deserved.

[Sidenote: 1763—Wilkes as a Member of Parliament]

In those days Wilkes made no very remarkable figure in Parliament. It was outside the walls of Westminster that he first made a reputation as a public man. In the unpopularity of Bute, Wilkes found opportunity for his own popularity. The royal peace policy was very unwelcome, and agitated the feeling of the country profoundly. Political controversy ran as high in the humblest cross-channels as in the main stream of courtly and political life. At that time, we are told by a contemporary {51} letter-writer, the mason would pause in his task to discuss the progress of the peace, and the carpenter would neglect his work to talk of the Princess Dowager, of Lord Treasurers and Secretaries of State. To win support and sympathy from such keen observers, the Ministry turned again for aid to the public press that had been so long neglected by the Whigs. Smollett, the remembered novelist, Murphy, the forgotten dramatist, were commissioned to champion the cause of the Government in the two papers, the *Briton* and the *Auditor*.

The Government already had a severe journalistic critic in the *Monitor*, a newspaper edited by John Entinck, which had been started in 1755. The *Monitor* was not at all like a modern newspaper. It was really little more than a weekly pamphlet, a folio of six pages published every Saturday, and containing an essay upon the political situation of the hour. Its hostility to Bute goaded the minister into the production of the *Briton*, which was

afterwards supplemented by the creation of the *Auditor* when it was found that Smollett had called up against the Ministry a more terrible antagonist than the *Monitor*. For the *Briton* only lives in the memories of men because it called into existence the *North Briton*.

Wilkes had entered Parliament as the impassioned follower of Pitt. He made many confessions of his desire to serve his country, professions which may be taken as sincere enough. But he was also anxious to serve himself and to mend his fortunes, and he did not find in Parliamentary life the advancement for which he hoped. Twice he sought for high position under the Crown, and twice he was unsuccessful. He wished to be made ambassador to Constantinople, where he would have found much that was congenial to him, and his wish was not granted. He wished to be made Governor-General of the newly conquered Quebec, and again his desires were unheeded. Wilkes believed that Bute was the cause of his double disappointment. He became convinced that while the favors of the State lay in Bute's hands they would only be given to Tories, and more especially to Tories who were also {52} Scotchmen. If Bute could have known, it would have been a happy hour for him which had seen Wilkes starting for the Golden Horn or sailing for the St. Lawrence. But Bute was a foolish man, and he did his most foolish deed when he made Wilkes his enemy.

The appearance of the *North Briton* was an event in the history of journalism as well as in the political history of the country. It met the heavy-handed violence of the *Briton* with a frank ferocity which was overpowering. It professed to fight on the same side as the *Monitor*, but it surpassed Entinck's paper as much in virulence as in ability. Under the whimsical pretence of being a North Briton, Wilkes assailed the Scotch party in the State with unflagging satire and unswerving severity. In the satire and the severity he had an able henchman in Charles Churchill.

[Sidenote: 1731-1764—The poet Churchill]

Those who are inclined to condemn Wilkes because for a season he found entertainment in the society of a Sandwich, a Dashwood, and a Potter, must temper their judgment by remembering the affection that Wilkes was able to inspire in the heart of Churchill. While the scoundrels of Medmenham were ready to betray their old associate, and, with no touch of the honor proverbially attributed to thieves, to drive him into disgrace, to exile, and if possible to death, the loyal friendship of the poet was given to Wilkes without reserve. Churchill was not a man of irreproachable character, of unimpeachable morality, or of unswerving austerity. But he was as different from the Sandwiches and the Dashwoods as dawn is different from dusk, and in enumerating all of the many arguments that are to be accumulated in defence of Wilkes, not the least weighty arguments are that while on the one hand he earned the hatred of Sandwich and of Dashwood, on the other hand he earned the love of Charles Churchill.

Churchill's name and fame have suffered of late years. Since Byron stood by the neglected grave and mused on him who blazed, the comet of a season, the genius of Churchill has been more and more disregarded. But the Georgian epoch, so rich in its many and contrasting types {53} of men of letters, produced few men more remarkable in themselves, if not in their works, than Charles Churchill. The cleric who first became famous for most unclerical assaults upon the stage, the satirist who could be the most devoted friend, the seducer who could be so loyal to his victim, the spendthrift who could be generous, the cynic who could feel and obey the principles of the purest patriotism, was one of those strangely compounded natures in which each vice was as it were effaced or neutralized by some compensating virtue. It may be fairly urged that while Churchill's virtues were his own, his vices were in large part the fault of his unhappy destiny. The Westminster boy who learned Latin under Vincent Bourne, and who

was a schoolfellow of Warren Hastings, of Cowper, and of Colman, might possibly have made a good scholar, but was certainly not of the stuff of which good clergymen are made. An early marriage, an unhappy marriage contracted in the Rules of the Fleet, had weighed down his life with encumbrances almost before he had begun to live. Compelled to support an unsuitable wife and an increasing family, Churchill followed his father's example and his father's injudicious counsel and took Holy Orders. Men took Orders in those days with a light heart. It afforded the needy a livelihood, precarious indeed for the most part, but still preferable to famine. Men took Orders with no thought of the sanctity of their calling, of the solemn service it exacted, of its awful duties and its inexorable demands. They wished merely to keep famine from the door, to have food and fire and shelter, and they took Orders as under other conditions they would have taken the King's shilling, with no more feeling of reverence for the black cassock than for the scarlet coat. Churchill was not the man to wear the clergyman's gown with dignity, or to find in the gravity of his office consolation for the penury that it entailed. The Establishment offered meagre advantages to an extravagant man with an extravagant wife. He drifted deeper and deeper into debt. He became as a wandering star, reserved for the blackness of bailiffs and the darkness of duns. But the {54} rare quality he had in him of giving a true friendship to his friend won a like quality from other men. Dr. Lloyd, under-master of his old school of Westminster, came to his aid, helped him in his need, and secured the patience of his creditors. He was no longer harassed, but he was still poor, and the spur of poverty drove him to tempt his fortune in letters. Like so many a literary adventurer of the eighteenth century, he saw in the writing of verse the sure way to success. Like so many a literary adventurer of the century, he carried his first efforts unsuccessfully from bookseller to bookseller. The impulses of his wit were satirical; he was not dismayed by failure; the stage had entertained him and irritated him, and he made the

stage the subject of his first triumph. "The Rosciad" was in every sense a triumph. Its stings galled the vanity of the players to frenzy. At all times a susceptible brotherhood, their susceptibilities were sharply stirred by Churchill's corrosive lines and acidulated epigrams. Their indignation finding vent in hot recrimination and virulent lampoon only served to make the poem and its author better known to the public. Churchill replied to the worst of his assailants in "The Apology," which rivalled the success of "The Rosciad," and gained for the satirist the friendship of Garrick, who had affected to disdain the praises of "The Rosciad," but who now recognized in time the power of the satirist and the value of his approval. Churchill himself was delighted with his good fortune. He was the talk of the town; he had plenty of money in his pocket; he was separated from his wife, freed from his uncongenial profession, and he could exchange the solemn black of the cleric for a blue coat with brass buttons and a gold-laced hat.

[Sidenote: 1762—Newspaper polemics]

Lest the actors whom he had lashed should resort to violence for revenge, he carried with ostentation a sturdy cudgel. It was a formidable weapon in hands like Churchill's, and Churchill was not molested. For Churchill was a man of great physical strength. He tells the world in the portrait he painted of himself of the vastness of his bones, of the strength of his muscles, of his arms like {55} two twin oaks, of his legs fashioned as if to bear the weight of the Mansion House, of his massive body surmounted by the massive face, broader than it was long. The ugly face was chiefly remarkable, according to the confession of its owner, for its expression of contentment, though the observant might discern "sense lowering in the penthouse of his eye." Like most giants, he overtaxed his strength, both mentally and physically. Whatever he did he did with all his mighty energy. He loved, hated, worked, played, at white heat as it were, and withered up his forces

with the flame they fed. In nothing did his zeal consume itself more hotly than in his devotion to Wilkes.

Churchill met Wilkes in 1762, and seems to have fallen instantly under the spell which Wilkes found it so easy to exercise upon all who came into close contact with him. Undoubtedly Churchill's friendship was very valuable to Wilkes. If Churchill loved best to express his satire in verse, he could write strongly and fiercely in prose, and the *North Briton* owed to his pen some of its most brilliant and some of its bitterest pages. In the *North Briton* Wilkes and Churchill laid about them lustily, striking at whatever heads they pleased, holding their hands for no fame, no dignity, no influence. It was wholly without fear and wholly without favor. If it assailed Bute again and again with an unflagging zeal, it was no less ready to challenge to an issue the greatest man who over accepted a service from Bute, and to remind Dr. Johnson, who had received a pension from the King's favorite, of his own definition of a pension and of a pensioner.

Before the fury and the popularity of the *North Briton* both the *Auditor* and the *Briton* had to strike their colors. The *Auditor* came to its inglorious end on February 8, 1763. The *Briton* died on the 12th of the same month, leaving the *North Briton* master of the field. Week after week the *North Briton* grew more severe in its strictures upon the Government, strictures that scorned the veil of hint and innuendo that had hitherto prevailed in these pamphleteering wars. Even the *Monitor* had always alluded to the statesmen whom it assailed by initial letters. {56} The *North Briton* called them by their names in all the plainness of full print, the name of the sovereign not being excepted from this courageous rule. But the fame of the *North Briton* only came to its full with the number forty-five.

{57}

CHAPTER XLV.

NUMBER FORTY-FIVE.

[Sidenote: 1763—Wilkes's criticism of the King's speech]

When Bute disappeared from the public leadership of his party, Wilkes, from professedly patriotic motives, delayed the publication of the current number of the *North Briton*, to see if the policy which Bute had inspired still guided the actions of the gentle shepherd, George Grenville. Wilkes wished to know if the influence of the Scottish minister was at an end, or if he still governed through those wretched tools who had supported the most odious of his measures, the ignominious peace, and the wicked extension of the arbitrary mode of excise. He declared himself that if Bute only intended to retire into that situation which he held before he took the seals, a situation in which he dictated to every part of the King's administration, Wilkes was as ready to combat the new Administration as he had been steady in his opposition to a single, insolent, incapable, despotic minister.

Any hope that Wilkes may have entertained of a reformation of the Ministry was dispelled by a talk which he had with Temple and Pitt at Temple's house, where Temple showed him an early copy of the King's speech. Wilkes, Pitt, and Temple were entirely in agreement as to the fatal defects of the speech, and Wilkes went promptly home and wrote the article which made the forty-fifth number of the *North Briton* famous.

In itself the number forty-five was no stronger in its utterances than many of the preceding numbers. If its tone be compared with the tone of journalistic criticism of ministers or their sovereign less than a generation later, it seems sober and even mild. Wilkes's article started with a citation

from Cicero: "Genus orationis atrox et {58} vehemena, cui opponitur genus illud alterum lenitatis et mansuetudinis." Then came Wilkes's comment on the speech. He was careful not to criticize directly the King. With a prudence that was perhaps more ironical than any direct stroke at the sovereign, he attacked the minister who misled and misrepresented the monarch. "The King's speech has always been considered by the legislature and by the public at large as the speech of the minister."

Starting from this understanding, Wilkes went on to stigmatize the Address as "the most abandoned instance of ministerial effrontery ever attempted to be imposed upon mankind," and he doubted whether "the imposition is greater upon the sovereign or on the nation." "Every friend of his country," the writer declared, "must lament that a prince of so many great and amiable qualities, whom England truly reveres, can be brought to give the sanction of his sacred name to the most odious measures and to the most unjustifiable public declarations from a throne ever renowned for truth, honor, and unsullied virtue."

The article was not intemperate and it certainly was not unjust. But when it appeared the King was still new flushed with his idea of his own personal authority in the State, and the slightest censure of his policy goaded him into a kind of frenzy. Had Wilkes endeavored with his own hand to kill the King in his palace of St. James's he could hardly have made the monarch more furious. He had long hated and his ministers had long dreaded the outspoken journalist. King and ministers now felt that the time had arrived when they could strike, and strike effectively. The King commanded the law officers of the Crown to read the article and give their opinion upon it. The law officers did the work that they knew the King expected from them. They found that the paper was an infamous and seditious libel tending to incite the people to insurrection. They declared that the offence was one punishable in due course of law as a misdemeanor. Upon this hint the

ministers acted, rapidly and rashly. A general warrant was issued for the apprehension of the authors, printers, and publishers of the *North Briton*. The printer {59} and the publisher were arrested and brought before Lord Halifax and Lord Egremont, to whom they gave up the names of John Wilkes and Charles Churchill as the authors of the *North Briton*. The next step was to arrest Wilkes himself.

[Sidenote: 1763—Arrest of Wilkes]

The King's messengers came upon Wilkes in his house in Great George Street, Westminster. It is honorably characteristic of the man that in the moment of his own danger he felt more concern for the danger of another. While he was arguing with the officials that they had no power to arrest him, as he was a member of Parliament and therefore privileged against arrest, Churchill came into the room on a visit to Wilkes. Churchill, Wilkes knew, was as certain to be arrested as he was. Churchill could plead no privilege. It was probable that the messengers were unfamiliar with Churchill's face. Wilkes, with happy good-nature and happy audacity, immediately hailed Churchill as Mr. Thompson, clasped his hand and inquired affectionately how Mrs. Thompson did and if she was going to dine in the country. If Wilkes was clever in his suggestion Churchill was no less clever in taking the hint. He thanked Wilkes, declared that Mrs. Thompson was at that moment waiting for him, and that he had merely called in to inquire after the health of Wilkes. Saying which, Churchill swiftly bowed himself out, hurried home, secured all his papers, and disappeared into the country. The King's messengers, who were promptly at his lodgings, were never able to discover his whereabouts.

The flight to which Wilkes so ingeniously assisted him is not the brightest part of Churchill's career. He carried with him into his retreat a young girl, a Miss Carr, the daughter of a Westminster stonecutter, whom

the charms of Churchill's manners had induced to leave her father's house. He could not marry the girl, as he was married already, and, to do him justice, he appears soon to have repented the wrong he had done her. But after an unsuccessful attempt on the girl's part to live again with her own people she returned to her lover, and she lived with her lover to the end. Churchill seems to have been sincerely {60} attached to her. If he had been a free man, if his life had not been blighted by his early unhappy marriage, their union might have been a very happy one. At his death he left annuities to both women, to the woman he had married and the woman he had loved, the wife's annuity being the larger of the two.

While Churchill was making his way as quickly as possible out of a town that his services to his friend had rendered too hot to hold him, Wilkes was immediately hurried before Lord Halifax and Lord Egremont at Whitehall. He carried himself very composedly in the presence of his enemies. He persistently asserted his privilege, as a member of Parliament, against arrest. He refused to answer any questions or to acknowledge the authorship of No. 45 of the *North Briton*. He professed with equal enthusiasm his loyalty to the King and his loathing of the King's advisers, and he announced his intention of bringing the matter before Parliament the moment that the session began. Egremont and Halifax retaliated by sending Wilkes to the Tower and causing his house to be searched and all his papers to be seized. The high-handed folly of the King's friends had for their chief effect the conversion of men who had little sympathy for Wilkes into, if not his advocates, at least his allies against the illegal methods which were employed to crush him.

Wilkes, through his friends, immediately applied to the Court of Common Pleas for a writ of *habeas corpus*. This was at once obtained, and was served upon the messengers of the Secretary of State. But Wilkes was no longer in their custody, and Wilkes was detained in the Tower for a

whole week, part of the time, as he declared, in solitary confinement, before he was brought into court. Judge Pratt immediately ordered his discharge on the ground of his claim to immunity from arrest as a member of Parliament, without prejudice to any later action against him.

[Sidenote: 1763—Hogarth's caricature of Wilkes]

It was while Wilkes was before Pratt at Westminster that, if we may accept the authority of Churchill, one of Wilkes's keenest enemies seized an opportunity for a cruel {61} revenge. Hogarth hated both Wilkes and Churchill. He had begun the quarrel by attacking the *North Briton* and the *Monitor* in his cartoon "The Times," executed for the greater glorification of the painter's patron, Lord Bute. The *North Briton* replied to this attack with a vigor which infuriated Hogarth, who had his full share of the irritable vanity which the world always attributes to the artist. In Wilkes's difficulty Hogarth saw his opportunity. Lurking behind a screen in the Court of Common Pleas, the painter sought and found an opportunity for making a sketch of Wilkes. While Justice Pratt, with what Wilkes called "the eloquence and courage of old Rome," was laying down the law upon the prisoner's plea preparatory to setting him at liberty, Hogarth's busy pencil was engaged upon the first sketch for that caricature which has helped to make Wilkes's features famous and infamous throughout the world. The print was promptly published at a shilling, and commanded an enormous sale. Nearly four thousand copies, it is said, were sold within a few weeks. The envenomed skill of Hogarth has made the appearance of Wilkes almost as familiar to us as to the men of his own time. The sneering, satyr face, the sinister squint, the thrust-out chin and protruding lower jaw belong to a face severely visited by Nature, even when liberal allowance is made for the animosity that prompted the hand of the caricaturist. The caricature was a savage stroke; to Wilkes's friends it seemed to be a traitor's stroke. Wilkes appears to have taken it, as he took most things, with composure. "I know,"

he wrote later, "but one short apology to be made for the person of Mr. Wilkes; it is that he did not make himself, and that he never was solicitous about the case of his soul (as Shakespeare calls it) only so far as to keep it clean and in health. I never once heard that he hung over the glassy stream, like another Narcissus, admiring the image in it, nor that he ever stole an amorous look at his counterfeit in a side mirror. His form, such as it is, ought to give him no pain while it is capable of giving so much pleasure to others. I believe he finds himself tolerably happy in the clay {62} cottage to which he is a tenant for life, because he has learned to keep it in pretty good order; while the share of health and animal spirits which Heaven has given him shall hold out, I can scarcely imagine he will be one moment peevish about the outside of so precarious, so temporary a habitation, or will ever be brought to own 'Ingenium Galbae male habitat:' 'Monsieur est mal logé.'" Good-humored at the time, his good-humor persevered, and in later life he was wont to say jestingly that he found he was growing more and more like his famous portrait every day. But if it was becoming of Wilkes to bear the attack in so serene and even so jocular a spirit, it was not unbecoming, as it was not ungenerous, of his friends to fail to imitate the coolness of their leader. It is not quite easy to understand why, in an age of caricature, an age when all men of any notoriety were caricatured, the friends of Wilkes were so sensitive to the satire of Hogarth. Public men, and the friends of public men, have grown less sensitive. However, Wilkes's friends were, and showed themselves to be, as angry as Wilkes was, or showed himself to be, indifferent, and the hottest and angriest of them all was Churchill. Churchill could retaliate, and Churchill did retaliate with a ferocity that equalled and more than equalled Hogarth's.

[Sidenote: 1763—Churchill's denunciation of Hogarth]

With a rage that was prompted by friendship, yet with a coolness that the importance of the cause he championed called for, Churchill aimed blow

after blow upon the offending painter. The skill of a practised executioner directed every stroke to a fresh spot, and with every stroke brought blood. The satirist called upon Hogarth by his name, to stand forth and be tried "in that great court where conscience must preside," bade him review his life from his earliest youth, and say if he could recall a single instance in which

Thou with an equal eye didst genius view
And give to merit what was merit's duet
Genius and merit are a sure offence,
And thy soul sickens at the name of sense.

The poet goes on to say that "when Wilkes our countryman, {63} our common friend arose, his King, his country to defend," Malice

Had killed thee, tottering on life's utmost verge,
Had Wilkes and Liberty escaped thy scourge.

And then, in some two hundred lines of strenuous rage, Churchill denounced Hogarth with a denunciation that was the more effective because it was accompanied by a frank and full recognition of Hogarth's great gifts and deserved title to fame. Hogarth retaliated by his famous caricature of Churchill as a canonical bear with a pot of porter in one paw and a huge cudgel in the other, the knots on the cudgel being numbered as Lie 1, Lie 2, and so forth. Instantly the great caricaturist was attacked by others eager to strike at one who had struck so hard in his day. The hatred of Bute was extended to the painter who condescended to accept Bute's patronage, and who labored to please his patron. Hogarth was derided as "The Butyfier," in mockery of his "Analysis of Beauty." It would have been as lucky for Hogarth as it would have been lucky for Bute to let Wilkes alone.

If Wilkes's release filled his supporters throughout the country with delight, it only spurred on his enemies to fresh attempts and fresh blunders.

Had they left the matter where it stood, even though it stood at a defeat to them, they would have spared themselves much ignominy. But the fury of the King inspired a fiercer fury in the ministers and those who followed the ministers. Every weapon at their command was immediately levelled at Wilkes, even, it may not be unfairly asserted, the assassin's weapon. Wilkes carried himself gallantly, defiantly, even insolently. His attitude was not one to tempt angry opponents to forbearance. His letters from the Tower and after his release to Lord Halifax were couched in the most contemptuous language. He brought an action against Lord Halifax. He brought an action against Mr. Wood, the Under-Secretary of State, and was awarded 1,000 pounds damages. When Lord Egremont died, in the August of 1763, Wilkes declared that he had "been gathered {64} to the dull of ancient days." He republished the numbers of the *North Briton* in a single volume with notes, to prove that the King's speech could constitutionally be only regarded as the utterance of the King's ministers. There must have been a splendid stubbornness in the man which enabled him to face so daringly, so aggressively, the desperate odds against him.

[Sidenote: 1763—Wilkes and his accusers]

Every man who wished to curry favor with the King and the King's ministers was ready to strike his blow at Wilkes. There was not a bully among the hangers-on of the King and ministers who was not eager to cross swords with Wilkes or level pistol at him. Insult after insult, injury after injury, were offered to the obnoxious politician. The King dismissed him from the colonelcy of the Buckinghamshire Militia. Lord Temple was the Lord-Lieutenant of the county of Buckinghamshire, and as Lord-Lieutenant it was his duty to convey to Wilkes the news of his disgrace. Never was such news so conveyed. Temple told Wilkes of his dismissal in a letter of warm enthusiasm, of warm personal praise. The King immediately retaliated by removing Temple from the Lord-Lieutenancy and striking his

name off the list of privy councillors. The enmity was not confined to the King and to the parasites who sought to please the King. Dr. Johnson declared that if he were the monarch he would have sent half a dozen footmen to duck Wilkes for daring to censure his royal master or his royal master's ministers. In the House of Commons the hostility was at its height. When Parliament met Wilkes sought to call the attention of the House to his case, but was anticipated by Grenville, who read a royal message directed at Wilkes, the result of which was that the House voted that the number Forty-five of the *North Briton* was a seditious libel, and ordered it to be burned by the common hangman.

The basest part of the attack upon Wilkes was the use that his enemies made of his private papers, the way in which they associated his political conduct with an offence that was wholly unpolitical. It had amused Wilkes to set up a private printing-press at his own house. At this {65} press certain productions were printed which were no doubt indecent, which were no doubt blasphemous, but which were furthermore so foolish as to make both their indecency and their blasphemy of very little effect. One was the "Essay on Woman," written as a parody of Pope's "Essay on Man;" the other was an imitation of the "Veni Creator." Neither of these pieces of gross buffoonery bore any author's name. Very few copies of them had been printed, and these few solely for circulation among private friends with a taste for foul literature. No offence had been committed, no offence had been intended, against public morality. It is certain, as far as any literary puzzle can be regarded as certain, that Wilkes's share in the dirty business was chiefly, if not entirely, limited to the printing of the pages. The "Essay on Woman," as those who have had the misfortune to read it know, is a dreary writer's piece of schoolboy obscenity, if entirely disgusting, no less entirely dull. The text of the "Essay" was composed in great part, if not altogether, by Potter, the unworthy son of the Archbishop of Canterbury and worthy member of the Medmenham brotherhood. When Wilkes's papers

were seized, or by some other means, the Government got possession of the proof sheets of the "Essay on Woman." They immediately resolved, in defiance of public decency, of political morality, to use it as a weapon against their enemy. It shows the shallowness of their pretence at justification that they put the weapon into the hands of the worst and basest of Wilkes's former friends and allies in profligacy, into the hands of Lord Sandwich. On the first night of the session Lord Sandwich rose in the House of Lords, and proceeded to denounce Wilkes and the "Essay on Woman" with a vehemence of false austerity that impressed the assembly and infinitely delighted Lord Le Despencer, who had been the common friend, the brother sinner of accuser and accused, and who now expressed much entertainment at hearing the devil preach. The spurious virtue of Sandwich was followed by the spurious indignation of Warburton. The "Essay on Woman" contained certain notes written in parody of Warburton's notes {66} to the "Essay on Man," just as the verses themselves were a parody on Pope's poem. Warburton chose to regard this as a broach of privilege, and he assailed Wilkes with even greater fury than Sandwich had done, winding up by apologizing to the devil for even comparing Wilkes to him. An admiring House immediately voted the poems obscene, libellous, and a breach of privilege. Two days afterwards an address from the Lords called upon the King to prosecute Wilkes for blasphemy.

[Sidenote: 1763—Wilkes as a champion of popular liberty]

Wilkes was unable to face this new attack. He had already fallen a victim to an attack of another and no less malignant nature. While the creatures of the Government in the Upper House were trying to destroy his character, one of their creatures in the Lower House was doing his best to take Wilkes's life. This was a man named Martin, who had been attacked in the *North Briton* some eight months earlier. Martin seemed to have resolved upon revenge, and to have set about obtaining it after the fashion not of the

gentleman, but of the bravo. Day by day, week by week, month by month he practised himself in pistol shooting, until he considered that his skill was sufficient to enable him to take the dastard's hazard in a duel. He seized the opportunity of the debate on November 15th to describe the writer in the *North Briton* as a "coward and a malignant scoundrel." When Wilkes, on the following day, avowed the authorship of the paper, Martin sent him a challenge. The challenge was in all respects a strange one. It was treacherous, because it came at the heels of deliberate preparation. It was peremptory, for it called upon Wilkes to meet his enemy in Hyde Park within an hour. It contravened the laws of the duello, because Martin, who was the challenger, himself insisted on the use of the weapons with which he had made himself so murderously skilful. Wilkes accepted the duel with characteristic courage, with characteristic rashness. He met Martin in Hyde Park, and the amateur bravo shot Wilkes through the body. It is a further characteristic of the many elements of good that went to Wilkes's strange composition that, as he lay on the grass bleeding fast and {67} apparently mortally wounded, his first care was not for himself and his hurt, but for the safety of his adversary, of an adversary who deserved chivalrous treatment as little as if he had taken Wilkes unawares and shot him in the back.

While Wilkes was lying on what threatened to be his death-bed the feeling on both sides only increased in intensity. The Ministry were indifferent to the helplessness of their enemy. Wilkes was expelled from the House of Commons. He was expelled from the Militia. The common hangman was ordered publicly to burn the *North Briton*, but the hangman was not suffered to obey the order. An angry mob set upon him and upon the sheriffs who were assisting at the ceremony, rescued the *North Briton* from its persecutors, and in rude retaliation burned instead the joint emblems of the popular disdain—a boot and a petticoat. The people's blood was up; the symptoms were significant enough for any save such a King and such ministers to understand. While the Ministry, with a refinement of

cruelty, were sending daily the King's surgeons to watch Wilkes's health and proclaim the moment when he might again be attacked, the Corporation of Dublin was setting an example that was soon followed by the Corporation of London and by other corporations in presenting him with the freedom of its city. While Wilkes was slowly journeying towards Paris, where his daughter was, and passing, as he wrote, "the most unhappy days he had known," an angry mob gibbeted the effigy of Bute at one of the gates of Exeter, and kept the image swinging there in derision for a fortnight in defiance of the authorities. While Wilkes was languishing in foreign exile to save his liberty and his very life from the malignity of his enemies, his portrait, painted by Reynolds, was placed in the Guildhall with an inscription in honor of the jealous assertor of English liberty by law.

Wilkes was well advised in keeping out of England. He had done his part. The decisions of Pratt in the Court of Common Pleas, the decisions in the Guildhall, had conferred a permanent benefit upon the English citizen. But {68} Wilkes was not bound to put himself into the power of his enemies in order to establish the authorship of the "Essay on Woman." His enemies took as much advantage as they could of his absence. He was found guilty by the Court of King's Bench of having reprinted the number Forty-five and of having written the "Essay on Woman." As he did not appear to receive his sentence, he was promptly outlawed for contumacy. Thus a Ministry wise in their own conceit believed that they had got rid of Wilkes for good and all. They did not note, or if they noted did not heed, that the favorite sign of ale-houses throughout the country was the head of Wilkes. They were indifferent to the fact that Wilkes had come to be regarded in all directions as the champion of popular liberty. All they knew, all that they cared to know, was that Wilkes was in exile, and was like enough to die in exile. Even the success of "The Beggar's Opera" taught them nothing, and yet the success of "The Beggar's Opera" was a significant lesson. "The Beggar's Opera" was revived at Covent Garden while the

excitement about Wilkes was at its height, and its audiences were as ready to read in political allusions between the lines as they had been at the time of its first production. The line "That Jemmy Twitcher should peach on me I own rather surprises me" was converted at once into an innuendo at the expense of Lord Sandwich, to whom the name Jemmy Twitcher was immediately applied by the public at large, almost to the disuse, so Horace Walpole tells us, of his own title.

[Sidenote: 1764—Death of Hogarth and Churchill]

But the Ministry had so far triumphed that for four years Wilkes remained away from England, drifting from one foreign capital to another, making friends and winning admirers everywhere, and employing his enforced leisure in attempting great feats of literary enterprise. A scheme for a Constitutional History of England was succeeded by a no less difficult and, as it proved, no less impracticable scheme. During Wilkes's exile he lost the most famous of his enemies and the most famous of his friends. On October 26, 1764, Hogarth died. It was commonly said, and generally credited, that he died of a broken heart {69} in consequence of the furious attacks which had followed upon his unhappy quarrel with Wilkes. It was a pity that the closing hours of Hogarth's life should have been occupied with so petty and so regrettable a squabble. Hogarth was entirely in the wrong. Hogarth began the quarrel; and if Hogarth was eager to give hard knocks he should have been ready to take hard knocks in return. But the world at large may very well be glad that Hogarth did lurk in the court by Justice Pratt and did make his memorable sketch of Wilkes. The sketch serves to show us if not what Wilkes exactly was, at least what Wilkes seemed to be to a great many of his countrymen. The caricaturist is a priceless commentator. If Hogarth indeed indirectly shortened his life by his portrait of Wilkes, he gave, as if by transfusion of blood, an increased and abiding vitality to certain of the most interesting pages of history.

Within a few days of Hogarth, Churchill died. His devotion to Wilkes prompted him to join him in his Continental banishment. He got as far as Boulogne, where Wilkes met him, and at Boulogne he died of a fever, after formally naming Wilkes as his literary executor. Wilkes, who was always prompted by generous impulses, immediately resolved that he would edit a collected edition of Churchill's works, and for a time he buried himself in seclusion in Naples with the firm intention of carrying out this purpose. But the task was too great both for the man and for the conditions under which he was compelled to work. In the first place, annotations of such poems as Churchill's required constant reference to and minute acquaintance with home affairs, such as it was well-nigh impossible for an exile to command. In the second place, it was not an easy task for a man even with a very high opinion of himself to play the part of editor and annotator of poems a great part of which had him for hero. In a very short time the work was abandoned, and Wilkes emerged from his literary retreat.

Wilkes has been very bitterly and, as it would appear, very unjustly upbraided for his seeming neglect of his dead friend's wishes, of his dead defender's fame. In spite of {70} those whose zeal for the memory of Churchill drives them into antagonism with the memory of Wilkes, it may be believed that the task was not one "for which Wilkes could, with the greatest ease, have procured all the necessary materials; and to which he was called not by the sacred duties of friendship only, but by the plainest considerations of even the commonest gratitude." Even if Wilkes had been, which Wilkes was not, the kind of a man to make a good editor, a good annotator, the difficulties that lay in the way of the execution of his task were too many. The fact that the poems were so largely about himself gave a sufficient if not an almost imperative reason why he should leave the task alone. But in any case he must have felt conscious of what events proved, that there was other work for him to do in the world than the editing of other men's satires.

Not, indeed, that the genius of Churchill needed any tribute that Wilkes or any one else could bestow. His monument is in his own verses, in the story of his life. If indeed the lines from "The Candidate" which are inscribed on Churchill's tombstone tell the truth, if indeed his life was "to the last enjoyed," part of that enjoyment may well have come from the certainty that the revolutions of time would never quite efface his name or obscure his memory. The immortality of the satirist must almost inevitably be an immortality rather historical than artistic; it is rather what he says than how he says it which is accounted unto him for good. As there are passages of great poetic beauty in the satires of Juvenal, so there are passages of poetic beauty in the satires of Churchill. But they are both remembered, the great Roman and the great Englishman, less for what beauty their work permitted than for the themes on which they exercised their wit. The study of Churchill is as essential to a knowledge of the eighteenth century in London as the study of Juvenal is essential to a knowledge of the Rome of his time. That fame Churchill had secured for himself; to that fame nothing that Wilkes or any one else might do could add.

{71}

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE AMERICAN COLONIES.

[Sidenote: 1765—Grenville as Bute's successor]

Wilkes in exile had ceased to exist in the minds of the King's Ministry. In Naples or in Paris he was as little to be feared as Churchill in his grave. An insolent subject had presumed directly to attack the King's advisers and indirectly the King himself, and the insolent subject was a fugitive, a

broken, powerless man. The young King might well be pleased with the success of his policy. In pursuance of that policy he had reduced the great fabric of the Whig party to a ruin, and had driven the factious demagogue who opposed him into an ignominious obscurity. To a temper flushed by two such triumphs opposition of any kind was well-nigh welcome for the pleasure of crushing it, and was never less likely to be encountered in a spirit of conciliation. Yet the King was destined in the very glow of his success to find himself face to face with an opposition which he was not able to crush, and on which any attempt at conciliation was but so much waste of time. The King's new and formidable opponent was his own chief minister.

When Bute, perhaps in fear for his life, perhaps in despair at his unpopularity, resigned the office he filled so ill, he hoped to find in his successor Grenville a supple and responsive creature, through whom Bute would still be as powerful as before. Bute had to taste a bitter disappointment. Grenville's gloomy spirit and narrow mind unfitted him, indeed, for the office he was called upon to hold, but they afforded him a stubbornness which declined to recognize either the authority of the favorite or the authority of the favorite's master. By the time that Grenville had been two years in office the King hated him as {72} bitterly as he had ever hated Pitt. If Bute was impotently furious to find himself discarded and despised by his intended tool, the King was still more exasperated to find that the King's servant proposed to be the King's master. Grenville was a good lawyer and a good man of business, but he was extremely dull and extremely tactless, and he was at as much pains to offend the King as if he intended offence. He was overbearing in manner to a monarch who was himself overbearing; he badgered him with long rambling discourses upon his royal duty; he deliberately wounded him in his two warmest affections, his love for his mother and his regard for Bute. Grenville was right enough in his objection to the undue influence of Bute, but his animadversions

came with a bad grace from the man who was to do as much harm to England as Bute had ever done. As Grenville had triumphed over Bute and driven him into the background, so he wished to triumph over the Princess Dowager and deprive her of power. In 1765 the King fell ill for the first time of that malady from which he was to suffer so often and so heavily. As soon as he was restored to health he proposed the introduction of a Regency Bill to settle satisfactorily the difficulties that might very well arise if the heir to the throne were to succeed before the age of eighteen.

[Sidenote: 1765—The King seeks to remove Grenville]

Grenville acted in the matter of the Regency Bill as if the dearest wish of his heart were to flout the King's wishes and to wound his feelings. The King wished, lest he should again be stricken with illness while the heir-apparent was still an infant, to be given the right to name a regent by will. Grenville and Grenville's colleagues, who were now as jealous of the authority of Bute as any subscriber to the *North Briton*, saw or professed to see in the King's proposal an insidious scheme for placing little less than royal power within the reach of the favorite. They made it impossible for the King to name Bute by limiting his choice to the members of the royal family. But they went further than this in affronting the King. They limited his choice of a regent to members of the royal family, but they also limited the number of {73} members of the royal family from whom he might make his choice. They insisted that the name of the King's mother, of the Princess Dowager, should not be included in the Bill. It is difficult to understand how the King could ever have been induced to consent to this peculiarly galling insult. It seems that Grenville assured him, on entirely false premises, that if her name were mentioned in the Bill the House of Commons would be certain to strike it out. Preferring the private to the public affront, George surrendered to his minister, only to find that his minister was flagrantly misinformed. The friends of the Princess in the

House of Commons moved that her name should be written into the Bill, and they carried their point in Grenville's teeth. Grenville had played the tyrant and George had accepted the humiliation for nothing. George tried at once to overthrow Grenville. In those days a king who disliked a minister had a very simple and easy way of showing and of gratifying his dislike. He could dismiss his minister without ceremony and without question. Nowadays a minister depends for his power and tenure of office upon the majority in the House of Commons, and a sovereign would not think of dismissing a minister, or of doing anything else than accepting formally the decision of the House of Commons. But when George the Third was king the only check upon the royal power of dismissing a minister lay in the possible difficulty of finding another to take his place. This was the check George now met. He wanted with all his heart to dismiss Grenville. He turned to Cumberland of Culloden, and implored him to bring back Pitt and enable him to get rid of Grenville. Cumberland tried and Cumberland failed. Pitt was in one of those paroxysms of illness which seem to have completely overmastered him. He was almost entirely under the influence of Temple. Temple's detestation of Bute reconciled him to Grenville's policy when he found that Grenville seemed to share that detestation. Temple persuaded Pitt to refuse. Cumberland came back to the King to tell of his failure. There was nothing to be done. Grenville had to be kept on. If the enforced association {74} did not make the sovereign and his minister better friends, if both smarted under a sense of humiliation and defeat, it is scarcely surprising that the stubbornness of both was intensified in cases where their stubbornness was pitted not against each other, but against a common obstacle. Such a case was then in existence.

[Sidenote: 1765—The American colonies]

Three thousand miles away the wealth and power of England was represented by a number of settlements occupying a comparatively narrow

strip of territory on the Atlantic seaboard of the North American continent. The American colonies were the proudest possessions of the British Empire. Through generation after generation, for more than two centuries, English daring and English courage had built up those colonies, reclaiming them from the wilderness and the swamp, wresting them from wild man and wild beast, fighting for them with European power after European power. They were a source of wealth, a source of honor, and a source of strength to England. They were cheaply bought with the brave lives that had been given for them. It is hard to realize that any sovereign, that any statesman could fail to see how precious a possession they were, or how unwise any course of action must be which could tend in any way to lessen their affection or to alienate their support. Yet such a sovereign was upon the throne and such a minister was by his side.

Mr. Willett, senior, in "Barnaby Rudge," explains to his friends that his absent son Joe is away in "the Salwanners in America, where the war is." Mr. Willett's knowledge and appreciation of the American colonies represents pretty well for profundity and accuracy the knowledge and appreciation of the majority of the English people in the times contemporary with, and indeed long subsequent to, the quarrels between the old country and the new. To the bulk of the British people America was a vague and shadowy region, a sort of no-man's land, peopled for the most part with black men and red men, and dimly associated with sugar-planting and the tobacco trade. Its distance alone made it seem sufficiently unreal to those whose way of life was not drawn by business or {75} by politics into association with its inhabitants. The voyage to America was a grimly serious adventure, calling for fortitude and triple brass. The man was indeed lucky who could make the passage from shore to shore in six weeks of stormy sea, and the journey generally took a much longer time, and under the same conditions of discomfort and of danger that attended on the voyage of the "Mayflower." The vast majority of Englishmen concerned

themselves as little with America as they concerned themselves with Hindostan. Both were British possessions, and as such important, but both were too far away to assume any very substantial reality in the consciousness of the bulk of the English people. Of the minority who did possess anything that can be called knowledge of the American colonies, the majority imbibed its information from official sources, from the reports of governors of provinces and official servants of the Crown. These reports were for the most part as reliable for a basis on which to build an intelligent appreciation as the legends of the Algonquins or the myths of the Six Nations.

If the English knowledge of the American colonies had been a little more precise it would have run to this effect. The colonies of the New England region were mainly peopled by a hardy, industrious, sober, frugal race, still strongly Puritanical in profession and in practice, and knowing but little of the extremes of fortune. Neither great poverty nor great wealth was common among those sturdy farmers, who tended their own farms, tilled their own land, lived upon their own produce, and depended for their clothing and for most of the necessaries of life upon the work of their own hands. A slender population was scattered far asunder in lonely townships and straggling villages of wooden houses, built for the most part in the formidable fashion imposed upon men who might at any time have to resist the attacks of Indians. Inside these villages the rough, rude justice of the Puritan days still persisted. The stocks and the pillory and the stool of repentance were things of the present. A shrewish housewife might still be made to stand at her cottage door with {76} the iron gag of the scold fastened upon her shameful face. A careless Sabbatarian might still find himself exposed to the scorn of a congregation, with the words "A wanton gospeller" placarded upon his ignominious breast. Inside those wooden houses a rude simplicity and a rough plenty prevailed. The fare was simple; the labor was hard; simple fare and stern labor between them reared a

stalwart, God-fearing race. Its positive pleasures were few and primitive. Husking-bees, quiltings, a rare dance, filled up the measure of its diversions. But the summer smiled upon those steadfast, earnest, rigorous citizens, and in the wild and bitter winters each household would gather about the cheerful fire in the great chimney which in some of those cottages formed the major part of the building, and find content and peace in quiet talk and in tales of the past, of the French and Indian wars, and of their ancestors, long ago, in old England. Those same great fires that were the joy of winter were also one of its troubles. Once lit, with all the difficulty attendant upon flint and steel and burnt rag, they had to be kept alight from morning till night and from night till morning. If a fire went out it was a woful business to start it again with the reluctant tinder-box. There was, indeed, another way, an easier way, of going round to a neighbor and borrowing a shovelful of hot embers wherewith to kindle the blackened hearth. But in villages built for the most part of wood this might well be regarded as a dangerous process. So the law did regard it, and to start a fire in this lazy, lounging fashion was penalized as sternly as any breach of the Sabbath or of public decorum, and these were sternly punished. Drunkenness was grimly frowned down. Only decent, God-fearing men were allowed to keep taverns, and the names of persons who had earned the reputation of intemperance were posted up in those taverns as a warning to the host that he should sell such men no liquor. In Connecticut tobacco was forbidden to any one under twenty years of age, unless on the express order of a physician. Those who were over twenty were only allowed to smoke once a day, and then not within ten miles of any dwelling.

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[Sidenote: 1765—American colonial customs]

In spite of their democratic simplicity, even the New England colonists had their distinctions of rank as clearly marked as among the people of old England. The gentry dressed in one fashion; the working classes dressed in another. The family rank of students determined their places in the lists of Harvard College and Yale College. In Boston, the chief New England town, life was naturally more elaborate and more luxurious than in the country places. Ladies wore fine clothes and sought to be modish in the London manner; gentlemen made a brave show in gayly colored silks and rich laces, gold-headed canes and costly snuff-boxes. Even in Boston, however, life was simpler, quieter, and sweeter than it was across the Atlantic; there was Puritanism in its atmosphere—Puritanism and the serenity of learning, of scholarship, of study.

There was much more wealth in the province of New York; there was much more display in the southern colonies. New York was as famous for its Dutch cleanliness and its Dutch comfort as for its Dutch windmills that twirled their sails against the sky in all directions. There was store of plate and fine linen in New York cupboards. There were good things to eat and drink in New York households. Down South the gentlefolk lived as gentlefolk lived in England, with perhaps a more lavish ostentation, a more liberal hospitality. They loved horses and dogs, horse-racing and fox-hunting, dancing, music, high living, all things that added to the enjoyment of life. Their servants were their own black slaves. The great city of the South was Charleston, the third of the colonial cities. The fourth and last was Philadelphia, the "faire greene country town" of Penn's love, the last in our order, but the first in size and splendor, with its flagged sidewalks that had made it famous throughout the American continent as if it had been one of the seven wonders of the world, with its stately houses of brick and stone, its avenues of trees, its fruitful orchards and sweet-smelling gardens. The people of Philadelphia had every right to be proud of their city.

Communication was not easy between one colony and {78} another, between one town and another. But neither was it easy in England. For the most part the conditions of life were much the same on one side of the Atlantic as on the other. The whole population, white and black, freeman and slave, was about two million souls. They were well-to-do, peaceable, hard-working—those who had to work, good fighters—those who had to fight, all very willing to be loyal and all very well worth keeping loyal. It was worth their sovereign's while, it was worth the while of his ministers, to know something about these colonists and to try and understand natures that were not at all difficult to understand. Had they been treated as the Englishmen they were, all would have been well. But the King who gloried in the name of Briton did not extend its significance far enough.

[Sidenote: 1765—Friction with the American colonists]

It is not easy to understand the temper which animated all the King's actions towards the American colonies. They were regarded, and with justice, as one of the greatest glories of the English crown; they were no less a source of wealth than of pride to the English people. Yet the English prince persisted in pursuing towards them a policy which can only be most mildly characterized as a policy of exasperation. When George was still both a young man and a young king, the relations between the mother country and her children across the Atlantic were, if not wholly harmonious, at least in such a condition as to render harmony not merely possible, but probable. The result of a long and wearing war had been to relieve the colonists directly from one and indirectly from the other of their two greatest perils. By the terms on which peace was made the power of France was broken on the North American continent. The French troops had been withdrawn across the seas. The Lilies of France floated over no more important possessions in the new world than a few insignificant fishing stations near Newfoundland. A dangerous and dreaded enemy to colonial

life and liberty could no longer menace or alarm. As a consequence of the withdrawal of the French troops the last united attack of the red men against the white was made and failed. {79} The famous conspiracy of Pontiac was the desperate attempt of the Indian allies of France to annihilate the colonists by a concerted attack of a vast union of tribes. The conspiracy failed after a bloody war that lasted for nearly two years. Pontiac, the Indian chief who had helped to destroy Braddock, and who had dreamed that all the English might as easily be destroyed, was defeated and killed; his league was dissipated, and the power of the red men as a united force broken for good. Under such conditions of immunity from long-standing and pressing perils, due in the main to the triumph of British arms, the colonists might very well have been expected to regard with especial favor their association with England. If there had been differences between the two countries for long enough, no moment could have been apter for the adoption of a policy calculated to lessen and ultimately to abolish those differences than the moment when the weary and wearing Seven Years' War came to its close. A far-seeing monarch, advised and encouraged by far-seeing statesmen, might have soldered close the seeming impossibilities and made them kiss. Had the throne even been filled by a sovereign slightly less stubborn, had the throne been surrounded by servants slightly less bigoted, the arrogant patronage of the one part and the aggressive protestation of the other part might have been judiciously softened into a relationship wisely paternal and loyally filial. The advantage of an enduring union between the mother country and her colonies was obvious to any reasonable observer. A common blood, a common tongue, a common pride of race and common interests should have kept them together. But the relations were not amicable. The colonies were peopled by men who were proud indeed of being Englishmen, but by reason of that very pride were jealous of any domination, even at the hands of Englishmen. The mother country, on the other hand, regarded the colonies, won with English hands and watered

with English blood, as being no less portion and parcel of English soil because three thousand miles of stormy ocean lay between the port upon the Severn and the port upon {80} the Charles River. She came to regard as mere ingratitude those assertions of independence which most characteristically proved the colonies to be worthy of it and of her. The theory of the absolute dominion of England over the American colonies might have died a natural death, a harmonious settlement of grievances and adjustment of powers might have knitted the two peoples together in an enduring league, if it had not been for George the Third.

[Sidenote: 1765—England and her colonial governors]

The mind of George the Third was saturated with a belief in his personal importance; the heart of George the Third was exalted by the determination to play a dominating part in the country of his birth and the history of his reign. The hostility to the exercise of home authority latent in the colonies irritated the King like a personal affront. To resist or to resent the authority of the Government of England was to resist and to resent the authority of the sovereign who was determined that he would be to all intents and purposes the Government of England. If the relationship between England and America had been far happier than George found it at the time of his accession, it probably would not long have preserved a wholesome tenor. But the relationship was by no means happy. The colonial assemblies were for the most part at loggerheads with the colonial governors. These governors, little viceroys with petty courts, extremely proud of their power and self-conscious in their authority, generally detested the popular assemblies upon whom they were obliged to depend for the payment of their salaries. Their dislike found secret expression in the letters which it was the duty and the pleasure of the colonial governors to address to the Home Government. The system of colonial administration in England was as simple as it was unsatisfactory. At its head was a standing committee of

the Privy Council which had been established in 1675. This committee was known at length as "The Lords of the Committee of Trade and Plantations," and in brief and more generally as "The Lords of Trade." It was the duty of the colonial governors to make lengthy reports to the Lords of Trade on the {81} commercial and other conditions of their governorships. It was too often their pleasure to supplement these State papers with lengthy and embittered private letters, addressed to the same body, making the very most and worst of the difficulties they had to deal with in their work. The colonies, as represented in these semi-official communications, were turbulent, contumacious, discontented, disrespectful to viceregal dignity, rebellious against the authority of Great Britain. These communications informed the minds of the Lords of Trade, who in their turn influenced those who were responsible for the conduct of the King's Government. Thus a vicious system, acting in a vicious circle, kept alive an irritation and fostered a friction that only increased with the increasing years. It had always been the worst feature of England's colonial policy that she was ever ready to accept with too little question the animadversions of the governors upon the governed. The Lords of Trade accepted the communications of the colonial governors as gospel truth, and as gospel truth it was taken in its turn by the ministers to whom it was transmitted and by the monarch to whom they carried it. The general public were as ignorant of and as indifferent to the American colonies as if they were situated in the mountains of the moon. The major part of the small minority that really did seek or desire information about America gained it from the same poisonous sources that inspired the Government, and based their theories of colonial reform upon the peevish epistles, often mendacious and always one-sided, which fed the intelligences of the Lords of Trade. The few who were really well informed, who had something like as accurate an appreciation of the colony of Massachusetts as they had of the county of Middlesex, were powerless to counteract the general ignorance and the

more particular misconception. It was the cherished dream of authority in England to bring the colonies into one common rule under one head in such a way as to strengthen their military force while it lessened their legislative independence. It now seemed as if with the right King and the right Ministry {82} this dream might become a reality. In George the Third and in George Grenville prerogative seemed to have found the needed instruments to subjugate the American colonies.

[Sidenote: 1765—Trade restrictions upon the colonies]

Many of the grievances of the colonies were grave enough. If some of the injuries that England inflicted upon her great dependency seem petty in the enumeration, a number of small causes of irritation are no less dangerous to peace between nations than some great injustice. But lest the small stings should not be enough, the Government was resolved that the great injustice should not be wanting. The colonists resented the intermittent tyranny and the persistent truculence of the most part of the royal governors. The colonists resented the enforced transportation of criminals. The colonists resented the action of Great Britain in annulling the colonial laws made to keep out slaves. It is melancholy to reflect that the curse of slavery, for which Englishmen of later days often so bitterly and so rightly reproached America, was unhappily enforced upon a country struggling to be rid of it by Englishmen who called themselves English statesmen. The colonists resented the astonishing restrictions which it pleased the mother country to place, in what she believed to be her own interest, upon colonial trade. These laws commanded that all trade between the colonies should be carried on in ships built in England or the colonies. This barred out all foreigners, especially the Dutch, then the chief carriers for Europe. They compelled the American farmer to send his products across the ocean to England. They forbade the exportation of sugar, tobacco, cotton, wool, indigo, ginger, dyeing-woods to any part of the world except to England or

some English colony. They only allowed exportation of fish, fur, oil, ashes, and lumber in ships built in England or the colonies. They forced the colonists to buy all their European goods in England and bring them over to America in English vessels. They prohibited the colonial manufacture of any article that could be manufactured in England. They harassed and minimized the trade between one colony and another. No {83} province was permitted to send woollen goods, hats, or ironware to another province. Some of the regulations read more like the rules of some Turkish pashalik than the laws framed by one set of Englishmen for another set of Englishmen. In the Maine woods, for instance, no tree that had a diameter greater than two feet at a foot above the ground could be cut down, except to make a mast for some ship of the Royal Navy.

Bad and bitter as these laws were in theory, they did not for long enough prove to be so bad in practice, for the simple reason that they were very easy to evade and not very easy to enforce. The colonists met what many of them regarded as an elaborate system for the restriction of colonial trade by a no less elaborate system of smuggling. Smuggling was easy because of the long extent of sea-coast. Smuggling was lucrative, as few considered it an offence to evade laws that were generally resented as unfair. When the Sugar Act of 1733 prohibited the importation of sugar and molasses from the French West Indies except on payment of a prohibitory duty, the New England colonists, who did a thriving trade in the offspring of the union of sugar and molasses, rum, found themselves faced by a serious problem. Should they accept the Act and its consequential ruin of their trade or ignore it, and by resorting to smuggling prosper as before? Without hesitation they decided that their rights as Englishmen were assailed by the obnoxious imposition, and they turned to smuggling with the light heart that is conscious of a heavy purse. The contraband trade was brisk, the contrabandists cheerful, and so long as England made no serious attempt to put into operation laws that the genial and business-like smugglers of the

Atlantic sea-coast regarded as preposterous nobody complained, and international relations were cordial. But the situation was not seen with so bright an eye by the British merchant. He witnessed with indignation the failure of the attempt to monopolize the commerce of the colonies to his own advantage, and he clamored for the restoration of his fat monopoly. His clamor was unheeded while the great war {84} was running its course. But with the end of the war and the new conditions consequent upon the advent of a new King with a brand-new theory of kingship and prerogative, the situation began to change.

The colonial policy of George Grenville's Administration might be conveniently considered under three heads. The Ministry was resolved, in the first place, to enforce Acts of Trade which smuggling had long rendered meaningless in the American colonies. The Ministry was resolved, in the second place, to establish a permanent garrison of some ten thousand men in America. The Ministry was resolved, in the third place, to make the colonists pay a third of the cost of keeping up this garrison by a direct taxation. It was easy enough for Grenville to formulate the three ministerial purposes, but it was not very easy to give them any effect. The colonists resented and the colonists resisted all three proposals. If they were technically wrong in their resentment at the enforcement of the Acts of Trade, they were reasonable in their reluctance to accept the proposed garrison, and they were justified by every law of liberty and of patriotism in resisting with all the strength at their command the proposed scheme of taxation.

[Sidenote: 1765—James Otis and John Adams]

The English Government began its task by a rigorous attempt to enforce the Acts of Trade. Grenville had made up his narrow mind that the colonies should be compelled to adhere to the conditions which obliged them to

trade with England only for England's principal manufactures. There should be no more smuggling from Spanish America, no more smuggling from the West Indies. To enforce this determination, which deprived the colonists at a blow of the most profitable part of their trade, the Government employed certain general search warrants, which, if strictly legal in the letter, were conceived in a spirit highly calculated to goad a proud people into illegal defiance. They goaded one proud man into active protest. A distinguished servant of the Government, James Otis, the King's Advocate, resigned his office in order that he might be at liberty to denounce the Writs of Assistance. {85} Otis may have been technically wrong in resisting the Writs of Assistance, but it can scarcely be questioned that as a philosophic politician, who was devoted to the interests of his countrymen, he was ethically in the right. Otis was thirty-six years old; he was known to his compatriots as a graduate of Harvard, an able lawyer, a zealous student of classical literature, and an author of repute on Latin prosody. The issue of the Writs of Assistance converted the respected and respectable public servant into a conspicuous statesman as hotly applauded by the one side as he was execrated by the other. A single speech lifted him from an esteemed obscurity to a leading place among the champions of colonial rights against imperial aggressions. The assemblage which Otis addressed, which Otis dominated, was forever memorable in the history of America. "Otis was a flame of fire." The words are the words of one who was a young man when Otis spoke, who listened and took notes as the words fell from Otis's lips. "With a promptitude of classical allusions, a depth of research, a rapid summary of historical events and dates, a profusion of legal authorities, a prophetic glance of his eyes into futurity, and a rapid torrent of tempestuous eloquence, he hurried away all before him. Then and there was the first scene of the first act of opposition to the arbitrary claims of Great Britain. Then and there the child Independence was born. Every man of an immense

crowded audience appeared to me to go away as I did, ready to take up arms against Writs of Assistance."

The youth who took notes of the words of Otis, and who was inspired by them with the desire to rise and mutiny, was destined to play even a greater part in the history of his country. If Otis was one of the first to assert actively, by deed as well as by word, the determination of the colonies to oppose and, if needs were, to defy the domination of England, John Adams was the first to applaud his action and to appreciate its importance. In 1763 John Adams was no more than a promising young lawyer who had struggled from poverty and hardship to regard and authority, and who had wrested from iron Fortune a great {86} deal of learning if very little of worldly wealth. Short of stature, sanguine of temperament, the ruddy, stubborn, passionate small man had fought his way step by step from the most modest if not the most humble beginnings, as zealously as if he had known of the fame that was yet to be his and the honor that he was to give to his name and hand down to a long line of honorable descendants. If the ministers who weakly encouraged or meanly obeyed King George in his frenzy against America could have understood even dimly the temper of a race that was rich in sons of whom John Adams was but one and not the most illustrious even to them, there must have come dimly some consciousness of the forces they had to encounter, and the peril of their policy. But the Ministry knew nothing of Adams, and knew only of Otis as a mutinous and meddlesome official. Otis and his protest signified nothing to them, and they would have smiled to learn that young Mr. Adams, the lawyer, believed that American independence was born when Mr. Otis's oration against Writs of Assistance breathed into the colonies the breath of life that was to make them a nation.

[Sidenote: 1765—Taxation without representation]

If Otis voiced and Adams echoed the feelings of the colonists against Writs of Assistance and the enforcement of the Acts of Trade, they might no less eloquently have interpreted the general irritation at the proposed establishment of a permanent garrison on the continent. The colonists saw no need of such a garrison so late in the day. When the Frenchmen held the field, when the red man was on the war path, then indeed the presence of more British soldiers might have become welcome. But the flag of France no longer floated over strong places, no longer fluttered at the head of invasion. The strength of the savage was crippled if not crushed. The colonists had nothing to fear from the one and little to fear from the other foe. They thought that they had much to fear from the presence of a British garrison of ten thousand men. This British garrison might, on occasion, be used not in defence of their liberties, but in diminution of their liberties. The irritation against the proposed garrison might have {87} smouldered out if it had not been fanned into a leaping flame by the means proposed for the maintenance of the garrison. Grenville proposed to raise one-third of the cost of support from the colonies by taxation. No proposal could have been better calculated to goad every colony and every colonist into resistance, and to fuse the scattered elements of resistance into a solid whole. More than two generations earlier both Massachusetts and New York had formally denied the right of the Home Government to levy any tax upon the American colonies. The colonies were not represented at Westminster—could not, under the conditions, be represented at Westminster. The theory that there should be no taxation without representation was as dear to the American for America as it was dear to the Englishman for England. Successive English Governments, forced in times of financial pressure wistfully to eye American prosperity, had dreamed, and only dreamed, of raising money by taxing the well-to-do colonies. It was reserved to the Government headed by Grenville, in its madness, to attempt to make the dream a reality. It is true that even Grenville did not propose, did not

venture to suggest that the American colonies should be taxed for the direct benefit of the English Government. He brought forward his scheme of taxation as a benefit to America, as a contribution to the expense of keeping up a garrison that was only established in the interests of America and for America's welfare. In this spirit of benevolence, and with apparent confidence of success, Grenville brought forward his famous Stamp Act.

There were statesmen in England who saw with scarcely less indignation than the Americans themselves, and with even more dismay, the unfolding of the colonial policy of the Government. These protested against the intolerable weight of the duties imposed, and arraigned the folly which, by compelling these duties to be paid in specie, drained away the little ready money remaining in the colonies, "as though the best way to cure an emaciated body, whose juices happened to be tainted, was to leave it no juices at all." They assailed the injustice that refused {88} to recognize as legal tender any paper bills of credit issued by the colonies. Politicians, guided by the intelligence and the inspiration of Burke, applauded the Americans for their firmness in resolving to subsist to the utmost of their power upon their own productions and manufactures. They urged that it could not be expected that the colonists, merely out of a compliment to the mother country, should submit to perish for thirst with water in their own wells. And these clear-sighted politicians saw plainly enough that such blows as the Government were aiming at America must in the end recoil upon Great Britain herself. They appreciated the injury that must be done to British commerce by even a temporary interruption of the intercourse between the two countries. But bad as the restrictive measures were in their immediate, as well as in their ultimate consequences, worse remained behind. The proposed Stamp Act scarcely shocked Otis or Adams more directly and cruelly than it shocked the soundest and sanest thinkers on the other side of the Atlantic. Words which certainly expressed the thoughts of Burke declared that the approval, even with opposition, given to such a

measure as the Stamp Act, the bare proposal of which had given so much offence, argued such a want of reflection as could scarcely be paralleled in the public councils of any country.

The King's speech at the opening of Parliament on January 10, 1765, gave unmistakable evidence of the temper of the monarch and of the Ministry. It formally expressed its reliance on the wisdom and firmness of Parliament in promoting the proper respect and obedience due to the legislative authority of Great Britain. The Government was resolved to be what it considered firm, and it undoubtedly believed that a proper show of firmness would easily overbear any opposition that the colonists might make to the proposed measure. The Stamp Act was introduced, the Stamp Act was debated upon; in due time the Stamp Act passed through both Houses, and in consequence of the ill health of the King received the royal assent by commission on March 28, 1765. The first foolish challenge to American loyalty was formally made, and {89} America was not slow to accept it. It may be admitted that in itself the Stamp Act was not a conspicuously unfair or even a conspicuously unreasonable measure. It was a legitimate and perfectly fair way of raising money from a taxable people. It was neither legitimate nor fair when imposed upon unrepresented colonists. But if it had been the sanest and most statesmanlike scheme for raising money ever conceived by a financier, it would have deserved and would have received no less hostility from the American people. The principle involved was everything. To admit in any degree the right of Great Britain to impose at her pleasure a tax upon the colonists was to surrender in ignominy the privileges and to betray the duties of free men. Any expectations of colonial protest that the Ministry may have allowed themselves to entertain were more than fulfilled. Colony after colony, great town after great town, great man after great man, made haste to protest with an emphasis that should have been significant against the new measure. Boston led the way. Boston's most distinguished citizen, Boston's most

respected son was the voice not merely of his town, not merely of his State, but of the colonial continent. Ten years later the name of Samuel Adams was known, hated, and honored on the English side of the Atlantic.

[Sidenote: 1765—Samuel Adams]

Samuel Adams was one of those men whom Nature forges to be the instruments of revolution. His three-and-forty years had taught him much: the value of silence, the knowledge of men, the desire to change the world and the patience to bide his time. A few generations earlier he might have made a right-hand man to Cromwell and held a place in the heart of Hampden. On the very threshold of his manhood, when receiving his degree of Master of Arts at Harvard, he asserted his defiant democracy in a dissertation on the right of the people of a commonwealth to combine against injustice on the part of the head of the State. The badly dressed man with the grave firm face of a Pilgrim Father was as ready and as resolute to oppose King George as any Pym or Vane had been ready and resolute to oppose Charles Stuart. He had at one {90} time devoted himself to a commercial career, with no great success. He was made for a greater game than commerce; he had the temper and he gained the training for a public life, and the hour when it came found that the man was ready. When the citizens of Boston met to protest against the Stamp Act Samuel Adams framed the first resolutions that denied to the Parliament of Great Britain the right to impose taxes upon her colonies.

[Sidenote: 1765—The opposition to the Stamp Act]

If Massachusetts was the first to protest with no uncertain voice against the Stamp Act, other colonies were prompt to follow her example, and to prove that they possessed sons no less patriotic. Virginia was as vehement and as vigorous in opposition as Massachusetts. One speech in the Virginia House of Burgesses made the name of Patrick Henry famous. Patrick Henry

was a young man who tried many things and failed in them before he found in the practice of the law the appointed task for his rare gifts of reasoning and of eloquence. A speech in Hanover Court House in defence of the people against a suit of the parish clergy gave him sudden fame. As grave of face as Samuel Adams, as careless of his attire, tall and lean, stamped with the seal of the speaker and the thinker, Patrick Henry at nine-and-twenty was already a very different man from the youth who five years earlier seemed destined to be but a Jack of all trades and master of none, an unsuccessful trader, an unsuccessful farmer, whose chief accomplishments in life were hunting and fishing, dancing and riding. The debate on the Stamp Act gave him a great opportunity. As he addressed his words of warning to the stubborn sovereign across the sea his passion seemed to get the better of his prudence and to tempt him into menace. "Caesar," he said, "had his Brutus, Charles the First his Cromwell." He was going on to say "and George the Third," when he was interrupted by angry cries of "Treason!" from the loyalists among his hearers. Patrick Henry waited until the noise subsided, and then quietly completed his sentence, "George the Third may profit by their example. If this be treason, make the most of it." The words were not treasonable, {91} but they were revolutionary. They served to carry the name of Patrick Henry to every corner of the continent and across the Atlantic. They made him a hero and idol in the eyes of the colonists; they made him a rebel in the eyes of the Court at St. James's.

Massachusetts had set an example which Virginia had bettered; Massachusetts was now to better Virginia. If Virginia, prompted by Patrick Henry, declared that she alone had the right to tax her own citizens, Massachusetts, inspired by James Otis, summoned a congress of deputies from all the colonial assemblies to meet in common consultation upon the common danger. This congress, the first but not the last, memorable but not most memorable, met in New York in the early November of 1765. Nine colonies were represented at its table—Massachusetts, South Carolina,

Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and New York. The congress passed a series of resolutions, as firm in their purpose as moderate in their language, putting forward the grievances and asserting the rights of the colonies.

But the protests against the Stamp Act were not limited to eloquent orations or formal resolutions. Deeds, as well as words, made plain the purpose of the American people. Riots broke out in colony after colony; the most and worst in Massachusetts. Boston blazed into open revolt against authority. There were two Government officials in Boston who were especially unpopular with the mob—Andrew Oliver, the newly appointed collector of the stamp taxes, and Chief Justice Hutchinson. A scarecrow puppet, intended to represent the obnoxious Oliver, was publicly hung upon a tree by the mob, then cut down, triumphantly paraded through the city to Oliver's door, and there set on fire. When the sham Oliver was ashes the crowd broke into and ransacked his house, after which it did the same turn to the house of Chief Justice Hutchinson. Oliver and Hutchinson escaped unhurt, but all their property went through their broken windows and lay in ruin upon the Boston streets. Hutchinson was busy upon a History of Massachusetts; the manuscript shared the fate of its {92} author's chairs and tables, and went with them out into the gutter. It was picked up, preserved, and exists to this day, its pages blackened with the Boston mud. Many papers and records of the province which Hutchinson had in his care for the purpose of his history were irretrievably lost.

The next day the judges and the bar, assembled in their robes at the Boston Court House, were startled by the apparition of a haggard man in disordered attire, whom they might have been pardoned for failing to recognize as their familiar chief justice. In a voice broken with emotion Hutchinson apologized to the court for the appearance in which he presented himself before it. He and his family were destitute; he himself

had no other shirt and no other clothes than those he was at that moment wearing. Part even of this poor attire he had been obliged to borrow. Almost in rags, almost in tears, he solemnly called his Maker to witness that he was innocent of the charges that had made him obnoxious to the fury of the populace. He swore that he never, either directly or indirectly, aided, assisted, or supported, or in the least promoted or encouraged the Stamp Act, but on the contrary did all in his power, and strove as much as in him lay, to prevent it. The court listened to him in melancholy silence and then adjourned, "on account of the riotous disorders of the previous night and universal confusion of the town," to a day nearly two months later.

It was a thankless privilege to be a stamp officer in those stormy hours. Most of the stamp officers were forced to resign under pressure which they might well be excused for finding sufficiently cogent. In order to make the new law a dead letter the colonists resolved that while it was in force they would avoid using stamps by substituting arbitration for any kind of legal procedure. With a people in this temper, there were only two things to be done; to meet their wishes, or to annihilate their opposition. It is possible that Grenville might have preferred to attempt the second alternative, but by this time Grenville's power was at an end.

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CHAPTER XLVII.

EDMUND BURKE.

[Sidenote: 1730-82—Rockingham and his Ministry]

The friction between Grenville and the King was rapidly becoming unbearable to George, if not to his minister. George was resolved to be rid of his intolerable tyrant at the cost of almost any concession. He was now fully as eager to welcome Pitt back to office as he had once been hot to drive him out of it. Again Cumberland was called in; again Cumberland approached Pitt; again Pitt's willingness to resume the seals was overborne by the stubbornness of Temple. The King was in despair. He would not endure Grenville and Grenville's bullying sermons any longer, and yet it was hard indeed to find any one who could take Grenville's place with any chance of carrying on Grenville's work. Cumberland had a suggestion to make, a desperate remedy for a desperate case. If Pitt and the old Whigs were denied to the King, why should not the King try the new Whigs and Rockingham?

The old Whig party, as it had lived and ruled so long, had practically ceased to exist. So much the King had accomplished. Saint George of Hanover had struck at the dragon only to find that, like the monster in the classical fable, it took new form and fresh vitality beneath his strokes. There was a Whig party that was not essentially the party of Pitt, a party which was recruiting its ranks with earnest, thoughtful, high-minded, honorable men to whom the principles or want of principles which permitted the old Whig dominion were as intolerable as they appear to a statesman of to-day. At the head of this new development of Whig activity was the man to whom Cumberland now turned in the hour of the King's trial, Charles Watson Wentworth, Marquis of Rockingham.

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Lord Rockingham was one of those ornaments of the English senate for the benefit of whose biographers the adjective amiable seems especially to have been invented. Although the master of a large fortune, while he was

still a boy of twenty he was deservedly noted for the gravity and stillness of his youth, and during a political career of one-and-thirty years, if he showed neither commanding eloquence nor commanding statesmanship, he did honor to the Whig party by his sincere patriotism and irreproachable uprightness of character. If heaven had denied Rockingham the resplendent gifts that immortalize a Chatham, it had given him in full measure of the virtues of patriotism, honesty, integrity, and zeal. The purity of his life, the probity of his actions, and the excellence of all his public purposes, commended him to the affectionate regard of all who held that morality was more essential to a statesman than eloquence, and that it was better to fail with such a man than to succeed with those to whom, for the most part, the successes of that day were given. Two years before, in 1763, his dislike for the policy of Lord Bute had driven him to resign his small office as Lord of the Bedchamber, and he carried his scrupulousness so far as to resign at the same time his Lord-Lieutenantcy of Yorkshire.

To the delight of the Duke of Cumberland, and to the delight of the King, Rockingham consented to form a Ministry. With the best will in the world Rockingham could not make his Ministry very commanding. It was but a makeshift, and not a very brilliant makeshift, but at least it served to get rid of Grenville and of Grenville's harangues. So long as Grenville was unable to terrorize the royal closet with reproaches and reproofs addressed to the King, and with menaces aimed at Bute, George was quite willing to see Newcastle intrusted with the Privy Seal, and Conway made Secretary of State for one department, and the Duke of Grafton for the other. But the Ministry which the King accepted because he could get nothing better, and because he would have welcomed something much worse so long as it delivered him from {95} Grenville—the Ministry that provoked the derisive pity of most of its critics was destined to attain an honorable immortality. The heterogeneous group of men who called themselves or were called, who believed themselves or were believed to be Whigs, had

obtained one recruit whose name was yet to make the cause he served illustrious. Lord Rockingham had many claims to the regard of his contemporaries; undoubtedly his greatest claim to the regard of posterity lies in the intelligence which enabled him to discern the rising genius of a young writer, and the wisdom which found a place by his side and a seat in the House of Commons for Edmund Burke.

[Sidenote: 1765—The coming of Edmund Burke]

The history of a nation is often largely the history of certain famous men. Great epochs, producing great leaders, make those leaders essentially the expression of certain phases of the thought of their age. The life of Walpole is the life of the England of his time because he was so intimately bound up with the great movement which ended by setting Parliamentary government free from the possible dominion of the sovereign. The life of Chatham, the life of Pitt, the life of Fox, each in its turn is a summary of the history of England during the time in which they helped to guide its destinies. But to some men, men possessing in an exceptional degree the love for humanity and the longing for progress, this power of representing in their lives the sum and purpose of their age is markedly characteristic. Just as Mirabeau, until he died, practically represented the French Revolution, so certain English statesmen have from time to time been representative of the best life, the best thought, the best purposes, desires, and ambitions of the country for whose sake they played their parts. Of no man can this theory be said to be more happily true than of Edmund Burke.

It would scarcely be exaggeration to say that the history of England during the middle third of the eighteenth century is largely the history of the career of Edmund Burke. From the moment when Burke entered upon political life to the close of his great career, his name was associated with every event of importance, his voice raised {96} on one side or the other of

every question that concerned the welfare of the English people and the English Constitution. As much as this, however, might be said of more than one actor in the political history of the period covered by Burke's public life. But the influence which Burke exercised upon his time, the force he brought to bear upon his political generation, were a greater influence and a stronger force than that directed by any other statesman of the age. Whether for good or for evil, according to the standards by which his critics may judge him, Burke swayed the minds of masses of his countrymen to a degree that was unequalled among his contemporaries. With the two great events of the century—the revolt of the American colonies and the French Revolution—his name was the most intimately associated, his influence the most potent. With what in their degree must be called the minor events of the reign—with the trial of Wilkes, with the trial of Warren Hastings—he was no less intimately associated, and in each case his association has been the most important feature of the event. Where he was right as where he was wrong, and whether he was right or whether he was wrong, he was always the most interesting, always the most commanding figure in the epoch-making political controversies of his day. Grenville wrote of him finely, many years after his death, that he was in the political world what Shakespeare was in the moral world.

[Sidenote: 1729-59—Burke's early life]

Burke entered political life, or entered active political life, when he was returned to Parliament in the December of 1765. Up to that time his life had been largely uneventful; much of it must be called as far as we are concerned eventless, for of a great gap of his life, a gap of no less than nine years, we know, if not absolutely nothing, certainly next to nothing. It is not even quite certain where or when he was born. The most approved account is that he was born in Dublin on January 12, 1729, reckoning according to the new style. The place of his birth is still pointed out to the curious in

Dublin: one of the many modest houses that line the left bank of the Liffey. His family was supposed to stem from Limerick, from {97} namesakes who spelled their name differently as Bourke. His mother's family were Catholic; Burke's mother always remained stanch to her native faith, and, though Burke and his brothers were brought up as the Protestant sons of a Protestant father, the influence of his mother must have counted for much in creating that tender and generous sympathy towards a proscribed creed which is one of the noblest characteristics of Burke's career.

Burke's earliest and in a sense his best education was received between his twelfth and fourteenth years, in the school of a Yorkshire Quaker named Abraham Shackleton, who kept a school at Ballitore. Burke used often to declare in later years that he owed everything he had gained in life to the teaching and the example of those two years with Abraham Shackleton. The affectionate regard which Burke felt for his schoolmaster, an affectionate regard which endured until Shackleton's death, thirty years later, in 1771, he felt also for his schoolmaster's son, Richard Shackleton. Most of what we know of Burke's life in Trinity College from 1743 to 1748 we gather from his letters to Richard Shackleton, letters of absorbing interest to any student of the growth of a great mind. Less vivacious, less brilliant than the boyish letters of Goethe, they resemble them in the eager thirst they display for knowledge of all kinds, in their passionate enthusiasm for all the rich varieties of human knowledge, in their restless experiments in all directions. In those younger days Burke thought himself, as every generous and ambitious youth must needs think himself, a poet, and many verses were forwarded to the faithful friend, to lighten the effect of serious theological discussions and elaborate comparisons of classical authors.

Dissensions with his father and a determination to study for the bar sent Burke to England in the early part of 1750, and there for nine long years he practically disappears from our knowledge. All we know is that he studied

law, but that, like many another law student, he gave more time and thought to literature than to his legal studies; that this action deepened the hostility of his father, who {98} reduced Burke's allowance to a pittance, and that his daily need as well as his desire drove Burke to seek his livelihood in letters.

[Sidenote: 1759—The work of Edmund Burke]

He seems to have had a hard fight for it. The glimpses we get of him during that period of youthful struggle show him as an ardent student of books, but a no less ardent student of life, not merely in the streets and clubs and theatres of the great city, but in the seclusion of quiet country villages and the highways and byways of rural England. Romance has not failed to endeavor to illuminate with her prismatic lantern the darkness of those nine mysterious years. A vivid fancy has been pleased to picture Burke as one of the many lovers of the marvellous Margaret Woffington, as a competitor for the chair of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow, as a convert to the Catholic faith, and, perhaps most remarkable of all these lively legends, as a traveller in America. These are fictions. The certain facts are that somewhere about 1756 he married a Miss Nugent, daughter of an Irish physician who had settled in England. Miss Nugent was a Catholic, and thus, for the second time, the Catholic religion was endeared to Burke by one of the closest of human relationships. At about the same time as his marriage, Burke made his first appearance as an author by the "Vindication of Natural Society," a satire upon Bolingbroke which many accepted as a genuine work of Bolingbroke's, and by the "Essay on the Sublime and the Beautiful," which is perhaps most valuable because we owe to it in some degree the later masterpiece of aesthetic criticism, the "Laocoon" of Lessing. From this time until his connection with public life began his career was linked with Fleet Street and its brotherhood of authors, and his pen was steadily employed. With that love for variety of subject which is characteristic of most of the authors of the eighteenth century, he handled a

number of widely differing themes. He wrote "Hints for an Essay on the Drama," a work which has scarcely held its place in the library of the dramatist by the side of the "Paradoxe sur le Comédien" of Diderot, or the "Hamburgische {99} Dramaturgie" of Lessing. He wrote an account of the European settlements in America, still interesting as showing the early and intimate connection of his thoughts with the greatest of English colonies. He wrote an "Abridgment of English History," which carries unfortunately no farther than the reign of John a narrative that is not unworthy of its author. He founded the "Annual Register," and was in its pages for many years to come the historian of contemporary Europe. Of all the many debts that Englishmen owe to Burke, the conception and inception of the "Annual Register" must not be reckoned as among the least important.

It was at this point in his career that Burke's connection with public life began, not to end thenceforward until the end of his own life. Single-speech Hamilton, so called because out of a multitude of speeches he made one magnificent speech, was attracted to Burke by the fame of the "Vindication of Natural Society," sought his acquaintance, and when Hamilton went to Ireland as secretary to Lord Halifax, Burke accompanied him. For two years Burke remained with Hamilton in Ireland, studying the Irish question of that day, with the closeness of the acutest mind then at work and with the racial sympathy of the native. Then he quarrelled, and rightly quarrelled, with Hamilton, because Hamilton, to whom the aid of Burke was infinitely precious, sought to bind Burke forever to his service by a pension of three hundred a year. Burke demanded some leisure for the literature that had made his name. Hamilton justified Leland's description of him as a selfish, canker-hearted, envious reptile by refusing. Burke, who always spoke his mind roundly, described Hamilton as an infamous scoundrel, flung back his pension and returned to freedom, independence, and poverty. But he was soon to enter the service of another statesman under less galling terms, under less unreasonable conditions.

Burke's name was brought before Lord Rockingham, probably by Burke's friend and namesake, though in all likelihood not kinsman, William Burke. Lord Rockingham {100} appointed Burke his private secretary, and by the simple integrity of his character bound Burke, to use his own words, "by an inviolable attachment to him from that time forward." But the alliance thus begun was threatened in its birth. A mysterious hostility attributed by Burke to "Hell-Kite" Hamilton brought certain charges to the notice of the Duke of Newcastle. The Duke of Newcastle hurried to Lord Rockingham to warn him that his newly appointed secretary was a disguised Jesuit, a disguised Jacobite. Lord Rockingham immediately communicated these accusations to Burke, who repelled them with a firmness and dignity which had the effect only of confirming Lord Rockingham's admiration of Burke and of drawing closer the friendship of the two men. Burke was promptly brought into Parliament as member for Wendover, and during the single year which Lord Rockingham's Administration lasted its leader had every reason to rejoice at the happy chance which had given to him such a follower and such an ally.

Burke delivered his maiden speech in the House of Commons on January 27, 1766, a few days after the opening of the session, on the subject of the dissatisfaction in the American colonies. His speech won the praise of the Great Commoner; his succeeding speeches earned him enthusiastic commendation from friends and admirers outside and inside the House of Commons. The successful man of letters had proved himself rapidly to be a successful orator and a politician who would have to be reckoned with.

[Sidenote: 1766—The influence of Burke's career]

It has been contended, and not unreasonably, that as an orator Burke is not merely in the first rank, but that he is himself the first, that he stands alone, without a rival, without a peer, and that none of the orators of

antiquity can be said even to contest his unquestionable supremacy. But it is in no sense necessary to Burke's fame that the fame of others should be in any way impugned or depreciated. It is sufficient praise to say that Burke is one of the greatest orators the world has ever held. To argue that he is superior to Demosthenes on the {101} one hand, or to Cicero on the other, is to maintain an argument very much on a par with that which it amused Burke himself to maintain when he contended for the superiority of the "Aeneid" over the "Iliad." It is quite enough to be able to say well-nigh without fear of contradiction that Burke is probably the greatest orator who ever spoke in the English language.

Burke's political career began brilliantly in the championship of freedom, in the defence of the oppressed, in the defiance of injustice. He was made welcome to the great political arena in which he was to fight so long and so hard. His ability was recognized at once; he may be said to have leaped into a fame that the passage of time has not merely confirmed but increased. No author more profoundly influenced the thought of his time; no author of that time is likely to exercise a more enduring influence upon succeeding generations. Of all the men of that busy and brilliant age, Burke has advanced the most steadily in the general knowledge and favor. While other men, his rivals in eloquence, his peers in the opinions of his contemporaries, come year by year to be less used as influences and appealed to as authorities, the wisdom of Burke is more frequently drawn upon and more widely appreciated than ever. The world sees now, even more clearly than the world saw then, that whether Burke was right or wrong in his conclusions as to any question, it had to be admitted that the point of view from which he started to get at that conclusion was the correct one.

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CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE STAMP ACT.

[Sidenote: 1766—Benjamin Franklin]

That the colonies were not well understood in England was no fault of the colonists. There was at that time and hour in England a man specially authorized to speak on behalf of the colony of Pennsylvania, and indirectly entitled as he was admirably qualified to represent the other colonies. At that time Benjamin Franklin was the most distinguished American living and the most distinguished American who had ever lived. It was not his first visit to England. He had crossed the Atlantic forty years before when he was a youth of eighteen, eager to set up for himself as a master printer, and anxious to obtain the materials for his trade in the old country. In those eighteen years he had learned many things. He had learned how to print; he had learned how to bear poverty with courage and ambition with patience; he could never remember a time when he was unable to read, but he had learned how to read with inexhaustible pleasure and unfailing profit, and he had learned how to write. When he was seventeen he had run away from his birthplace, Boston, and the home of an ill-tempered brother, and made his way as best he might to Philadelphia. As he tramped into the city with a loaf under each arm for provender, a young woman leaning in a doorway laughed at the singular figure. Six years later she married Franklin, who in the interval had been a journeyman printer in Philadelphia, a journeyman printer in London, and had at last been able to set up for himself in Philadelphia. From 1729 the story of Franklin's life is the story of a steady and splendid advance in popularity and wealth, and in the greater gifts of knowledge, wisdom, and humanity. He published a newspaper, {103} the *Philadelphia Gazette*; he disseminated frugality, thrift, industry, and the

cheerful virtues in "Poor Richard's Almanack," he was the benefactor and the blessing of the city of his adoption. He founded her famous library; he devoted the results of his scientific studies to her comfort, welfare, and comeliness; he maintained her defences as a military engineer, and was prepared to serve her gallantly in the field against the Indians as a colonel of Militia of his own raising. No man ever lived a fuller life or did so many things with more indomitable zeal or more honorable thoroughness. The colony of Pennsylvania was very proud of her illustrious citizen and delighted to do him honor. When he visited England for the second time, in 1757, he was the Agent for the General Assembly of Pennsylvania, he was Deputy Postmaster-General for the British colonies, he was famous throughout the civilized world for his discovery of the identity of lightning with the electric fluid. He was in London for the third time when Rockingham took office. He had lived nearly sixty years of a crowded, memorable, admirable life; he was loaded with laurels, ripe in the learning of books and the learning of the book of the world. Even he whom few things surprised or took unawares would have been surprised if he could have been told that the life he had lived was eventless, bloodless, purposeless in comparison with the life he had yet to live, and that all he had done for his country was but as dust in the balance when weighed against the work he was yet to do for her. He was standing on the threshold of his new career in the year when Edmund Burke entered Parliament.

The Rockingham Administration did its best to undo the folly of Grenville's Government. After long debates in both Houses, after examination of Franklin at the bar of the Commons, after the strength and acumen of Mansfield had been employed to sustain the prerogative against the colonies and the voice of Burke had championed the colonies against the prerogative, after Grenville had defended himself with shrewdness and Pitt had added to the splendor of his fame, the Stamp Act was formally {104} repealed. Unhappily, the new Ministry was only permitted to do good

by halves. The same session that repealed the Stamp Act promulgated the Declaratory Act, asserting the full power of the King, on the advice of Parliament, to make laws binding the American colonies in all cases whatsoever. This desperate attempt to assert what the repeal of the Stamp Act virtually surrendered was intended as a solace to the King and as a warning—perhaps a friendly warning—to the colonies. Those who were most opposed to it in England may well have hoped that it might be accepted without too much straining in the general satisfaction caused by the repeal of the hated measure. Even Franklin seemed to believe that the Declaratory Act would not cause much trouble in America. The event denied the hope, and indignation at the Declaratory Act outlasted in America the rejoicing over the subversion of Grenville's policy. Nevertheless, the rejoicing was very great. On May 16, 1766, the public spirit of Boston was stimulated by the distribution of a broadsheet headed "Glorious News." This broadsheet announced the arrival of John Hancock's brig "Harrison," in six weeks and two days from London, with the important tidings of the repeal of the Stamp Act. The broadsheet painted a lively picture of the enthusiasm at Westminster and the rejoicings in the City of London over the total repeal of the measure. It told of the ships in the river displaying all their colors, of illuminations and bonfires in many parts; "in short, the rejoicings were as great as was ever known on any occasion." This broadsheet, "printed for the benefit of the public," ended in a rapture of delight. "It is impossible to express the joy the town is now in, on receiving the above great, glorious, and important news. The bells on all the churches were immediately set a-ringing, and we hear the day for a general rejoicing will be the beginning of next week." Boston had every reason to rejoice, to ring its bells and fly its flags, and set poor debtors free from prison in honor of the occasion. The colonies had stood together against the Home Government, and had learned something of {105} the strength of their union by the repeal of the Stamp Act.

[Sidenote: 1766—Action of the Colonial Governors]

But when the bells had stopped ringing and the flags were hauled down and the released debtors had ceased to congratulate themselves upon their newly recovered liberty, Boston and the other colonial cities found that their satisfaction was not untempered. The broadsheet that had blazoned the repeal had also assured its readers that the Acts of Trade relating to America would be taken under consideration and all grievances removed. "The friends to America are very powerful and disposed to assist us to the best of their ability." The friends to America were powerful, but they fought against tremendous odds. Dulness and mediocrity, a spite that was always stupid, and a stupidity that was often spiteful, an alliance of ignorance and arrogance were the forces against which they struggled in vain. The Acts of Trade were to be enforced as rigidly as ever. The Declaratory Act pompously asserted the unimpeachable prerogative of British Majesty to make what laws it pleased for the colonies. The good that had been done seemed small in comparison with the harm that might yet be done, that in all probability would be done.

For the time more was to be feared from the viceroys of the provinces than from the Home Government. Mr. Secretary Conway addressed a circular letter to the governors of the different colonies, reproving the colonists, indeed, for the recent disturbances, but with a measured mildness of reproof that seemed carefully calculated not to give needless offence or cause unnecessary irritation. "If by lenient persuasive methods," Conway wrote, "you can contribute to restore the peace and tranquillity to the provinces on which their welfare and happiness depend, you will do a most acceptable and essential service to your country." An appeal so suave, advice so judicious, did not seem the less prudent and humane because the Secretary insisted upon the repression of violence and outrage and reminded those to whom his letter was addressed that if they needed aid in

the maintenance of law and order {106} they were to require it at the hands of the commanders of his Majesty's land and naval forces in America. If all the gentlemen to whom the Secretary's circular was addressed had been as reasonable and as restrained in language as its writer, things might even then have turned out very differently. It was not to be expected, and the colonists did not expect, that outrage and violence were to go unchallenged and unpunished, and it is probable that few even in Massachusetts would have objected to the formal expression of thanks for firmness and zeal which was made by Conway to the governor of that colony. But the temperance that was possible to Conway was impossible to Bernard. Bernard was one of the worst of a long line of inappropriate colonial governors. He was a hot-headed, hot-hearted man who seemed to think that to play the part of a domineering, blustering bully was to show discretion and discernment in the duties of his office. He always acted under the conviction that he must always be in the right and every one else always in the wrong, and he blazed up into fantastic rages at the slightest show of opposition. As this was not the spirit in which to deal with the proud and independent men of Massachusetts, Governor Bernard passed the better part of his life in a passion and was forever quarrelling with his provincial legislature and forever complaining to the Home Government of his hard lot and of the mischievous, mutinous set of fellows he had to deal with.

When Bernard received the Secretary's letters and the accompanying copies of the two Bills that had been passed by the British Parliament, he hastened to make them known to the Assembly of Massachusetts. But he made them known in a speech that was wholly lacking in either temperance or discretion. Had it been at once his desire and his duty to inflame his hearers against himself and the Government which he represented he could hardly have chosen words more admirably adapted for the purpose. With a wholly unchastened arrogance and a wholly ungoverned truculence, the governor of the province lectured or rather hectored the gentlemen of the

Council and the {107} gentlemen of the House of Representatives after a fashion that would have seemed in questionable taste on the part of an old-fashioned pedagogue to a parcel of unruly schoolboys. He was for bullying and blustering them into a better behavior, and he assured those who were willing to make amends and to promise to be good in the future that their past offences would be buried in a charitable oblivion. "Too ready a forgetfulness of injuries hath been said to be my weakness," Bernard urged with strange ignorance. "However, it is a failing which I had rather suffer by than be without."

The House of Representatives replied to the reproofs of their governor in an address that was remarkable for the firmness with which it maintained its own position and the irony with which it reviewed the governor's pretensions. To prove their independence of action, they delayed the Act of Indemnity demanded by Secretary Conway for several months, and then accompanied it with a general pardon to all persons who had been concerned in the riots provoked by the Stamp Act. Though this Act was promptly disallowed by the Home Government on the ground that the power of pardon belonged exclusively to the Crown, it took effect nevertheless, and added another to the grievances of Bernard and of his backers in England.

[Sidenote: 1766—End of the Rockingham Administration]

The slowly widening breach between the American colonies and the mother country might even yet have been filled if it had been possible for the King to depend upon the services and listen to the advice of ministers whose good intentions and general good sense had the advantage of being served and indirectly inspired by the genius of Burke. But unhappily, the fortunes of the party with whom he was allied were not long fated to be official fortunes. After a year of honorable if somewhat colorless existence,

the Rockingham Administration came to an end. There was no particular reason why it should come to an end, but the King was weary of it. If it had not gravely dissatisfied him, it had afforded him no grave satisfaction. An Administration always seemed to George the Third like a candle which he could illuminate or extinguish at his {108} pleasure. So he blew out the Rockingham Administration and turned to Pitt for a new one. In point of fact, an Administration without Pitt was an impossibility. The Duke of Grafton had resigned his place in the Rockingham Ministry because he believed it hopeless to go on without the adhesion of Pitt, and Pitt would not adhere to the Rockingham Ministry. Now, with a free hand, he set to work to form one of the most amazing Administrations that an age which knew many strange Administrations can boast of.

The malady which had for so long martyrized the great statesman had afflicted him heavily of late. His eccentricities had increased to such a degree that they could hardly be called merely eccentricities. But though he suffered in mind and in body he was ready and even eager to return to power, so long as that power was absolute. By this time he had quarrelled with Temple, who had so often hindered him from resuming office, and who was now as hostile to him as his brother, George Grenville, had ever been. Temple, in consequence, found no place in the new Administration. The Administration was especially designed to please the King. A party had grown up in the State which was known by the title of the King's friends. The King's friends had no political creed, no political convictions, no desire, no ambition, and no purpose save to please the King. What the King wanted said they would say; what the King wanted done they would do; their votes were unquestionably and unhesitatingly at the King's command. They did not, indeed, act from an invincible loyalty to the royal person. It was the royal purse that ruled them. The King was the fountain of patronage; wealth and honors flowed from him; and the wealth and the honors welded the King's friends together into a harmonious and formidable

whole. The King's friends found themselves well represented in a Ministry that was otherwise as much a thing of shreds and patches as a harlequin's coat. Pitt had tried to make a chemical combination, but he only succeeded in making a mixture that might at any time dissolve into its component parts. It was composed {109} of men of all parties and all principles. The amiable Conway and the unamiable Grafton remained on from Rockingham's Ministry. So did the Duke of Portland and Lord Bessborough, so did Saunders and Keppel. Pitt did not forget his own followers. He gave the Great Seal to Lord Camden, who, as Justice Pratt, had liberated Wilkes from unjustifiable arrest. He made Lord Shelburne one of the Secretaries of State. The Chancellorship of the Exchequer was given to a politician with a passion for popularity that made him as steadfast as a weathercock, Charles Townshend.

[Sidenote: 1766—Pitt as Earl of Chatham]

By this time Pitt was no longer the Great Commoner. The House of Commons was to know him no more. Under the title of Earl of Chatham he had entered the Upper House. Such an elevation did not mean then, as it came later to mean, something little better than political extinction. But Pitt's elevation meant to him a loss of popularity as immediate as it was unexpected. Though he was no longer young, though he was racked in mind and body, though he sorely needed the repose that he might hope to find in the Upper House, he was assailed with as much fury of vituperation as if he had betrayed the State. A country that was preparing to rejoice at his return to power lashed itself into a fury of indignation at his exaltation to the peerage. In the twinkling of an eye men who had been devoted yesterday to Pitt were prepared to believe every evil of Chatham. His rule began in storm and gloom, and gloomy and stormy it remained. The first act of his Administration roused the fiercest controversy. A bad harvest had raised the price of food almost to famine height. Chatham took the bold step of laying an embargo on the exportation of grain. The noise of the debates over this act had hardly died away when Pitt's malady again overmastered him, and once more he disappeared from public life into mysterious melancholy silence and seclusion. It was an unhappy hour for the country which deprived it of the services of Chatham and left the helm of state in the hands of Charles Townshend.

Charles Townshend was the erratic son of a singularly {110} erratic mother. The beautiful Audrey Harrison married the third Marquis Townshend, bore him five children, and then separated from him to carry her beauty, her insolence, and her wit through an amazed and amused society. It was one of her eccentricities to change her name Audrey to Ethelfreda. Another was to fancy herself and to proclaim herself to be very

much in love with the unhappy Lord Kilmarnock. She attended the trial persistently, waited under his windows, quarrelled with Selwyn for daring to jest about the execution—no very happy theme for wit—and was all for adopting a little boy whom some of the officials of the Tower had palmed off upon her as Kilmarnock's son. Walpole liked her, delighted in her witty, stinging sayings. She was always entertaining, always alarming, always ready to say or do anything that came into her mind. She lived, a whimsical, spiteful, sprightly oddity, to be eighty-seven years of age. [Sidenote: 1766—Peculiar characteristics of Charles Townshend] Charles Townshend was her second son, and Charles Townshend was in many ways as whimsical as his mother. He had a ready wit, a dexterity in epigram, an astonishing facility of speech, and a very great appreciation of his own power of turning friends or foes into ridicule. It is told of him that once in his youth, when a student at Leyden, he suffered from his readiness to jest at the expense of another. At a merry supper party he plied one of the guests, a seemingly unconscious, stolid Scotchman named Johnstone, with sneers and sarcasms which the Scotchman seemed to disregard or take in good part. On the next morning, however, Townshend's victim, enlightened by some friend as to the way in which he had been made a butt of, became belligerent and sent Townshend a challenge. Various opinions have been expressed of Townshend's action in the matter. He has been applauded for good sense. He has been reproached for cowardice. Certainly Townshend did not, would not fight his challenger. It required a great deal of good sense to decline a duel in those days, and Townshend did decline the duel. He apologized to his slow-witted but stubborn-purposed opponent with a profusion of apology which some of his {111} friends thought to be excessive. In these days we should consider Townshend's refusal to fight a duel merely as an unimportant proof of his common-sense, but in the last century, in the society in which Townshend moved, and on the Continent, such a refusal suggested the possession of a degree of common-sense that was far from

ordinary—that was, indeed, extraordinary. Townshend's tact, wit, and good spirits carried him through the scrape somehow. He made the rounds of Leyden with his would-be adversary, calling in turn upon each of his many friends, and obtaining from each, in the presence of his companion, the assurance that Townshend had never been known to speak of Johnstone slightingly or discourteously behind his back. The episode, trivial in itself, gains a kind of gravity by the illustration it affords of Townshend's character all through Townshend's short career. The impossibility of restraining an incorrigible tongue, and the unreadiness to follow out the course of action to which his words would seem to have committed him, were the distinguishing marks of Townshend's political existence. No man, no party, nor no friend could count on the unflinching services of Townshend. His conduct was as irresponsible as his eloquence was dazzling. In his twenty years of public life he had but one purpose—to please and to be praised; and to gain those ends he sacrificed consistency and discretion with a light heart. The beauty of his person and the fluent splendor of his speech went far towards the attainment of an ambition which was always frustrated by a fatal levity. In the fine phrase of Burke, he was a candidate for contradictory honors, and his great aim was to make those agree in admiration of him who never agreed in anything else.

It has been given to few men to desire fame more ardently, and to attain it more disastrously, than Charles Townshend. If we may estimate the man by the praises of his greatest contemporary, no one better deserved a fairer fortune than fate allotted to him. Burke spoke of Townshend as the delight and ornament of the House of Commons, and the charm of every private society which he honored with his presence. Though his passion for {112} fame might be immoderate, it was at least a passion which is the instinct of all great souls. While Burke could rhapsodize over Townshend's pointed and finished wit, his refined, exquisite, and penetrating judgment, his skill and power in statement, his excellence in luminous explanation, Walpole

was no less enthusiastic in an estimate that contrasted Townshend with Burke. According to Walpole, Townshend, who studied nothing with accuracy or attention, had parts that embraced all knowledge with such quickness that he seemed to create knowledge instead of seeking for it. Ready as Walpole admits Burke's wit to have been, he declares that it appeared artificial when set by that of Townshend, which was so abundant in him that it seemed a loss of time to think. Townshend's utterances had always the fascinating effervescence of spontaneity, while even Burke's extempore utterances were so pointed and artfully arranged that they wore the appearance of study and preparation. This brilliant, resplendent creature, in every respect the opposite to George Grenville, showy where Grenville was solid, fluent where he was formal, glittering and even glowing where he was sober or sombre, fascinating where he was repellent, gracious where he was sullen, and polished where he was rude, was nevertheless destined to share Grenville's hateful task and Grenville's deserved condemnation. Such enthusiasm as Parliament had permitted itself to show over the repeal of Grenville's Stamp Act had long flickered out. The colonists were regarded with more disfavor than ever by a majority that raged against their ingratitude and bitterly repented the repeal of the Act. Townshend's passion for popularity forced him into the fatal blunder of his life. He was indeed, as Burke said, the spoiled child of the House of Commons, never thinking, acting, or speaking but with a view to its judgment, and adapting himself daily to its disposition, and adjusting himself before it as before a looking-glass. The looking-glass showed him a member of a Ministry that was unpopular because it refused to tax America. He resolved that the looking-glass should show him a member of a Ministry popular because {113} it was resolved to tax America. His hunger and thirst after popularity, his passion for fame, were leading him into strange ways indeed. He was to leave after him an enduring name, but enduring for reasons that would have broken his bright spirit if he could have realized them. The shameful folly

of George Grenville was the shameful folly of Charles Townshend. His name stands above Grenville's in the roll of those who in that disastrous time did so much to lower the honor and lessen the empire of England. It became plain to Townshend that the Parliamentary majority regretted the repeal of the Stamp Act and resented the theory that America should not be taxed. Townshend resolved that revenue could and should be raised out of America. He introduced a Bill imposing a tax on glass, paper, and tea upon the American colonies. Though the amount to be raised was not large, no more than forty thousand pounds, and though it was proposed that the whole of the sum should be spent in America, it was as mischievous in its result as if it had been more malevolently aimed. [Sidenote: 1766—Death of Townshend] Townshend himself did not live long enough to learn the unhappy consequences of his folly. A neglected fever proved fatal to him in the September of 1767, in the forty-third year of his age. Walpole lamented him with an ironical appreciation. "Charles Townshend is dead. All those parts and fire are extinguished; those volatile salts are evaporated; that first eloquence of the world is dumb; that duplicity is fixed, that cowardice terminated heroically. He joked on death as naturally as he used to do on the living, and not with the affectation of philosophers who wind up their works with sayings which they hope to have remembered." Townshend had passed away, but his policy remained, a fatal legacy to the country.

Townshend was immediately succeeded in the Chancellorship of the Exchequer by a young politician who had been for some years in Parliament and had held several offices without conspicuously distinguishing himself. When Lord North entered the House of Commons as member for Banbury, his record was that of any intelligent young {114} nobleman of his time. He had written pleasing Latin love poems at Eton, he had been to Oxford, he had studied at Leipzig. George Grenville saw great promise in North. He even predicted that if he did not relax in his political pursuits he was very likely to become Prime Minister. Unhappily for his

country, North did not relax in his political pursuits. There was an ironic fitness in the fact that North should be admired by Grenville and should succeed to Townshend, for no man was better fitted to carry on the fatal policy of the two men who had outraged the American colonies by the Stamp Act and the tax on tea.

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CHAPTER XLIX.

WILKES REDIVIVUS.

[Sidenote: 1767—The return of Wilkes]

While the King's Government was preparing for itself an infinity of trouble abroad, it was not destined to find itself idle for want of trouble at home. Great and grave trouble came upon the King and his friends suddenly, and out of a quarter from which they least expected it. If they were confident of anything, they were confident that they had dealt the final blow to the audacious demagogue who for a time had fluttered the town with the insolences of the *North Briton*. The *North Briton* had ceased to exist. Of the two men whose bitter genius had been its breath, Churchill was dead, and Wilkes himself, a fugitive and a beggar, drifting from one European capital to another, seemed as little to be feared as if he slept by Churchill's side. The visit of the Commander's statue to Don Juan seemed scarcely more out of the course of nature to Don Juan's lackey than the reappearance in active public life of Wilkes appeared to the King's friends, for whom Wilkes had ceased to exist.

Wilkes had wearied of Continental life. His affection for his own country was so earnest and so sincere that, in a letter to the Duke of Grafton, he declared his willingness to bury himself in the obscurity of private life, if he were permitted to return unmolested to England. The appeal failed to extract a satisfactory reply. The Ministers would make no terms with their ruined foeman. Wilkes then resolved to show that he was not so helpless as his enemies appeared to think him. He published in 1767, in London, a pamphlet, in which he stated his case with indignation, but not without dignity. When the pamphlet had obtained a wide circulation, Wilkes followed {116} it up by appearing himself in London in the February of 1768, at the moment of the general election, and announcing himself as a candidate for Parliament for the City of London. The audacity of this step amazed his enemies and delighted his friends. If it had been taken a little earlier it might have won him the seat. So calm and so wise an observer as Franklin, at least, thought that it would have done so. As it was, though Wilkes came late into the field, and was placed at the bottom of the poll, he secured more than twelve hundred votes, and did, in the conventional phrase too often used to soothe defeat, gain a great moral victory.

The courage of the outlaw had more than revived all the old enthusiasm for him. We know on the authority of Burke that the acclamations of joy with which he was welcomed by the populace were inconceivable, and that the marks of public favor which he received were by no means confined to the lower order of the people. Several merchants and other gentlemen of large property and of considerable interest openly espoused his cause, and a subscription was immediately opened in the City for the payment of his debts. We know on other authority that in an age when betting was the mode the extraordinary betting as to Wilkes's success in his desperate enterprise was actually organized by a certain number of brokers into stock which was quoted on 'Change. Burke ascribes the reason for the failure to the open voting. The electors were obliged, he said, to record their names,

and the consequences of an opposition to great corporate and commercial connections were too obvious not to be understood.

[Sidenote: 1768—Wilkes as Member for Middlesex]

As soon as Wilkes knew of his defeat in the City, he struck a yet bolder note for success. He came forward at once as a candidate for the County of Middlesex in opposition to the established interest of two gentlemen who had represented it for several years, who were supported by the whole interest of the Court and who had considerable fortunes and great connections in it. But Wilkes, too, had powerful abettors. The Duke of Portland was one of his most prominent supporters. His old friend Temple {117} supplied the freehold qualification which was then essential for a Parliamentary candidate. Horne, the Rector of Brentford, where the election took place, gave all his great influence and all his gifts to the service of Wilkes with the same devotion that had formerly animated Churchill. Horne was not altogether an admirable character, and his enthusiasm for Wilkes had hitherto awakened no corresponding enthusiasm on Wilkes's part. But Horne was invaluable at a crisis like the Middlesex election. He had the eloquence of a sophist; he had the strategy of a tactician; he was endowed with an unconquerable energy, an indomitable determination. He was exceedingly popular in his parish; he caught the mood of the popular party, and he happened to be on the right side. It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of the services he rendered to Wilkes and to the cause of which Wilkes was the figurehead by his work in the Middlesex election. The zeal of Horne, the friendship of Temple, the daring of Wilkes carried the day. It was no ordinary victory. It was an astonishing triumph. As Burke pointed out, the same causes did not operate upon the freeholders at large which had prevented the inclinations of the livery of London from taking effect in Wilkes's favor, and the result of the polling on March 28 was that Wilkes was returned to Parliament by a prodigious majority. Wilkes polled

1290 votes. Mr. George Cooke, the Tory candidate, who had been the representative for eighteen years, only scored 827, and Sir W. Beauchamp Procter, the Whig candidate, only got 807 votes.

There was great excitement in London when the result of the election was known. It pleased the popular voice to insist that every window should be illuminated in honor of Wilkes's triumph, and all windows that were not lit up were unhesitatingly broken. Those persons who were known to be Wilkes's principal opponents received the special attentions of the mob. Lord Bute's house had to stand a siege; so had the house of Lord Egremont, who had signed the warrant for Wilkes's committal; so had other houses which were either known to belong to the {118} opponents of the hero or showed themselves to be such by their darkened windows. All such windows were instantly broken, to the joy of the glaziers, who declared that a Middlesex election was worth any number of Indian victories. The mob had it all its own way, for the strength of the constabulary had been drafted off to Brentford in expectation of rioting there which never took place. But the mob did not abuse its triumph. It was in its playful, not its dangerous mood. It stopped the carriages of the gentry, made the occupants cheer for Wilkes and Liberty, scrawled the number Forty-five upon the polished panels, broke the glasses, but in the main let the carriage-owners go unmolested. The Duke of Northumberland was forced to toast the popular favorite in a mug of ale. One ludicrous occurrence very nearly became an international episode. The Austrian Ambassador, Count Hatzfeldt, famed for his stateliness, for his punctiliousness in ceremonial, fell a victim to popular misapprehension. The mob that surrounded his coach took him, unhappily, for a Scotchman, either because of his stiffness of demeanor or because they could not understand what he was saying. To be thought Scotch was a bad thing for any man in the hands of a mob that howled for Wilkes, that howled against Bute. The Austrian Ambassador was dragged from his carriage and held uplifted in sufficiently uncomfortable fashion while the

magic number Forty-five was chalked upon the soles of his shoes. He was no further hurt; if he had been a more prudent man he would have grinned at the mischance and said no more about it. But he chose to consider his dignity and the dignity of his empire affronted by the follies of a crowd. He lodged a formal complaint with the English Government. The English Government could do nothing more than express regret with such gravity as it could muster. As for the irreverent rogues who had laid their hands upon the feet of the representative of a friendly State, it was not in the power of the Government to punish them. The earth has bubbles as the water has, and they were of them.

For two days the town was practically at the mercy of {119} the Wilkite mob. The trainbands were called out by the Mayor, who was an ardent courtier, but the men of the trainbands were, for the most part, no less ardent Wilkites. They lent their drums to swell the noise of Wilkes's triumph; they could not be counted on to lend their muskets to the suppression of Wilkes's partisans. Even the regular troops were not, it was thought, to be relied upon in the emergency. It was said here that certain regimental drummers had beaten their drums for Wilkes; it was said there that soldiers had been heard to declare that they would never fire upon the people.

The fury of the Ministry, and especially the fury of the King, flamed high. The King's heat was increased by a letter which Wilkes had addressed directly to him on his return to England. In this letter Wilkes made a not undignified appeal for the King's mercy and clemency, complained of the wicked and deceitful acts of revenge of the late Ministry, and assured the sovereign of his zeal and attachment to his service. To this letter, naturally, no direct reply was made. The form that the King's answer took was to insist that all the strength of the Government must be used against Wilkes in

order that he should be driven from that Parliament to which the electors of Middlesex had dared to return him.

[Sidenote: 1768—Wilkes in prison]

In the mean time the force of the law was slowly exerted against Wilkes. Wilkes had promised that on the first day of the term following his arrival in England he would present himself at the Court of King's Bench. He kept his promise and surrendered himself on April 20. The judges of the King's Bench seem to have been paralyzed by the position. It took them a whole week to decide that they would refuse Wilkes bail—a whole week, every day, every hour of which served to make Wilkes's cause better known and Wilkes himself more popular. Wilkes went to prison under the most extraordinary circumstances. His journey from Westminster to Bishopsgate was more like a royal progress than the passage of a criminal and an outlaw. It was only with the greatest difficulty that Wilkes was able to detach himself from the zeal of the populace {120} and get quietly into his prison. The prison immediately became an object of greater interest than a royal palace. Every day it was surrounded by a dense crowd that considered itself rewarded for hours of patient waiting if it could but get a glimpse of the prisoner's face at a window. All this show of enthusiasm exasperated the ministers and drove them into the very acts that were best calculated to keep the enthusiasm alive. On the day of the opening of Parliament, May 10, the Government, under the pretence of fearing riot, sent down a detachment of soldiers to guard the King's Bench Prison, in St. George's Fields. This was in itself a rash step enough, but every circumstance attending it only served to make it more rash. As if deliberately to aggravate the popular feeling, the regiment chosen for this pretence of keeping the peace was a Scotch regiment. At a moment when everything Scotch was insanely disliked in London such a choice was not likely to insure good temper either on the part of the mob or on the part of the military. That good temper was not

intended or desired was made plain by a letter written by Lord Weymouth, the Secretary of State, to the local magistrate, urging him to make use of the soldiers in any case of riot.

What followed was only what might have been expected. The crowd, irritated by the non-appearance of Wilkes, still more irritated by the presence of the soldiery, threatened, or was thought to threaten, an attack upon the prison. Angry words were followed by blows; the brawl between the mob and the military became a serious conflict. A young man named Allan, who seems to have had nothing to do with the scuffle, was killed in a private house by some of the soldiers who had forced an entrance in pursuit of one of their assailants. Then the Riot Act was read; the troops fired; half a dozen of the rioters were killed, including one woman, and several others were wounded.

News of this bad business intensified the angry feeling against the Government. A Scotch soldier, Donald Maclean, was put on his trial for the murder of Allan. His {121} acquittal caused an indignation which deepened when the colonel of the regiment presented him with thirty guineas on behalf of the Government. This was taken as an example of the determination of the Crown to silence the voice of the people with the weapons of Scotch mercenaries. Pamphlets, speeches, sermons, all were employed to stimulate the general agitation and to brand with atrocity the conduct of the Ministry. The tombstone erected over the murdered man Allan chronicled his inhuman murder "by Scottish detachments from the Army," and quoted from Proverbs the words, "Take away the wicked from before the King."

[Sidenote: 1768—The Ministry on its defence]

The ministers, on their side, were not slow to defend themselves. Burke, with his usual fairness, has stated their case for them when he tells how they

painted in the strongest colors the licentiousness of the rabble and that contempt of all government which makes it necessary to oppose to a violent distemper remedies not less violent. This is, of course, the excuse of every overbearing authority, which, having aroused irritation by its own mismanagement, can conceive of no better way of allaying that irritation than the bayonet and the bullet. The Ministry and the advocates of the Ministry maintained that the unhappy disposition of the people was such that juries under the influence of the general infatuation could hardly be got to do justice to soldiers under prosecution, unless Government interposed in the most effectual manner for the protection of those who had acted under their orders. They further urged that, in view of the danger of the insolence of the populace becoming contagious with the very soldiery, it was necessary for them to keep those servants firm to their duty by new and unusual rewards. "Whatever weight," says Burke, dryly, "might have been in these reasons, they were but little prevalent, and the Ministry became by this affair and its concomitant circumstances still more unpopular than by almost any other event." But it must in fairness be admitted that, foolish, stubborn, and even brutal as the King's ministers showed themselves to be, their position was a very difficult one.

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It was well open to the Government to urge, and to urge with truth, the peculiar lawlessness of the hour. It is an effective example of the ineffectiveness of a mere policy of coercion that, at a time when the penal laws of Great Britain were ferocious to a degree that would have disgraced Dahomey, the laws were so frequently defied, and defied with impunity. The laws might be merciless, even murderous, but the Executive had not always the power to compel respect or to enforce obedience. Among the lower classes in the great city, and not merely that portion of the lower classes who are qualified by the appellation of the dangerous classes, but in

strata where at least a moderate degree of civilization might be hoped for, an amount of savagery, of lawlessness, and of cruelty prevailed that would have not ill become the pirates of the Spanish Seas or the most brutal of Calabrian brigands. The hideous institution of the pillory stimulated and fostered all the worst instincts of a mob to whose better instincts no decent system of education sought to appeal. Ignorance, and poverty, and dirt brooded over the bulk of the poorer population, to breed their inevitable consequences. Murder was alarmingly common. Riots that almost reached the proportions of petty civil wars were liable to arise at any moment between one section of the poorer citizens and another. The horrors of the Brownrigg case show to what extent lust of cruelty could go. The large disbandments that are the inevitable consequence of peace after a long war had thrown out of employment, and thrown upon the country, no small number of needy, unscrupulous, and desperate men, only too ready to lend a hand to any disturbance that might afford a chance of food and drink and plunder.

[Sidenote: 1752—Mob violence in London]

Mob law ruled in London to an extraordinary degree during the whole of the eighteenth century. It reached a high pitch, but not its highest pitch, at the time when the watchword was Wilkes and Liberty. London was to witness bitterer work, bloodier work than anything which followed upon the Middlesex election and the imprisonment of the popular hero. But for the time the audacity of the mob seemed to have gone its farthest. The temper of the {123} mob was insolent, its insolence was brutal. It hated all foreigners—and among foreigners it now included Scotchmen—and it manifested its hatred in vituperation, and when it dared in violence. A white man would hardly be in more danger in a mid-African village than a foreigner was in the streets of London. There is a contemporary account written by a French gentleman who travelled in England, and who

published his observations on what he saw in England, which gives a piteous account of the barbarous incivility to which he, his friends, and his servants were exposed when they walked abroad. The mob that jeered and insulted the master very nearly killed the servant for the single offence of being a Frenchman. But the brutalities of the mob were not limited to strangers. The citizens of London fared almost as badly if not quite as badly as any Frenchman could do. Fielding gives a picture in one of his essays of the lawless arrogance which was characteristic of the rabble. He gave to the mob the title of the Fourth Estate in an article in the *Covent Garden Journal* for June 13, 1752, and in another article a week later he painted an ironical picture of the brutal manners and overbearing demeanor of the mob. "A gentleman," he wrote, "may go a voyage at sea with little more hazard than he can travel ten miles from the metropolis." On the river, on the streets, on the highways, according to Fielding, mob manners prevailed, and brutal language might at any moment be followed by brutal actions. When the largest allowance is made for the exaggeration of the satirist, enough remains to show that the condition of London in the second half of the eighteenth century was disorderly in the extreme. People who ventured on the Thames were liable to the foulest insults, and even to be run down by those who were pleased to regard the stream as their appanage, and who resented the appearance on it of any who seemed better dressed than themselves. Women of fashion were liable to be hustled, mobbed, insulted if they ventured in St. James's Park on a Sunday evening. No one could walk the streets by day without the probability of being annoyed, or by night without the risk of {124} being knocked down. After painting his grim picture in the Hogarth manner, Fielding concluded grimly that he must observe "that there are two sorts of persons of whom this fourth estate do yet stand in some awe, and whom, consequently, they have in great abhorrence: these are a justice of the peace and a soldier. To these two it is

entirely owing that they have not long since rooted all the other orders out of the commonwealth."

[Sidenote: 1769—Wilkes's expulsion from the Commons]

The Government hoped that the longer Wilkes lay in prison, the more chance there was that the enthusiasm for him would abate. But in this hope the Government were disappointed. Even in the ranks of the ministers the King was not able to find unswerving agreement to his demands for Wilkes's expulsion from Parliament. Outside Parliament the agitation was not only undiminished, but was even on the increase. This was shown conclusively by a fresh event in connection with Middlesex. Cooke, who was the colleague of Wilkes in the representation of the county, died. Serjeant Glynn, who had made himself conspicuous as the champion of Wilkes and the advocate of the popular cause, came forward to contest the vacant seat, and carried the constituency in spite of the most determined efforts on the part of the royal faction to defeat him. There were more riots, more deaths on the popular side, more trials, more convictions for murder and more pardons of the condemned men. The agitation which had been burning at a steady heat blazed up into a flame. Wilkes made every use of the opportunity. He had succeeded in getting a copy of the letter which Lord Weymouth had sent to the magistrates, the letter in which Lord Weymouth had practically urged the magistrates to fire upon the people. Wilkes immediately sent it to the *St. James's Chronicle*, a tri-weekly independent Whig journal which had been started in 1760. The *St. James's Chronicle* printed the letter, and Wilkes's own letter accompanying it, in which he accused the Ministry of having planned and determined upon the "horrid massacre of St. George's Fields." The letter, said Wilkes, "shows how long a hellish project can be brooded over by some infernal {125} spirits without one moment's remorse." It may be admitted that if the language of Wilkes's

enemies in the two Houses was strong even to ruffianism, Wilkes could and did give them as good as he got in the way of invective and vituperation.

The Government, goaded into fury by this daring provocation, resolved to make an example of the offender. Lord Barrington brought the letter formally before the House of Commons. The House of Commons immediately voted it a libel, and summoned Wilkes from his prison to the bar of the House. On February 3, 1769, Wilkes appeared before the Commons. With perfect composure he admitted the authorship of the letter to the *St. James's Chronicle*, and, with an audacity that exasperated the House, he proclaimed his regret that he had not expressed himself upon the subject in stronger terms, and added that he should certainly do so whenever a similar occasion should present itself. "Whenever," he said, "a Secretary of State shall dare to write so bloody a scroll, I will through life dare to write such prefatory remarks, as well as to make my appeal to the nation on the occasion." Wilkes found champions in the House of Commons. Burke, Beckford, and many others either defended Wilkes or urged that the matter was not for the House of Commons, but for the law courts to deal with. In the division the Government was triumphant by a majority of 219 against 137, and Wilkes was formally expelled from the House of Commons on the ground, not merely of his comments on the letter of Lord Weymouth, but on account of the Number Forty-five of the *North Briton* and the "Essay on Woman."

A new writ was issued for the county of Middlesex. The county of Middlesex promptly re-elected Wilkes without opposition on February 16. On February 17 the House of Commons again voted the expulsion of Wilkes. This time the House of Commons exceeded its powers and its privileges in adding that the expelled man was incapable of sitting in the existing Parliament. Every blow that the royal party had struck at Wilkes had only aroused stronger sympathy for him; and this illegal act, this

usurpation {126} by one House of powers that only belonged to Parliament, caused the liveliest indignation. It was resolved by the friends of Wilkes, and by all who were the friends of the principles with which Wilkes had come to be identified, to fight to the utmost in defence of their constitutional rights, that were now so gravely, so wantonly jeopardized. On March 16 there was a new polling at Brentford, and, as before, Wilkes was returned unopposed. There was, indeed, an effort made by an obscure merchant named Dingley to oppose him, but he could find no freeholder to second him, and he was chivied ignominiously from the scene of the election. On March 17 the House of Commons, for the third time, played what Burke called the tragi-comedy of declaring the election void. A new writ was again issued, and this time the Ministry were resolved that, come what come might, Wilkes should have an opponent. It was not the easiest of tasks to find a man willing to oppose Wilkes's candidature on the hustings at Brentford. Dingley, the merchant, had experienced the violence of the mob; it was confidently assumed that any other antagonist would fare very much worse. But the Ministry found their champion in a young officer, Colonel Luttrell, of the Guards, a son of Lord Irnham. Luttrell was a gallant young soldier, a man of that temper which regards all popular agitations with supreme disdain, and of that courage that would face any danger, not merely with composure, but with pleasure. His friends were so apprehensive that he was going to his death that his life was insured, and the gentlemen of the clubs, who were always willing to bet upon any imaginable contingency, betted freely on his chances of surviving his adventure. Wilkes's friends, however, were resolved to disappoint the expectations of their enemies. Thanks to their energy and patience, the election went off with perfect order. Wilkes was, of course, returned at the top of the poll by an enormous majority. Luttrell came next with less than a quarter of his votes, and an absurd attorney, who had thrust himself into the election at the last moment, came last with a ludicrous poll of five votes.

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[Sidenote: 1769—Lord North and the Wilkes case]

On Thursday, April 13, Wilkes was elected. London was again illuminated, and a great demonstration outside the King's Bench Prison congratulated the hero of the hour on his third triumph. On the following day the House of Commons prepared again to reject Wilkes. The debate lasted over the Saturday—a rare event in those days—and in the early dawning of Sunday morning Colonel Luttrell was declared to be duly elected as the member for Middlesex. The ministerial victory was not a very great victory. They had only a majority of 197 votes to 143. It served their turn at a pinch, but it was not a big enough majority to inspire Lord North with the courage to resist a proposal that a fortnight should be allowed to the electors of Middlesex in which, if they wished, to petition against conduct which practically deprived them of their constitutional rights.

Lord North had many years of public life before him, many years of slumbering and blundering on the treasury bench, before his death in 1792, as Lord Guildford, in a melancholy, premature old age. In those years he was privileged to do a vast amount of injury to his country, uncompensated for by any act to her advantage. Lord North's conduct in the case of Wilkes was not the most foolish act in a career of folly, but it certainly served as an illuminating preface to a chronicle of wasted time. No proofs of the wit that endeared him to his contemporaries have been preserved; his fame for an unalterable urbanity is but an empty memory; his record is only rescued from oblivion by the series of incredible follies which began with the unjust attempt to annihilate Wilkes.

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CHAPTER L.

THE SPIRIT OP JUNIUS.

[Sidenote: 1769—The Letters of Junius]

While all this was going on a new force suddenly made itself felt in English political life. The King and his ministers found themselves attacked by a mysterious and dangerous opponent. On March 21, 1769, a letter was addressed to the *Public Advertiser*, signed "Junius," which marked the beginning of a new era in political literature. At that time the *Public Advertiser* was the most important paper in London. It had first appeared under that name in 1752, but it was the direct descendant, through a series of changes of name, of the *Daily Post*, which Defoe had helped to start in 1719. It had its rivals in the *Daily Advertiser*, which was founded in 1724, and the *Gazetteer* and *New Daily Advertiser*, which was started in 1728. In the course of time both these journals had sunk to be little more than advertising sheets. They gave hardly any news, and they had no political influence. The *Public Advertiser* was a much more important paper. It gave abundance of foreign and domestic intelligence, it had original contributions in prose and verse, and its columns were always open to letters from correspondents of all kinds on all manner of subjects.

It was not until the first letter signed with the signature of Junius appeared that the paper assumed a serious political importance. The writer, whoever he was, who chose that signature had written before in the columns of the *Public Advertiser*. In 1767 Woodfall, the publisher, received the first letter from the correspondent who was to become so famous, and from time to time other letters came signed by various names taken from classical nomenclature, such as Mnemon, Atticus, Lucius, Brutus, {129}

Domitian, Vindex, and, perhaps, Poplicola. But it was with the adoption of the name of Junius that the real importance of the letters began. They came at a crisis; they spoke for the popular side; they spoke with a bitterness and a ferocity that had hitherto not been attempted in political journalism. The great French writer Taine has said that the letters of Junius, at a time of national irritation and anxiety, fell one by one like drops of fire on the fevered limbs of the body politic. He goes on to say that if Junius made his phrases concise, and selected his epithets, it was not from a love of style, but in order the better to stamp his insult. Oratorical artifices in his hand became instruments of torture, and when he filed his periods it was to drive the knife deeper and surer, with an audacity of denunciation and sternness of animosity, with a corrosive and burning irony applied to the most secret corners of private life, with an inexorable persistence of calculated and meditated persecution.

The first few letters of Junius were devoted to an altercation with Sir William Draper over the character in the first place of Lord Granby and in the second place of Lord Granby's defender, Sir William Draper. Sir William, though he fought stoutly for his friend and stoutly for himself, did neither himself nor his friend much good by engaging in the controversy. He was no match for the weapons of Junius. He had neither the wit nor the venom of his antagonist. But the great interest of the letters began when Junius, taking up the cause of Wilkes, struck at higher game than Sir William Draper or Lord Granby. His first letter to the Duke of Grafton was an indictment of the Duke for the conduct of the Crown in the case of a murder trial arising out of the Brentford election. A young man named George Clarke had been killed in a riot and a man named Edward M'Quirk was tried and found guilty of the murder. A kind of hugger-mugger inquest produced a declaration that Clarke's death was not caused by the blow he had received from his assailant, and in consequence, "whereas a doubt had arisen in our royal breast," the King formally pardoned the murderer by

royal {130} proclamation. On this theme Junius lashed Grafton and concluded his letter with a direct allusion to Wilkes. He asked if Grafton had forgotten, while he was withdrawing this desperate wretch from that justice which the laws had awarded and which the whole people of England demanded, that there was another man, the favorite of his country, whose pardon would have been accepted with gratitude, whose pardon would have healed all divisions. "Have you quite forgotten that this man was once your Grace's friend? Or is it to murderers only that you will extend the mercy of the Crown?"

The attack thus daringly begun was steadily maintained. Wilkes had no keener, no acuter champion than Junius. With great skill Junius avoided all appearance of violent partisanship. He was careful to censure much in Wilkes's conduct, careful to discriminate between Wilkes's private character and Wilkes's public conduct. The unjustifiable action of the House of Commons in forcing Colonel Luttrell upon the electors of Middlesex gave Junius the opportunity of assailing Wilkes's enemies without appearing to champion Wilkes to the utterance. Junius admitted that the Duke of Grafton might have had some excuse in his opposition to Wilkes on account of Wilkes's character, and might have earned the approval of men who, looking no further than to the object before them, were not dissatisfied with seeing Mr. Wilkes excluded from Parliament. But, Junius went on to argue, "you have now taken care to shift the question; or, rather, you have created a new one, in which Mr. Wilkes is no more concerned than any other English gentleman. You have united the country against you on one grand constitutional point, on the decision of which our existence as a free people absolutely depends. You have asserted, not in words but in fact, that representation in Parliament does not depend upon the choice of the freeholders."

[Sidenote: 1769—The identity of Junius]

The authorship of the letters of Junius is one of those problems, like the problems of the identity of the Man in the Iron Mask, which have never been settled with absolute certainty and which probably never will be settled {131} with absolute certainty. But between absolute certainty and the highest degree of probability there is no very great gulf fixed, and it is in the highest degree probable that the author of the letters was Philip Francis. The letters have been attributed to all manner of men. They were ascribed, absurdly enough, to Wilkes. Wilkes could write bitterly and he could write well, but he could write neither so well nor so bitterly as Mr. Woodfall's correspondent. Dr. Johnson, who ought to have known better, thought they were written by Burke. It is his excuse that there did not seem at the time any man of the same ability as the writer of the letters except Burke. But Dr. Johnson, who had been quick enough to recognize the genius of the anonymous author of the essay on "The Sublime and the Beautiful," erred when he thought that the same hand penned the anonymous letters. The prose of Burke was as far above the prose of Junius as the prose of Junius was above the prose of Wilkes. None of the letters surpasses in ferocity, none approaches in excellence the letter which Burke wrote to the noble Duke who had slandered him. The letters were attributed to Barré; they were attributed to Lee, who was yet to earn another kind of fame; they were attributed to many hands. To us, at least, it seems clear that they were the work of Philip Francis.

The electors of Middlesex did petition against the substitution of the despised Luttrell for the adored Wilkes. The consideration of the petition was the occasion for one of the most memorable debates that can be recorded of an age rich in memorable debates. On the one side the influence of the Ministry and the influence of the King induced Blackstone to deny himself and to falsify those principles of constitutional law with which his name is associated. On the other side principles as little honorable but a far acuter political perception urged Wedderburn, who was nominally a King's

man, to go over to the popular cause with the air of a Coriolanus. On the one side Fletcher Norton upheld the authority of the resolution. On the other side George Grenville argued against it with an acumen which showed that an able lawyer might have {132} been a great lawyer. In that famous debate Burke spoke at his best, and yet the event of that debate was not the speech of Burke, was not the speech of the experienced politician, of the seasoned statesman, of the famous man of letters, but the speech of a young man who was almost a boy, the speech of Charles James Fox. All who have written on the debate agree in their admiration of the speech of one who, as far as Parliament was concerned, was but a raw lad and who nevertheless held his own on a point of law against experienced lawyers, in statesmanship against Grenville, and in eloquence against Burke.

[Sidenote: 1769—Unpopularity of George the Third]

Of course the petition of Middlesex was rejected; the election of Luttrell was confirmed. On the day of the confirmation the King prorogued Parliament in a foolish speech in which he seemed to think that he had gained a victory. But if the King and the Ministry believed or hoped that in expelling Wilkes from Parliament they had got rid of Wilkes for good and all; if they believed or hoped that in thus degrading Wilkes they would deprive him of his popularity with the people or even diminish that popularity, they were speedily to be undeceived and bitterly disappointed. Both King and ministers knew their business very badly; with limitations of intelligence which would have been disastrous to the conduct of a small shop, they came in this instance, as in other instances, within measurable distance of wrecking a royalty. It is probable that Franklin, shrewd, cool observer though he was, went too far when he wrote in his journal that if George the Third had had a bad private character, and John Wilkes a good one, the latter might have turned the former out of his kingdom. But it is certain that the signs of the King's unpopularity were now as significant as

were the signs of Wilkes's popularity. It had been said that at this time a good half of the King's subjects preferred Wilkes to their King. The estimate is probably under rather than above the fact. Wilkes was placed in the position of being the champion of all the rights and liberties that Englishmen most prized; the King in the {133} position of being their most uncompromising, most obstinate opponent.

Thus, while honors were offered daily to the prisoner of the King's bench, insults were daily offered to his royal enemy. The King could scarcely go abroad without becoming the object of a demonstration of popular disfavor, and even in his palace he could not escape from deputations empowered to protest against the conduct of his ministers. In all parts of the kingdom public meetings were held, and from these public meetings petitions poured in upon the King calling upon him to dissolve his Parliament. It has been truly observed that the custom of holding public meetings for the discussion of public grievances dates from this period. On two solemn occasions the Lord Mayor of London, accompanied by the sheriffs, presented addresses to the King remonstrating against the action of the House of Commons. To the first address the King replied that it was disrespectful to him, injurious to Parliament, and irreconcilable to the principles of the Constitution. After which reply he could think of nothing better, nothing more kingly to do than to turn round to his courtiers and burst out laughing. He treated the second address with the same insolence, an insolence which provoked from the Lord Mayor an uncourtierly reply which reminded the King that those who endeavored to alienate the King's affections from his subjects were violators of the public peace and betrayers of the Constitution established by the glorious Revolution. Those words were afterwards inscribed in gold upon the monument of the mayor who spoke them. If those words, and words of like purport and temper, at first moved the King to laughter, they soon exasperated him past laughing. Once he clapped his hand to his sword-hilt and declared that he would sooner

have recourse to that than grant a dissolution. The tension of public feeling can best be estimated when a constitutional sovereign on the one side could dare to make such a remark; when a representative of the people like Colonel Barré on the other side could dare in the House of {134} Commons to say that disregard of public petitions might lead the people to think of assassination.

While the King was insulted and insulting, and longing to stifle opposition by the sword, John Wilkes in his prison was receiving new proofs of the place he held in public affection. He was elected alderman for the Ward of Farringdon Without. We are told that his table at the prison was daily supplied with the most rare and costly delicacies, presented to him by his admirers. The mysterious Chevalier d'Eon sent him a present of Russian smoked tongues, with the whimsical wish that they could have the eloquence of Cicero, and the delicacy of Voltaire, to do him honor. Friendly revellers sent him hampers of the wine he liked the best. More serious gifts were laid at his feet. For a while money literally rained in upon him. The leading Whigs provided him with an income. Nobles and great ladies sent him large sums. A number of politicians banded together under the title of the Society for Supporting the Bill of Rights, and raised a great deal of money, much of which went in meeting some of the heavy debts with which Wilkes was embarrassed, much of which went in keeping up the princely way of living which suited Wilkes's temperament, and which was perhaps not unsuited to the part he was playing as the rival of a prince. In the public press, on the platform, on the stage, his influence was enormous. His good pleasure sent politicians to Parliament; his good pleasure made London sheriffs, made provincial mayors. While the false rumor that he was the author of "The Letters of Junius" only swelled the volume of his fame, the author of those letters was adding to Wilkes's pride and power by public championship and by private letters, choking with an adulation that seems strange indeed from so savage a pen. If Garrick dared for a moment to run

counter to popular feeling, as a little earlier he had dared to disdain the praise of Churchill, he had to give way in the case of Wilkes, as he had given way in the case of Wilkes's poet. The very name of Wilkes drove men on both sides of the quarrel into a kind of frenzy. Alexander Cruden, of the "Concordance," {135} showed his devotion to his King and his dislike of Wilkes by carrying a large sponge with him whenever he walked abroad in order that he might wipe out the ominous number, forty-five, whenever he saw it chalked up. As the number was chalked up everywhere by the Wilkites, Cruden soon found the task beyond his powers. It was lucky for him that he got no harm in his zeal, lucky for him that he did not come across that militant clergyman who pulled the nose of a Scotch naval officer for attacking Wilkes and then met his man in Hyde Park and wounded him.

[Sidenote: 1770—A fight for the liberty of the Press]

On April 17, 1770, Wilkes's term of imprisonment came to an end. Wilkes immediately started for Bath to avoid a demonstration in London; but London was illuminated in his honor, and in a great number of provincial towns his release was celebrated with all the signs of a national holiday. If he had been a hero in prison, he was no less a hero out of it. He moved from triumph to triumph. While alderman he won a victory over the Court and the Commons which did much to establish the liberty of the press in England. The House of Commons, in a foolish attempt to suppress reports of the debates in Parliament, tried to arrest certain printers. Wilkes and the Lord Mayor took the printers' part; advised them to conceal themselves; and in their turn arrested those who, in obedience to a royal proclamation and the orders of the House, arrested the printers.

The House of Commons committed the Lord Mayor and Alderman Oliver to the Tower, and summoned Wilkes to appear at the bar. Wilkes coolly replied that as he was a member of Parliament, and as he was not

addressed as a member of Parliament should be, and ordered to attend in his place according to custom, he should ignore the summons. The House made a second and yet a third order for his appearance, each of which Wilkes treated with disdain. It is a significant proof of the power of Wilkes's popularity that the House did not take any steps to punish his contumacy. While it affected to find a consolation in the assurances of the King that Wilkes was "below the {136} notice of the House," it had to endure as best it might an affront resentment of which would only have added to Wilkes's popularity. The honors paid to the Lord Mayor and the alderman during their imprisonment showed only too plainly that hostility to the Court and the Parliamentary majority was heroism in the eyes of the majority of the citizens of London.

Once again Wilkes had won the day. From that time forward Parliament put no embargo upon the publication of reports of its debates. Fresh honors were showered on Wilkes. He was elected sheriff. He was presented by the Court of Common Council with a silver goblet, designed according to his own wish with a representation of the death of Caesar, and graced with the ominous motto from one of the poems of Churchill:

May every tyrant feel
The keen deep searchings of a patriot steel,

a citation which, taken in conjunction with Barré's wild talk in the House about assassination, was sufficiently significant of the temper of the time.

[Sidenote: 1774—Wilkes Lord Mayor of London]

Wilkes had been alderman; he had been sheriff; he was now to bear the crown of civic honors. He was put in nomination for the office of Lord Mayor. The Court party made a desperate effort to defeat him. They had tried and failed to prevent him from being elected to Parliament. They had

tried and failed to prevent him from being made alderman, from being made sheriff. They now tried with all their might to prevent him from being made Lord Mayor. Wilkes had much to fight against. There were defections from his own party. The once devoted Horne had squabbled with his idol over money matters, and was now as venomous an enemy as he had been a fulsome partisan. Alderman Townshend, an ex-Lord Mayor, strained all his influence, which was great in the City, against Wilkes. A wild rumor got about at one time, indeed, that Townshend had settled the difficulty of the Court forever by challenging Wilkes and shooting him dead. The story had no foundation, but for a moment it flattered the hopes of Wilkes's {137} enemies and fluttered the hearts of Wilkes's friends. The opposition ended as opposition to Wilkes always ended. Twice he was placed at the head of the poll, and twice the Court of Aldermen chose another candidate. The third time, in the election of 1774, Wilkes was at last chosen as Lord Mayor by the Court of Aldermen in despite of the unwearied efforts of the Court party to defeat him. "Thus," wrote Walpole, "after so much persecution by the Court, after so many attempts upon his life, after a long imprisonment in jail, after all his own crimes and indiscretions, did this extraordinary man, of more extraordinary fortune, attain the highest office in so grave and important a city as the capital of England, always reviving the more opposed and oppressed, and unable to shock Fortune and make her laugh at him who laughed at everybody and everything!" It has been well said by Mr. Fraser Rae that the significance of election to the office of Lord Mayor was very much greater more than a hundred years ago than it is now. Then the Chief Magistrate of the City was not necessarily a man who had passed through certain minor offices and who rose by routine to fill the highest. At that time the Corporation was a political power, which ministers had to take into account, and which sovereigns had to propitiate. A greater triumph than the mayoralty followed in quick succession. At the general election of 1774 Wilkes came forward again, and for the fifth time, as candidate for

Middlesex. This time he was not opposed. Luttrell abandoned an impossible position and did not stand. Ten years after Wilkes's first appearance in the House of Commons he returned to it again in triumph as the member for Middlesex and the Lord Mayor of London.

And here, on the top of his triumph, Wilkes may be said to drop through the tissue of our history. He was to live nearly a quarter of a century longer, three-and-twenty years of a life that was as calm and peaceful as the hot manhood that preceded it had been vexed and unquiet. Although he lives in history as one of the most famous of the world's agitators, he had in his heart little affection {138} for the life of a public man. And the publicity of the civic official was especially distasteful to him. He hated the gross festivals, the gross pleasures, the gross display of City life. He sickened of the long hours spent in the business of mayoralty; he sickened yet more of the pleasures incidental to mayoralty. Though he remained in Parliament for many years, and conducted himself there with zeal, discretion, and statesmanship, and always, or almost always, proved himself to be the champion of liberty and the democratic principle, he did not find his greatest happiness in public speeches and the triumphs and defeats of the division lobby. What he loved best on earth was the society of his daughter, between whom and himself there existed a friendship that is the best advocate for Wilkes's character. And he loved best to enjoy that society in the kind of sham classic retirement which had so powerful an attraction for so many of the men of the eighteenth century. His cottage in the Isle of Wight, with its Doric column to the manes of Churchill, with its shrine to Fortuna Redux, was his idea of the ancient city of Tusculum.

His tastes and pleasures were the tastes and pleasures of a man of letters. He affected a curious kind of scholarship. The hand that had been employed upon the *North Briton*, now devoted itself to the editing of classic texts; the intellect that had been associated with the privately printed "Essay on

Woman" was now associated with privately printed editions of Catullus which he fondly believed to be flawless, and of Theophrastus, whose Greek text it pleased him to print without accents. In his tranquil old age he made himself as many friends as in his hot manhood he had made himself enemies. Those who had most hated him came under the spell of his attraction, even the King himself, even Dr. Johnson. His interview with Dr. Johnson is one of the most famous episodes in the literary and political history of the last century. His assurance to King George that he himself had never been a Wilkite is in one sense the truest criticism that has ever been passed upon him. If to be a Wilkite was to entertain {139} all the advanced and all the wild ideas expressed by many of those who took advantage of his agitation, then certainly Wilkes was none such. But he was a Wilkite in the better sense of being true to his own opinions and true to his sense of public duty. When he expressed the wish to have the words "A friend to liberty" inscribed upon his monument, he expressed a wish which the whole tenor of his life, the whole tone of his utterances fully justified. And if he was loyal to his principles he could be chivalrous to his enemies. Almost his last public appearance was at the general election of 1796, when he came forward, with a magnanimity which would have well become many a better man, to support the candidature of Horne Tooke at Westminster, of the man who, after having been his fawning friend, his fulsome flatterer, had turned against him with the basest treachery and the bitterest malignity. There may have been, surely there must have been, a vein of irony in the words in which Wilkes complimented the apostate and the turncoat as a man of public virtues. But the irony was cloaked by courtesy; if the action smacked of the cynic, at least it was done in obedience to the behest to forgive our enemies.

[Sidenote: 1797—Death of Wilkes]

On November 38, 1797, the old, worn, weary man, who had worked so hard and done so much, welcomed, in his capacity of Chamberlain of the City of London, Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson to the honorary freedom of the City. The setting star saluted the rising star. Nelson was then thirty-nine. He had been at sea since he was twelve. He had voyaged in polar seas and tropic waters. He had fought the Americans. He had fought the French. "Hate a Frenchman as you would the devil" was his simple-minded counsel of perfection. He had fought the Spaniards. He had lost an eye at Calvi. He had lost an arm at Santa Cruz. He was ten years married. His love, his error, his glory, Emma Hamilton, Carracioli, Trafalgar, were yet to come.

Less than a month later, in the late December, 1797, John Wilkes was dead. He was seventy years old. For nearly forty years he had lived unknown, unheeded. For {140} ten years he was the most conspicuous man in England, the best hated and the best loved. For twenty years more he was an honored public and private citizen. He will always be remembered as one of the most remarkable men of a century of remarkable men.

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CHAPTER LI.

CHARLES JAMES FOX.

[Sidenote: 1749-1768—A champion of popular rights]

One of the most immediate results of the Wilkes controversy in the House of Commons was to draw attention to a young man who had entered Parliament at the General Election of 1768 while he was still considerably under age. The young member for Midhurst made himself conspicuous as

the most impassioned opponent of Wilkes. A strenuous supporter of Luttrell outside the walls of Westminster, inside those walls the boy who represented the fictitious constituency of Midhurst distinguished himself by the easy insolence with which he assailed Wilkes and the popular cause which Wilkes represented. He delighted in informing the delighted majority in the House that he, for his part, "paid no regard whatever to the voice of the people." When Burke condescended to notice and to rebuke the impertinence of a youth of nineteen, he little thought that the lad whom he reproved would come to be a far more extreme advocate of popular rights than he himself, or that the chronicle of the century in recording the names of those who made themselves prominent for the utterance of democratic opinions should place the name of John Wilkes far below the name of Charles James Fox.

It would not be easy to imagine a worse training for a youth intended for the service of his country and destined to contend for the honors of the State than the life that was lived by Charles James Fox from early boyhood to early manhood. It was not in the power of his father, Henry Fox, Lord Holland, to set before his son the example of a parent whose public life was pure, admirable, and honorable. But in the domestic circle Lord Holland was {142} a very different man from the corrupt and juggling politician known to the world. In the domestic circle his affections and his tendernesses were his most conspicuous traits, and in the domestic circle he was as unfortunate for his children through his very virtues as outside it he was unfortunate by reason of his vices. Fox was a loving husband, but he was an adoring father, and the extremest zeal and warmth of his adoration was given to his son Charles James. The child was from the first precocious, alert, and gifted beyond his years, and the father fostered and flattered the precocity with a kind of worship that proved, as it was bound to prove, disastrous. It seems to have been Henry Fox's deliberate belief that the best way to bring up a spirited, gifted, headstrong child was to gratify

every wish, surrender to every whim, and pander to every passion that ebullient youth could feel. The anecdotes of the day teem with tales of the fantastic homage that Fox paid to the desires and moods of his imperious infant. He made him his companion while he was still in the nursery; he allowed him to be his master before he had fairly left it. Never was the creed of Thelema acted upon more consistently and persistently than by Lord Holland towards Charles James Fox. It is an astonishing proof of the strength and innate goodness of the childish nature that it was not ruined outright, hopelessly and helplessly, by the worst training ever given to a son by a father. That it did Fox infinite harm cannot be denied and was only to be expected. That it failed entirely to unbalance his mind and destroy his character only serves to show the sterling temper of Fox's metal. His youth was like his childhood, petted, spoiled, wayward, capricious, and captivating. Every one loved him, his father, his father's friends, the school companions with whom he wrote Latin verses in praise of lovely ladies with lovely names. All through his life the love of men and the love of women was given to him with a generosity that was only equal to the lovable nature that compelled and commanded it. His career is one record of unrivalled precocity. As a child he had been his father's friend rather than his father's plaything; as a {143} lad he was his father's travelling companion, and learned from that father the pleasant art of sowing wild oats not with the hand but with the whole sack. He returned to England a proficient gambler, a finished rake, the dear friend of famous men, the darling of beautiful women, to enter, before he was of age, upon that political career in which it seemed certain that if he would follow in his father's steps he might hope for more than his father's fortunes. If Charles Fox had been quite cankered by his father's care, if the essence of his genius had been corruptible, he might have given the King's friends a leader as far removed from them as Lucifer from his satellites, and contrived perhaps—though that indeed would have been difficult—to amass almost as much

money as he was able to spend with comfort. To judge by the young man's initial enterprise, his Parliamentary career promised to be as brilliant and as brutal as any king who hated Chatham and hated Wilkes and hated the American colonies could possibly desire. The furious intolerance of his maiden speech was happily, however, only like that false dawn familiar to travellers in the East. The true sunrise was yet to come. But for six years he was as consistent in his support of Lord North and the policy that North represented as for the rest of his career he was consistent in opposition to it.

[Sidenote: 1768—Fox's scholarship]

The life of Fox recalls, in its brilliant activity, in its no less brilliant scholarship, the dazzling careers of some of those Italian princes who were equally at home and equally distinguished in the battlefield and in the library, equally happy in handling their weapons or in turning the pages of the latest volume from the presses of Aldus that renewed the youth of some masterpiece of Greece or Rome. Fox's scholarship would have been remarkable in a man whose days and nights were devoted to scholarship alone. It was little less than marvellous in a man who gave a large part of his days to the fiercest political fights of a fiercely political age and a large part of his nights to the fascination of the card-table, the disasters of the dice-box, and the pursuit of the sweet, elusive shadow which is {144} called pleasure. Fox's love for literature was indeed its own reward. In the darkest hours of a life that tasted the bitterness of many public and many private sorrows he could steep his vexed spirit in the sweet waters watched by the Muses, and arise cleansed, inspirited, and comforted. Though he saw those public honors that his genius deserved denied, though he lost those chances of command by which he could best have served his country, though his own fault wrecked his fortune and his own follies wasted his substance and delivered the home of his glorious youth into alien hands, he could turn from troubles that would have broken the spirit and cracked the

heart of a less heroic fighter, to find solace and consolation in the golden music of the "Odyssey" and the majestic cadences of Virgil.

Fox loved the classics with the passion of a poet, not with the patience of a pedant, and found that noble rapture in the human beauty of Euripides which Parson Adams found in the divine grandeur of Aeschylus. But if his reading in the literatures of Greece and Rome was wide and deep, it was not limited to the literatures which the world calls classic. France, Italy, Spain, offered him their best, and found him a worthy worshipper, the faithful lover and loyal student of all that was best in each. He was the comrade of Don Quixote as he was the comrade of Orlando Furioso and the comrade of Gil Blas. But he was never one of those who exalt the laurels of other lands to the neglect of those of their own. He knew English literature and loved English literature as well as if he had never scanned a Latin line or conjugated a Greek verb or read a page of Molière, or Calderon, or Metastasio. He knew Chaucer as well as it was possible for any one then or for generations later to know Chaucer, and he appreciated him as few have appreciated him before or since. The poets of his own time were as dear to him in their degree as the singer of England's morning song. It is hardly necessary to say that he was as familiar with Shakespeare as every one should be and as very few are. Only one arc was wanting to the circle of his splendid {145} culture, only one string was lacking to the bow of his prodigious reading. There was a great literature growing up in a neighboring country of which Charles Fox knew nothing, and of which we cannot doubt that he would have rejoiced to know much. It is curious that in a country which had been ruled for three successive reigns by German sovereigns, the German language was entirely neglected and the glorious dawn of German literature entirely ignored. While Fox was still a young man, playing at love, playing at cards, playing at politics, and through all these diversions adding to that mighty store of learning, and training his mind in the finest and most intimate judgments upon the Greek and Roman

poets, Germany had been enriched by the masterpiece of the greatest critic since Aristotle, and was fostering the golden youth of the greatest poet since Shakespeare. It would have amazed Fox, as it would have amazed every English scholar then living, if he could have been told that the spirit of the antique world was to be renewed in a country which had given them four generations of phlegmatic princes, and in a language of which few scholars in England knew a single word.

[Sidenote: 1768—Fox's quarrel with Lord North]

Fox's term of adherence to North and to North's policy was not too happy a time for the nominal superior. A hot-headed young Lord of the Admiralty resigned his office in a huff, and was not without difficulty persuaded to return to office as Commissioner of the Treasury. The breach between Fox and North was bridged over, but the bridge was frail. The two men eyed each other with disfavor. Fox asserted his independence by occasionally voting against the minister, by consorting with Burke. After the death of Lord Holland, North revenged himself by dismissing Fox from office in a letter famous for its insolent brevity. For a time Fox still accorded to the ministry an uncertain support, but he was drifting in thought and speech and action in the inevitable direction of his genius. The hour came when he took his seat on the Opposition benches, and asserted himself as a {146} formidable opponent of the Government. A quarrel across the Atlantic gave him the opportunity to prove that the principles which men of to-day would call Liberal principles had gained one of their greatest and one of their most eloquent champions.

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CHAPTER LII.

[Sidenote: 1765-74—Lord Hillsborough]

While the battle had been raging over Wilkes at home, the cloud of trouble had been growing larger and larger abroad. The discontent of the American colonies increased in direct ratio with the determination of the home Government to ignore or to override that discontent. The King was fortunate, or believed himself to be fortunate, in finding among his ministers the aptest instrument he could desire for striking at the Americans. Lord Hillsborough, the Secretary of State, was one of those men who appear to be inspired by a very genius of perversity. He had a power of misunderstanding a political situation and underestimating a political crisis which, if it could only have been reversed, would have earned him a foremost place among the statesmen of his time. But his perversity was of like temper with the perversity of the King, and Lord Hillsborough was admirably qualified to interpret the King's dislike of his American subjects and to make himself the mouthpiece of the anti-Colonial feeling which had been steadily growing up in the House of Commons since the days when the repeal of the Stamp Act had known its season of brief popularity.

The comparative temperance and lucidity of the Rockingham period seemed now indeed remote and memorable. Exasperation and not conciliation appeared to be the persistent note of England's colonial policy. It was England's misfortune to be peculiarly ill served on both sides of the Atlantic by those who were intrusted with the conduct of colonial affairs. It would be hard to say whether the provincial governors abroad or the ministers at home were least capable of understanding the people with whom they {148} had to deal, or were most to blame for their actions in the face of a danger that their own folly had brought about. With a man like Lord Hillsborough for Secretary of State in London, with a man like

Bernard for Governor of Massachusetts in Boston, it is not to be wondered at now, and it ought not to have been wondered at then, that the colonies refused to crystallize into tranquillity. Francis Bernard was a man of certain ability, certain gifts, and uncertain good intentions. But he was, as we have seen, a perfervid Tory, a zealous champion of the royal prerogative, a profound believer in the wisdom of minimizing, if not abrogating, the privileges of which the colonists, and especially the colonists of Massachusetts, were so proud. It was Bernard's peculiar fortune to be not merely the supporter but the adviser of the English Ministries in almost all the series of disastrous actions towards their colonies. Bernard was inspired by a kind of furious folly in his words and deeds. Unhappily, this kind of furious folly was not confined to the colonial governor. Lord Hillsborough was no less foolish and no less dangerous than Bernard. Horace Walpole described Hillsborough as nothing more than a pompous composition of ignorance and want of judgment. He certainly was hopelessly ignorant of America, and he certainly showed a hopeless want of judgment in his dealings with the Americans. Hillsborough backed up Bernard in his blunders and his braggadocio with the light heart that comes of an empty head. He backed up Bernard with a steady zeal that would have been splendid if it could have been made to serve any useful purpose. Where Bernard was bellicose and blustering, Hillsborough blustered and was bellicose in his turn. It was Hillsborough's honest, innate conviction that the American colonists were a poor-spirited, feeble-hearted, and still more feeble-handed pack of rascals, braggarts whom a firm front discomfited, natural bondsmen to whom it was only necessary, as in the old classic story, to show the whip to awe them into cringing submission. This theory found its fittest formula a little later, when Hillsborough, speaking for the Government he adorned, and {149} inspired by a more than usual afflatus of folly, declared that "we can grant nothing to the Americans except what they may ask with a halter round their necks." It is difficult to believe that a

reasonable minister, endowed with a sufficient degree of human ability to push his way from office to office and from title to title, could have known so little of the history of his own country and the characteristics of his own countrymen as to think that any of England's children were easily to be frightened into ignominious supplication. But Hillsborough undoubtedly did think so, and he always acted consistently in support of his strong conviction that the independent colonists were nothing more than a mob of cowardly malcontents. He acted on this conviction to such good purpose that his name has earned its place of honor with that of Grenville, of Townshend, and of Wedderburn, in the illustrious junta who were successfully busy about the sorry business of converting a great empire into a small one.

[Sidenote: 1766—The Mutiny Act]

After the Stamp Act had raised its crop of disturbance and disorder, the Government extended to the colonies the measure called the Mutiny Act, for the quartering of troops and providing them with necessaries. The Legislature of New York refused to execute this Act, on the ground that it involved the very principle of taxation which had just been abandoned by the repeal of the Stamp Act. It made provision for the troops in its own way, and calmly ignored the Act of Parliament. Parliament retorted in due course by passing a bill by which the Governor, Council, and Assembly of New York were prevented from passing any law whatsoever until they had complied with the letter and the spirit of the Mutiny Act. This measure was loudly applauded in England, even by some who had shown themselves very friendly to the grievances of the colonists. When New York found that her great deed was too great, and, bending before the anger of Parliament, reluctantly complied with the terms of the Mutiny Act, there were not wanting observers to point out that the lesson, though only addressed to one colony, was of significance to all, and that an inevitable surrender was the

proof {150} of the hopeless inferiority of the colonies when brought into direct contest with the supreme power. These jubilations were as short-lived as they were untimely. If New York was weak and wavered, Massachusetts was more firm of purpose. She sternly refused to comply with the terms of the Mutiny Act. She went farther still in defiance of the Government. She issued a circular to the other colonies, calling upon them very frankly and very clearly to co-operate in taking some united course for the purpose of obtaining redress for the recent acts of the English Government. This was the second instance of deliberate combination for a definite end among the colonies, and it caused much disquiet and more irritation to the Government. Lord Hillsborough, always in favor of what he believed to be firm measures, immediately sent Governor Bernard instructions to have the offending circular rescinded. Governor Bernard would have been only too glad to obey, but obedience was not easy.

[Sidenote: 1770—The Boston massacre]

Bernard could command, but Massachusetts could refuse to give way. When Bernard retaliated by dissolving the Massachusetts Legislature, colony after colony replied to his action by applauding the conduct of Massachusetts and condemning Lord Hillsborough. The English Government answered the protests of Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, Georgia, and New York by creating a new office especially to deal with the colonies, and by appointing Lord Hillsborough to fill the post. Everything that could be done on the English side of the Atlantic by those in power to show those on the American side of the Atlantic that they might look in vain for justice or for consideration from authority was done. Lord Hillsborough was under the impression that a little firmness—what he called firmness—would soon bring the colonists to their senses, but every mail that came across the Atlantic showed that Lord Hillsborough's theory was unsupported by facts. Now it was the news that the seizure of John

Hancock's sloop "Liberty" for a breach of the revenue laws had brought about a riot in Boston in which the Commissioners of Revenue had to fly for their lives. Now it was the news of {151} a great convention in Faneuil Hall to protest against the troops which Hillsborough, at the request of Bernard; poured into Boston. Now it was the news of daily increasing hostility between the citizens of Boston and the British soldiers quartered in the town. It was evident, even to Hillsborough, that a dangerous spirit had been aroused in America, but he still believed that America could be easily frightened or chastised into good behavior. He proposed to enforce an old law of Henry the Eighth by which the colonists offending could be shipped across the Atlantic for trial in England. All that was best and most eloquent in the House of Commons protested against such folly, and did not protest in vain. Some small concessions were made in a half-hearted and grudging way to the Americans. Governor Bernard was recalled. Some of the obnoxious taxes were repealed, though Lord North was not to be persuaded to abandon the tax on tea. These poor concessions were made known to the colonists in a more than usually uncivil and injudicious letter from Lord Hillsborough. The concessions were too trivial and they came too late. If Boston had its brief day of rejoicing when Bernard took his departure, the men of Boston were soon to be occupied with other thoughts than of banners and bonfires. The bad feeling between the people and the military grew worse, and at last displayed itself in active hostility. March 5, 1770, was a memorable day in the history of Boston. Three thousand miles away Lord North was moving in Parliament for the repeal of all the American duties with the single and fatal exception of the tax on tea. In Boston a small quarrel between some of the citizens and certain British troops under the command of Colonel Preston suddenly blazed up into a dangerous collision. Some of the soldiers fired. Several citizens were killed, several more wounded. There was an angry call to arms, and a general civil attack upon the military was only with difficulty prevented by the Lieutenant-

Governor, who ordered the arrest and imprisonment of Colonel Preston and the soldiers under him. These duly underwent a trial whose conduct and whose issue reflect the highest honor {152} upon Boston. The soldiers were defended by no less prominent a man and conspicuous a patriot than John Adams; and, thanks to John Adams, Colonel Preston and six of his men were acquitted, and only two of the soldiers convicted of manslaughter. But if the people of Boston were willing that even their enemies should be tried fairly, and fairly acquitted, they were not willing to allow the events of that day to pass into oblivion. A public funeral was accorded to the victims of the Boston Massacre, and the grim name for a grim deed was for long years later solemnly and publicly commemorated.

The bad news of the Boston Massacre was followed to England by the bad news of the business of the "Gaspee." The "Gaspee" was an English warship employed to enforce the Revenue Acts along the Rhode Island coast. Its commander, Lieutenant Duddington, took an active delight in his duty which brought him into perpetual antagonism with a people who regarded elusion of the revenue laws as their privilege and prerogative. One night the "Gaspee," pursuing the Providence packet, that had refused to lower her colors in salutation as she passed, ran aground in shallow water and lay fast bound for the night. The news of her insolence to the Providence packet and of her present plight flew abroad all over Providence. After sundown a number of the townspeople of Providence, well armed and stern of purpose, rowed from the town to the stranded "Gaspee," boarded her, and overcame the ineffectual resistance of her crew. In the scuffle Duddington was badly wounded. His wounds were dressed: he and his men were put on shore with all their belongings, and then and there the "Gaspee" was set fire to and watched till she was consumed. Though a large money reward was offered for the apprehension of the offenders, no one of the assailants was ever brought before the King's justice.

Misfortunes like the Boston Massacre, disorders like the burning of the "Gaspee," naturally increased the anti-colonial exasperation of the English King and of ministers like North and Hillsborough. North thought whatever {153} the King wished him to think. Hillsborough still believed that the Americans were only to be listened to when they came with halters around their necks. King George was convinced that the New England mutineers would speedily prove to be lambs when England chose to play the lion. At this moment of extreme tension something happened which still further strained the relations between the two countries.

[Sidenote: 1767—The letters of Hutchinson and Oliver]

In the year 1767, Hutchinson, who was then Governor-General of Massachusetts, and Oliver, the Lieutenant-Governor of the colony, wrote certain letters to Whately, who was private secretary to George Grenville. These were private letters, confidential letters. Neither of the writers dreamed that they would ever become public possessions. They were intended to inform and to advise a minister's secretary and the minister himself. In these letters Hutchinson and Oliver set forth very fully and frankly their views as to the condition of the colonies and the better way of dealing with them. Hutchinson and Oliver had suffered much at the hands of the people of Boston. It was chance rather than clemency which allowed them to escape with their lives on that wild August day of 1765. It is probable that their opinion of the popular party in Massachusetts was colored if not prejudiced by memories of the Stamp Act riots. Hutchinson and Oliver were all for strong measures of repression and coercion. To their minds the colonies were allowed a great deal too much liberty; their people and their leaders were not nearly so sensible of the advantage of British supremacy as they ought to be; they were forever asserting their own rights and privileges in a spirit that could only be properly met by a prompt and comprehensive curtailment of those rights and privileges. The colonists

were too free, too proud of their charters and constitutions. Hutchinson and Oliver, with that fine superiority to charters and constitutions which characterized so many a royal governor, insisted that very considerable changes of government, all in the direction of coercion, were necessary, in order to make the conceited colonists know their place and to keep {154} them in it. These letters no doubt made their due impression upon Whately and upon Grenville. Letters like them were always being despatched across the Atlantic by governors and deputy governors to persons of importance in England, pointing out how ungrateful the colonists were for their many blessings, and what a good thing it would be for them if a few of these blessings were taken away. These letters had their influence upon the persons of importance to whom they were addressed. They formed the minds of ministers; they fed the fancies of the King. They served to bolster up the singular system of ignorance and incapacity which went by the name of colonial administration.

Of course Hutchinson and Oliver and their kind thought that they were only writing for ministerial eyes, that they were only whispering into royal ears. They no doubt assumed that their letters would be safely pigeon-holed, or still more safely destroyed. It did not occur to them that they ever could or would be made public, and by their publication thrust new weapons into the hands of the men whose liberties they were so zealous to suppress. But the unexpected often, if not always, happens. Whately died in the June of 1772, and after his death the letters he had received, and preserved, from Hutchinson and Oliver, were somehow stolen. We shall probably never know how they were stolen or by whom. It was claimed in later years, but not proved, that Dr. Hugh Williamson was the means of transmitting the letters to Franklin. All that we know for certain is that they came into the hands of Benjamin Franklin, and that Benjamin Franklin believed it to be his duty as agent for Massachusetts to make them known to the colony he represented. He was only allowed to do so under certain strict and definite

conditions. The source from which they came was to be kept absolutely secret. They were only to be shown to a few leading colonists; they were to be neither printed nor copied, and they were to be returned promptly. Franklin accepted these conditions, and as far as was in his power observed them. The source from which they came was kept a secret, is still a secret. {155} But Franklin could not very well enforce, perhaps did not very greatly desire to enforce, those conditions upon his friends on the other side of the Atlantic. He pointed out that, though they might not be printed or copied, they might be talked about. And talked about they were. The knowledge of them set all Boston afire with excitement, filling the colonists with indignation and their opponents with dismay. The Massachusetts House of Assembly carried by a large majority a petition to the King, calling for the removal of Hutchinson and Oliver as betrayers of their trust and enemies to the colony. Hutchinson, soon made aware of the publicity given to the correspondence, demanded to see the letters that were said to come from him. The Assembly permitted this, but accorded the permission with a show of distrust that was in itself the crudest affront. A small committee was appointed to take the letters to Hutchinson and to show him the letters in their presence, the implication being that Hutchinson was not to be trusted with the letters except in the presence of witnesses. Hutchinson had to submit to the insult; he had also to admit that the letters were genuine. He gave, or was understood to give, permission that the letters might be made public. The letters were promptly made public. Thousands of copies were struck off and scattered broadcast all over the continent.

[Sidenote: 1772—Temple and Whately fight a duel]

England was scarcely less excited than America by the publication. There was a general curiosity to know how the letters had been purloined and how they had been made public. The Whately to whom the letters had been addressed had a brother, William Whately. William Whately seems to have

been alarmed lest it might be thought that he was in any way instrumental to the promulgation of the letters. He diverted any suspicion from himself by accusing another man of the theft. This other man was a Mr. John Temple, who had once had an opportunity of examining the papers of the late Mr. Whately. Temple immediately challenged his accuser; a duel was fought, and as far as ordeal of battle went, Temple made good his innocence, for he wounded William Whately. At {156} this moment Franklin came forward. He admitted that the letters had come into his hands, and that he had despatched them to America. He declined to say how they did come into his hands, but he solemnly asserted the absolute innocence of both Temple and Whately of any knowledge of or complicity in the transaction. A storm of popular anger broke upon Franklin. He was regarded as a criminal, spoken of as a criminal, publicly denounced as a criminal. Wedderburn, the Solicitor-General, was his denunciator, and he chose for the place of his attack the House of Commons, and for the hour the occasion of the presentation of the petition of Massachusetts for the removal of Hutchinson and Oliver.

[Sidenote: 1772—Wedderburn's attack on Franklin]

Wedderburn assailed Franklin in a speech whose ability was only surpassed by its ferocity. In the presence of an illustrious audience, that numbered among its members some of the most famous men of that time or of any time, Wedderburn directed against Franklin a fluency of invective, a fury of reproach that was almost splendid in its unbridled savagery. The Privy Councillors, with one exception, rocked with laughter and revelled in applause as the Solicitor-General pilloried the agent from the colony of Massachusetts Bay as a thief, well-nigh a murderer, a man lost to all honor, all decency. The one grave exception to the grinning faces of the Privy Councillors was the face of Lord North. He sat fixed in rigidity, too well aware of all that depended upon the glittering slanders of Wedderburn to

find any matter of mirth in them. Only one other man in all that assembly of genius and rank and fame and wit carried a countenance as composed as that of Lord North, and that was the face of the man whom Wedderburn was bespattering with his ready venom. Benjamin Franklin, dressed in a gala suit, unlike the sober habit that was familiar with him, stood at the bar of the House and listened with an unconquerable calm to all that Wedderburn had to say. If it was the hour of Wedderburn's triumph, it was not the hour of Franklin's humiliation. He held his head high and suffered no emotion to betray itself while Wedderburn piled insult upon insult, {157} and the majority of his hearers reeled in a rapture of approval. But if Franklin listened with an unmoved countenance, the words of Wedderburn were not without their effect upon him. He was human and the slanders stung him, but we may well believe that they stung him most as the representative of the fair and flourishing colony whose petition was treated with the same insolence that exhausted itself in attacking his honor and his name.

The clothes philosophy of Diogenes Teufelsdroch is readily annotated by history. There are garments that have earned an immortality of fame. Such an one is the sky-blue coat which Robespierre wore at the height of his power when he celebrated the festival of the Supreme Being, and in the depths of his degradation when a few days later he was carried to his death. Such an one is the gala coat of flowered Manchester velvet which Franklin wore in his day of degradation when he was compelled to listen with a tranquil visage and a throbbing heart to the fluent invective of Wedderburn, and which was laid away and left unused through five tremendous years, not to be taken from its retirement until Franklin wore it again on the day of his greatest triumph, when he signed that treaty with England which gave his country her place among the nations of the world. Battles had been fought and won in the saddest of civil wars, the trained and seasoned troops of Europe had learned the lesson of defeat from levies of farmers, English generals had surrendered to men of their own race and their own speech,

and a new flag floated over a new world between the day when Franklin went smartly dressed to Westminster to hear Wedderburn do his best and worst, and the day when Franklin vent smartly dressed to Paris as the representative of an independent America. Franklin's flowered coat is no less eloquent than Caesar's mantle.

The man whom the Court party employed to deal the death-blow to colonial hopes, and to overwhelm with insult and abuse the colonial agent, was a countryman and intimate friend of the detested Bute. Alexander Wedderburn attained the degree of eloquence with which he now {158} assailed Franklin at a cost of scarcely less pains than those devoted by Demosthenes to conquer his defects. He had a strong and a harsh Scotch accent, and neither the accent nor the race was grateful to the London of the eighteenth century. Wedderburn's native tenacity enabled him in a great degree to overcome his native accent. He toiled under Thomas Sheridan and he toiled under Macklin the actor to attain the genuine English accent, and his labors did not go unrewarded. Boswell writes that he got rid of the coarse part of his Scotch accent, retaining only so much of the "native wood-note wild" as to mark his country, "which if any Scotchman should affect to forget I should heartily despise him," so that by degrees he formed a mode of speaking to which Englishmen did not deny the praise of eloquence. Successful as an orator, secure in the patronage of the royal favorite, Wedderburn sought the society of the wits and was not welcomed by them. Johnson disliked him for his defective colloquial powers and for his supple readiness to go on errands for Bute. Foote derided him as not only dull himself, but the cause of dulness in others. Boswell, who admired his successful countryman, assumed that his unfavorable appearances in the social world were due to a cold affectation of consequence, from being reserved and stiff. The scorn of Johnson and the sneers of Foote would not have saved him from oblivion; he owes his unlovely notoriety to his assault upon Franklin, with all its disastrous consequences. Many years later, when

Wedderburn was Lord Loughborough and Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, a humorous editor dedicated to him ironically a new edition of Franklin's "Rules for Reducing a Great Empire to a Small One."

The English Government was now resolved to show that it would temporize no longer with the factious colonists. If in a spirit of rash and ill-repaid good-nature it had repealed certain taxes, at least it would repeal no more. The tax on tea existed; the tax on tea would be enforced; the tax on tea should be respected. The East India Company had a vast quantity of tea which it desired {159} to sell. It obtained from the Government the permission to export the tea direct to America instead of being obliged to let it pass through the hands of English merchants. Under such conditions the tea could be sold very cheaply indeed in the colonies, and the Government hoped and believed that this very cheapness would be a temptation too keen for the patriotism of a tea-drinking city to withstand.

[Sidenote: 1773—The Boston "Tea-party"]

If the King and the East India Company were resolved to force their tea upon the American colonists, the Americans were no less stubborn in their resolution to refuse it. The tea-ships sailed the seas, weathered the winds and waves of the Atlantic, only to be, as it were, wrecked in port. The colonists in general, and especially the colonists of Massachusetts, were resolved not to suffer the tea to be landed, for they knew that once landed it could be sold so cheaply that it would be hard for many to resist the temptation to buy it. Every effort was made to prevent the importation. In many cases the consignees were persuaded, not wholly without menace, to make public engagement to relinquish their appointments. Pilots were advised as patriots to lend no aid to the threatened importation; indeed, it was pretty plainly hinted to some of them that they would best prove their patriotism by using their especial knowledge in such a way as would most

effectually prevent it. Boston set the example of self-denial and of resistance. In the December of 1773 three ships laden with tea arrived in her port. Their captains soon heard of the hostility to their mission, were soon warned of the dangers that awaited them. Alarmed at their perils, the captains declared their perfect willingness to return with their cargoes to England if they were permitted to do so by the Board of Customs and the persons to whom the tea had been consigned. But the willingness of the captains was of no avail. The consignees insisted that the tea should be delivered to them, and neither the Custom House nor the Governor would grant the captains permission to return. But if the consignees and the authorities were resolved that the tea should be landed, the citizens of Boston were equally resolved that it should {160} not. Their fantastic method of giving force to their resolution has made it famous. In the dusk of a December evening the three tea-ships were suddenly boarded by what seemed to be a small army of Mohawk Indians in all the terror of their war-paint. These seeming Indians were in reality serious citizens of Boston, men of standing, wealth, and good repute, wearers of names that had long been known and honored in the Commonwealth. The frightful paint, the gaudy feathers, the moccasins and wampum, the tomahawks, scalping-knives, and pistols that seemed so alarming to the peaceful captains of the boarded ships were but the fantastic accoutrements that concealed the placid faces and the portly persons of many a respectable and respected Boston burgess.

The plan had been schemed out by a conclave of citizens around a bowl of punch in Court Street, and was carried out with a success that was no less remarkable than its peacefulness. The trappings of the red man concealed the identity of many prominent citizens, friends of John Hancock and Samuel Adams, their rivals in ability and their peers in energy. The sham savages were so numerous and so determined that no resistance was offered by the captains or the crews of the vessels. The shore was picketed with sentinels ready to resist any interference on the part of any representatives

of royal authority. There was no interference. The conspirators of the punch-bowl and those who obeyed their instructions kept their secret so close, and did their work so quickly, that those in authority knew nothing about the business until the business was happily over. In about two hours the entire cargo of the three tea-ships was dragged out of the hold and flung into the sea. The patriotic citizen who had asked significantly if tea could be made with salt water was satisfactorily answered by the Mohawks when they cast overboard the last of their three hundred and forty-two chests, and prepared to disappear as rapidly and as mysteriously as they had come. During the whole adventure only one man was hurt, who tried to secrete some of the tea about his person, and who was given a drubbing for his pains. The Mohawks {161} scattered and disappeared, washed their faces, rolled up their blankets, concealed their pistols and axes, and as many reputable Boston citizens returned to their homes. It is related that some of them on their way home passed by a house in which Admiral Montague was spending the evening. Montague heard the noise of the trampling feet, opened the window and looked out upon the fantastic procession. No doubt some news of what had happened had reached him, for he is reported to have called out: "Well, boys, you have had a fine night for your Indian caper. But mind, you've got to pay the fiddler yet." One of the Mohawk leaders looked up and answered promptly: "Oh, never mind, squire. Just come out here, if you please, and we'll settle the bill in two minutes." The admiral considered the odds were against him, that the joke had gone far enough. He closed the window, leaving the bill to be settled by whoso thought fit, and the laughing savages swept on to their respectable wigwams. If some very reputable citizens found a few leaves of tea in their shoes when they took them off that night, they said nothing about it, and nobody was the wiser. So ended the adventure of the Boston Tea-party, which was but the prologue to adventures more memorable and more momentous. We learn that at least one of these masquerading Indians

survived to so late a date as the March of 1846. Men now living may have clasped hands with Henry Purkitt and David Kinnison and heard from their own lips the story of a deed that enraged a King, offended Chatham, was disapproved of by George Washington, and was not disapproved of by Burke.

[Sidenote: 1773—After the Boston "Tea-party"]

The news of the Boston Tea-party reached London on January 19, 1774, and was public property on the 21st. Other news little less unpleasant soon followed. At Charleston tea was only landed to lie rotting in damp cellars, not an ounce of it to be bought or sold. In Philadelphia a proclamation of December 27, 1773, announced that "THE TEA-SHIP being arrived, every Inhabitant who wishes to preserve the Liberty of America is desired to meet at the STATE-HOUSE, This Morning, precisely {162} at TEN O'clock, to advise what is best to be done on this alarming Crisis." "What was best to be done" proved to be to compel the tea-ship to return at once with its cargo to England. New York refused to allow the tea-ship "Nancy" to enter the harbor, and if some tea was eventually landed under the cannon of a man-of-war, it was only to be locked up as in Charleston, and to be left to lie unused. The bad news was received in England with an unreasoning fury by those whose fault it was, and by those who knew nothing at all about the matter; with a grave indignation by those who, like Pitt, were as resolute to support the supremacy of England as to plead for justice to her colonies; with despair by those who dreamed of an honorable and abiding union between the two peoples; and with applause by those who admired any protest against injustice, however vehement and irregular.

It is difficult, in reading the debates on the troubles in America, to credit the sanity of the majority of the speakers. These advocated a colonial policy that should only have commended itself to a session of Bedlamites, and

clamored for a treatment of the colonists that might well have shocked the susceptibilities of a savage. No Virginian planter could be more disdainful of the rights of his slaves, or more resentful at any attempt to assert them, than the average member of Parliament was disdainful of the rights of the American colonists and resentful at their assertion. The English country gentlemen who applauded the ministers and who howled at Burke seemed to be absolutely unconscious that the men of Massachusetts and the men of New York were not merely like themselves made in the same image, but brethren of their own race, blood of their blood and bone of their bone, children of the same stock whose resistance to oppression was recorded at Runnymede and Worcester, at the Boyne and at Culloden. Even if the colonists had been the knaves and fools and cowards that the Parliamentary majority appeared to think them, the action of that majority was of a kind eminently calculated to lend strength to the most feeble spirit and courage to the most craven heart. The coarse {163} contempt, the brutal menace which were the distinguishing features of all that ill-timed oratory might well have goaded into resistance men who had been slaves for generations till servility had grown a habit. Yet this contempt and menace were addressed to men trained by harsh experiences to be stubborn in defence and sturdy in defiance, men who had won their liberty from the sea and the wilderness, who were as tenacious of their rights and as proud of their privileges as they were tenacious of the soil which they had wrested from the red man and the wolf, and proud of the stately cities which had conquered the forest and the swamp. It was the descendants of Miles Standish and John Smith, of Endicott and Bradford and Underhill and Winslow whom the Squire Westerns of Westminster were ready to insult and were eager to enslave.

It must, however, be remembered that even men who had advocated the claims of the colonies were, or professed to be, shocked at the daring deed of the men of Boston. Dean Tucker declared that mutinous colonies were no

use to England, and had better be allowed to depart. Chatham found the action of the Boston people criminal, prompted by passions and wild pretences. In America George Washington disapproved of the exploit.

[Sidenote: 1774—Closing the port of Boston]

The East India Company, pressed by the pinch of financial difficulties, clamored for a revenge that the King was resolved to give them. Under his instigation Lord North, in the beginning of 1774, introduced the famous measure for closing the port of Boston against all commerce. The Bill declared that "in the present condition of the town and harbor the commerce of his Majesty's subjects cannot be safely carried on there." It was accordingly asserted to be "expedient that the officers of his Majesty's Customs should be forthwith removed from the said town." It was enacted that "from and after the first day of June, 1774, it shall not be lawful for any person or persons to lade, or cause to be laden, or put off from any quay, wharf, or other place within the town of Boston, or in or upon any part of the shore of the bay, commonly called the harbor of Boston, into any ship, vessel, boat, etc., any goods, wares, {164} or merchandise whatsoever . . . or to take up, discharge, or cause or procure to be taken up or discharged within the town, out of any boat, lighter, ship, etc., any goods, wares, or merchandise whatsoever . . . under pain of the forfeiture of the goods and merchandise and of the boat," and so on, in a long and drastic measure practically intended to ruin Boston. This was what the Government thought it well to describe by the word "expedient." This was not all. Comprehensive alterations of the laws of the province followed. The charter of Massachusetts was changed. The council for the province, which had hitherto been chosen by the people, was now to be chosen by the Crown, and the judges of the province were to be nominated by the Crown. Another measure authorized the Governor to send persons implicated in the

disturbances to England for trial. Boston and the province were indeed to be heavily punished and sternly brought to their senses.

The King and the King's ministers had hoped fondly, in the old as well as the new sense of the word, that their action towards the port of Boston would effectually humble the spirit and crush the opposition of that mutinous city. Their scheme was founded upon a nice calculation of the innate baseness of human nature. They argued that the closing of the port of Boston would turn the stream of her commerce in the direction of other cities, which would be only too glad to enrich themselves at the expense of their disabled comrade. While they believed that the punishment of Boston would thus breed a selfish disunion in the province of Massachusetts, they trusted also that the spectacle of the severe punishment meted out to Massachusetts would have its wholesome deterring effect upon other colonies and destroy at once whatever desire for union might exist among them. The King and the King's ministers were the more deceived. Their ingenious scheme produced a result precisely the opposite of that which they so confidently anticipated. The other ports of Massachusetts did not seize with avidity the opportunity for plunder afforded them by the humiliation of Boston. The other colonies were not driven into discord by the sight of {165} the punishment of Massachusetts. On the contrary, the ports of Massachusetts refused to take advantage of the degradation of Boston, and the colonies were urged, and almost forced, into union by what they regarded as the despotic treachery of the English Crown. The most devoted friend, the most enthusiastic advocate of the rights of the American colonists could scarcely have devised better means of drawing them together and welding them into a solid fellowship than those which had been employed by George the Third and his advisers for the purpose of keeping them apart forever.

[Sidenote: 1774—General Gage]

An immense number of copies of the Boston Port Bill were sent with great rapidity all over the colonies. In the fine phrase which we must needs believe to be Burke's, these had the effect which the poets ascribe to the Fury's torch; they set the countries through which they passed in a flame. At Boston and New York "the populace had copies of the Bill printed upon mourning paper with a black border, which they cried about the streets under the title of a barbarous, cruel, bloody, and inhuman murder." In other places the Bill was publicly burned. All over the Continent great meetings were held, at which, with more or less vehemence of speech, but with a common enthusiasm and a common indignation, the Bill was denounced, and the determination to resist it defiantly asserted. When General Gage arrived on his mission of administration he found not merely the colony of Massachusetts, but the whole continent in an uproar. He had to deal with a vast majority of the people who were in proclaimed resistance to the Act, and who only differed in the extreme of resistance to which they were prepared immediately to go, and a minority who either approved or did not altogether disapprove of the Act. Gage was condemned to the government not of a cowed, humbled, and friendless province, but of a raging nation, frantic at the infringement of its rights, and sustained in the struggle it was resolved to make by the cheer and aid of a league of sister nations. The flame from the Fury's torch had spread with a vengeance. Gage was a brave man, an able man, an {166} honorable man; but for Alexander he was a little over-parted. The difficulties he had to encounter were too great for him to grapple with; the work he was meant to do too vast for his hands or the hands of any man. He was sent out to sway a chastened and degraded province; he found himself opposed by a defiant people, exalted by injustice and animated by attack.

CHAPTER LIII.

THE "VICAR OF WAKEFIELD."

[Sidenote: 1774—Death of Oliver Goldsmith]

In the early spring that followed upon the winter when the Mohawks of Boston made tea with salt water, at a time when politicians were busy fighting over the Boston Port Bill, and neither side dreamed of the consequences that could come of a decision, one of the gentlest and sweetest writers of the English speech passed quietly, and somewhat unhappily, away from a world he had done so much to make happy. With Oliver Goldsmith an epoch of literature came to an end, as the year that saw his death ended an epoch in the history of the world. The characteristic literature of the eighteenth century, the literature that began with Swift and Addison, and Steele and Pope; that boasted among its greatest the names of Sterne and Richardson, Smollett and Fielding, came to its close with the genius of Goldsmith. With the new conditions which were coming over the world a new literature was to be created. Wordsworth was a child of four, at Cockermouth; Coleridge was a child of four, at Bristol; over in Germany a young poet, whose name was unknown in England, had been much influenced by Goldsmith's immortal story, and was in his turn and time to have a very profound influence over the literature of Goldsmith's adopted country. The year of Goldsmith's death was the year in which the young Goethe published those "Sorrows of Werther" which marked the birth of a new form of expression in art.

Goldsmith was born in Ireland, at Pallas, in the county of Longford, in the early November of 1728. He lived for over forty-five years a life of poverty, of vagrancy, of squalor, of foolish dissipation, of grotesque vanity, of an {168} industry as amazing as his improvidence, of a native idleness that was successfully combated by a tireless industry, of an amazing

simplicity that was only rivalled by his amazing genius. There were a great many contrasting and seemingly incompatible elements in Goldsmith's queer composition, but his faults were not of a kind to prevent men from finding him lovable, and, whatever his faults were, they left no stain upon his writings.

The writings of Goldsmith are distinguished in English literature, and, indeed, in the literature of the world, by their sweet pure humor, fresh and clear and sparkling as a fountain whose edges the satyr's hoof has never trampled. They charm by their humanity, by their tender charity, by the nobility of their lesson, a nobility only heightened by the intense sympathy with the struggles, and sorrows, and errors of mankind. A new St. Martin of letters, he was ever ready to share his mantle of pity with the sad and sinning. He had himself suffered so much, and been so tempted and tested, and had retained throughout his trials so much of the serenity of a child, that all his writings breathe compassion for frailty and failure with something of a schoolboy sense of brotherhood which softens even his satire. The flames of London's fiery furnace had blazed and raged about him, but he passed through them unconsumed. The age in which he lived was not an age of exalted purity, the city wherein he dwelt was scarcely saintly. He lived in some of the most evil days of the eighteenth century, but his writings and his life escaped pollution. He was not a saint, indeed; he was a spendthrift and he loved his glass, but he was never tainted with the servile sins of cities. Through all the weltering horror of Hogarth's London we seem to see him walk with something of the freshness of his boyhood still shining on his face. The reflection of the Irish skies was too bright upon his eyes to let them be dimmed by the squalor and the shame of a squalid and shameful city.

[Sidenote: 1774—The friends of Goldsmith]

With the true instinct of his fine nature he made his friends and companions among the wisest and highest of his time. His intimates and companions were Edmund {169} Burke, and Dr. Johnson, and Sir Joshua Reynolds. He had women friends too, as wisely chosen as the men—women who were kind to him and admired him, women whose kindness and admiration were worth the winning, women whose friendship brightened and soothed a life that was darkened and vexed enough. Mary Horneck and her sister were the stars of his life, his heroines, his idols, his ideals. He has made Mary Horneck immortal as the "Jessamy Bride." In his hours of poverty he was cheered by the thought of her; while he lived he worshipped her, and when he died a lock of his hair was taken from his coffin and given to her. Thackeray tells a touching little story of the Jessamy Bride. She lived long after the death of the man of genius who adored her, lived well into the nineteenth century, and "Hazlitt saw her, an old lady, but beautiful still, in Northcote's painting-room, who told the eager critic how proud she was always that Goldsmith had admired her."

Goldsmith was a companionable being and loved all company that was not vicious and depraved. He could be happy at the club in the society of the great thinkers and teachers and wits of the time. He could be more than happy at Barton, in the society of Mary and her sister. But he could be happy too, in far humbler, far less romantic fellowship. "I am fond of amusement," he declares in one of his most delightful essays, "in whatever company it is to be found, and wit, though dressed in rags, is ever pleasing to me." There was plenty of wit dressed in rags drifting about the London of that day. Men of genius slept on bulkheads and beneath arches, and starved for want of a guinea, or haunted low taverns, or paced St. James's Square all night in impecunious couples for sheer need of a lodging, cheering each other's supperless mood with political conversations and declarations that, let come what might come, they would never desert the Ministry. But Goldsmith unearthed men of genius whose names nobody ever heard of,

and studied them and made merry with them, and transferred them to his pages for us to make merry with more than a century after Goldsmith {170} fell asleep. We may suspect that Goldsmith never really found those wonderful beggars he chronicles. He did not discover them as Cabot discovered America; he is their inventor, as the fancy of poets invented the Fortunate Islands.

Goldsmith's strolling player is as real as Richard Savage, with whom he is contemporary, and it must be admitted that he is a more presentable personage. What a jolly philosophy is his about the delights of beggary! It has all the humor of Rabelais with no touch of the Touraine grossness. It has something of the wisdom of Aurelius, only clad in homespun instead of the purple. The philosophy of contentment was never more merrily nor more whimsically expressed. A synod of sages could not formulate a scheme in praise of poverty more impressive than the contagious humor of his light-hearted merriment. The strolling player has the best of the argument, but he has it because he is speaking with the persuasive magic of the tongue of Oliver Goldsmith.

The same pervading cheerfulness, the same sunny philosophy, which is, however, by no means the philosophy of Pangloss, informs all his work. Beau Tibbs boasting in his garret; Dr. Primrose in Newgate; the good-natured man, seated between two bailiffs, and trying to converse with his heart's idol as if nothing had happened; Mr. Hardcastle, foiled for the five-hundredth time in the tale of Old Grouse in the Gun Room; each is an example of Goldsmith's method and of Goldsmith's manner. If Goldsmith did not enjoy while he lived all the admiration, all the rewards that belonged of right to his genius, the generations that have succeeded have made amends for the errors of their ancestors. "She Stoops to Conquer" is still the most successful of the stock comedies. If "The Good-Natured Man" can scarcely be said to have kept the stage, it is still the delight of the

student in his closet. What satires are better known than the letters of the "Citizen of the World"? What spot on the map is more familiar than Sweet Auburn? As for the "Vicar of Wakefield," what profitable words could now be added to {171} its praise? It has conquered the world, it is dear to every country and known in every language, it has taken its place by unquestionable right with the masterpieces of all time.

[Sidenote: 1774—Goldsmith and Dr. Johnson]

"Dr. Goldsmith," said his most famous friend of the man who was then lying in the Temple earth—"Dr. Goldsmith was wild, sir, but he is so no more." This epitaph has been quoted a thousand times, but it must in no sense be taken as a summing-up of the dead man's career. It was a rebuke, justly administered, to the critic who at such a moment could have the heart to say that Oliver Goldsmith had been wild. Dr. Johnson, who uttered the rebuke, put the same thought even more profoundly in a letter addressed to Bennet Langton shortly after Goldsmith's death. In this letter he announces Goldsmith's death, speaks of his "folly of expense," and concludes by saying, "But let not his frailties be remembered; he was a very great man." These simple words are infinitely more impressive than the magniloquence of the epitaph which Johnson wrote on Goldsmith.

Goldsmith lived in London and he died in London, and he lies buried in the precincts of the Temple. The noise, and rattle, and roar of London rave daily about his grave. Around it rolls the awful music of a great city that has grown and swollen and extended its limits and multiplied its population out of all resemblance to that little London where Goldsmith lived and starved and made merry, and was loved, and dunned, and sorrowed for. The body that first drew breath among the pleasant Longford meadows, which seem to stretch in all directions to touch the sky, lies at rest within the humming, jostling, liberties of the Temple. It is perhaps fitting that the grave of one

who all his life loved men and rejoiced so much in companionship should be laid in a place where the foot of man is almost always busy, where silence, when it comes at all, comes only with the night.

There is not a space in the scope of this history to deal, otherwise than incidentally, with the literature of England in the eighteenth century. The whole Georgian era, from its dawn to its dusk, is rich in splendid names in {172} letters as in art. The great inheritance from the Augustan age of Anne, the anguish of Grub Street, the evolution of the novel, the eloquence of the pulpit and the bar, the triumphs of science, the controversies of scholars, the fortunes of the drama, the speculations of philosophy, the vacillations of the pamphleteer, the judgments of the critics, the achievements of historians—these are themes whose intimate consideration is outside the range of this work's purpose. All that is possible is here and there to linger a little in the company of some dear and famous figure—a Swift, a Johnson, a Goldsmith, a Sheridan—who stands above his fellows in the world's renown or in our individual affection, who played while he lived his conspicuous part on the great stage of public life, or who helped conspicuously to influence public thought. The selection is, within these limitations, inevitably arbitrary, and is given frankly as such. Certain names assert themselves masterfully, and of these Goldsmith's is one of the most masterful. He added images to daily life and common thought as Bunyan did or Shakespeare. There is no more need to explain Dr. Primrose than there is to explain Mr. Facing-both-ways, and if Beau Tibbs is only less familiar as Osric, Tony Lumpkin is to the full as familiar as Falstaff. Goldsmith himself is the lovable type of a class that was often unlovely in the eighteenth century, the needy man of letters. If he has his lodging in the Grub Street of Dreams, his presence there brings sunlight into the squalid place, and an infinite humor, an infinite charity compensate royally for a little finite folly and finite vanity. In the great art he served and the great age

he adorned Goldsmith stands, not alone, but apart, with the very human demigods.

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CHAPTER LIV.

YANKEE DOODLE.

[Sidenote: 1775—The Philadelphia Congress]

An English ministry and an English king were convinced that everything necessary to do for the suppression of the mutinous spirit in a turbulent but unwarlike people had been done. The existence of Boston as a trading port had been abolished; Carthage had been blotted out; there was an English army within the walls of Boston; there was an English fleet in the Charles River. Who could doubt that the cowardly farmers whom Sandwich derided, and their leaders, the voluble lawyers whom Sandwich despised, would be cowed now into quiescence, only thankful that things were no worse? The best and wisest in England were among those who did doubt, but they were like Benedict in the play—nobody marked them, or at least nobody responsible for any control over the conduct of affairs. Official confidence was suddenly and rudely shaken. The lawyers proved to be men of deeds as well as of words. The disdained farmers showed that the descendants of the men who had fought with beasts and with Indians after the manner of Endicott and Standish had not degenerated in the course of a few generations. Over the Atlantic came news which made the Boston Massacre, the burning of the "Gaspee," and the Boston Tea-party, seem trivial and insignificant events. An astounded Ministry learned that a formal Congress of Representatives of the different colonies had been convened

and had met in Philadelphia, and had drawn up a Declaration of Rights. Chatham admired and applauded their work. To the King and the King's ministers it was meaningless when it was not offensive. But the colonists showed that they could do more than meet in Congresses and draw up {174} splendid State Papers. The next news was of acts of war. Gage schemed a raid upon the stores of powder and arms accumulated by the disaffected colonists in Concord. Warning of his plan was carried at night by a patriotic engraver named Paul Revere to every hamlet within reach of a horse's ride. There was a skirmish at Lexington on the road to Concord between the King's troops and a body of minute-men, which resulted in the killing and wounding of many of the latter and the dispersal of their force. An expedition that began with what might in irony be termed a victory for the British arms ended in a disaster as tragic as it was complete. Concord forewarned had nothing to yield to the English soldiers who invaded her quiet streets; but the surrounding country, equally forewarned, answered the invasion by sending bodies of armed farmers and minute-men from every point of the compass to the common centre of Concord. There was a sharp, short fight on Concord Bridge, which ended in the repulse of the royal troops and the death of brave men on both sides. Then the British officer decided to retreat from Concord. It proved one of the most memorable retreats in history. From behind every tree, every bowlder, every wall, every hedge, enemies trained in the warfare of the wilderness poured their fire upon the retiring troops. It seemed to one of the officers engaged in that memorable fight as if the skies rained down foes upon them, unseen foes only made known by the accuracy of their marksmanship and the pertinacity of their veiled pursuit. All the way from Concord the retiring troops fought in vain with an enemy that was seldom seen, but whose presence was everywhere manifested by the precision of his aim and the tale of victims that followed each volley. The retreat was becoming a rout when reinforcements sent out from Boston under the command of Lord

Percy stayed an actual stampede. But it could not stay the retreat nor avert defeat. Lord Percy, who had marched out with his bands playing "Yankee Doodle," in mockery of the Americans, had to retreat in his turn with no mocking music, carrying with him the remnant of the invaders of Concord. He {175} and his force did not get within touch of Boston and the protection of the guns of the fleet a moment too soon. Had a large body of insurgents, who came hurrying in to help their brethren, arrived on the field a little earlier, Lord Percy and his command must inevitably have been made prisoners of war. As it was, this one day's business had given success and the confidence that comes of success to the raw colonists, and had inflicted a crushing defeat upon a body of soldiers who had been led to believe that the sight of their scarlet coats would act like a charm to tame their untutored opponents.

[Sidenote: 1776—Military success of the colonists]

Gage only recovered from the shock of this disaster to realize that Boston was invested by an insurgent army. The victors of the fight and flight from Concord were rapidly reinforced by bodies of men from all parts of the country; their ranks were hourly swelled by levies roughly armed but stubbornly resolved. Unpleasant facts forced themselves thick and fast upon Gage's notice. But yesterday, as it were, he had imagined that the mere presence of the forces under his command was sufficient to overawe the colonists and settle any show of insubordination forever; to-day he had to swallow in shame and anger a staggering defeat. Still Gage did nothing and his enemies accumulated. Royal reinforcements arrived under Burgoyne, Clinton, and Howe, to do nothing in their turn. But the peasants they despised were not idle and would not allow them to be idle. The English general woke up one morning to find that under cover of night an important point of vantage overlooking the town of Boston had been occupied and roughly fortified by the rebels. The citizen soldiers who had gathered

together to defend their liberties had stolen a march upon the English general. They had occupied the rising ground of Breed Hill, below Bunker's Hill, on the Charlestown side of the Charles River, and had hurriedly intrenched themselves there behind rude but efficient earthworks. Gage was resolved that the rebels should not remain long in their new position. Chance might have allotted them a scratch victory over a small body of men taken unawares in unfamiliar country {176} and by unfamiliar methods of fighting. But here was a business familiar to the British soldier; here was work that he did well and that he loved to do. If the colonists really believed that they could hold Breed Hill against troops with whom the taking by storm of strong positions was a tradition, so much the worse for them. The order was given that the rebels must be cleared away from Breed Hill at once, and the welcome task was given to Lord Howe, in command of the flower of the forces in Boston. It is probable that Howe felt some pity for the rash and foolhardy men whose hopes it was his duty and his determination to destroy. Confident that the enterprise would be as brief as it must be decisive, Howe prepared to assault, and the battle of Breed Hill began.

[Sidenote: 1775—The Battle of Breed Hill]

The Breed Hill battle is one of the strangest and one of the bravest fights ever fought by men. On the one side were some hundreds of simple citizens, civilians, skilled as individuals in the use of the gun, and accustomed as volunteers, militia, and minute-men to something that might pass for drill and manoeuvre, officered and generalled by men who, like Warren and Greene, knew warfare only by the bookish theoric, or by men who, like Putnam and Pomeroy, had taken their baptism of fire and blood in frontier struggles with wild beast and wilder Indian. On the other side were some thousands of the finest troops in the world, in whose ranks victory was a custom, on whose banners the names of famous battles blazed. They

were well trained, well armed, well equipped. They moved at the word of command with the monotonous precision and perfection of a machine. They were led by officers whose temper had been tested again and again in the sharp experiences of war, men to whom the thought of defeat was as unfamiliar as the thought of fear. The contrast between the two opposing forces was vividly striking in the very habiliments of the opponents. The men who were massed behind the breastworks of Breed Hill were innocent of uniform, of the bright attire that makes the soldier's life alluring, innocent even of any distinction between officer and private, or, if the words seem too formal {177} for so raw a force, between the men who were in command and the men who were commanded. The soldiers who were massed below, the force whose duty it was to march up the hill and sweep away the handful in hodden gray and black broadcloth who held it, glittered with all the bravery of color dear to the British army. Splendid in scarlet and white and gold, every buckle shining, every belt and bandolier as brightly clean as pipeclay could make it, the little army under Howe's command would have done credit to a parade in the Park or a field day at Windsor. The one side was as sad and sombre as a Puritan prayer-meeting; the other glowed with all the color and warmth of a military pageant. The holders of the hill had come from their farms and their fields in the homely working clothes they wore as they followed the plough or tended their cattle; the townsmen among them came in the decent civic suits they wore behind their desks or counters. Few men's weapons were fellows in that roughly armed array. Each militant citizen carried his own gun, some favorite weapon, familiar from long practice in fowling, or from frequent service further afield against the bear, the panther, and the wolf. Some of the flint-locks were enormously long; many of them would have seemed extremely old-fashioned to an ordnance officer. But every gun was like an additional limb to those practised marksmen, who knew little of firing in platoons, but everything of the patient accuracy which gives the backwoodsman his

unerring aim. The assailants carried the latest weapons approved of by the War Office, and manipulated them with the faultless unison and unswerving harmony that would have compelled the compliments of a commander-in-chief at a review. At the top of the hill were some sixteen hundred men, a mob of undisciplined sharpshooters, few of whom had ever fired a shot in organized warfare. At the bottom of the hill were some four thousand of the finest troops in the world, stiffened with all the strength that prestige and practice could give them. It did not seem on the face of it a very equal combat; it did not seem to the English generals that it ought to take very long to {178} march from the bottom to the top of the hill and make short work of the mutinous peasants on its summit. The best indeed that the mutinous peasants could hope for when the British were upon them was to be shot or bayoneted as quickly as possible, for the terms of Gage's proclamation directly threatened with the gallows every rebel taken with arms in his hands.

But at Breed Hill, as at Concord, the unexpected came to pass. The British troops were unable to endure the destructive fire of the colonists. Again and again they advanced over the incline as calmly as if on parade; again and again they reeled backward with shattered ranks, leaving grim piles of dead upon the fire-swept slope. The execution was terrible; regiments that marched up the hill as if to certain victory fell back from it a mere remnant of themselves, leaving most of their men and almost all their officers behind. For awhile the fight was a succession of catastrophes to the force under Howe's command. It looked as if Breed Hill would never be taken. But there came a time when the men who held it could hold it no longer. Their supply of powder began to run out, and with their means of keeping up their fire their power of holding their position came to an end. Then came a last charge of Howe's rallied forces, this time in the lightest of marching array, a last volley from behind the earth-works, and Breed Hill was in the hands of the British. It was captured at the last without much

bloodshed, without much loss to its garrison. The smoke hung so thick about the enclosure where the rebels had held their own so long and so well that it was not easy for the bayonets of the conquerors to do much execution, and the defenders of Breed Hill slipped away for the most part under cover of the mist they themselves had made. Indeed, there was little inclination for pursuit on the part of the victors. They had done what they had been set to do, but they had done it at a cost which for the time made it impossible for them to attempt to pursue an advantage so dearly bought. They did not, could not know the strength of their enemy; they were content to hold the ground which had been won {179} with such a fearful waste of British blood. Breed Hill was a nominal victory for the King; it was a real victory for the rebels, who had shown what an undisciplined force, composed of farmers, trappers, lawyers, shopkeepers, and divines, could do against the finest troops in the world.

[Sidenote: 1775—The Continental Army]

Already insurgent America had an army, and an army of investment. The rebels, whom Gage affected to despise almost as much as he was himself despised by General Burgoyne, were massed in numbers unknown to the loyalists before Boston, and the English soldiers were cooped up in the city they had crossed the seas to command. The colonial army was rude and rough, but earnest and resolute, and it had evolved generals of its own making, rough and rude as itself, but able, daring, and fearless. Israel Putnam, who killed a wolf once with his own hands in his wild youth, gripping it by the throat till he had choked its life out, had come to fight against the flag beneath which he had fought so well in the French wars. Nathaniel Greene had flung down his military books and caught up the sword, had abandoned the theory for the practice, and was beginning to make a name. Benedict Arnold, after a life as varied, as shady, and as adventurous as that of any picaroon in a Spanish story, leaped into fame as a

daring spirit by the way in which he and Ethan Allen, at the head of a mixed force of Vermonters and New Englanders, had taken Fort Ticonderoga, on the great lakes, by surprise, and had endowed the dawning army with its captured cannon. Prescott, the hero of Breed Hill, was now a veteran soldier; and the names of Artemas Ward, of Schuyler, of Pomeroy, Heath and Thomas, Sullivan and Montgomery, Wooster and Spencer were becoming more than mere names to Englishmen in Boston and in London. Two Englishmen held rank as generals in the crude colonial army—the adventurer Charles Lee, whom some foolish people believed to be the real Junius, and Horatio Gates. There were few thoroughly worthless men in the young army, but it is painful to record that Lee and Gates were eminent among them. These were the generals of what was now to be called the {180} Continental Army. Happy in most of them, happy in much, it was happiest of all in this: that it had for its commander-in-chief the noblest man, who was to prove the greatest soldier, then living in the world.

[Sidenote: 1775—George Washington]

When Braddock died, the hero of a hopeless fight and the martyr of his own folly, the funeral service was read over his body by the young Virginian soldier who had fought by his side and had warned him against his rashness. To men in later years there seemed to be something prophetic, with the blended irony and pathos of prophecy, in the picture of that dead Englishman, his scarlet coat torn and bloody with so many wounds, lying in his grave while his American lieutenant read over him the words that committed so much wasted courage to the earth. At the time and hour the thing signified no more than the price of a petty victory of allied French and Indians, which the Virginian soldier was soon to avenge. After planting the banner of King George on the ruins of Fort Duquesne, Captain Washington sheathed his sword and retired from military into civil life, with as little likelihood as desire of ever carrying arms again. All he asked and all he

anticipated was to live the tranquil life of a comfortable colonial gentleman. After a youth that had been vexed by many experiences of the passion of love he had married happily and wisely, and had settled down to a gracious rural life at Mount Vernon, on the banks of the Potomac River. He wished no better than to be a country gentleman, with a country gentleman's pleasures and pursuits—farming, hunting, fishing—with a country gentleman's friendships for neighbors like himself. He was a dutiful servant of his State; he was a member of the Virginia Houses of Burgesses for fifteen years after the fall of Fort Duquesne, and though he seldom played any part in debate he commanded the confidence and the esteem of his colleagues and of his fellow-citizens. He lived and enjoyed a peaceful, honorable, useful, uneventful life, and might have lived it to its end in dignified obscurity if a rash and headstrong sovereign over-seas had not found ministers too servile or too foolish to say him nay.

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The Continental Congress, conscious of Washington's ability, offered him the command of its improvised army. Washington accepted the duty, well aware of its gravity, its danger, its awful responsibility. He refused any pay beyond his actual expenses, and he entered upon a struggle whose difficulties were not all or nearly all due to the enemy in the sternest and noblest sense of duty to his countrymen and to the principles of liberty. At first, in his own words, he loathed the idea of independence. He only took up arms to defend cherished rights; the day was not yet, though the day was not far off, when the Virginian soldier would renounce his allegiance to the King whose commission he had carried and to the country from which his race stemmed. Washington's military genius soon showed itself in the use he made of the loose, incoherent, disorganized mass of men which was called the Continental Army. It was fortunate for the Continental cause that the English generals, penned up within the walls of Boston, had little idea

of the obstacles Washington had to overcome, the opposition he had to encounter, the sore straits to which the want of everything essential to a besieging army drove him. But his indomitable courage, his unfailing coolness, his unconquerable resource overcame a sea of troubles that might well have swept even a strong man and a brave soldier off his feet. With regiment after regiment quietly disbanding as their term of service expired; with a plentiful lack of powder, of arms, of provisions, of uniforms; with a force that at moments threatened to dissolve into nothingness and leave him with a handful of generals alone beneath his insurgent flag, Washington never allowed the enemy, and seldom allowed a friend, to guess how near at times he came to despair. He raised troops somehow; he got provisions somehow; somehow he managed to obtain powder; somehow he managed to obtain arms. The want of weapons was so great that many bodies of men were only provided with pikes, and that Franklin was driven to suggest, and partly in a spirit of humanity, that American farmers fighting for their liberty should be armed with the bows and arrows of the red {182} men, and should strive to renew upon the fields of Massachusetts the successes of their ancestors, the yeomen of Agincourt, with their clothyard shafts.

The generals shut up in Boston knew nothing of the cares that harassed the mind of Washington. All they knew was that they were closely beleaguered; that they were cooped up in Boston by a large if irregular army, and that they could not get out. They affected, of course, to despise their enemy. At the private theatricals which were given to divert the enforced leisure of Lord Howe an actor who came on as a caricature of Washington, attired like a military scarecrow, never failed to please. Burgoyne was confident that sooner or later he could find that "elbow-room" the ungratified desire for which has served to immortalize his name. But neither Howe nor Burgoyne nor any one else could dissipate the ragged regiments that invested Boston, nor baffle the plans of the great soldier who commanded them. For nearly a year the world saw with wonder the

spectacle of an English army confined in Boston, and an English fleet riding idly in the Charles River. Then the end came. Washington, closing in, offered Lord Howe, the English general then in command, the choice of evacuation or bombardment. The English general chose the former. The royal troops withdrew from Boston, taking with them the loyalist families who had thrown in their lot with the King's cause. The English ships that sailed from Boston were terribly overcrowded with the number of refugees who preferred flight, with all its attendant sorrows, to remaining in a rebellious country. The English fleet sailed away from Boston and the Continental Army marched in. So far the cause of King George was going very badly indeed; so far the rebellious colonists had failed to justify the confident prophecies of Lord Sandwich. With any other king and with any other ministers one such year's work would have been enough at least to induce them to reconsider their position. But the King was George the Third, and his ministers were what they were, and it was resolved that the war must go on.

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[Sidenote: 1775-81—The Declaration of Independence]

The war did go on. It lasted for five years more, in spite of the protests of every truly patriotic Englishman, in spite of proof after proof that nothing could break the spirit or crush the courage of the colonists. While in England Fox arrayed himself in the blue and buff that composed the uniform of the Continental Army, while the Duke of Richmond made it a point to speak, and with excellent reason, of the Continental Army as "our army," while the eloquence of Chatham and the eloquence of Burke were launched in vain against campaigns as idle as they were infamous, the war went stubbornly on. The King and his ministers proposed new measures of repression and expended vast sums in the purchase of Hessian regiments to

dragoon the defiant colonists. Soon all pretence of loyalty had to be abandoned by the Americans. The statue of King George was dragged from its place of honor in Bowling Green, New York, and run into bullets to be used against his German levies. In the summer that followed the evacuation of Boston the rebellious colonies proclaimed their independence in the most memorable declaration of a people's right ever made by men. This was in 1776. The disastrous war had still five years to run.

The fortunes of the war varied. The early victories of the Americans were followed by a series of defeats which left Philadelphia in the hands of the British, and which would have broken the heart of any man of less heroic mould than Washington. Hope revived with a series of Continental victories. Aid came to America from abroad. France, Germany, Poland sent stout soldiers to fight for freedom—Lafayette, Von Steuben, Kosciusko. The English general Burgoyne surrendered with all his army at Saratoga. After the winter of 1777, when Washington and his army suffered all the rigors of Valley Forge, France acknowledged the independence of America, the British evacuated Philadelphia, and Paul Jones made himself forever famous by the way in which he and his ship "Le Bonhomme Richard," carried the American war to the coast of England. Again came colonial reverses. A {184} steady succession of English successes scarcely struck so hard a blow at the Continental cause as the treason of Benedict Arnold, who entered into negotiations with the British to betray his command. Washington had trusted and loved Arnold like a brother. "Whom can I trust now?" he asked in momentary despair when the capture of an English officer. Major André, and the flight of Benedict Arnold to the British lines revealed to him an undreamed-of treason which had threatened to undermine the colonial cause. But Benedict Arnold's crime had for its only result the death of a better man than himself, of Major André, who had by the laws of war to suffer death as a spy. There were other traitors and semi-traitors in the American army: Lee was certainly the first; Gates was almost,

if not quite, the second. But Lee and Gates failed to do the mischief to which their base jealousy of Washington prompted them. The right cause triumphed. In 1781 another British army surrendered, the army of Cornwallis, at Yorktown. Even North was forced to recognize that this crushing disaster to the royal hopes and the royal arms practically ended the war. It was suspended in the following year, and in 1783, after much negotiation, which at times threatened to come to nothing, a treaty of peace was signed in France, and the American Republic took its place among the nations of the earth. It was for these negotiations that Franklin, as we have said, brought out from its obscurity that gala suit which he had worn for the last time when he stood at the bar of the House of Commons and listened to the brutal and foolish assaults of Wedderburn. Many days had passed since that day.

So ended one of the most unjust and one of the most foolish wars ever waged by England. It must never be forgotten that the war was in no sense an English war. The English people as a whole had then no voice to express itself one way or the other. Of those Englishmen whose voices had to be heard, the best and the wisest were as angry in their denunciations of the crime of the King and the King's ministers, and as cordial in their {185} admiration of Washington and his companions, as if they had been members of that Continental Congress which first in Philadelphia proclaimed the existence of a new nation.

[Sidenote: 1778—Death of the Earl of Chatham]

The fatal war which had cost the English King the loss of his greatest colonies, which had spilt a vast amount of blood and wasted a vast amount of treasure in order to call into being a strong and naturally resentful rival to the power of England, must be said also to have cost the life of the greatest English statesman of the century. The genius of Chatham had never been

more nobly employed than in protesting with all the splendor of its eloquence against the unjust war upon the Americans and the unjust deeds which had heralded the war. But time, that had only swelled the ranks of the wise and sane who thought as Chatham had thought and found their own utterance from the fire of his words, had wrought a change in the attitude of a great statesman. Harassed by the disease that racked his body, the mind of Chatham had altered. The noble views that he had maintained in defiance of a headstrong king and a corrupt ministry had changed in the face of the succession of calamities that had fallen upon his country. The success that he had desired for the insurgent arms had been accorded, and he came to despair at the consequence of that success. He had been granted his heart's desire in full measure, and the gratification choked him. When it came to be a question of conceding to the colonists that formal recognition of an independence which they had already won, the intellect of Chatham revolted against the policy himself had fostered. He forgot or he forswore the principles which animated Burke, which animated Fox, which guided the course of Rockingham and inspired the utterances of Richmond. All he could see was an England humiliated by many defeats, an England threatened by many terrible alliances, and in the face of humiliation and of menace he forgot that both alike were the inevitable, the well-deserved fruit of injustice. Remembering that he had helped to make England great, he refused to remember that England would have been still greater if she had {186} followed the honorable course his wisdom had made plain to her. His proud, unhappy spirit could not consent to her dismemberment, a dismemberment which seemed to his fading intellect to be the equivalent to her ruin. He came from his sick bed, a ghastly image of decay, to offer the desperate protest of a dying man against surrender to the mutiny his own eloquence had fanned. "Come the four quarters of the world in arms and we will shock them." The spirit of Faulconbridge was strong in the ruined body of the statesman who was carried to his seat in the House of Lords by the

son who bore his name and by the Lord Mahon who had married his daughter. His eagle face was turned against the men who had been his colleagues. His trembling hand pointed at them in condemnation. He gasped out a few sentences, almost inarticulate, almost inaudible, before he reeled in a fit upon the arms of those about him. He was carried from the House; he was carried to Hayes, and at Hayes a few weeks later the great career came to an end. His last battle was at least heroic. If his stroke was struck on the wrong side and for a cause his prime had done so much to baffle, it is not necessary to attribute his perversion entirely to the insidious ravages of the malady that had clouded his whole life. He could not bear to see the country that was in so eminent and so intimate a sense his country yield even to claims that were conspicuously right and just at the command of a league between England's rebellious children and England's enemy, France. There broke his mighty heart. In Chatham England lost one of the greatest of her statesmen, one of the most splendid of her sons. His life was passionately devoted to his country, his career one long struggle against a peculiarly bigoted, stubborn, and unwise King. Always hated by his enemies, often misunderstood by his friends, he showed while he lived a steadfast front alike against the enemies of England abroad and those worse enemies of England at home who filled the throne and the places about the throne. He was buried with great pomp and honor at Westminster, leaving behind him not merely the memory of an illustrious name, {187} but a name that the second generation was still to make illustrious.

[Sidenote: 1781—England and her lost colonies]

The folly of the King and the servility of his ministers resulted in what seemed to be almost an irredeemable catastrophe for England. Even those Englishmen who most sympathized with the struggle for American independence could not but feel a regret that men who might have been among the most glorious citizens of a great and united empire should be

thus recklessly forced into an enmity that had deprived England of its most splendid possessions. The enemies of England, many and eager, believed her day was done, that her sun was setting, that neither her power nor her prestige would ever recover from the succession of disasters that began at Lexington and that ended in Paris. But the vitality of the country was too great to be seriously impaired even by the loss of the American colonies. From a blow that might well have been little less than fatal the country recovered with a readiness and a rapidity that was amazing. Men who in their youth heard their elders speak with despair of the calamity that had befallen their country lived to old age to learn that the wound was not incurable, and that England was greater, richer, prouder, and more powerful than she had ever been before. If she had lost the American colonies she had learned a lesson in the loss. The blow that might have stunned only served to rouse her to a greater sense of her danger and a livelier consciousness of her duty. If she had suffered much from rashness she was not going to suffer more from inaction, and it seemed as if every source of strength in the kingdom knit itself together in the common purpose of showing to the world that England still was England, although a part of her empire had passed away from her forever. There was no glory to be got for England out of the American war; it was wrong from first to last, wrong, unjust, and foolish, but when it ended it did not find her crippled, nor did it leave her permanently enfeebled in temper or in strength.

We may gather some idea of what risk wise men felt they were running from a famous speech of Edmund {188} Burke. He was striving to stay the determination of the Ministry to declare war upon the American colonies. He wished his hearers to appreciate the progress that America had made within living memory. He called imagination to his aid. He spoke of a statesman then living in the late evening of an honorable life. He pictured that statesman in the promise of his early dawn, saluted by the angel of his auspicious youth, and given the power to see into the future, so far as to the

hour when Burke was speaking. "What," said Burke, "if while he was gazing with admiration on the then commercial grandeur of England the genius should point out to him a little speck, scarce visible in the mass of the nation's interest, and should tell him, 'Young man, there is America, which at this day serves for little more than to amuse you with stories of savage men and uncouth manners, yet before you taste of death will show itself equal to the whole of that commerce which now attracts the envy of the world. Whatever England has been growing to by a progressive increase of improvement, brought in by varieties of people, by succession of civilizing conquests and civilizing settlements in a series of seventeen hundred years, you shall see as much added to her by America in the course of a single life!' If this state of his country had been foretold to him, would it not require all the sanguine credulity of youth and all the fervid glow of enthusiasm to make him believe it? Fortunate man, he has lived to see it." If the genius of prophecy could have stood by Burke's shoulder then, and illuminated his noble soul with the knowledge that is the common possession of mankind to-day, would it not have required all the sanguine credulity, all the divine enthusiasm of genius to make him believe it?

[Sidenote: 1732-99—The death of Washington]

The war that gave the world a new nation and a republic greater than Rome added one of the greatest names, and perhaps the noblest name, to the roll-call of the great captains of the earth. No soldier of all those that the eyes of Dante discerned in the first circle, not even "Caesar, all armored with gerfalcon eyes," adorns the annals of antiquity more than George Washington illuminates the {189} last quarter of the eighteenth century. His splendid strength, his sweet austerity, his proud patience are hardly to be rivalled in the previous history of humanity, and have perhaps only been rivalled since his day by children of the same continent and of the same southern soil, who sacrificed qualities much akin to his own on a cause that,

unlike his, was not the cause of freedom. "First in peace, first in war, and first in the hearts of his country-men." The phrase of Lee has been worn threadbare with iteration since it was first uttered, but it always rings true of the high-minded, unfaltering soldier and honorable, simple gentleman whose genius in war and whose modesty in peace made the republic of America an enduring fact in history. Long after the great soldier and good man had been laid to rest an English poet did him justice, and no more than justice, by writing that "the first, the last, the best, the Cincinnatus of the West, whom envy dared not hate, bequeathed the name of Washington to make man blush there was but one." Washington was made the first President of the American Republic in 1789, after resolutely resisting all suggestions to make himself king of the new commonwealth. He served for two terms of four years each, and then retired into private life, unembittered by the cruel and stupid ingratitude of the few and unspoiled by the reasoned and grateful homage of the many. He died in 1799 in his quiet home in Mount Vernon, while the King who still regarded him as a rebel had many years of his unquiet reign to live.

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CHAPTER LV.

THE GORDON RIOTS.

[Sidenote: 1778-80—Sir George Savile's Catholic Relief Bill]

In the year 1778 Sir George Savile earned for himself an honorable distinction by passing his measure for the relief of Roman Catholics. Sir George Savile was a man of advanced views; he fought gallantly in the House of Commons through five successive Parliaments, in which he

represented York County, for all measures which he believed to be sincerely patriotic, and against all measures which he believed to be opposed to the honorable interests of his country. He gained the laurel of praise from Burke, who, in one of his famous Bristol speeches, spoke of him as a true genius, "with an understanding vigorous, acute, relined, distinguishing even to excess; and illuminated with a most unbounded, peculiar, and original cast of imagination." The man whom Burke thus generously praised deserved the praises. He strove earnestly against the American war. He enthusiastically supported Pitt's motion in 1783 for a reform in Parliament. He was the author of an admirable Bill for the Limitation of the Claims of the Crown upon Landed Estates. But his name is chiefly associated with his Bill for Catholic Relief, both because of the excellent purpose of the measure itself, and because of the remarkable outburst of fanaticism which followed it.

Sir George Savile's measure did away with certain restrictions, certain barbarous restrictions, as they now seem, upon English subjects professing the Catholic faith. The famous Act of the eleventh and twelfth years of King William the Third, the Act known as the Act for the Further Preventing the Growth of Popery, had instituted certain very harsh penal enactments against Catholics. {192} That Act Sir George Savile proposed largely to repeal. This was a measure of relief of no great magnitude, but it did at least recognize the common humanity of Catholic Englishmen with Protestant Englishmen; it did at least allow to Catholic Englishmen some of the dearest and most obvious rights of citizenship. The savage penal laws which for so long afflicted the sister island of Ireland were tempered and abrogated in this measure as far as England was concerned, and rumor spread it abroad that a similar relief was soon to be extended to the Catholics of Scotland. Straightway a Bill which had passed both Houses without a single negative aroused the fiercest opposition beyond the Border. The announcement of the recall of the Stuarts could not have spread a

greater panic through the ranks of the Scottish Protestants. A violent agitation was set on foot, an agitation which could not have been more violent if the Highlanders had once again been at the gates of Edinburgh. An alarmist spirit spread abroad. All manner of associations and societies were called into being for the defence of a faith which was not menaced. Committees were appointed to inflame faction and serve as the rallying points of bigotry. Sectarian books and pamphlets of the most exaggerated and alarming kind were sown broadcast all over the country. The result of this kind of agitation showed itself in a religious persecution, which gradually developed into a religious war. The unfortunate Catholic residents in Edinburgh, in Glasgow, and in other great Scottish towns found themselves suddenly the victims of savage violence at the hands of mobs incited by the inflammatory utterances and the inflammatory propaganda of the Protestant committees. In the face of the disorder which a suggestion of mercy aroused in Scotland, the Government seemed to take fright, and to abandon all thought of extending the clemency of the Relief Bill to Scotland.

But the Scottish agitation against the Catholics soon spread across the Border, soon directed itself, not against the imaginary Bill which it might be the intention of the Government to pass, but against the actual Bill which the {192} Government had passed for the benefit of English Catholics. The bigoted bodies, societies, and committees in Scotland soon found their parallels in England. The English Protestant Association rose into being like some sudden evocation of a wizard, and chose for its head and leader the man who had made himself conspicuous as the head and leader of the movement in Scotland—Lord George Gordon.

[Sidenote: 1750-80—Lord George Gordon]

Lord George Gordon lives forever, a familiar figure in the minds of the English-speaking race, thanks to the picture drawn by Charles Dickens. Englishmen know, as they know the face of a friend, the ominous figure "about the middle height, of a slender make and sallow complexion, with an aquiline nose, and long hair of a reddish brown, combed perfectly straight and smooth about his ears and slightly powdered, but without the faintest vestige of a curl." It is a living portrait of that solemn gentleman in the suit of soberest black, with those bright large eyes in which insanity burned, "eyes which betrayed a restlessness of thought and purpose, singularly at variance with the studied composure and sobriety of his mien, and with his quaint and sad apparel." It fits well with all that we know of Lord George Gordon, to learn that there was nothing fierce or cruel in his face, whose mildness and whose melancholy were chiefly varied by a haunting air of "indefinable uneasiness, which infected those who looked upon him and filled them with a kind of pity for the man: though why it did so they would have had some trouble to explain." Such was the strange fanatic whose name was destined to be blown for a season throughout England, who was fated to stand for a moment visible in the eyes of all men, the idol of intolerance, the apostle of violence, of murder, and of fire, and then to fall most pitiably, most pitifully into the dust.

Lord George Gordon was still a young man when he became leader of the anti-Catholic agitation. He would seem in our days a very young man, for, as he was born in 1750, he was only thirty when the agitation reached its height. But a man of thirty was counted older than he {193} would not be reckoned, in an epoch when it was possible for a young man just come of age to lead the House of Commons. Lord George Gordon had led a somewhat varied life. He had been in the navy, and had left the service from pique, while the American war was still in its earliest stages, in consequence of a quarrel with Lord Sandwich concerning promotion. The restless energy which he could no longer dedicate to active service he

resolved most unhappily to devote to political life. He entered Parliament as the representative of the borough of Ludgershall, and soon earned for himself a considerable notoriety in Westminster. He had very fierce opinions; he attacked everybody and everything; his vehemence and vituperation were seasoned with a kind of wit, and he made himself, if not a power, at least an important factor in the House of Commons. Indeed, it passed into a kind of proverb at St. Stephen's that there were three parties in the State—the Ministry, the Opposition, and Lord George Gordon. Parliament had seen before, and has seen since, many a politician fighting thus like Hal o' the Wynd for his own hand, but no one so influential for a season or so pernicious in his influence as Lord George Gordon.

It seems quite clear to those who review so strange a career at this distance of time that Lord George Gordon was of deranged intellect. It does not need the alleged contrast between his professions and his practice to enforce this conclusion. Many men have affected the religious habit and the religious bearing while their lives were privately profligate without deserving to be called insane except in the sense in which any criminal excess may be regarded pathologically as a proof of madness. Even if it were true that the long-haired and black-habited George Gordon were the debauched profligate that Hannah More and Horace Walpole maintained him to be, he might find fellow-sinners of unquestioned sanity. But the conduct of his public life goes to prove that his wits were diseased. His behavior in the House, when it was not intolerably tedious, was characterized by a grotesque buffoonery which men looked upon as laughable {194} or pitiable according to their tempers, but which they had not yet learned to look upon as dangerous. When he denounced the King as a Papist, when he declared that the time would come when George Gordon would be able to dictate to the Crown and Parliament, when he occasionally interrupted his wild utterances to break into floods of tears, men sneered or

yawned or laughed. They were soon to learn that the man was something more than divertingly contemptible.

In the excitement that followed on the passing of the relief measure Lord George Gordon found his opportunity for being actively noxious. A gloomy fanaticism in Scotland took fire at the fear lest kindred relief should be extended to the North Briton, and, as we have said, displayed itself in savage speech and savage deed. In the press and from the pulpit denunciations of the Catholics streamed. The Synod of Glasgow solemnly resolved that it would oppose any Bill brought into Parliament in favor of Scottish Catholics. In Edinburgh and in Glasgow houses were wrecked and lives menaced. In Glasgow a worthy potter, Mr. Bagnal, who had brought from Staffordshire its famous art, had his property wholly destroyed. In Edinburgh the house of a Catholic priest was wrecked in obedience to a brutal handbill which called upon its readers to "take it as a warning to meet at Leith Wynd, on Wednesday next, in the evening, to pull down that pillar of popery lately erected there." The "pillar of popery" was the dwelling occupied by the priest, which was duly wrecked in obedience to the bidding of the nameless "Protestant" who signed the manifesto. It is curious to note a postscriptum to the handbill, which ran thus: "Please to read this carefully, keep it clean, and drop it somewhere else. For King and country.—UNITY." The means which were adopted to spread fanaticism in Scotland were carefully followed when the time came for carrying the agitation into England.

[Sidenote: 1778-80—The English "Protestant Association"]

It was indeed not necessary to be a Catholic to call down the fury of fanatical persecution. To have expressed any sympathy for Catholicism, to have taken part in any way, {195} no matter how indirect, in the advocacy of the relief measure, was enough to mark men out for vengeance. Dr.

Robertson, the historian, was threatened because he advocated tolerance in religious matters. A lawyer named Crosbie was denounced merely because he had in the way of his regular business drawn up the Bill intended for Parliament. It was inevitable that the action of intolerance in Scotland should come before the notice of Parliament. Wilkes, always ostentatious in the cause of liberty, called upon Dundas to bring in his relief measure for Scotland. When Dundas declared that it was better to delay the measure until cooler judgment might prevail, Wilkes denounced him for allowing Parliament to truckle to riot, and the denunciation found support in the actions of Burke and of Fox. Lord George Gordon had found his opportunity. He assailed Fox; he assailed Burke. He declared that every non-Catholic in Scotland was ready to rise in arms against Catholic relief, and that the rebels had chosen him for their leader. He raged and vapored and threatened on the floor of the House. But he did more than rage and vapor and threaten. Whether of his own motion, or prompted by others, he formed a "Protestant Association" in England. Of this, as of the similar Scottish Association, he was declared the head, and this accumulation of honors wholly overthrew his intelligence. An amiable writer has declared that "it would be much beneath the dignity of history to record the excesses of so coarse a fanatic but for the fatal consequences with which they were attended." The amiable defender of a detestable phrase does not understand that it was the excesses of the fanatic that led to the fatal consequences, and that Lord George Gordon, as the ostensible head and conspicuous cause of one of the gravest events of the history of England in the eighteenth century, is in no sense beneath the "dignity of history." The business of history is with him and with such as he, as well as with the statelier, austerer figures who sanely shape the destinies of the State. There was plenty of fanaticism abroad in England; it was reserved for Lord George Gordon to bring it together into {196} a single body, to organize it, and to employ its force with a terrible if temporary success. He issued an insane

proclamation calling upon men to unite against Catholicism; he held a great meeting of the Protestant Association at Coachmakers' Hall, at which with a kind of Bedlamite-brilliancy he raved against Catholicism and lashed the passions of his hearers to delirium. It was resolved to hold a huge meeting of the Protestant Association in St. George's Fields on June 2. At its head Lord George Gordon was to proceed to the House of Commons and deliver the petition against Catholic relief. All stanch Protestants were to wear blue cockades in their hats to mark out the faithful from the unfaithful.

[Sidenote: 1780—The Lord George Gordon riots]

On June 2, 1780, the meeting was held. Lord George Gordon had announced in his speech at the Coachmakers' Hall that he would not deliver the petition if the meeting were less than twenty thousand strong. The number of Lord George's limit was enormously exceeded. It is said that at least sixty thousand persons were present in St. George's Fields on the appointed day, and some chroniclers compute the number at nearer one hundred thousand than sixty thousand. It is curious to note in passing that a Roman Catholic cathedral stands now on the very site where this meeting was held. After the meeting had assembled it started to march six abreast to Westminster. The hand of the great romancer who has made George Gordon live has renewed that memorable day, with its noise, its tumult, its tossing banners, its shouted party cries, its chanted hymns, its military evolutions, its insane enthusiasms, its dangerous latent passions. Gibbon, who was then a member of the House of Commons, declared that the assemblage seemed to him as if forty thousand Puritans of the days of Cromwell had started from their graves. The forty thousand Puritans were escorted by and incorporated with a still greater body of all the ruffianism and scoundrelism that a great city can contribute to any scene of popular agitation. What fanaticism inspired rowdyism was more than ready to profit by. The march to Westminster and the arrival at Westminster form one of {197} the wildest

episodes in the history of London. By three different routes the blue-cockaded petitioners proceeded to Westminster, and rallied in the large open spaces then existing in front of the Houses of Parliament. The innate lawlessness of the assemblage soon manifested itself in a series of attacks upon the members of both Houses who were endeavoring to make their way through the press to their respective Chambers. It is one more example of the eternal irony of history that, while the mob was buffeting members of the Lower House, and doing its best to murder members of the Upper House, while a merciless intolerance was rapidly degenerating into a merciless disorder, the Duke of Richmond was wholly absorbed in a speech in favor of annual parliaments and universal suffrage. Member after member of the House of Lords reeled into the Painted Chamber, dishevelled, bleeding, with pale face and torn garments, to protest against the violence of the mob and the insult to Parliamentary authority. Ashburnham, Townshend and Willoughby, Stormont and Bathurst, Mansfield, Mountfort, and Boston, one after another came in, dismayed victims of and witnesses to the violence that reigned outside. Bishop after bishop entered to complain of brutal ill-treatment. But the Duke of Richmond was so wrapped up in his own speech and its importance that he could only protest against anything which interrupted its flow. It is agreeable to find that imbecility and terror did not rule unchallenged over the Upper House that day. One account, that of Walpole, who is always malicious, represents Lord Mansfield as sitting upon the woolsack trembling like an aspen. Another, more creditable and more credible, declares that Lord Mansfield showed throughout the utmost composure and presence of mind. About the gallantry of Lord Townshend there can be no doubt. When he heard that Lord Boston was in the hands of the mob, he turned to the younger peers about him, reminded them of their youth, and the fact that they wore swords, and called upon them to draw with him and fight their way to the rescue of their brother peer. It was at least a gallant if

a hopeless suggestion. What could the {198} rapiers of a score of gentlemen avail against the thousands who seethed and raved outside Westminster Hall? The solemn Duke of Richmond interfered. If the Lords went forth to face the mob he urged that they should go as a House and carrying the Mace before them. On this a debate sprang up, while the storm still raged outside. A Middlesex magistrate, called to the bar in haste, declared that he could only offer six constables to meet the difficulty. A proposal to call upon the military power was fiercely opposed by Lord Shelburne. Under such conditions the Peers did nothing, and in the end retired, leaving Lord Mansfield alone in his glory.

[Sidenote: 1780—Lord George Gordon at Westminster]

If things went badly in the Upper House, they went still worse in the Lower House. While members trying to gain entrance suffered almost as much ill-treatment as the Peers at the hands of the mob, the Commons' House was much more closely leaguered than the House of Lords. For it was in the Commons' House that the petition was to be presented. It was in the Commons' House that Lord George Gordon, pale, lank-haired, black-habited, with the blue cockade in his hat, was calling upon the Commons to receive immediately the monstrous petition. Every entrance to the House was choked with excited humanity. The Lobby itself was overflowing with riotous fanatics, who thundered at intervals upon the closed doors of the Chamber with their bludgeons. Shrieks of "No Popery," and huzzas for Lord George Gordon filled the place with a hideous clamor strangely contrasting with the decorum that habitually reigned there.

Lord George Gordon did not cut a very heroic figure on that memorable day at Westminster. He was perpetually rushing from his place to the door of the House to repeat to rowdyism in the Lobby what different members had said in the debates. At one time he denounced the Speaker of the

House; at another, Mr. Rous; at another, Lord North. Occasionally he praised a speaker, and his praise was more ludicrous than his condemnation. At one moment, when Lord George was at the door communicating with the crowd, Sir Michael le Fleming came up to him {199} and tried to induce him to return to his seat. Lord George immediately began caressing Sir Michael le Fleming in a childish, almost in an imbecile way, patting and stroking him upon the shoulders, and expressing inarticulately a pitiful kind of joy. He introduced Sir Michael le Fleming to the mob as a man who had just been speaking for them. A little later Lord George again addressed the crowd, this time from the little gallery, when he stimulated their passions by appeal to the example of the Scotch, who had found no redress till they had pulled down the Mass-houses. Probably no stranger scene has ever been witnessed at Westminster than this of the pale-faced fanatic and madman, with the blue cockade in his hat, running backward and forward from the Chamber to the door of the House, delivering inflammatory addresses to the mob that raged in the Lobby, and stimulating them by his wild harangues to persevere in their conduct, and to terrify the King and the Parliament into obedience to their wishes. The names of the members who spoke against the petition he communicated to the shrieking throng; their utterances he falsely reported.

It is deeply interesting to note a fact which has escaped the notice of not merely the most conspicuous historians of the time, but also the keen eye of the great novelist who studied the event. It is recorded in the "Annual Register" for the year 1780 that among the members whose names Lord George Gordon denounced to the raving crowd in the Lobby the name of Mr. Burke had especial prominence. It is curious to picture the imbecile fanatic standing upon the steps leading to the Strangers' Gallery and invoking the fury of the fanatic and the lawless against the greatest public man of his age.

For a while Lord George Gordon was suffered to rant unimpeded. At last Colonel Holroyd, seizing hold of him, threatened to move for his immediate committal to Newgate, while Colonel Gordon, with a blunter and yet more efficacious eloquence, declared that if any of the rioters attempted to force his way past the door of the House, he, Colonel Gordon, would run his sword through {200} the body, not of the invader, but of Lord George Gordon. As Colonel Gordon was a kinsman of Lord George's, it may be that Lord George knew sufficient of his temper to believe his word and was sufficiently sane to accept his warning. At least there came a pause in his inflammatory phrases, and shortly afterward the news of the arrival of a party of Horse and Foot Guards did what no persuasions or entreaties could effect. It cleared the Lobby and the approaches to the House. Under conditions of what might be called comparative quiet the division on Lord George Gordon's proposal for the immediate reception of the petition was taken, and only found six supporters against a majority of one hundred and ninety-two.

[Sidenote: 1780—Spread of the Gordon Riots]

But mischief was afoot and began to work. The mob that had been dispersed from Westminster broke up into different parties and proceeded to expend its fury in the destruction of buildings. The hustling of peers, the bonneting of bishops, the insulting of members of Parliament, all made rare sport; but the demolition of Catholic places of worship promised a better, and suggested exquisite possibilities of further depredation. The Catholic chapels in Duke Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, and in Warwick Street, Golden Square—the one belonging to the Sardinian, the other to the Bavarian Minister—were attacked, plundered, set fire to, and almost entirely destroyed. The military were sent for; they arrived too late to prevent the arson, but thirteen of the malefactors were seized and committed to Newgate, and for the night the mob was dispersed. It was not a bad day's

work for the rioters. Parliament had been insulted, the Government and the very Throne menaced. In two parts of the town Catholic buildings, under the protection of foreign and friendly Powers, stood stripped and blackened piles. Riot had faced the bayonets of authority—had for a moment seemed ready to defy them. Yet at first nobody seems to have taken the matter seriously or gauged its grave significance. Neither the Catholics, against whom the agitation was levelled, nor the peers and prelates and members of Parliament who had been so harshly treated seemed to understand the {201} sternness of the situation. There was a sense of confidence in law and order, a feeling of security in good administration, which lulled men into a false confidence.

This false confidence was increased by the quiet which reigned over Saturday, June 3. Parliament met undisturbed. An address of Lord Bathurst's, calling for a prosecution of "the authors, abettors, and instruments of yesterday's outrages," was carried after a rambling and purposeless debate, and the House of Lords adjourned till the 6th, apparently convinced that there was no further cause for alarm. This public composure was rudely shaken on the following day, Sunday, June 4. The rioters reassembled at Moorfields. Once again the buildings belonging to Catholics were ransacked and demolished; once again incendiary fires blazed, and processions of savage figures decked in the spoils of Catholic ceremonial carried terror before them. The Lord Mayor, Kennett, proved to be a weak man wholly unequal to the peril he was suddenly called upon to face. There were soldiers at hand, but they were not made use of. One act of resolution might have stayed the disorder at the first, but no man was found resolute enough to perform the act; and rapine, raging unchecked, became more audacious and more dangerous.

On the Monday, though the trouble grew graver, nothing was done to meet it beyond the issuing of a proclamation offering a reward of five

hundred pounds for the discovery of the persons concerned in the destruction of the chapels of the Bavarian and Sardinian Ambassadors. The mob gathered again, bolder for the impunity with which it had so far acted. Large bodies of men marched to Lord George Gordon's house in Welbeck Street and paraded there, displaying the trophies stripped from the destroyed chapels in Moorfields. Others began work of fresh destruction in Wapping and in Smithfield. Sir George Savile's house in Leicester Fields, and the houses of Mr. Rainsforth of Clare Market, and Mr. Maberly of Little Queen Street, respectable tradesmen who had been active in arresting rioters on the Friday night, were sacked and their furniture burned in huge bonfires in the streets. The {202} Guards who had the task of escorting the prisoners taken on Friday to Newgate were pelted.

On the Tuesday authority seemed to have wakened up to a vague sense that the situation was somewhat serious. Parliament reassembled to find itself again surrounded and menaced by a mob, which wounded Lord Sandwich and destroyed his carriage. Lord George Gordon attended the House, but even his madness appeared to have taken alarm, for he had caused a proclamation to be issued in the name of the Protestant Association disavowing the riots. As he sat in his place, with the blue cockade in his hat, Colonel Herbert, who was afterwards Lord Carnarvon, called to him from across the House, telling him to take off the badge or he would cross the floor and do it himself, Lord George's vehemence did not stand him in good stead where he himself was menaced. He had no following in the House. Colonel Herbert was a man of the sword and a man of his word. Lord George Gordon took the cockade from his hat and put it in his pocket. If authority had acted with the firmness of Colonel Gordon on the Friday and of Colonel Herbert on the Tuesday, the tumult might have been as easily cowed as its leader. But still nothing was done. The House of Commons made a half-hearted promise that when the tumult subsided the

Protestant petition would be taken into consideration, and a suggestion that Lord George ought to be expelled was unfavorably received.

From that moment, and for two long and terrible days, riot ruled in London. In all directions the evening sky was red with flames of burning buildings; in all directions organized bands of men, maddened with drink, carried terror and destruction. The Tuesday evening was signalized by the most extraordinary and most daring deed that the insurgents had yet done. Some of the men arrested on the Friday had been committed to Newgate Prison. To Newgate Prison a vast body of men marched, and called upon Mr. Akerman, the keeper, to give up his keys and surrender his prisoners. His firm refusal converted the mob into a besieging army.

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[Sidenote: 1780—The burning of Newgate Prison]

Two men of genius have contributed to our knowledge of the siege of Newgate. Crabbe, the poet, was at Westminster on the Tuesday, and after seeing all the disturbance there he made his way with the current of destruction towards Newgate, and witnessed the astonishing capture of a massive prison by a body of men, unarmed save with such rude weapons of attack as could be hurriedly caught up. The prison was so strong that, had a dozen men resisted, it would have been almost impossible to take it without artillery. But there was nobody to resist. Mr. Akerman, the keeper, acted with great courage, and did his duty loyally, but he could not hold the place alone. Crowbars, pickaxes, and fire forced an entrance into the prison. "Not Orpheus himself," wrote Crabbe, "had more courage or better luck" than the desperate assailants of the prison. They broke into the blazing prison, they rescued their comrades, they set all the other prisoners free. Into the street, where the summer evening was as bright as noonday with the blazing building, the prisoners were borne in triumph. Some of them had been

condemned to death, and never were men more bewildered than by this strange reprieve. The next day Dr. Johnson walked, in company with Dr. Scott, to look at the place, and found the prison in ruins, with the fire yet glowing. The stout-hearted Doctor was loud in his scorn of "the cowardice of a commercial place," where such deeds could be done without hinderance.

While one desperate gang was busy with the destruction of Newgate, other gangs, no less desperate, were busy with destructive work elsewhere. The new prison in Clerkenwell was broken open by one crowd, and its prisoners set free. Another assailed Sir John Fielding's house, and burned its furniture in the streets. A third attacked the house of Lord Mansfield in Bloomsbury Square. This last enterprise was one of the most remarkable and infamous of the bad business. Lord Mansfield and his wife had barely time to escape from the house by a back way before the mob were upon it. The now familiar scenes of savage violence followed. The doors were broken open, the {204} throng poured in, and in a comparatively short time the stately mansion was a ruin. Lord Mansfield's law library, one of the finest in the kingdom, and all the judicial manuscripts made by him during his long career, were destroyed. A small detachment of soldiers came upon the scene too late to prevent the destruction of the house or to intimidate the mob; although, according to one account, the Riot Act was read and a couple of volleys fired, with the result that several of the rioters were shot and wounded. It is curious to find that the reports of the intended purposes of the wreckers drew persons of quality and curiosity to Bloomsbury Square in their coaches as to a popular performance, and that the destruction of Lord Mansfield's house proved more attractive than the production of a new play.

[Sidenote: 1780—Public alarm in London]

The Wednesday was no less terrible than the Tuesday. The rioters seemed to think that, like so many Mortimers, they were now Lords of London. They sent messages to the keepers of the public prisons of the King's Bench, the Fleet, and to prominent Catholic houses, informing them of the precise time when they would be attacked and destroyed. By this time peaceable London was in a state of panic. All shops were shut. From most windows blue banners were thrust out to show the sympathy of the occupants with the agitation, and the words "No Popery" were scrawled in chalk across the doors and windows of every householder who wished to protect himself against the fanaticism of the mob. At least one enterprising individual got from Lord George Gordon his signature to a paper bidding all true friends to Protestants to do no injury to the property of any true Protestant, "as I am well assured the proprietor of this house is a stanch and worthy friend to the cause." But there were plenty of houses where neither fear nor fanaticism displayed blue banner or chalked scrawl, houses whose owners boasted no safeguard signed by Lord George Gordon, and with these the mob busied themselves. The description in the "Annual Register" is so striking that it deserves to be cited; it is probably from the pen of Edmund Burke: "As soon {205} as the day was drawing towards a close one of the most dreadful spectacles this country ever beheld was exhibited. Let those who were not spectators of it judge what the inhabitants felt when they beheld at the same time the flames ascending and rolling in clouds from the King's Bench and Fleet Prisons, from New Bridewell, from the toll-gates on Blackfriars Bridge, from houses in every quarter of the town, and particularly from the bottom and middle of Holborn, where the conflagration was horrible beyond description. . . . Six-and-thirty fires, all blazing at one time, and in different quarters of the city, were to be seen from one spot. During the whole night, men, women, and children were running up and down with such goods and effects as they wished to preserve. The tremendous roar of the authors of these terrible scenes was

heard at one instant, and at the next the dreadful report of soldiers' musquets, firing in platoons and from different quarters; in short, everything served to impress the mind with ideas of universal anarchy and approaching desolation."

From the closing words of this account it is plain that at last authority had begun to do its duty and to meet force with force. Terrorized London shook with every wild rumor. Now men said that the mob had got arms, and was more than a match for the military; now that the lions in the Tower were to be let loose; now that the lunatics from Bedlam were to be set free. Every alarming rumor that fear could inspire and terror credit was buzzed abroad upon that dreadful day, when the servants of the Secretary of State wore blue cockades in their hats and private gentlemen barricaded their houses, armed their people, and prepared to stand a siege. Horace Walpole found his relative, Lord Hertford, engaged with his sons in loading muskets to be in readiness for the insurgents. Everybody now shared in the general alarm, but the alarm affected different temperaments differently. Some men fled from town; others loaded guns and sharpened swords; others put their hands in their pockets and lounged, curious spectators, on the heels of riot, eager to observe {206} and willing to record events so singular and so unprecedented.

It is pleasant to be able to chronicle that the King showed an especial courage and composure during that wild week's work. George the Third never lost head nor heart. To do his House justice, personal courage was one of their traditions, but the family quality never showed to better advantage than in this crisis. If indeed George the Second were prepared, as has been hinted, to fly from London on the approach of the young Pretender, George the Third displayed no such weakness in the face of a more immediate peril. The peril was more immediate, it was also more menacing. No man could safely say where bad work so begun might

ultimately pause. What had been an agitation in favor of a petition might end in revolution against the Crown. Outrages that had at first been perpetrated with the purpose of striking terror only were changing their character. Schemes of plunder formed no part of the early plans of the rioters; now it began to be known that the rioters had their eyes turned towards the Bank of England and were planning to cut the pipes which provided London with water. With a little more laxity on the part of authority, and a few more successes on the part of the mob, it is possible that Lord George Gordon might have found himself a puppet Caesar on the shields of Protestant Praetorians.

[Sidenote: 1780—Stern action by the authorities]

That nothing even approaching to this did happen was largely due to the courage and the determination of the Sovereign. The Administration vacillated. The Privy Council, facing an agitation of whose extent and popularity it was unaware, feared to commit itself. George felt no such fear. Where authority fell back paralyzed in the presence of a new, unknown, and daily increasing peril, he came forward and asserted himself after a fashion worthy of a king. If the Privy Council would not act with him, then he would act without them. He would lead out his Guards himself and charge the rioters at their head. The courage which had shown itself at Dettingen, the courage which had been displayed by generations of rough German {207} electors and Italian princes, showed itself gallantly now and saved the city. The King lamented the weakness of the magistrates, but at least there was one, he said, who would do his duty, and he touched his breast with his hand. George the Third is not a heroic figure in history, but just at that moment he bore himself with a royal honor which ranked him with Leonidas or Horatius. If there are to be kings at all, that is how kings ought to behave. George was fortunate in finding a man to stand by him and to lend to his soldierly courage the support of the law. Wedderburn, the

Attorney-General, declared, with all the authority of his high position, that in cases where the civil power was unable to restrain arson and outrage, it was the duty of all persons, civil as well as military, to use all means in their power to deal with the danger. The reading of the Riot Act was nugatory in such exceptional conditions, and it became the duty of the military to attack the rioters. Thus supported, the King ordered Wedderburn to write at once to Lord Amherst, the Commander-in-Chief, authorizing him to employ the military without waiting for authority from the civil powers. Wedderburn, who in a few days was to become Chief Justice and Lord Loughborough, wrote the order, kneeling upon one knee at the council table, and from that moment the enemy was grappled with in grim earnest.

It was high time. No less than two unsuccessful attacks had been made during that day upon the Bank of England, but precautions had been taken, and the successes of Newgate were not repeated in Threadneedle Street. The assailants were repulsed on each occasion by the military, who occupied every avenue leading to the Bank. Had the attack upon the Bank succeeded it is impossible to form any estimate of what the result might have been. But it failed, and with that failure the whole hideous agitation failed as well. But the crowning horror of the whole episode was reserved for that final day of danger. In Holborn, where riot raged fiercest, stood the distilleries of Mr. Langdale, a wealthy Roman Catholic. The distilleries were attacked and fired. Rivers of spirit ran in all the {208} conduits and blazed as they ran. Men, drunk with liquor and maddened with excitement, kneeled to drink, and, drinking, fell and died where they lay. By this time the soldiers were acting vigorously, driving the rabble before them, shooting all who resisted, as some did resist desperately. The fire that had grown during the week was quenched at last in blood. On the Thursday morning London was safe, comparatively quiet, almost itself again. The shops indeed were still closed, but mutiny had lived its life. There was a short, sharp struggle during the day in Fleet Street, between some of the

fanatics and the Guards, which was stamped out by repeated bayonet charges which killed and wounded many. Everywhere were blackened spaces, smouldering ruins, stains of blood, and broken weapons, everywhere the signs of outrage and of conflict. But the incendiary fires were quenched and with them the fire of insurrection. The riots were at an end. The one wish of every one was to obliterate their memory as speedily as might be. The stains of blood were quickly removed from the walls of the Bank of England, from the roadway of Blackfriars Bridge. The marks of musket shots were swiftly effaced from the scarred buildings.

[Sidenote: 1780—Suppression of the Gordon Riots]

It was never fully known how far the rioters themselves suffered in the suppression of the disorder. The official returns give lists of 285 direct deaths, and of 173 cases of serious wounds in the hospitals. But this can only represent a small proportion of the actual casualties. Many dead, many wounded, must have been carried away by friends and hidden in hurried graves, or nursed in secret to recovery. Many, too, perished at Blackfriars Bridge, or were hideously consumed in the flames that rose from the burning of Langdale's distilleries. But if the number of those who suffered remains an unknown quantity, it is not difficult to approximate to the destructive power of the disturbances. The cost of the whole bad business has been estimated at at least 180,000 pounds. To that amount an imbecile insanity had despoiled London. But the imbecile insanity had incurred a deeper debt. In the wild trials that followed upon the panic and the violence forty-nine {209} men were condemned to death for their share in the riot, and twenty-nine of these actually suffered the last penalty of the law. It was not, in the eyes of some, a heavy sacrifice to pay. It did not seem a heavy sacrifice in the eyes of John Wilkes, who declared that if he were intrusted with sovereign power not a single rioter should be left alive to boast of, or

to plead for forgiveness for, his offence. But Lord George Gordon was not worth the life of one man, not to speak of nine-and-twenty.

The folly of the Administration did not end with their victory. On the 9th they did what they ought to have done long before, and arrested Lord George Gordon. But even this necessary belated act of justice they performed in the most foolish fashion. Everything that the pomp and ceremonial of arrest and arraignment could do was done to exalt Lord George in the eyes of the mob and swell his importance. He was conveyed to the Tower of London. Though the rising was thoroughly stamped out, and there was practically no chance of any attempt being made to rescue the prisoner, Lord George was escorted to the Tower by a numerous military force in broad daylight, with an amount of display that gave him the dignity of a hero and a martyr. To add to the absurdity of the whole business, the poor crazy gentleman was solemnly tried for high treason. Many months later, in the early February of the next year, 1781, when the riots were a thing of the past, and their terrible memory had been largely effaced, George Gordon was brought to the Bar of the Court of King's Bench for his trial. His wits had not mended during his confinement. He had been very angry because he thought that he was prevented from seeing his friends. His anger deepened when he learned that no friends had desired to see him. The fanatic had served his turn, and was forgotten. He was not of that temper which makes men devoted to a leader. He was but the foolish figurehead of a fanatical outburst, and when he was set aside he was forgotten. But when he was brought up for trial a measure of popular enthusiasm in the man reasserted itself. He behaved very strangely at his trial, urging his right to read {210} long passages of Scripture in his defence. Happily for him, his defence was managed by abler hands than his own. The genius of Erskine, the gifts of Kenyon, were expended in his behalf. The unwisdom of the Government in prosecuting him for high treason was soon apparent. He was acquitted, to the general satisfaction of his supporters, and of many who

were not his supporters. If public thanksgiving were returned in several churches for his acquittal, one grave manly voice was uplifted to swell the approval. Dr. Johnson declared that he was far better pleased that Lord George Gordon should escape punishment than that a precedent should be established for hanging a man for constructive treason.

Thus the great Gordon riots flickered ignominiously out. Lord George made occasional desperate efforts to reassert himself, trying to force himself upon the notice of the King at St. James's. In 1787 he was found guilty of libels upon the Queen of France and the French Ambassador. He fled to Holland, where he was arrested by the Dutch authorities, and shipped back to England. He was committed to Newgate, by curious chance, on the anniversary of the day on which it had been burned by his followers. In Newgate he lived for some years, adjuring Christianity, and declaring himself to be a follower of the Jewish faith. In Newgate the fanatic, renegade, madman, died of jail distemper on November 1, 1793. He was only forty-two years old. In his short, unhappy life he had done a great deal of harm, and, as far as it is possible to judge, no good whatever. Perhaps the example of the Gordon riots served as a precedent in another land. If the news of the fall of the Bastille and the September massacres reached Lord George Gordon in his prison, he may have recalled to his crazed fancy the fall of Newgate and the bloody Wednesday of the June of 1780.

CHAPTER LVI.

TWO NEW MEN.

[Sidenote: 1780—The younger Pitt and Brinsley Sheridan]

The year 1780 that witnessed the Gordon riots welcomed into political life two men, both of whom were young, both of whom bore names that were already familiar from an honorable parentage, and both of whom were destined to play very conspicuous parts in the House of Commons. One of the two men was known to his family alone, and his intimates, as a youth of great promise and great knowledge, which gave to his twenty years the ripened wisdom of a statesman and a scholar. The other, who was eight years older, had been for some years in the public eye, had been the hero of a romantic scandal which had done much to make his name notorious, and had written some dramatic works which had done more to make his name famous. It was a fortunate chance that when the House of Commons stood in need of new blood and new men the same time and the same year saw the return to Parliament of William Pitt and of Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

It has been said that every reader of the "Iliad" finds himself irresistibly compelled to take sides with one or other of the great opposing camps, and to be thenceforward either a Greek or a Trojan. In something of the same spirit every student of the reign of the third George becomes perforce a partisan of one or other of two statesmen who divided the honors of its prime between them, who were opposed on all the great questions of their day, and who represented at their best the two forces into which English political life was then, and is still, divided. The history of England for the closing years of the eighteenth century and the early dawn of the nineteenth century is {212} the history of these two men and of their influence. Those who study their age and their career are separated as keenly and as hotly to-day as they were separated keenly and hotly a hundred years ago into the followers of Charles James Fox or the followers of William Pitt. The record of English party politics is a record of long and splendid duels between recognized chiefs of the two antagonistic armies. What the struggle between

Gladstone and Disraeli, for example, was to our own time, the struggle between Fox and Pitt was to our ancestors of three generations ago. All the force and feeling that made for what we now call liberal principles found its most splendid representative in the son of Lord Holland: all the force and feeling that rallied around the conservative impulse looked for and found its ideal in the son of Lord Chatham. The two men were as much contrasted as the opinions that they professed. To the misgoverned, misguided, splendidly reckless boyhood and early manhood of Fox Pitt opposed the gravity and stillness of his youth. The exuberant animal vitality of Fox, wasting itself overlong in the flame of aimless passions, was emphasized by the solid reserve, the passionless austerity of Pitt. The one man was compact of all the heady enthusiasms, the splendid generosities of a nature rich in the vitality that sought eagerly new outlets for its energy, that played hard as it worked hard, that exulted in extremes. The other moved in a narrow path to one envisaged aim, and, conscious of a certain physical frailty, husbanded his resources, limited the scope of his fine intellect, and acted not indeed along the line of least resistance but within lines of purpose that were not very far apart. The one explored the mountain and the valley, lingered in gardens and orchards, or wandered at all adventure upon desolate heaths; the other pursued in patience the white highway to his goal, untempted or at least unconquered by allurements that could prove irresistible to his adversary.

[Sidenote: 1780—The character of the younger Pitt]

The two men differed as much in appearance as in mind. The outer seeming of each is almost as familiar as the forms and faces of contemporaries. Fox was massively {213} corpulent, furiously untidy, a heroic sloven, his bull throat and cheeks too often black with a three days' beard, infinitely lovable, exquisitely cultured, capable of the noblest tenderness, yet with a kind of grossness sometimes that was but a part, and

perhaps an inevitable part, of his wide humanity. Pitt was slender, boyish, precise, punctilious in attire, his native composure only occasionally lightened by a flash of humor or sweetened by a show of playfulness, old beyond his years and young to the end of his short life, sternly self-restrained and self-commanded, gracious in a kind of melancholy, unconscious charm, a curiously unadorned, uncolored personality, that attracted where it did attract with a magnetism that was perhaps all the more potent for being somewhat difficult to explain. Fox was always a lover in many kinds of love, fugitive, venal, illicit, honorable, and enduring. Pitt carried himself through temptations with a monastic rigor. There was a time when his friends implored him for the sake of appearances, and not to flout too flagrantly the manners of the time, to show himself in public with a woman of the town. His one love story, strange and fruitless, neither got nor gave happiness and remains an unsolved mystery.

There were only two tastes held in common by the two men, and those were tastes shared by most of the gentlemen of their generation and century, the taste for politics and the taste for wine. Men of the class of Holland's son, of Chatham's son, if they were not soldiers and sailors, and very often when they were soldiers and sailors, went into political life as naturally as they went into a university or into the hunting field. In the case of the younger Fox and of the younger Pitt the political direction was conspicuously inevitable from the beginning. The paths of both lay plain from the threshold of the nursery to the threshold of St. Stephen's. The lad who was the chosen companion of his father at an age when his contemporaries had only abandoned a horn-book to grapple with Corderius, the boy who learned the principles of elocution and the essence of debate from the lips of the Great Commoner, were children very specially fostered in the arts of {214} statesmanship and curiously favored in the knowledge that enables men to guide and govern men. From the other taste there was no escape, or little escape, possible for the men of that day. It would have

been strange indeed if Fox had been absolved from the love of wine, which was held by every one he knew, from his father's old friend and late enemy Rigby to the elderly place-holder, gambler, and letter-writer Selwyn, who loved, slandered, and failed to ruin Fox's brilliant youth. It would have been impossible for Pitt, floated through a precarious childhood on floods of Oporto, to liberate his blood and judgment from the generous liquor that promised him a strength it sapped. It was no more disgrace to the austere Pitt than to the profligate Fox to come to the House of Commons visibly under the influence of much more wine than could possibly have been good for Hercules. Sobriety was not unknown among statesmen even in those days of many bottles, but intoxication was no shame, and Burke was no more commended for his temperance than Fox, or Pitt, or Sheridan were blamed for their intemperance.

[Sidenote: 1759-80—The youth of the younger Pitt]

William Pitt was born in 1759, when George the Second still seemed stable on his throne, and when the world knew nothing of that grandson and heir to whose service the child of Chatham was to be devoted. He was the fourth child and second son; the third son and last child of Chatham was born two years later. William Pitt was delicate from his infancy, and by reason of his delicacy was never sent to school. He was educated by private tuition, directly guided and controlled by his father. From the first he was precocious, full of promise, full of performance. He acquired knowledge eagerly and surely; what he learned he learned well and thoroughly. Trained from his cradle in the acquirements essential to a public life, he applied himself, as soon as he was of an age to appreciate his tastes and to form a purpose, to equipping himself at all points for a political career. When the great Chatham died he left behind him a son who was to be as famous as himself, a statesman formed in his own school, trained in his own methods, inspired by his counsels, and guided by {215} his example. A legend which

may be more than legend has it that from the first destiny seemed determined to confront the genius and the fame of Fox with the genius and the fame of Pitt. It is said that the Foxes were assured by a relative of the Pitts that the young son of Chatham, then a child under a tutor's charge, showed parts which were sure to prove him a formidable rival to the precocious youth who was at once the delight and the despair of Lord Holland's life. It is certain that the young Fox was early made acquainted with the ripe intelligence and eager genius of the younger Pitt. It was his chance to stand with the boy one night at the bar of the House of Lords, and to be attracted and amazed at the avidity with which Pitt followed the debate, the sagacity with which he commented upon what he saw and heard, and the readiness with which he formulated answers to arguments which failed to carry conviction to his dawning wisdom. Pitt loved the House of Commons while he was still in the schoolroom; it was inevitable that he should belong to the House of Commons, and he entered it at the earliest possible moment, even before he was legally qualified to do so, for he was not quite of age when he first took his seat.

The qualities of fairness and fitness which Greek wisdom praised in the conduct of life were characteristic of Pitt's life. In its zealous, patient preparation for public life, its noble girding of the loins against great issues, its wistful renunciation of human hopes, its early consciousness of terrible disease, its fortitude in the face of catastrophes so unexpected and so cruel; in its pensive isolation, in the richness of those early successes that seemed as if in anticipation to offer compensation for the early death, his life seems to have been adorned with certain ornaments and ordered by certain laws that make it strangely comely, curiously symmetrical. In that youth of his which was never quite young, and which was never allowed to grow old, in his austere attitude to so much that youth holds most dear, in the high passion of his patriotism with its eager desire, so often and so sternly thwarted, to add to England's glory, he stands apart from {216} many

greater and many wiser men, in a melancholy, lonely dignity. It has been given to few men to inspire more passionate attachment in the minds of his contemporaries; it has been given to few statesmen to be regarded abroad, by eyes for the most part envious or hostile, as pre-eminently representative of the qualities that made his country at once disliked and feared. His political instincts were for the most part admirable, and if it had been his fortune to serve a sovereign more reasonable, more temperate, and more intelligent than George the Third his name might have been written among the great reformers of the world. At home an unhappy deference to the dictates of a rash and incapable king, abroad an enforced opposition to one of the greatest forces and one of the greatest conquerors that European civilization has seen, prevented Pitt from gaining that position to which his genius, under conditions less persistently unhappy, would have entitled him. To have gained what he did gain under such conditions was in itself a triumph.

The new-comer who entered Parliament at the same period as William Pitt was as curiously unlike him as even Fox himself. If few knew anything of Pitt every one knew something of Sheridan, who had already made fame in one career and was now about to make fame in another. It may afford consolation to the unappreciated to reflect that the most famous English dramatist since Shakespeare's day, the brightest wit of an age which piqued itself into being considered witty, the most brilliant orator of an age which regarded oratory as one of the greatest of the arts, and whose roll is studded with the names of illustrious orators, the most unrivalled humorist of a century which in all parts of the world distinguished itself by its love of humor, was looked upon in his nonage as a dull, unpromising boy, chiefly remarkable for his idleness and carelessness.

[Sidenote: 1751-80—The parents of Brinsley Sheridan]

The quality which we now call Bohemianism certainly ran in Sheridan's blood. His grandfather, Dr. Thomas Sheridan, the friend of Swift, the Dublin clergyman and schoolmaster, was a delightfully amiable, wholly reckless, {217} slovenly, indigent, and cheerful personage. His father, Thomas Sheridan, was a no less cheerful, no less careless man, who turned play-actor, and taught elocution, and married a woman who wrote novels and a life of Swift. At one time he could boast the friendship of Dr. Johnson, who seems to have regarded him with an ill-humored contempt, but Dr. Johnson's expression of this contempt brought about a quarrel. The most remarkable thing about him is that he was the father of his son. Neither he nor his wife appears to have had any idea of their good fortune. Mrs. Sheridan once declared of her two boys that she had never met with "two such impenetrable dunces." None the less the father contrived with difficulty to scrape together enough money to send his boys to Harrow, and there, luckily, Dr. Parr discerned that Richard, with all his faults, was by no means an impenetrable dunce. Both he and Sumner, the head-master of Harrow, discovered in the schoolboy Sheridan great talents which neither of them was capable of calling into action.

Richard Sheridan came from Harrow School and Harrow playgrounds to London, and, later on, to Bath. London did not make him much more industrious or more careful than he had been at Harrow-on-the-Hill. It was far pleasanter to translate the honeyed Greek of Theocritus, with its babble of Sicilian shepherds, its nymphs and waters and Sicilian seas, than to follow the beaten track of ordinary education. It was vastly more entertaining to translate the impassioned prose of Aristaenetus into impassioned verse, especially in collaboration with a cherished friend, than to yawn over Euclid and to grumble over Cocker. The translation of Aristaenetus, the boyish task of Sheridan and his friend Halhed, still enjoys a sort of existence in the series of classical translations in Bohn's Library. It is one of the ironies of literature that fate has preserved this translation

while it has permitted the two Begum speeches, that in the House of Commons and that in Westminster Hall, practically to perish. What little interest does now cling to the early work belongs to the fact of its being a collaboration. Halhed, who worked {218} with Sheridan at the useless task, was a clever young Oxford student, who was as poor as he was clever, and who seemed to entertain the eccentric idea that large sums of money were to be readily obtained from the reading public for a rendering in flippant verse of the prose of an obscure author whose very identity is involved in doubt. Aristaenetus did not become the talk of the town even in spite of an ingeniously promulgated rumor assigning the authorship of the verses to Dr. Johnson. Neither did the plays and essays in which the friends collaborated meet with any prosperous fate.

From the doing of Greek prose into English verse Sheridan and Halhed turned to another occupation, in which, as in the first, they were both of the same mind. They both fell in love, and both fell in love with the same woman. All contemporary accounts agree in regarding the daughter of Linley the musician as one of the most beautiful women of her age. Those who knew the portrait which the greatest painter of his time painted of Sheridan's wife as St. Cecilia will understand the extraordinary, the almost universal homage which society and art, wit and wealth, and genius and rank paid to Miss Linley. Unlike the girl in Sheridan's own poem, who is assured by her adorer that she will meet with friends in all the aged and lovers in the young. Miss Linley found old men as well as young men competing for her affection and for the honor of her hand.

Sheridan and Halhed were little more than boys when they first beheld and at once adored Miss Linley. Charles Sheridan, Richard's elder brother, was still a very young man. But Miss Linley had old lovers too, men long past the middle pathway of their lives, who besought her to marry them with all the impetuosity of youth. One of them, whom she wisely rejected

on the ground that wealth alone could not compensate for the disparity in years, carried off his disappointment gracefully enough by immediately settling a sum of three thousand pounds upon the young lady.

There is an air of romance over the whole course of {219} Sheridan's attachment to Miss Linley. For a long time he contrived to keep his attachment a secret from his elder brother, Charles, and from his friend Halhed, both of whom were madly in love with Miss Linley, and neither of whom appears to have had the faintest suspicion of finding a rival, the one in so close a kinsman, the other in his own familiar friend. It must be admitted that Sheridan does not appear to have behaved with that uprightness which was to be expected from his gallant, impetuous nature. Not merely did he keep his secret from his brother and his friend, but he seems to have allowed his friend to look upon him as a confidant and ally in pressing Halhed's suit upon Miss Linley. Halhed reproached him sadly, but not bitterly, in a poetical epistle, the value of which is more personal than poetical, when he discovered the real mind of his friend. Then, like a wise man if a sad one, Halhed went away. He sailed for India, the golden land of so many wrecked hopes and disappointed ambitions; he long outlived his first love and his successful rival; he became in the fulness of time a member of Parliament, and he died in 1830. He is dimly remembered as the author of a grammar of the Bengalee language and of a work on Gentoo laws translated from the Persian.

[Sidenote: 1771—Marriage of Sheridan and Miss Linley]

Sheridan's courtship progressed more and more romantically. The persecutions of a married rake named Matthews drove Miss Linley to fly to France with Sheridan, to whom she was secretly married at Calais. The revengeful and disappointed Matthews inserted a libellous attack upon Sheridan in the *Bath Chronicle*. Sheridan extorted at his sword's point a

public apology from Matthews. Further and baser mendacity on the part of Matthews provoked a second duel, in which the combatants seem to have fought with desperate ferocity, and in which Sheridan, badly wounded, refused to ask his life at the hands of his antagonist and was only rescued by the seconds. A long period of separation followed, full of dark hours for Sheridan, hours only brightened by occasional meetings of the most eccentric kind, as when the wild young poet, quaintly {220} disguised in the complicated capes of a hackney coachman, had the tormenting privilege of driving his beloved from Covent Garden Theatre, where her voice and beauty were nightly charming all London. At last the opposition of Linley was overcome, and on April 13, 1773, the most brilliant man and most beautiful woman of their day were for the second time and more formally married, and a series of adventures more romantic than fiction came to an end.

The romance, it is agreeable to think, did not conclude with the marriage ceremony. Sheridan seems to have offered his wife as devoted an attachment after her marriage as he had shown in the days of duelling and disguising that preceded it. He wrote verses to her, and she wrote verses to him, long after they had settled down to serene domesticity, which breathe the most passionate expressions of mutual love. And yet there is a legend—it is to be hoped and believed that it is only a legend—which ends the romance very sadly. According to the legend young Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Sheridan's close friend, felt more than a friend's admiration for the wife of his friend. According to the legend Elizabeth Sheridan returned the passion, which by the unhappiness it brought with it shortened her life. According to the legend Lord Edward only married the fair Pamela, Philippe Egalité's daughter, because of the striking resemblance she bore to the St. Cecilia of his dreams. The legend rests on the authority of Madame de Genlis, who was probably Pamela's mother and who is no infallible authority. It is possible that the undoubted resemblance of Pamela to Mrs.

Sheridan is the origin of the whole story. Lord Edward was always falling in love in a graceful, chivalrous kind of way. But there is no serious proof that his friendship for Mrs. Sheridan was anything more than the friendship an honorable man may entertain for the wife of his friend. The graver and more authentic story of Fitzgerald's life has yet to be told in these pages.

[Sidenote: 1775—Sheridan as dramatist and politician]

For a brief period after his marriage Sheridan thought of devoting himself to the law. But his thoughts and {221} tastes were otherwise inclined, and on January 27, 1775, not quite two years after his marriage, "The Rivals" was produced at Covent Garden and a new chapter opened in the history of dramatic literature. It is curious to think that the clumsiness of the player to whom the part of Sir Lucius O'Trigger was given came very near to damning the most brilliant comedy that the English stage had seen for nearly two centuries. The happy substitution of actor Clinch for actor Lee, however, saved the piece and made Sheridan the most popular author in London. How grateful Sheridan felt to Clinch for rescuing Sir Lucius is shown by the fact that his next production, the farce called "St. Patrick's Day; or, the Scheming Lieutenant," was expressly written to afford opportunity for Clinch's peculiar talents. In 1777 came "The School for Scandal," Sheridan's masterpiece, which was followed by Sheridan's last dramatic work, "The Critic." Never probably before was so splendid a success gained so rapidly, so steadily increased in so short a time, to come so abruptly to an end in the very pride of its triumph.

Quite suddenly the most famous English author then alive found opportunity for the display of wholly new and unexpected talents, and became one of the most famous politicians and orators alive. There had, indeed, always been a certain political bent in Sheridan's mind. He had tried his hand at many political pamphlets, fragments of which were found among his papers by Moore. He had always taken the keenest interest in the great questions which agitated the political life of the waning eighteenth century. The general election of 1780 gave him an opportunity of expressing this interest in the public field, and he was returned to Parliament as member for the borough of Stamford. It is difficult to find a parallel in our history for the extraordinary success which attended Sheridan in his political life as it had already attended him in his dramatic career.

Just on the threshold of his political career Sheridan lost the wife he loved so well. He was profoundly afflicted, but the affliction lessened and he married a Miss {222} Ogle. There is a story told in connection with this second marriage which is half melancholy, half humorous, and wholly pathetic. The second Mrs. Sheridan, young, clever, and ardently devoted to her husband, was found one day, according to this story, walking up and down her drawing-room apparently in a frantic state of mind because she had discovered that the love-letters Sheridan had sent to her were the same as those which he had written to his first wife. Word for word, sentence for sentence, passion for passion, they were the same letters. No doubt Sheridan made his peace. It is to be presumed that he thought the letters so good that they might very well serve a second turn; but this act of literary parsimony was not happy. Parsimony of his written work was, however, Sheridan's peculiarity. Verses addressed to his dear St. Cecilia make their appearance again and again, under altered conditions, in his plays. It is singular enough, as has been happily said, that the treasures of wit which

Sheridan was thought to possess in such profusion should have been the only species of wealth which he ever dreamed of economizing.

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CHAPTER LVII.

FOX AND PITT.

[Sidenote: 1781—Fall of the Lord North Administration]

Pitt entered public life the inheritor of a great name, the transmitter of a great policy, at a time when the country was in difficulty and the Government in danger. In the January of 1781 North was still in power, was still supported by the King, had still some poor shreds of hope that something, anything might happen to bring England well out of the struggle with America. In the November of the same year North reeled to his fall with the news of the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown. In those ten months Pitt had already made himself a name in the House of Commons. He was no longer merely the son of Pitt; he was Pitt. He had attached himself to an Opposition that was studded with splendid names, and had proved that his presence added to its lustre. The heroes and leaders of Opposition at Westminster welcomed him to their ranks with a generous admiration and enthusiasm. Fox, ever ready to applaud possible genius, soon pronounced him to be one of the first men in Parliament. Burke hailed him, not as a chip of the old block, but as the old block itself. The praises of Burke and of Fox were great, but they were not undeserved. When the Ministry of Lord North fell into the dust, when the King was compelled to accept the return of the Whigs to office, Pitt had already gained a position which entitled him in his own eyes not to accept office but to refuse it.

Rockingham formed a Ministry for the second time. The new Ministry was formed of an alliance between the two armies of the Rockingham Whigs and the Shelburne Whigs. Rockingham represented the political principles that dated from the days of Walpole. {224} Shelburne represented, or misrepresented, the principles that dated from the days of Chatham. The King would very much have preferred to take Shelburne without Rockingham, but even the King had to recognize that it was impossible to gratify his preference. Even if Shelburne had been a much better leader than he was he had not the following which would entitle him to form a Ministry on his own account. And Shelburne was by no means a good leader. To the Liberal politician of to-day Shelburne seems a much more desirable and admirable statesman than Rockingham. Most of his political ideas were in advance of his time, and his personal friendships prove him to have been a man of appreciative intelligence. He had proved his courage in his youth as a soldier at Campen and Minden; he had maintained his courage in 1780 when he faced and was wounded by the pistol of Fullarton. But his gifts, whatever they were, were not of the quality nor the quantity to make a leader of men. He could not form a Ministry for himself, and he was not an element of stability in any Ministry of which he was a member. The Administration formed by the alliance of Rockingham and Shelburne could boast of many brilliant names, and showed itself laudably anxious to add to their number. In an Administration which had Fox for a Secretary of State, Burke for Paymaster-General of the Forces, and Sheridan for Under-Secretary of State, the Vice-Treasurership of Ireland was offered to Pitt.

[Sidenote: 1782—Fox's quarrel with Pitt]

Pitt declined the offer. He had made up his mind that he would not accept a subordinate situation. Conscious of his ability, he was prepared to wait. He had not to wait long. During the four agitated months of life allowed to

the Rockingham Administration Pitt distinguished himself by a motion for reform in the representative system which was applauded by Fox and by Sheridan, but which was defeated by twenty votes. Peace and reform were always passions deeply seated at the heart of Pitt; it was ironic chance that associated him hereafter so intimately with war and with antagonism to so many methods of reform in which he earnestly believed. When the quarrels {225} between Fox and Shelburne over the settlement of the American war ended after Rockingham's death in July, 1782, in the withdrawal from the Ministry of Fox, Burke, and the majority of the Rockingham party, Pitt rightly saw that his hour had come. Fox resigned rather than serve with Shelburne, Pitt accepted Shelburne, and made Shelburne's political existence possible a little longer. With the aid of Pitt, Shelburne could hold on and let Fox go; without Pitt, Fox would have triumphed over Shelburne. From this moment began the antagonism between Fox and Pitt which was to last for the remainder of their too brief lives. At the age of twenty-three Pitt found himself Chancellor of the Exchequer, and one of the most conspicuous men in the kingdom. Fox, who was ten years older, was defeated by the youth whose rivalry had been predicted to Fox when the youth was yet a child.

Pitt's triumph lasted less than a year. Fox, conscious of his own great purposes, and eager to return to office for their better advancement, was prepared to pay a gambler's price for power. To overthrow Shelburne and with Shelburne Pitt, he needed a pretext and an ally. The pretext was easy to find. He had but to maintain that the terms of the peace with America were not the best that the country had a right to expect. The ally was easy to find and disastrous to accept. Nothing in the whole of Fox's history is more regrettable than his unnatural alliance with Lord North. Ever since the hour when Fox had found his true self, and had passed from the ranks of the obedient servants of the King into the ranks of those who devoted themselves to the principles of liberty, there had been nothing and there

could have been nothing in common between Fox and North. Everything that Fox held most dear was detestable to North, as North's political doctrines were now detestable to Fox. The political enmity of the two men had been bitter in the extreme, and Fox had assailed North with a violence which might well seem to have made any form of political reconciliation impossible. Yet North was now the man with whom Fox was content to throw in his lot in order to obtain the {226} overthrow of Shelburne and of Pitt. And Fox was not alone among great Whigs in this extraordinary transaction. He carried Burke with him in this unholy alliance between all that was worst and all that was best in English political life. The two men whose genius and whose eloquence had been the most potent factors in the fall of North a year before were now the means of bringing the discredited and defeated statesman back again into the exercise of a power which, as none knew better than they, he had so shamefully misused. Fox and North between them swept Shelburne out of the field. Fox and North between them were able to force a Coalition Ministry upon a reluctant and indignant King. The followers of Fox and the followers of North in combination formed so numerous and so solid a party that they were able to treat the sovereign with a lack of ceremony to which he was little used. Fox had gone out of office rather than admit that the right to nominate the first minister rested with the King instead of with the Cabinet. Now that he had returned to office, he showed his determination to act up to his principles by not permitting the King to nominate a single minister.

[Sidenote: 1783—Fox's coalition with Lord North]

The King's contempt for North since the failure to coerce America, the King's dislike of Fox since Fox became an advanced politician, were deepened now into uncompromising and unscrupulous enmity by the cavalier conduct of the coalition. The King, with his doggedness of purpose and his readiness to use any weapons against those whom he chose to

regard as his enemies, was a serious danger even to a coalition that seemed so formidable as the coalition between Fox and North. Fox may very well have thought that his unjustifiable league with North would at least have the result of giving him sufficient time and sufficient influence to carry into effect some of those schemes for the good of the country which he had most nearly at heart. The statesman who makes some unhappy surrender of principle, some ignoble concession to opportunity in order to obtain power, makes his unworthy bargain from a conviction that his hold of office is essential to the welfare of the State, and that a little {227} evil is excusable for a great good. The sophistry that deceives the politician does not deceive the public. Fox gravely injured his position with the people who loved him by stooping to the pact with North, and he did not reap that reward of success in his own high-minded and high-hearted purposes which could alone have excused his conduct. The great coalition which was to stand so strong and to work such wonders was destined to vanish like a breath after accomplishing nothing, and to condemn Fox with all his hopes and dreams to a career of almost unbroken opposition for the rest of his life. If anything in Fox's checkered career could be more tragic than the degradation of his union with the politician whom he declared to be void of every principle of honor and honesty, it was the abiding consequences of the retribution that followed it. Fox had fought hard and with success to live down the follies of his youth. He had to fight harder and with far less success to live down what the world persisted in regarding as the infamy of his association with North.

It is difficult to realize the arguments which persuaded Fox, which persuaded Burke, to join their forces with the fallen minister whom their own mouths, but a little while before, had, in no measured terms, declared to be guilty of the basest conduct and deserving of the severest punishment. All that we know of Fox, all that we know of Burke—and it is possible to know them almost as well as if they were the figures of contemporary

history—would seem to deny the possibility of their condescending to any act of conscious baseness. Stained and sullied as the youth of Fox had been with some of the more flagrant vices of a flagrantly vicious society, his record as gambler, as spendthrift, and as libertine seems relatively clean in comparison with this strange act of public treason to the chosen beliefs of his manhood, of public apostasy from those high and generous principles by whose strenuous advocacy he had redeemed his wasted youth. Fiery as Burke's temper had often proved itself to be, fantastic and grotesque as his obstinacy had often showed itself in {228} clinging defiantly to some crotchet or whimsey, that seemed to the spectator unworthy the adhesion of his great intellect, his most eccentric action, his most erratic impulse, appeared sweetly reasonable and serenely lucid when contrasted with the conduct that allowed him to guide or be guided by Fox in a course that proved as foolish as it looked disgraceful, to lead or to follow Fox into packing cards with their arch-enemy of the American war.

On the face of it there is nothing that seems not merely to justify, but even to palliate, the conduct of Fox and Burke. Ugly as the deed seemed to the men of their day, to the men who believed in them, trusted them, loved them, it seems no less ugly to those who at the distance of a century revere their memories and cherish their teachings. One thing may be, must be, assumed by those before whom the lives of Fox and Burke lie bare—that men so animated by high principles, so illuminated by high ideals, cannot deliberately, of set purpose, have sinned against the light. They must have felt, and strongly felt, their justification for entering on a course which was destined to prove so disastrous. Their justification probably was the conviction, nursed if not expressed, that to statesmen whose hands were so full of blessings, to statesmen whose hearts were so big with splendid enterprises, a trivial show of concession, a little paltering with the punctilio of honor, a little eating of brave words, and a little swallowing of principle,

was a small price to pay and a price well worth paying for the immeasurable good that England was to gather from their supremacy.

Whatever may have been the motives which induced Fox and Burke to ally themselves with a discredited and defeated politician like Lord North, the results of that alliance were as unsatisfactory to the high contracting parties as the most rigid believer in poetic justice could desire. The Coalition Ministry was unlucky enough in its enterprises to satisfy George himself, who had talked of going back to Hanover rather than accept its services, and had only been dissuaded from self-exile by the sardonic reminder of Lord Thurlow that it might be easier for the {229} King to go to Hanover than to return again to England. Burke inaugurated his new career at the Pay Office by an unhappy act of patronage. He insisted upon restoring to their offices two clerks, named Powell and Bembridge, who had been removed and arraigned for malversation, and he insisted upon defending his indefensible action in the House of Commons with a fury that was as diverting to his opponents as it was distracting to his colleagues. Fox, who had earned so large a share of public admiration for his advocacy of what now would be called liberal opinions, was naturally held responsible by the public for the successful opposition of the Coalition Ministry to Pitt's plan of Parliamentary reform.

[Sidenote: 1783—Legislation of the Coalition Ministry]

Pitt's proposal was not very magnificent. He asked the House to declare that measures were highly necessary to be taken for the future prevention of bribery and expense at elections. He urged that for the future, when the majority of voters for any borough should be convicted of gross and notorious corruption before a select committee of the House appointed to try the merits of any election, such borough should be disfranchised and the minority of voters not so convicted should be entitled to vote for the county

in which such borough should be situated. He suggested that an addition of knights of the shire and of the representatives of the metropolis should be made to the state of the representation. He left the number to the discussion and consideration of the House, but for his own part he stated that he should propose an addition of one hundred representatives. Pitt's scheme was scarcely a splendid measure of reform; but at least it was a measure of reform, and it met with small mercy at the hands of the coalition, being defeated by a majority of 293 to 149. This was not an auspicious beginning for the new Ministry, and it was scarcely surprising that many of Fox's adherents in the country should resent his employment of the swollen forces that were practically if not technically under his command to compass the defeat of a bill which, however inadequate, did at least endeavor to bring about a much-needed improvement.

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The great adventure of the Coalition Ministry, the deed by which it hoped to justify its existence, and by which indeed it has earned its only honorable title to remembrance, was the bill which is known to the world as Fox's India Bill. If the extending influence of England in India was a source of pride to the English people, it was also a source of grave responsibility. The conditions under which that influence was exercised, the weaknesses and inadequacies of the system by which the East India Company exercised its semi-regal authority, were becoming more apparent with every succeeding year to the small but steadily increasing number of persons who took a serious and intelligent interest in Indian affairs. A series of events, to be referred to later, had served to force into a special prominence the difficulties and the dangers of the existing state of affairs and to fasten the attention of thinkers upon the evils that had resulted, and the evils that must yet result from its continuance. To mitigate those evils in the present, and to minimize them in the future, Fox, inspired and aided by Burke's splendid

knowledge of Indian affairs, worked out a measure which was confidently expected to substitute order for disorder and reason for unreason. In the November of 1783, Pitt addressed a challenge to the Ministry calling upon them to bring forward some measure securing and improving the advantages to be derived from England's Eastern possessions, some measure not of temporary palliation and timorous expedients, but vigorous and effectual, suited to the magnitude, the importance, and the alarming exigencies of the case. Fox answered this challenge by asking leave to bring in a bill "for vesting the affairs of the East India Company in the hands of certain commissioners for the benefit of the proprietors and the public." At the same time Fox asked leave to bring in another bill "for the better government of the territorial possessions and dependencies in India." These two bills, supplementing each other, formed, in the opinion of those who framed and who advocated them, a simple, efficient, and responsible plan for the better administration of England's Indian {231} dependencies. However tentative and incomplete they may now appear as a means of dealing with a problem of such vast importance and such far-reaching consequences, they certainly were measures the adoption of which must have proved a gain to the country governing and to the country governed.

[Sidenote: 1783—Fox and the affairs of India]

The measures, which, it is probable, were originally planned out by Burke, but to which it is certain that Fox devoted all the strength of his intellect and all the enthusiasm of his nature, were of a daring and comprehensive character. The first proposed to make a clean sweep of the existing state of things in India by the appointment of a Board composed of seven commissioners to whom absolute authority over the East India Company's property, and over the appointment or removal of holders of offices in India, was to be intrusted for a term of four years. This term of four years was not to be affected by any changes of administration that

might occur in England during the time. The commerce of the Company was to be managed by a council of directors, who were themselves entirely under the control of the seven commissioners. The commissioners and the directors were required to lay their accounts before the proprietors every six months, and before both Houses at the beginning of every session. The commissioners were in the first instance to be appointed by Parliament, that is to say, by the Ministry headed by Fox and North; at the end of the four years they were to be appointed by the Crown. The Court of Proprietors was to fill up the vacancies in the council of directors. The second and less important measure dealt with the powers of the Governor-General and Council and the conduct to be observed towards the princes and natives of India.

The first measure was the measure of paramount importance, the measure from which Fox and his friends hoped so much, the measure which aroused in a very peculiar degree the anger of the King and of the King's followers. They saw in a moment the enormous influence that the passing of the measure would place in the hands of Fox. The names of the commissioners were left blank {232} in the bill, but when their time came to be filled up in committee they were all filled with the names of followers of Fox. It was argued that were the bill to become law a set of persons extremely obnoxious to the King would have in their hands for a solid term of years the entire administration of India and the control of an amount of patronage, estimated at not less than three hundred thousand a year. This would enable them to oppose to the royal prerogative of patronage an influence of like nature that brought with it scarcely less than royal power. It is scarcely surprising that Pitt should have employed all his eloquence and all his energy against what he described as "the boldest and most unconstitutional measure ever attempted, transferring at one stroke, in spite of all charters and compacts, the immense patronage and influence of the East to Charles Fox in or out of office."

[Sidenote: 1783—Henry Dundas and James Sayer]

If Pitt was the most conspicuous opponent of the India Bills, only less conspicuous was a man who, though much Pitt's senior, was still young, and who had already made himself prominent in the House of Commons, not merely as a politician of general ability, but as one who took a special interest in the affairs of India. Henry Dundas had been a characteristic ornament of the Scottish bar, at once a skilful lawyer and an attractive man of the world when, eight years before the existence of the Coalition Ministry, he had come to St. Stephen's as Lord Advocate. An ambition to shine as a statesman and an extraordinary power of application had equipped him with the varied information that enabled him to assert himself as an authority in many departments of national business. He had early recognized the importance of India as a field for the powers of a rising politician, and he had devoted to India and to Indian affairs that tireless assiduity which permitted him at once to appear a convivial spirit with the temperament and leisure of a man of pleasure, and a master of profound and intricate subjects, the secret of which was only known to those who were acquainted with his habit of early rising and his indefatigable capacity for work in the time that he allotted to work. When the public attention was {233} directed to India, towards the close of the American war, and when a very general sense of indignation was aroused by the mismanagement that lessened and that threatened to destroy British influence in the East, Dundas came forward with the confident air of one who was intimately acquainted with the complicated problem and who believed himself perfectly competent to set all difficulties right. He was the chairman of the select committee of the House of Commons appointed to inquire into the causes of the war in the Carnatic, and he impressed himself upon the House as an authority upon India of no mean order, both in the report from that committee and in a bill which he himself introduced for the purpose of dealing with the Indian question. He did not succeed in carrying his

measure, but he took care that his knowledge of his subject increased in proportion to its growing importance in the public view, and his ready eloquence and specious show of information made him a very valuable ally for Pitt and a fairly formidable opponent to Fox in the heady debates over the measures to which the political honor of the dishonorable coalition was pledged.

The India Bill had a more serious enemy than Dundas, a more serious enemy than Pitt so far as the immediate effect of enmity upon public opinion is to be estimated. There was an attorney in London named James Sayer whose private means enabled him to neglect his profession and devote himself to the production of political caricatures and squibs. Sayer was one of the many who believed in the rising star of Pitt, and he proved his belief by the publication of a caricature which Fox himself is said to have admitted gave the India Bill its severest blow in public estimation. This caricature was called "Carlo Khan's Triumphal Entry into Leadenhall Street." It represented Fox in the grotesque attire of a theatrical Oriental potentate, and with a smile of conquest upon his black-haired face, perched upon an elephant with the staring countenance of Lord North, that was led by Burke, whose spectacled acridity was swollen with the blowing of a trumpet from which depended a map of India. The {234} caricature was ingenious, timely, and extraordinarily efficacious in harming the measure and its champions. It had an enormous sale; it was imitated and pirated far and wide. It carried to all parts of the kingdom the conviction that Fox was aiming at nothing less than a dictatorship of India, and it intensified the general animosity towards the measures and the men of the Coalition Ministry more effectively than any amount of speeches in Westminster could have done. But it had no more power to weaken the solid majority of the Ministry in the House of Commons than the hurried erudition of Dundas, or than what Walpole called the "Bristol stone" of Pitt's eloquence as contrasted with the "diamond reason" of Fox's solid sense. Neither

political caricature nor popular disapproval, neither the indignation of the King nor the opulence of the fearful and furious East India Company, could prevent Fox from carrying his measures in the House of Commons by means of the sheer force of numbers that he had obtained by his unhallowed compact with North.

But the power of the new Ministry was vulnerable in another place where the most unconstitutional weapons were employed against it. The King was eager to avenge the affront that had, as he conceived, been put upon him by the compulsion that had forced him to accept ministers so little to his taste. He was prepared to stick at little in order to retaliate upon his enemies, as he always conceived those men to be who ventured to cross his purposes. Nothing could be done effectively to change the political composition of the Lower House; something could be essayed with the reasonable hope of modifying the composition of the Upper House. Lord Temple, a second-rate statesman, whose position gave him almost first-rate importance, was the instrument by which the King was able to bring very effective pressure upon the peers. George wrote a letter to Lord Temple in which he declared that he should deem those who should vote for Fox's measure as "not only not his friends, but his enemies;" and he added that if Lord Temple could put this in stronger words "he had full authority to do so." With this amazing document in his {235} possession Lord Temple went from one noble lord to another, pointing out the unwisdom of each in pursuing a course which would constitute him an avowed enemy of the King, and insisting upon the advantages that must follow from the taking of the very broad hint of the royal pleasure thus conveyed. Temple's arguments, backed by and founded upon the King's letter, had the most satisfactory result from the King's point of view. Peer after peer fell away from the doomed Ministry; peer after peer hastened to prove himself one of the elect, to assert himself as a King's friend by recording his vote against the obnoxious measure.

[Sidenote: 1783—Fall of the Coalition Ministry]

The course of action inspired by the King and acted upon by Lord Temple was flagrantly unconstitutional even in an age which permitted to the sovereign so much liberty of personal intervention in affairs. It was, however, attended with complete success. The India Bills were rejected in the House of Lords by a majority of nineteen, and this defeat, which would not have been regarded in more recent times as fatal to a Ministry, however fatal for the time being to the measure thus condemned, was instantly used by the King as a pretext for ridding himself of the advisers whose advice he detested. The King resolved to dismiss the ministers, and to dismiss them with every circumstance of indignity that should render their dismissal the more contemptuous. On the midnight of the day following the final defeat of the measure in the House of Lords a messenger delivered to the two Secretaries of State, Fox and North, a message from the King stating that it was his Majesty's will and pleasure that they should deliver to him the seals of their respective offices, and that they should send them by the Under-Secretaries, Mr. Frazer and Mr. Nepean, as a personal interview on the occasion would be disagreeable to the King. The seals were immediately sent to Buckingham House and were promptly handed over by the King to Lord Temple, who on the following day sent letters of dismissal to the other members of the Cabinet Council.

When the House of Commons met, under conditions of {236} keen excitement, Fox and North took their seats on the Front Opposition Bench with their vast majority behind them eager to retaliate upon the King, who had defied their voices and insulted their leaders. A young member, Mr. Richard Pepper Arden, rose in his place and moved a new writ for the borough of Appleby, in the room of the Right Honorable William Pitt, who had accepted the office of First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. We are told that this motion was received with loud and general

laughter by the Opposition, who regarded Pitt's conduct as a piece of foolhardy presumption. And indeed at first Pitt's position seemed difficult in the extreme. It was hard to form a Government in the face of a hostile majority in the Commons, and in the Lords Pitt's perplexity was increased by Lord Temple's sudden and sullen resignation of the office to which he had been so newly appointed. Various reasons have been given for Temple's mysterious and petulant behavior. Some have thought that he resigned because he was in favor of an immediate dissolution, while Pitt was opposed to such a step. Others believe that he was eager for some high mark of royal favor, possibly a dukedom, which was refused by the King and not warmly advocated by Pitt. In spite of all obstacles, however, Pitt succeeded in forming a Ministry, the best he could manage under the conditions. To Shelburne he offered nothing, and this omission adds a mystery greater than that of Temple's resignation to Pitt's administration. It must have surprised Shelburne, as it surprised every observer then and since. Pitt has been accused of ingratitude to the man who had been his father's friend and to whom he himself had owed so short a time before the leadership of the House of Commons. But Pitt was not ungrateful. He was merely astute. He read Shelburne as perhaps no other of his contemporaries was able to read him, and he gauged him at his true value or want of value. Shelburne's glittering unreality, his showy unreliability, were to have no place in Pitt's scheme of things. Abandoned by Temple, abandoning Shelburne, Pitt went his own way, doing the best he could in the face {237} of tremendous odds and doing it very well. One of his first acts of office was to bring in an India Bill of his own, which was decisively defeated in the Commons. For some months Pitt fought his hard and thankless fight as a minister with a minority behind him. At last, in the end of March, he saw his opportunity for a dissolution and resolved to take it. A singular episode threatened to delay his purpose. [Sidenote: 1784—The disappearance of the Great Seal] The Great Seal of England was stolen from the house of the

Lord Chancellor in Great Ormond Street, and was never recovered. It may have been purloined by some political partisan who believed, as James the Second believed, that by making away with the Great Seal he could effectively embarrass his opponents. But this "curious manoeuvre," as Pitt himself called it, was nullified by the promptitude with which another Great Seal was made.

The result of the dissolution was as gratifying to Pitt as it was disastrous to Fox. More than one hundred and sixty of Fox's friends lost their seats and earned instead the sobriquet of Fox's Martyrs, and Fox himself had very great difficulty in getting elected for the new Parliament. So ended the unfortunate episode of the Coalition Ministry. Much as Fox had suffered from the sins of youth, he was destined to suffer even more from this error of his manhood. For the rest of his life, save for a few months towards its close, he was destined to remain out of office, conscious of the great deeds he would have done and denied the power to do them, while his antagonist Pitt lived through long years of office, long years that were as eventful as any years and more eventful than most years in the history of the country. Fox had run up a great debt for a little power. He had paltered with his honor, with his principles, with his public utterances; he had staked more than he had a right to stake on success, and he had lost, utterly and hopelessly. If every error in life has to be paid for sooner or later, the price due from Fox for his apostasy was very promptly demanded and was very heavy.

It is to be regretted that Pitt began his long period of authority by an attempt as stubborn as it was ungenerous to keep his great rival out of public life. The election for {238} Fox's constituency of Westminster was one of the fiercest conflicts in English history. Every effort was made to drive Fox out, every effort to put him in. Beautiful women—whom Pitt described as "women of the people," in parody of the name they gave to

Fox of "the man of the people"—bribed voters with kisses, while the friends of Pitt rallied every man they could muster to the polling booths. Fox was returned, but the unconstitutional conduct of the High Bailiff in granting the request of the defeated candidate, Sir Cecil Wray, for a scrutiny, and in refusing to make a return till the scrutiny was effected, might have deprived Westminster for a season of any Parliamentary representation, and would have kept Fox out of Parliament altogether if he had not been returned for the Kirkwall Borough through the friendship of Sir Thomas Dundas. Pitt unfortunately backed up the action of the High Bailiff with a vehemence of zeal that suggested rancor, and that failed of its purpose. Fox was in the Commons to defend himself and his cause, and he did defend himself with an eloquence that even he never surpassed, and that gave its additional glory to its ultimate success.

[Sidenote: 1784—Pitt as a financier]

However the generosity or the taste of Pitt's conduct towards Fox in this instance might be questioned, there could be no question as to the rare ability he soon made proof of as a statesman and as a financier. During his few and troubled months of office before the dissolution, he had introduced an India Bill to take the place of that of Fox, which the King and the Lords had shattered. This Bill had been defeated by a majority of eight. He now introduced what was practically the same measure, and carried it triumphantly by a majority of more than two hundred. It established that Board of Control and that double system of government which existed, with some modifications, until the Act of 1858, following upon the Indian Mutiny, effected a radical revolution in the administration of India. The enemies of Pitt's measure declared that its abuse of patronage was as flagrant as and more enduring than that proposed by Fox, and for a long time public discontent {239} expressed itself loudly against the extreme favor that was shown to Scotchmen in the filling up of appointments.

The financial affairs of the country called for a bold hand and found it. Lord North had muddled the finances of England almost as completely and almost as hopelessly as contemporary French financiers were muddling the finances of France. Pitt faced something that was not altogether unlike financial chaos with a courage which was well and with a genius which was better. The picturesque institution of smuggling, capitalized by wealth and rank in London, and profitably employing some forty thousand adventurous spirits, withered before the spell of Pitt's dexterous manipulations. A window tax compensated for a lightened tea duty that made smuggling merely a ridiculous waste of time, and its most sinister effect may still be noticed here and there in England in the hideous imitations of windows painted on to the walls of houses to support a grotesque idea of harmony, without incurring the expense of an actual aperture for light and air. Pitt raised the loans necessary to meet the yawning deficit and to minimize the floating debt, and he astonished his world by introducing the amazing elements of absolute honesty and admirable publicity into the transaction. The principle of patronage that had made previous loans a scandalous source of corruption was gallantly thrown overboard; and the new minister announced to the general amazement that the new loans would be contracted for with those who offered the lowest terms in public competition. A glittering variety of new taxes, handled with the dexterity of a conjuror, and extracting sources of revenue from sources untaxed and very justifiably taxable, rounded off a series of financial proposals that inaugurated brilliantly his administration, and that had their abiding effect upon the welfare of the country. The crown of his financial fame was his plan for the redemption of the National Debt introduced in 1786. His plan was based on the comparatively familiar idea of a sinking fund. Up to the time of Pitt's proposal, however, such sinking fund as might exist in a time of peace was always liable to be taken over and {240} made use of by the Government in a time of war. Pitt's plan was to form a sinking fund which

should be made inalienable by an Act of Parliament until the Act creating it should be repealed by another Act of Parliament. For this purpose Pitt created a Board of Commissioners consisting of the Speaker, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Master of the Rolls, the Accountant-General, and the Governor and Deputy-Governor of the Bank of England. To this independent and distinguished body of men the sum of one million sterling was to be handed over annually for the gradual redemption of the existing debt by the purchase of stock.

The story of Pitt's early administration was not all a record of success. For the last time, and unsuccessfully, he attempted to bring about a Parliamentary reform. For the first time, and no less unsuccessfully, he tried to bring about that better understanding between England and Ireland which it was his merit always to desire, and his misfortune never to accomplish. In spite of his genius, his eloquence, and his popularity, his position in the House of Commons was in a sense precarious. It was not merely that he had the bad luck to be opposed by such a galaxy of ability as has perhaps never before or since dazzled from the benches of Opposition the eyes of any minister of Pitt's intellectual power. To be fought against relentlessly, tirelessly, by a Sheridan, a Burke, and a Fox would have been bad enough for a statesman at the head of a large and reliable majority and enjoying the uncheckered confidence of his sovereign. But Pitt did not enjoy the uncheckered confidence of the King, and Pitt's majority was not reliable. Lord Rosebery quotes an analysis of the House of Commons dated May 1, 1788, recently discovered among the papers of one of Pitt's private secretaries, which serves to show how uncertain Pitt's position was, and how fluctuating the elements upon which he had to depend for his political existence. In this document the "Party of the Crown"—an ominous term—is set down as consisting of 185 members, including "all those who would probably support his Majesty's Government under any minister not {241} peculiarly unpopular." No less than 108 members are set down as

"independent or unconnected;" the party ascribed to Fox musters 138, while that of Pitt is only estimated at 52, with the minimizing comment that "of this party, were there a new Parliament, and Mr. P. no longer to continue minister, not above twenty would be returned." In the face of difficulties like these Pitt stood practically alone. His was no Ministry "of All the Talents;" the ranks of the Ministry did not represent, even in a lesser degree, the rich variety of ability that made the Opposition so formidable.

[Sidenote: 1788—Prince George Augustus Frederick]

If the King was at best but a lukewarm supporter of his splendid minister, the heir to the throne was the minister's very warm and persistent enemy. When Pitt came to power the Prince of Wales was, and had been for some time, a conspicuous figure in society, a fitful element in political life, and a subject of considerable scandal to the public mind. George the Third was not the kind of man to be happy with or to bring happiness to his children. Possessed of many of those virtues which are supposed to make for domestic peace, he nevertheless failed signally to attach to himself the affection of his children. One and all, they left him as soon as they could, came back to him as seldom as they could. The King's idea of firmness was always a more or less aggravated form of tyranny, and he reaped in loneliness the harvest of his early harshness. Between his eldest son and himself there soon arose and long continued that feud between the reigning sovereign and his heir which seemed traditional in the House of Hanover.

George Augustus Frederick, Prince of Wales, has many claims to be regarded as perhaps the worst, and as certainly the most worthless, prince of his House. Something was to be excused in the son of such a father; some wild oats were surely to be sown in the soil of a childhood so dully and so sourly cultivated. But no severity of early surroundings will explain or palliate the unlovely mixture of folly and of falseness, of debauchery,

vulgarity, profligacy, and baseness, which were the most conspicuous {242} characteristics of the Prince's nature. The malignant enemy of his unhappy father, the treacherous lover, the perjured friend, a heartless fop, a soulless sot, the most ungentlemanly First Gentleman of Europe, his memory baffles the efforts of the sycophant and paralyzes the anger of the satirist. Genius has wasted itself again and again in the attempt fittingly to describe him. To Byron he became "the fourth of the fools and oppressors called George." Moore immortalized his "nothingness" as a "sick epicure's dream, incoherent and gross." Leigh Hunt went to prison for calling him a "fat Adonis of fifty." Landor, in an epigram on himself and his royal namesakes as bitter as four biting lines could be, could find nothing more bitter than to record his descent from earth, and thankfulness to Heaven that with him the Georges had come to an end. Thackeray abandoned in despair the task of doing justice to his existence. "I own I once used to think it would be good sport to pursue him, fasten on him, and pull him down. But now I am ashamed to mount and lay good dogs on, to summon a full field, and then to hunt the poor game."

When Pitt became Prime Minister the Prince of Wales was in Opposition, because he was opposed to his father. He imagined himself to be the friend of Fox, of Sheridan, of Burke, because Fox and Sheridan and Burke were unpopular with the King. His career had been one of debt and drunkenness, of mean amours and degrading pleasures, when the son of Chatham passed from his studious youth to the control of the destinies of England. Pitt was called upon and refused to consent to a Parliamentary appeal to the King for the payment of the Prince's debts. Pitt could feel no courtier's sympathy for the unnatural son, for the faithless Florizel of foolish Perdita Robinson, for the perjured husband of Mrs. Fitzherbert. There can be no doubt that in the December of 1785 the Prince of Wales went through a ceremony of marriage, which could not under the conditions constitute a legal marriage, with Mrs. Fitzherbert, a beautiful young woman of a little more than

twenty-nine years of age, who had twice been widowed {243} and was a member of the Roman Catholic faith. The town soon rang with gossip, and what was gossip in the drawing-rooms threatened to become a matter for "delicate investigation" in the House of Commons. The denial given by Fox in Parliament on the authority of the Prince of Wales practically ended any attempt at public inquiry, and almost broke the heart of Mrs. Fitzherbert. To her the Prince of course promptly disavowed Fox, with whom she immediately broke off all friendship. Fox himself, indignant at the Prince's falsehood and at the base use which had been made of his voice, shunned the Prince's society for a long time, which might very well have been longer. The scandal slowly ebbed; a compromise was arrived at between the King and his son; the King made an appeal to Parliament; and a sum of money was voted to deal with the Prince's debts in consideration of his promises of reform in the future.

[Sidenote: 1788—Talk of a Regency]

The Prince of Wales did not forget Pitt's attitude towards him, and the time soon arrived in which the minister came near to feeling the force of the Prince's anger. The health of the King was suddenly and seriously affected. Soon after his reign began he had been afflicted by a temporary loss of reason. The same misfortune now fell upon him in the autumn of 1788. It became necessary to make arrangements for the appointment of a regent, and the necessity was the cause of a fierce Parliamentary controversy. Fox rashly insisted that the Prince of Wales had as much right to assume the reins of government as he would have had in the case of the death of the monarch. Pitt maintained the more constitutional opinion that it was the privilege of Parliament to appoint a regent and to decide what powers should be intrusted to him. However little the knowledge may have influenced his action, Pitt knew very well that with the appointment of the Prince of Wales as regent his own hold of power would, for a time, come to

an end. The whole question, however, was suddenly set on one side by the unexpected recovery of the King. The King's restoration to reason was well for the minister, and undoubtedly well for the {244} kingdom. If Burke and Sheridan and Fox were avowedly the Prince's friends in Parliament, his most intimate friends, those who would be likely to prove influential in his mimic Court, were men of a very different kind. These were such men as George Hanger, the half-mad soldier, the "Paragon of Debauchery," as the caricaturists labelled the Prince's "confidential friend," who having been almost everything from captain of Hessians to coal merchant, and from recruiter for the East India Company to inmate of a debtor's prison, ended his long and unlovely career by declining to assume the title of Lord Coleraine, to which he became entitled in 1814, ten years before his death. These were such men as Charles Morris, the amiable Anacreon of Carlton House, who made better punch and rhymed better ballads than his fellows of that convivial age, and who had the grace to expiate the ignoble noonday of his existence by an honorable evening. These were such men as the queer gang of blackguards, ruffians, and rowdies who haunted Brighthelmstone, the bad and brutal Richard Barry, the "Hellgate" Lord Barrymore; the Jockey of Norfolk, with his hair grown gray in iniquities; Sir John Lade, whose wife had been the mistress of a highwayman; and the worst and basest spirit of the gang, the Duke of Queensberry. Such were the men whom the Prince delighted to make his companions; such were the men who, if the King's madness had persisted, would have hailed with satisfaction the overthrow of Mr. Pitt.

It were needless to dwell further for the present upon the adventures of the Prince of Wales, his amours, his debts, his friendships, his fantastic pavilion at Brighton, or his unhappy marriage in April, 1795, to his cousin, the Princess Caroline Amelia Elizabeth of Brunswick. Twenty years were to pass away before the recurrence of the King's malady was to give his eldest son the show of power, and in those twenty years the two political rivals—

one of whom was the greatest of his allies, and the other the greatest of his adversaries—had passed away.

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CHAPTER LVIII.

WARREN HASTINGS.

[Sidenote: 1732—The birth of Warren Hastings]

In the days when Clive was first winning his way to fame in India there was another young Englishman serving John Company, whose ability attracted the notice and gained the esteem of the conqueror of Dupleix. It is one of the privileges of genius to discern the genius of others. But even Clive, when he noted a young volunteer at Falta, who seemed destined for better things than the handling of a musket, cannot have dreamed that he was giving an opportunity to a man whose name was to take as high a rank in the history of India as his own, whose deeds were to be no less fiercely battled over, whose part in the creation of a great Indian Empire was to be as illustrious. All that India had been to Clive—a refuge, a battleground, a theatre of great deeds, and unfortunately also of great offences, the cause of almost unbearable triumph and almost intolerable humiliation, all that in as great a degree India was to be to Warren Hastings.

Warren Hastings was born in the December of 1732, in Churchill, Oxfordshire, near Daylesford in Worcestershire. His family had been a good as it was an old family. But it had come down in the world. It had grown poorer and poorer as the generations rolled on, and that manor of Daylesford which had been in the family in the days of the second Henry

had passed in the year of Sheriffmuir into the hands of a Gloucester merchant. When Warren Hastings was born, the fortunes of the house had come to a very low ebb indeed. Pynaston Hastings, Warren Hastings's father, was, perhaps, as imbecile a man as ever yet was the means of bringing an illustrious son into the world. He seems to have been weak, foolish, shiftless, as {246} worthless as a man well could be who was not actually a criminal. He had married very young, before he was sixteen; his wife had died shortly after giving birth to Warren Hastings. Pynaston married again, entered the Church, when he was old enough to take holy orders, and drifted away into the West Indies into outer darkness and oblivion, leaving children entirely dependent upon the charity of relatives. That charity did not fail, though at first it could be but meagrely extended. Warren Hastings's grandfather was desperately poor. All he could do for his deserted grandchild was to place him at the charity school of the village. There, habited almost like a beggar, taught as a beggar, the companion of clowns and playfellow of rustics, the future peer of kings and ruler of rajahs, the coming pro-consul who was yet to make the state of England as imperial as the state of Rome, received his earliest lessons in the facts of life, and dreamed his earliest dreams. His were strange dreams. In sleep, says a Persian poet with whom young Hastings was afterwards doubtless acquainted, the beggar and the king are equal. If Warren Hastings slept as a beggar, he certainly dreamed as a king. We know, on his own statement, that when he was but a child of seven he cherished that wild ambition which was to lead him through so many glories and so many crimes. We are familiar with the picture of the boy leaning over the stream on that summer day, and looking at the old dwelling of his race, and swearing to himself his oath of Hannibal that some day he would, if the stars were propitious, win back his inheritance.

[Sidenote: 1750—Warren Hastings's early life]

Somewhere about a year after this oath of Hannibal the fortunes of the lad took a turn for the better. An uncle, Howard Hastings, who had a place in the Customs, was willing to give a helping hand to the son of his graceless brother. He brought Warren Hastings to London. In London Warren Hastings was first sent to school at Newington, where his mind was better nourished than his body. In after life he used to declare that his meagre proportions and stunted form were due to the hard living of his Newington days. But the Newington days came to {247} an end. When he was some twelve years of age, his uncle sent him to Westminster School, where his name is still inscribed in letters of gold, and where his memory adds its lustre to the historic associations of a place that is richly blessed with historic associations. Warren Hastings distinguished himself in the great school of Westminster, as he had already distinguished himself in the little village school of Daylesford. With his oath of Hannibal burning in his mind, he seems to have determined to seek success in all that he attempted, and to gain it by his indomitable energy and will. If he was brilliant as a scholar, he was not, therefore, backward in those other arts which school-boys prize beyond scholarship. He was as famous on the river for his swimming and his boating as he was famous in the classroom for his application and his ability. His masters predicted for him a brilliant University career, and it is possible that Hastings may have seen Daylesford Manor awaiting him at the end of such a career, and have welcomed the prospect. But the life of Warren Hastings was not fated to pass in the cloistered greenness of a university or in the still air of delightful studies. Howard Hastings died and left his nephew to the care of a connection, a Mr. Chiswick, who happened to be a member of the East India Company. Perhaps Mr. Chiswick resented the obligation thus laid upon him; perhaps, as a member of the East India Company, he honestly believed that to enter its service was the proudest privilege that a young man could enjoy. Whatever were his reasons, he resolutely refused to sanction his charge's

career at the university, insisted upon his being placed for a season at a commercial school to learn arithmetic and book-keeping, and then shipped him off out of hand to Bengal as an addition to the ranks of the Calcutta clerks. Thus it came to pass that Warren Hastings, like Clive, was sent to India by persons in England who were anxious to get rid of a troublesome charge. There were a good many persons in the years to come who were very ready to curse the obstinacy of the elder Clive and the asperity of Mr. Chiswick for sending two such terrible adventurers forth to {248} the great battle-field of India. The history of our Indian Empire would certainly have been a very different story if only Mr. Clive had been more attached to his ne'er-do-well son, and if only Mr. Chiswick had been better affected towards his industrious charge. In the January of 1750 Warren Hastings said farewell to his dreams of a scholar's garland in England and sailed for India. In the October of the same year he landed in Bengal and altered the history of the world.

Gentlemen adventurers who went out to India in the last century in the service of John Company seldom knew much, or indeed cared much, about the condition of the country which they were invading. They dreamed mostly of large fortunes, fortunes to be swiftly made and then brought home and expended splendidly to the amazement of less fortunate stay-at-homes. For the past history of India they did not care a penny piece. What to them were the mythical deeds of Rama and of Krishna; what to them the marches of Semiramis and Sesostris, or the conquests of Alexander, or the fate and fortunes of the ancient kingdoms of the Deccan and Hindostan? They cared nothing for the spread of Mahommedan influence and authority, the glories of the Mogul Empire, the fate of Tamerlane, the fame of Aurungzebe. For them the history of India began with the merchant adventurers of 1659 and the East India Company of 1600, with the grant of Bombay to England as part of the dower which the Princess of Portugal brought to Charles the Second. Nor were they moved by imperial ambitions. It did not enter into

their heads to conceive or to desire the addition of a vast Indian empire to the appanages of the English crown. They cared little for the conflicting creeds of India, for Brahmanism and Buddhism and Jainism and Hinduism and the sects of Islam. They knew little of the differing tongues talked over that vast continent, more than five hundred in number, from the Hindi of one hundred million men to the most restricted dialects of the mountains of Assam and Nepaul. India for them meant the little space of earth where the English had a trading interest, {249} and the regions of the shadowy potentates beyond from whom in some way or other money might be got.

[Sidenote: 1750—Suraj ud Dowlah]

When Warren Hastings landed in India the relations of England and of Englishmen to India were just upon the turn. The star of Clive's fortunes was mounting towards its zenith; the fiery planet of Dupleix had begun to fail and pale and fade. The policy which Dupleix had adopted, that policy of intrigue with the native princes of India, the English East India Company had been forced in self-defence and very reluctantly to adopt. Having adopted it, the men of the English East India Company proved themselves to be better players at the game than Dupleix. Warren Hastings, driving his pen at a desk in Calcutta, or looking after silk-spinning in the factory of Kazim Bazar near Murshidabad on the Ganges, was able to watch almost from its beginning the great political drama in which he was destined in his time to play so great a part, and which was to end in giving England a great Asiatic empire. When Suraj ud Dowlah declared war against the English his first move was to fall upon the Kazim Bazar settlement. Warren Hastings and the other English residents were made prisoners and sent to Murshidabad, where, through the intervention of the Dutch Company, they were humanely treated. Then came the madman's march on Calcutta, the horror of the Black Hole, and the flight of the Governor and the Company's servants to the little fort at Falta in the Hughli below Calcutta.

Communications were entered upon between Governor Drake in Falta Island and Hastings at Murshidabad with a view to coming to terms with Suraj ud Dowlah. Warren Hastings was already, however, developing that genius for Oriental diplomacy which afterwards so characterized his career. He was made aware of the treason that was hatching against Suraj ud Dowlah in his own court and among his own friends, and he was quite ready to play his part and find his account in that treason. Treason is a risky game for a political prisoner at a court like that of Suraj ud Dowlah. Warren Hastings was quick-witted enough to see that the sooner he got away from that {250} court the better for himself. He succeeded accordingly in making his escape and joining the fugitives at Falta. Here two things of moment happened to him. He met the woman who was to be his first wife, and he met the great man who was to give him his first chance for fame. Among the refugees from Calcutta was the widow of a Captain Campbell. Warren Hastings fell in love with her, and afterwards in an hour of greater security he married her. He seem to have been very fond of her, to have been very happy with her, but she died very soon after the marriage, and the two children she bore him both died young, and so that episode came to an end. The more momentous meeting was with Clive. When the Madras expedition appeared in the Hughli, Warren Hastings volunteered to serve in the ranks, shouldered his gun, and took his part in the fighting round Calcutta. But Clive's keen eyes discerned stuff for better things than the sieging of Indian forts in the young volunteer. When Suraj ud Dowlah's defeat ended in Suraj ud Dowlah's death, and the traitorous Mir Jaffier sat on the throne in his stead, Warren Hastings was sent to the court of the new prince at Murshidabad, originally as second to the Company's representative, Mr. Scratton, and afterwards as sole representative.

[Sidenote: 1762—Clive and the East India Company]

At Murshidabad Warren Hastings had every opportunity to justify Clive's acumen in singling him out for distinction. The post he held was one of exceptional difficulty and delicacy. Mir Jaffier was not altogether an agreeable person to get on with. The English in India were taking their first lessons in Oriental intrigue. They were learning that if it was not particularly difficult to upset one tyrant and place another on his throne, it was not always easy to keep that other on the throne, or at all safe to rely upon his loyalty to the men who had brought about his exaltation. Mir Jaffier was surrounded by enemies. His court, like every other Oriental court, was honeycombed with intrigues against him. His English patrons, or rather his English masters, proved to have an itching palm. They were always wanting money, and Mir Jaffier {251} had not always got enough money in his treasury to content their desires. So he began to intrigue against the English with the Dutch, and the English found him out and promptly knocked him off his throne, and set up a new puppet in his stead. By this time Clive had returned to England, and the direction of the destinies of the East India Company was in the hands of the Governor, Mr. Vansittart, a well-meaning man whose views were not the views of Clive. Clive objected very much to the course which the East India Company were pursuing. He wrote a letter to the London Board rebuking in no measured language the defects and evils of the Indian Administration. Once again Clive was the cause of Warren Hastings's advancement. The London Board ordered the instant dismissal of all the officials who had signed Clive's letter and Warren Hastings was appointed to fill one of the vacant places.

The five years that elapsed between the departure of Clive for England in 1760 and his return to India in 1765 are not years that reflect much credit upon the East India Company's administration. They had suddenly found themselves lifted from a condition of dependency and, at one moment, of despair to a position of unhoped-for authority and influence. New to such power, dazzled by such influence, they abused the one and they misused the

other. But the part that Warren Hastings played during this unfortunate five years reflects only credit upon himself. The vices of the East India Company were not his vices; he was no party to their abuse of their power, or their misuse of their influence. When he was advanced from the Patna agency, his place was taken by a Mr. Ellis, who seems to have been exceptionally and peculiarly unfitted for the delicate duties of his post. He appears to have carried on all his negotiations and communications with the Nawab Mir Kasim with a high-handed arrogance and an absence of tact which were in their way astonishing. Relations between the Nawab and Mr. Ellis, as the Company's representative, became so strained that in 1762 Warren Hastings was again sent to Patna to investigate the whole trouble. {252} Clive's judgment was already justified: Warren Hastings's ability had already found much of the recognition it deserved; his twelve years of Indian life had changed him from the adventurous, inexperienced lad into the ripe and skilful statesman upon whom his masters were confident that they could rely in such a moment of emergency as had now come.

It would have been better for the Company if they had taken the advice that Warren Hastings gave in the report on the quarrel between the Nawab on the one side and Mr. Ellis on the other. He was a servant of John Company, but he was too good a servant not to see the faults of his masters and the follies to which those faults were leading. The Company had blundered very badly before the coming of Clive; had blundered through false security, through negligence, through pusillanimity, through greed. After the victories of Clive had placed the Board in Leadenhall Street, and its representatives in India, on a very different footing, the Company blundered through rapacity, through selfishness, through the arrogance born of an unforeseen success. All manner of oppressions and injustices were committed under the powerful protection of the English name. Hastings declared that the only way of ending the difficulty was to come to some definite settlement with the Nawab as to his authority on the one hand and

the Company's privileges on the other. Together with Mr. Vansittart, the Governor, Hastings visited the Nawab, and a plan of conciliation was made by which the rights of the Nawab and the rights of the Company were duly apportioned and declared. But the headstrong Council of the Company refused the propositions of Warren Hastings and of Vansittart, and refused to make any concessions to the Nawab. The irritated Nawab retaliated by abolishing all internal duties upon trade, by which act he deprived the English of the unjust advantages for which they had contended. It was now a question which should attack the other first, and Mr. Ellis, hearing a rumor of intended hostilities on the part of Mir Kasim, attacked the Nawab, drove him out of his dominions and {253} set up Mir Jaffier again for a time. Hastings protested against these acts, and declared that he would have resigned but that he was unwilling to leave the Company while engaged in a harassing war. But his position was uncomfortable. His counsels and those of Mr. Vansittart were unheeded. English aggression continued. Mr. Vansittart left for England in 1764, and in the December of that year Hastings followed him, glad to leave a scene of so much disorder, a disorder that was to increase alarmingly, until in the September of 1765 Clive reappeared in India and set things straight again.

[Sidenote: 1765-69—Hastings's return to England]

Of no period of Warren Hastings's life is less known than of the four years which he spent in his native land—from 1765 to 1769. He did not return to England like the traditional Nabob, with pockets overflowing with rupees. He had not employed his time and his energies, as so many other servants of John Company had done, solely to the furthering of his own fortunes, and the filling of his own pockets. If he had sailed for India fourteen years earlier as a penniless lad, he returned to England comparatively a poor man. He had tried his hand at commerce like every one else in India, but commerce was not much in his line. He had the

capacities of a statesman, he had the tastes of a man of letters, but he did not in any great degree possess the qualities that go to make a successful merchant. It is even said that he had to borrow the money to pay his passage home, and it seems certain that when he was home, the generous way in which he endeavored to assist his relations sorely taxed his meagre means.

Hastings seems to have sought for distinction in the career of a man of letters and not to have found it. The ability which he displayed in administration and the writing of State papers and political correspondence vanished whenever he attempted to produce work that made a more ambitious claim to be considered literature. The clearness of statement, the width of view, the logical form, the firm grasp and profound knowledge which were characteristic of the evidence he gave before the House of {254} Commons Committee in 1766, gave place to a thin and niggling pedantry of style when he turned his pen to the essays and the verses of a man of letters. Yet there were some topics on which he was eminently qualified to write, and by which, under happier conditions, he might have earned distinction. While he was in India he had not allowed his active mind to be entirely occupied with the duties of his official career. That love of literature, that marvellous capacity for acquiring knowledge, which had characterized him in his Westminster school-days, remained with him at the desk of the East India Company and in the courts of Indian princes. He gave great attention to the languages and the literatures of the East. Most of those English who served their term in India contented themselves, when they troubled themselves at all about the matter, with learning as much of the native vernaculars with which they were brought into contact as was necessary for the carrying on of a conversation and the giving of an order. With such a measure of knowledge Warren Hastings was not content. He studied Persian, the courtly language of India, closely; he read much in its enchanting literature. When he came back to England in 1765 he was

possessed of a knowledge of the most beautiful of the Eastern languages, as rare as it was useless then for an English man of letters to possess.

[Sidenote: 1769—Warren Hastings as an Oriental scholar]

Almost a century later the great American transcendentalist, Emerson, prophesied a rise of Orientalism in England, and he lived to see his words come true. But in the days when Warren Hastings was striving to make his way in London as an author, the influence of the East upon literature, upon scholarship, upon thought, was scarcely perceptible. People read indeed the "Arabian Nights" in M. Galland's delightful version; read the Persian tales of Petit de la Croix; read all the translations of the many sham Oriental tales which the popularity of Galland and Petit de la Croix had called for in Paris, and which the Parisian writers were ready to supply. But serious Oriental scholarship can hardly be said to have existed in England. Sir William Jones was the only Englishman of {255} distinction who was earnestly devoted to Eastern studies; but his Persian Grammar, which was in some degree the foundation-stone of Persian scholarship in England, had not yet appeared, and Sir William Jones was still writing to Reviczki those delightful letters in which he raves about the poetry of the Arabs and the Persians. Thus the scholarship of Warren Hastings placed him in an exceedingly small minority among Englishmen of letters. Hastings was not the man to be alarmed or discouraged by finding himself in a minority. He was as impassioned an admirer of Persian poetry as Sir William Jones; he considered that the Persian language should be included in the studies of all well-educated men; he dreamed of animating the waning fires of Oriental learning at Oxford. He had a vision in his mind of a new scholarship, to be called into being by the generosity of the East India Company. He thought of Englishmen becoming as familiar with the deeds of Rustum as with the wrath of Achilles, as intimate with the Ghazels of Hafiz as with the Odes of Horace. He seems to have visited Dr. Johnson in the hope of securing him

as an ally in his scheme. The scheme came to nothing, but the learning, the literary taste, and scholarly ambition of Hastings made a strong impression upon Johnson, who entertained a stately regard for the young man from India.

It soon became plain to Warren Hastings that he was not going to make much of a livelihood either by Persian poetry or by the calling of a man of letters. His thoughts had turned back to India within a year of his return to England, and he had applied for employment to the Company, but for some reason his request was not granted. In 1768, however, the Court of Directors appointed him to a seat in Council at Madras, and early in the following year, 1769, he sailed again for India on his most momentous voyage. Not only was that ship, the "Duke of Grafton," bearing him to a career of the greatest glory and the greatest obloquy; not only was it carrying him to a grandeur and a fall almost unparalleled in the history of men who were not monarchs. On board the "Duke of {256} Grafton" Warren Hastings was to meet with one of the most serious influences of his life. We have already seen how Hastings had married, had been a father, and how wife and children had passed out of his life and left him alone. Hastings was a man of strong emotions. Now he met a woman who awoke all the strongest emotions of his nature and won his devotion for the rest of his life. The Baroness von Imhoff was a young, beautiful, attractive woman, married to a knavish adventurer.

It is certain that she and Hastings felt a warm attachment for each other; it seems certain that Imhoff connived at, or at least winked at, the attachment. It may be that the understanding between Hastings and Imhoff was in this sense honorable—that the Baron was willing to free his wife from an unhappy union that she might form a happy union. It may be that Hastings's passion was indeed, in Macaulay's fine phrase, "patient of delay." The simple facts that call for no controversy are that Hastings met the

Baroness von Imhoff in 1769; that eight years later, in 1777, Imhoff, with the aid of Hastings's money, obtained his divorce in the Franconian Courts, and that the woman who had been his wife became the wife of Hastings. She made him a devoted wife; he made her a devoted husband. Hastings was never a profligate. In an age that was not remarkable for morality his life was apparently moral even to austerity. His relationships with the Imhoffs constitute the only charge of immorality that has been brought against him, and the charge, at least, is not of the gravest kind. If Anglo-Indian society was at first inclined to be uncharitable, if the great ladies of its little world held aloof in the beginning from the Baroness von Imhoff, her marriage with Hastings seems to have restored her to general favor and esteem.

[Sidenote: 1771—Hastings's great administrative qualities]

Warren Hastings found plenty of work cut out for him on his return to India. He had his own ideas, and strong ideas, about the necessity for reforms. He was much opposed to the policy of sending out as secretaries to the local governments men who were without local experience and therefore less likely to take a warm interest {257} in the Company's welfare, while such appointments were in themselves unjust to the claims of the Company's own servants. He vehemently urged the necessity for making the rewards of the service more adequate to the duties of the service, and he announced himself as determined to do all he could for "the improvement of the Company's finances, so far as it can be effected without encroaching upon their future income." If Hastings could scheme out needed reforms on his way out, he found on his arrival that the need for reform was little short of appalling. The position which Hastings held was a curious one. He was President of the Council, it is true, but president of a council of which every member had an equal vote, and many of the members of which had personal reasons for wishing to oppose the reforms

that Hastings was coming out to accomplish. A disorganized government had to be reorganized, an exhausted exchequer to be refilled, a heart-breaking debt to be reduced, and all this had to be done under conditions that well might have shaken a less dauntless spirit than that of Warren Hastings.

Warren Hastings was never for one moment shaken. In a very short space of time he had greatly bettered the administrative system, had fostered the trade of the country by the adoption of a uniform and low Customs duty, and had greatly furthered the establishment of civilized rule in the province conquered by Clive. He accomplished this in the face of difficulties and all dissensions in his own Council, against subtle native intrigues, against opposition open and covert of the most persistent kind. Every creature who throve out of the disorganization of India naturally worked, in the daylight or in the dark, against Hastings's efforts at organization. In 1771, when he was made Governor of Bengal, he had attempted much and succeeded in much. He fought hard with the secret terror of dacoity. Having given Bengal a judicial system, he proceeded to increase its usefulness by drawing up a code of Mohammedan and Hindu law. For the former he used the digest made by command of Aurungzebe; for the {258} second he employed ten learned Pundits, the result of whose labors was afterwards translated into English by Halhed, who had been the friend of Sheridan and his rival for the hand of Miss Linley.

The work which Warren Hastings accomplished in India must be called gigantic. He created organization out of chaos; he marched straightforward upon the course which Clive had already marked out as the path of the East India Company's glory. The East India Company was not very eager to advance along that path. Hastings spurred its sluggish spirit, and, though he was not able to do all that his daring nature dreamed of, he left behind him a long record of great achievements. The annexation of Benares, the practical

subjection of Oude, the extension of British dominion, the triumphs of British arms, must be remembered to the credit of Warren Hastings when his career as a great English adventurer is being summed up. That British Empire in India for which Clive unconsciously labored owes its existence to-day in no small degree to the genius, to the patience, and to the untiring energy of Warren Hastings.

[Sidenote: 1773—Hastings and the Rohilla War]

The two heaviest charges levelled against Warren Hastings are in connection with the Rohilla war and with the trial of Nuncomar, now better known as Nand Kumar. The genius of Burke and the genius of Macaulay have served not merely to intensify the feeling against Hastings, but in some degree to form the judgments and bias the opinions of later writers. But it is only due to the memory of a great man to remember that both in the case of the Rohilla war and in the case of Nand Kumar there were two sides to the question, and that Hastings's side has not always been investigated with the care it deserves. The adversary who denounced him in the House of Commons and impeached him in Westminster Hall, the adversary who assailed him with a splendid prose, were alike inspired by a longing for justice and a hatred of oppression. But it should be possible now, when more than a century has passed since the indictment of the one and well-nigh half a century since the indictment of the other, to remember {259} that if Hastings cannot be exculpated there is at least a measure of excuse to be offered for his action.

There is much to be said from a certain point of view in defence of Warren Hastings's action with regard to the Rohilla war. The Rohilla chiefs were no doubt a danger to the Nawab of Oude, whom Hastings regarded as a useful ally of the Company. By the conquest of Rohilkhand Hastings hoped to obtain for that ally a compact State shut in effectually from foreign

invasion by the Ganges all the way from the frontiers of Behar to the mountains of Thibet, while at the same time this useful ally would remain equally accessible to the British forces either for hostilities or protection. Put in this way the case seemed, no doubt, plausible enough to Hastings, and to all who thought with Hastings that Indian chiefs and princes were but pieces on a board, to be pushed this way or that way, advanced or removed altogether at the pleasure and for the advantage of the English resident and ruler. But what actually happened was that Hastings, in defiance of the whole principle of the Company's administration in India, interfered in the contests of native races and lent the force of English arms to aid a despot in the extirpation of his enemies. It is not to the point to urge that the Rohillas were not undeserving of their fate. Even if the Rohillas were little other than robber chiefs, even if their existence constituted a weak point in the lines of defence against the ever-terrible Mahrattas, all this did not in the eyes of Burke and of those who thought with Burke justify Hastings in lending English arms for their extermination and receiving Indian money for the loan. They saw an act of hideous injustice and corruption where Hastings saw merely a piece of ingenious state policy. He gave the troops, he got the money. The Rohillas were destroyed as an independent power, and the Company was richer than it had been before the transaction by some four hundred thousand pounds.

The story of Nand Kumar comes into the history as the result of an organic change in the composition and administration of the East India Company. North's {260} Regulating Act of 1773 made many changes in the administration of English India. The changes that most directly concerned Hastings converted the Governor of Bengal into a Governor-General, and reduced his Council to four members. The Governments of Madras and Bombay were placed under the joint control of Governor-General and Council. Hastings was appointed, naturally enough, to be the new Governor-General. His four councillors were Richard Barwell, General

Clavering, Colonel Monson, and Philip Francis. Barwell was the only one who was a member of Hastings's old Council. The three others were in England; they had been chosen expressly to guide Indian policy in accordance with the views of the home Government. Clavering and Monson had already earned some distinction of a soldierly kind; Francis was by far the ablest of the three. The author of the "Letters of Junius" was much of a scholar and something of a statesman, but he was a man of a fierce and unbending temper, prompt to quarrel, hotly arrogant in argument, unrelenting in his hatred of those who crossed his purposes.

These were not the kind of men with whom Hastings was likely to get on, and from the moment of their landing in India, where they complained that they were not received with sufficient ceremony, they and Hastings were furiously hostile. The meetings of the Governor-General and his Council became so many pitched battles, in which Hastings, aided only by Barwell, fought with tenacity and patience against men whose determination appeared to be in every possible instance to undo what he had done, and to oppose what he proposed to do. They treated him as if he were little better than a clerk in the Company's service; they acted as if their one purpose was to drive him out of public life.

[Sidenote: 1775—Charges against Hastings]

As soon as it was plain that the new men of the new Council were hostile to Hastings, Hastings's enemies were eager enough to come forward and help in the work. One of Hastings's oldest and bitterest enemies was the Brahmin Nand Kumar. Nand Kumar had always been hostile to Hastings. Now, when Hastings was in danger, was {261} threatened with defeat and with disgrace, Nand Kumar came forward with a whole string of accusations against him, accusations to which Francis, Clavering, and Monson listened eagerly. Nand Kumar accused Hastings of many acts of

shameless bribery, declared that he himself had bribed him in large sums, and produced a letter from a native princess in which she avowed that she had bribed Hastings in large sums. The three councillors appear to have accepted every word uttered by Nand Kumar as gospel truth. Hastings, on his side, refused to be arraigned at his own Council-board by a man whom he alleged to be of notoriously infamous character, though he and Barwell were perfectly willing that the whole matter should be referred to the Supreme Court. At last Hastings withdrew from the Council, followed by Barwell. The others immediately voted Clavering into the chair, summoned Nand Kumar before them, listened to all that he had to say, and on that evidence, in the absence of the accused man, the self-constituted tribunal found Hastings guilty of taking bribes from the princess, and ordered him to repay the sum of thirty-five thousand pounds to the public treasury.

For the moment it seemed as if Francis and his party had carried the day. Hastings had his back to the wall, he seemed to be well-nigh friendless. The triumvirate declared that there was no form of peculation from which Hastings had thought it reasonable to abstain, and they formally charged him with having acquired by peculation a fortune of no less than forty lakhs of rupees in two years and a half. Suddenly, when the position of Hastings appeared to be at its worst, it changed. Nand Kumar and two Englishmen named Fowke, who had been very zealous against Hastings, were charged before the Supreme Court with conspiracy, in having compelled a native revenue farmer to bear false witness against Hastings. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court was Elijah Impey, Hastings's old and attached friend, a circumstance of which much has been made. While Nand Kumar was bound over for trial on the charge of conspiracy, another and more serious charge was brought against him by a native attorney, who {262} accused him of forging and publishing a bond. On this charge Nand Kumar was arrested, and after a lengthy hearing of the case committed to the common jail.

There is nothing very surprising in this charge of forgery. Forgery was not a very serious crime in the eyes of such men as either Nand Kumar or his accuser. It was made plain that, whether he had forged the bond or no, he had forged the letter from the princess upon which the charge against Hastings was based, for the princess herself declared it to be a forgery. It had aroused some suspicion even before the disclaimer, on account of the signature, which did not resemble her signature in undoubted and authentic communications. On the question of the forged bond Nand Kumar was duly and apparently fairly tried. It was not very much of a charge. The business was very old. The native attorney had been seeking for some time to bring Nand Kumar to trial, and had only substituted a criminal for a civil suit when the establishment of the Supreme Court enabled him to do so.

[Sidenote: 1775—The execution of Nand Kumar]

Nand Kumar's trial ended in conviction, and conviction for forgery brought with it by the English law sentence of death. Whatever may be thought of the crime of forgery in England, it certainly was not looked upon in India by Indians as a criminal offence of a kind that called for the severest penalty of the law. But Nand Kumar had been tried by English law. His judges, in order to show their fidelity not merely to the spirit but to all the forms of English law, had worn their heavy wigs all through the torrid heat of those Calcutta June days. By the English law he was convicted and sentenced to death. The triumvirate made little or no attempt to save the man on whose word they had relied. On August 5, 1775, Nand Kumar was hanged on the Maidan outside Calcutta. He met his death with the composed courage of a man who looked upon himself as a martyr. Whatever his offences may have been, he had done nothing which in his own eyes, or in the eyes of his fellow-countrymen, called for the pitiless punishment which fell upon him.

Of course, the important question is how far, if at all, {263} Hastings was concerned in the death of Nand Kumar. That is just the question which it is impossible to answer definitely. The certain facts are that Nand Kumar was Hastings's enemy, that Impey was Hastings's friend; that at a moment of grave crisis in Hastings's life, when Nand Kumar was the most eminent witness against his name and fame, that witness, was arraigned on a charge that was very old, that had been suddenly converted from a civil to a criminal charge; that he was tried, found guilty, and executed. On the basis of that bare narrative of facts it would seem that if Hastings had nothing to do with the matter, he might almost as well have had as far as the judgment of posterity went. The thing was too apt, the conditions too peculiar not to leave their stigma upon the memory of the man who gained most by them.

At the same time it must be remembered that, however black the arguments against Hastings may seem, there is no positive proof that he was directly implicated in what his enemies called the judicial murder of Nand Kumar. It must be remembered that the writer who has gone most deeply into the whole ugly story, Sir James Stephen, in his careful "Story of Nuncomar," has after long and exhaustive analysis of every particular of the case recorded his judgment in favor of Impey and of Hastings. Sir James Stephen's judgment is not final, indeed, but it must have weight with any one who attempts impartially to appreciate two public men who have been accused for more than a century of a terrible crime. Sir James Stephen believes that Nand Kumar's trial was perfectly fair, that Hastings had no share whatever in the prosecution, and that there was no collusion of any kind between Hastings and Impey with regard to the trial, the verdict, or the execution. Every one must form as best he may his own judgment upon the matter and the men; but Sir James Stephen's opinion is one that must be taken into account in any attempt to decide.

The death of Nand Kumar did not end the struggle between Hastings and his three antagonists. While they made no further attempt of a like kind—the fate of Nand {264} Kumar, said Francis, would prevent any further native information against the Governor-General—they still resolutely strove by all possible means to cross and check him. It is not necessary to follow in all their mean and wearisome details the particulars of that prolonged conflict. The odds were against Hastings until the death of Monson, when, by means of his own casting vote and the adhesion of Barwell, Hastings found himself the master of the majority at the Council-table. But the persistence of the attacks had their result at home, where an ill-advised offer of resignation made by Hastings was seized upon by the Directors of the Company. The resignation was accepted, Wheler was appointed Governor-General in his stead, and pending his arrival in India the post was to be filled by Clavering.

This was a severe blow for Hastings. At first he thought of yielding to it, in which case his career in India would have been closed. But Clavering's indecent eagerness to seize upon the Governor-Generalship before it was fairly vacant forced Hastings to defiance. He refused to surrender his office to Clavering. Clavering called upon the army to support him. Hastings called upon the army to stand fast by him. The army followed Hastings, and the support of the men of the sword was followed by the support of the men of the robe. The judges of the Supreme Court backed up Hastings and censured Clavering, and a little later Clavering's death left Hastings for the time supreme in the Council-chamber. His supremacy was contested after the arrival of Wheler, who immediately sided with Francis against Hastings. But the supremacy was not overthrown. Hastings was in the majority; he would not allow the alliance of Francis and Wheler to impede him in his purposes, and he stuck to his post as Governor-General.

The East India Company made no effort to enforce his resignation. The Court of Directors resented his conduct, and found fault with him persistently, but they could not overlook his influence with the Court of Proprietors, and the condition of affairs in India was too grave to make the {265} dismissal of Hastings wise or politic. The Government bore Hastings little love, and the King in particular was much incensed at his refusal to resign, and was all for his recall and the recall of Barwell who had abetted, and the judges who had supported him. But the struggle with the American colonies absorbed the attention of the Administration too closely to allow them to interfere so markedly in the affairs of India at a moment when interference might perhaps have a result not unlike the civil war.

[Sidenote: 1702-82—Haidar the bitter enemy of the English]

English opposition was not the only difficulty that Warren Hastings had to contend with. Like the monarch in the Arabian tale who discerns armies marching against his capital from every point of the compass, Hastings found enemies rising up against him in all directions. A league of three native powers menaced the safety of the British possessions. The Mahratta states combined with the Nizam of the Deccan. Both again combined with a new power whose rise had been as rapid as it was alarming, the Mohammedan power of Haidar in Mysore. When Warren Hastings arrived in India the second time Haidar was in his sixty-seventh year. He was born in 1702 as the son of a Mogul officer in the Punjaub. At his death Haidar held a rank somewhat similar to that of a captain in the service of the Emperor of Delhi. Haidar deemed, and rightly deemed, that there was little or no opportunity for his ambition in that service, and his eyes seeking for a better chief, found the man in Nunjeraj, the nominal vizier and real ruler of the Rajah of Mysore. In 1750 Haidar persuaded the troops under his command to leave their Mogul prince and take service with the sovereign of Mysore. Under that sovereignty he rose rapidly to distinction. Though he

was little better than a robber chieftain, the ablest and most daring robber of a horde of robbers, his power grew so rapidly that in time he was able to supplant Nunjeraj, and in the end to usurp the sovereignty of Mysore in 1761.

Haidar had his bitter grudge against the English. In 1771 he had been badly beaten by the Mahrattas and had appealed to the English to help him, as they had {266} undertaken by treaty to do. But the help was refused to the defeated prince, and the defeated prince swore an oath of vengeance against the English, and when the time seemed ripe he did his best to keep his oath. When in 1779 France declared war against England, Haidar declared in favor of the French. He gave his sword to the service of the Grand Confederacy in 1778 and prepared to march upon Madras. The President and the Council were taken unawares. It was not until Haidar had marched with fire and sword into the Carnatic, and that the smoke of the villages he destroyed in his progress could be seen from Madras, that they learned that Haidar was in earnest and not merely making a menace in the hope of frightening the English into an advantageous treaty. Hastings himself seems to have been convinced that Haidar did not mean to attack the Company, but when the Mysore prince's purpose was plain every effort was made to stay his onset. Lord Macartney, although not one of the Company's servants, was made Governor of Madras. Haidar was compelled for the time to abandon his attempt upon the Carnatic. In 1783 his hatred of the English was ended by his sudden death. But he bequeathed it as a rich legacy to his son Tippu, a man as daring and as ambitious as his sire.

Hastings won away by concessions the Mahrattas and the Nizam from the cause of Tippu. But Tippu had his French allies, and Tippu and his French allies carried on a campaign successful enough to force the English practically to appeal for a peace, which Tippu accorded in a treaty flattering at once to his pride and to his ambition. It was a somewhat dearly bought

peace for the English, for Tippu, regarding the advances of the English as a proof of their weakness, made demands far more arrogant than his successes justified, and those demands were agreed to by the English envoys. The treaty with Tippu had to be made on a basis of mutual restitution of conquests, so that England was left at the end of the struggle against Mysore with a great loss both of men and money, and no advantages, territorial or strategical, to set against the loss. Even the peace upon these terms obtained did not prove {267} a lasting peace. Tippu was not unnaturally tempted by the concessions of the English into further displays of arrogance which in time inevitably resulted in another war. But by the time that war broke out Warren Hastings had returned to England and had no further personal concern with the affairs of British India.

In the mean time Hastings's feud with his antagonists on the Council-board continued. A kind of reconciliation, a kind of agreement with Francis, enabled Hastings to allow Barwell to return to England and still to leave the Governor-General in authority at the Board. But Hastings found that reconciliation or agreement with Francis was practically impossible. Rightly or wrongly, Francis renewed his old policy of attacking every proposal and interfering with every project that Hastings entertained. At last the long quarrel came to a violent head. Hastings replied to one of Francis's minutes in some severe words, in which he declared himself unable to rely upon Francis's word, as he had found Francis to be a man devoid of truth and honor.

[Sidenote: 1780—Hastings and Francis fight a duel]

Such a charge made in those days was generally to be met with in only one way. In that way Francis met it. Francis challenged Hastings to a duel. Hastings accepted the challenge. The antagonists met, exchanged shots, and Francis fell severely wounded before the pistol of Hastings. Hastings sent

friendly messages to Francis and offered to visit him, but Francis rejected his overtures absolutely, and on his return to health renewed his attacks upon Hastings until the close of the year, when he sailed for England to carry on more successfully his plans against his enemy.

Well as the Supreme Court had served Hastings in the case of Nuncomar and in the quarrel with Clavering, the time came when Hastings found himself placed in a position of temporary hostility to that Court and to his old friend Impey. The bad machinery of the Act of 1773 left room for almost every possibility of friction between the Supreme Court on the one hand and the Council on the other, instead of framing, as it should have framed, its {268} measure so as to allow the two powers to work harmoniously together, each in its own sphere, for the welfare of British India. The friction grew more intense as time went on. Sometimes one party to the quarrel was in the right, sometimes the other. Whichever was the case, the spectacle of the quarrel was in itself sufficiently humiliating and sufficiently dangerous. Hastings devised a scheme for the better regulation of the powers and privileges of the two conflicting bodies, but his scheme was put on one side by the British Government, and the Court and the Council remained as irreconcilable as before. At last it reached such a pitch that the Court issued a summons against the Government. The Government ignored the summons; things stood at a dead-lock; the personal relationships of Hastings and Impey were strained almost to severance. In this crisis Hastings thought of and carried out a compromise. He offered to Impey the presidency of the Company's chief civil court. Impey accepted the offer, and, though he has been severely censured for what has been called the taking of a bribe, the compromise proved to be the best way out of the difficulty that had arisen. Impey, who has been happily called the first of Indian codifiers, showed himself to be an excellent head for the provincial courts that were thus put under his control. The provincial courts had been hitherto more of a curse than a blessing; under Impey's guidance

they were brought into harmony with the Supreme Court. Impey was not long suffered to remain in his new office. Two years after his acceptance of the post he was removed from it by order of the Court of Directors. But the work he had done in that short time was good work and left abiding traces. Hastings's plan had borne fruit in Impey's "Code," and afterwards in the passing of an Act of Parliament clearly defining the jurisdiction and the powers of the Supreme Court.

[Sidenote: 1781—Hastings and the Rajah of Benares]

One of the latest acts of Warren Hastings's administration was also one of the acts that most provoked the indignation and the resentment of those who in England were watching with hostile eyes the progress of his career. {269} Chait Singh, the Rajah of Benares, held authority at first under the ruler of Oude, and afterwards under the government of the East India Company, to whom the sovereign of Oude had transferred it. The Rajah of Benares paid a certain tribute to the Company. The heavy necessities of the war compelled Hastings to call upon the Rajah for a larger sum. The step was not unusual. In time of war a vassal of the Company might very well expect to be called upon for an increased levy. But the Rajah of Benares was very unwilling to give this proof of his devotion to the Company. He demurred, temporized, promised aid of men and arms, which was never rendered. Hastings seems to have been convinced, first of all, that the Rajah was possessed of enormous wealth, and could well afford to pay heavily for the privilege of being ruled over by the Company, and in the second place that it was necessary for the power and influence of the Company to force the almost mutinous Rajah to his knees. He made a final demand for no less than fifty lakhs, or half a million pounds, and set off himself for Benares to compel the Rajah to obey.

Hastings never wanted courage, but his Benares expedition was certainly the most daring deed of his whole life. He entered the sacred city of Benares attended by an escort of a mere handful of men, and in Benares, in the midst of a hostile population, and practically in the power of the Rajah, he acted as if he were the absolute master of prince, people, and city. He insisted upon his full demands being complied with, and as the Rajah's reply appeared to be unsatisfactory he immediately ordered his assistant, Mr. Markham, to place the Rajah under arrest. The audacity of the step was so great as to suggest either that Hastings was acting with the recklessness of despair, or had formed no thought as to the not merely possible but probable result of his action. The Rajah accepted the confinement to his palace with a dignified protest. Two companies of sepoys were placed to guard him. These sepoys had no ammunition; they were surrounded by swarms of the Rajah's soldiery raging at the insult offered to their lord. The Rajah's men fell upon the sepoys and cut them {270} and their English officers to pieces. The Rajah lowered himself to the river by a rope of turbans, crossed the Ganges, and shut himself up in his stronghold of Ramnagar. Hastings's life was in imminent peril. Had he remained where he was he and his thirty Englishmen and his twenty sepoys would have been massacred. He fled in the darkness of the night to the fortress of Chunar, about thirty miles from Benares, where there was a small garrison of the Company's troops.

[Sidenote: 1781—The Vizier of Oude and the Begums]

However rash Hastings might have been in provoking the conflict with the Rajah, once it was provoked he carried himself with admirable courage and coolness. Shut up with a small force in a region blazing with armed rebellion, menaced by an army of forty thousand men, he acted with as much composure and ability as if he were the unquestioned master of the situation. He declined all offers of assistance from the Vizier of Oude,

rejected all Chait Singh's overtures for peace, and issued his orders to the forces that were gradually rallying around him with rare tact and judgment. In a very short time the whole aspect of affairs changed. The Company's forces under Major Popham defeated the Rajah's troops, captured fort after fort, drove the Rajah to take refuge in Bundelcund, and brought the city and district of Benares under British rule again. Hastings immediately declared that the fugitive Rajah's estates were forfeited, and he bestowed them upon the Rajah's nephew upon tributary terms which bound him faster to the Company, and exacted double the revenue formerly payable into the Company's exchequer.

But the money which Hastings so urgently needed, the money for which he had struck his bold stroke at Benares, was still lacking. All the booty gained in the reduction of Benares had been divided among the victors; none of it had found its way into the Company's coffers. The Vizier of Oude was deeply in the Company's debt, but the Vizier of Oude was in desperately straitened circumstances, and could not pay his debt. Knowing Hastings's need, the Vizier exposed to him certain plans he had formed for raising money by seizing upon the estates of the two {271} Begums, his mother, the widow of the late Nawab, and his grandmother, the late Nawab's mother. The Vizier may have had just claims enough upon the Begums, but it was peculiarly rash and unjustifiable of Hastings to make himself a party to the Vizier's interests. Hastings, unhappily for himself, lent the Vizier the aid of the Company's troops. The Begums, who were quite prepared to resist their feeble-spirited relation, did not go so far as to oppose the Company in arms. Their palace was occupied, their treasure seized, their servants imprisoned, and they themselves suffered discomforts and slights of a kind which constituted very real indignities and insults in the eyes of Mohammedan women. This was practically the last, as it was the most foolish, act of Hastings's rule. It had the misfortune for him of stirring the indignant soul of Burke.

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CHAPTER LIX.

THE GREAT IMPEACHMENT.

[Sidenote: 1785—Burke's knowledge of India]

Burke's spacious mind was informed by a passion for justice. He was not cast in the mould of men who make concessions to their virtues or compacts with their virtues. He could not for a moment admit that the aggrandizement of the empire should be gained by a single act of injustice, and in his eyes Warren Hastings's career was stained by a long succession of acts of injustice. He certainly would not do evil that good might come of it. If the Rohilla war was a crime, if the execution of Nand Kumar was an infamy, if the deposition of Chait Singh and the plundering of the Begums were crimes, then no possible advantage that these acts might cause to the temporal greatness of the State could weigh for one moment in the balance with Burke. In the high court of Burke's mind Warren Hastings was a doomed, a degraded man, even though it could have been proved, as indeed it would have been hard to prove, that any ill deeds which Warren Hastings had done were essential to the maintenance of English rule and English glory in India. Burke argued that English rule in India, English glory in India, did not gain but only lost by ill deeds. But if England's gain and England's glory in India depended upon such deeds, he for his part would have refused the gain and shuddered at the glory.

If Burke's all-conquering passion was a passion for justice, perhaps his keenest political taste was for India and the affairs of India. At a time when our Indian Empire was merely in its dawn, at a time when the affairs of India were looked upon by the nation at large as the commercial matters of a company, Burke allowed all the resources of his great mind to be

employed in the study of India. He {273} knew India—he who had never sailed its seas or touched its shores—as probably no other Englishmen of his time knew India, not even those whose lives had been for the most part passed in the country. And this comprehensive knowledge Burke was able to impart again with a readiness that was never unreliable, with a copiousness that was never redundant. He gave a fascination to the figures of Indian finance; he made the facts of contemporary Indian history live with all the charm of the most famous events of Greek or Roman history. India in his hands became what it rightly is, but what few had thought it till then, one of the most fascinating of human studies. Indian affairs on his lips allied all the allurement of a romance with all the statistical accuracy of a Parliamentary report. Such a genius for the presentation of facts inspired by such a passion for justice has enriched English literature with some of its noblest and most truthful pages.

The pith of all Burke's Indian policy, the text upon which all his splendid sermons of Indian administration were preached, is to be found in one single sentence of the famous speech on the Nabob of Arcot's debts. In that single sentence the whole of Burke's theory of government is summed up with the directness of an epigram and with the authority of a law. "Fraud, injustice, oppression, peculation, engendered in India, are crimes of the same blood, family, and caste, with those that are born and bred in England." Outside the noble simplicity of that ethical doctrine Burke could not and would not budge. That sentence represents the whole difference between him and the man whom he afterwards accused, between him and the men of whom that man came to be the representative. Burke's morality was direct, uncompromising, unalterable by climatic conditions or by the supple moralities of other races. The morality of Warren Hastings and of those who thought with and acted for Warren Hastings was the morality of Clive beforehand, was the morality that had been professed and practised time and again since the days of Clive and Hastings by the inheritors of

their policy in India. The ingenious theory was set up that in {274} dealing with Oriental races it was essential for the Englishman to employ Oriental means of carrying his point. If an Oriental would lie and cheat and forge and, if needs were, murder, why then the Englishman dealing with him must lie and cheat and forge and murder too, in order to gain the day. Things that he would not dare to do, things that, to do him justice, he would not dream of doing in England, were not merely permissible but justifiable, not merely justifiable but essential in his intercourse with Asiatic princes and peoples, with dexterous Mohammedan and dexterous Hindoo. The policy was inevitably new in Burke's time; it has been upheld again and again since Burke's time. The theory which allowed Clive to forge and Warren Hastings to plunder was the same principle which led English soldiers three generations later to make Brahmins wipe up blood before being killed, which prompted them to blow their prisoners from the cannon's mouth in the hope that their victims should believe that their souls as well as their bodies were about to perish, which instigated gallant men to suggest in all seriousness the advisability of flaying alive their captured mutineers. The influence of the East is not always a wholesome influence upon the wanderer from the West. It is displayed at its worst when it leads great men, as Clive and Hastings undoubtedly were great men, into the perpetration of evil actions, and the justification of them on the principle that in dealing with an Oriental the Englishman's morality undergoes a change, and becomes for the time and the hour an Oriental morality.

[Sidenote: 1785-87—The defender of Hastings]

Against such an adversary, Hastings, ignorant of the conditions of English political life, could bring forward no better champion than Major Scott. Hastings opposed to the greatest orator and most widely informed man of his age, a man of meagre parts, who only succeeded in wearying profoundly the House of Commons and every other audience to which he

appealed. Such a proconsul as Warren Hastings standing his trial upon such momentous charges needed all the ability, all the art that an advocate can possess to be employed in his behalf. Had Hastings {275} been so lucky as to find a defender endowed, not indeed with the genius or the knowledge of Burke, for there was no such man to be found, but with something of the genius, something of the knowledge of Burke, his case might have appeared very different then and in the eyes of posterity. If Scott could have pleaded for Hastings eloquently, brilliantly, with something of the rich coloring, something of the fervid enthusiasm that was characteristic of the utterances of his great antagonist, he might have done much to stem, if not to turn the stream of public thought. But Warren Hastings was not graced so far. His sins had indeed found him out when he was cursed with such an enemy and cursed with such a friend.

It is clear that Hastings himself on his return had little idea of the serious danger with which he was menaced. He seems to have become convinced that his services to the State must inevitably outweigh any accidents or errors in the execution of those services. He honestly believed himself to have been a valuable and estimable servant of his country and his Crown. We may very well take his repeated declarations of his own integrity and uprightness, not, indeed, as proof of his possession of those qualities, but as proof of his profound belief that he did possess them. When he landed in England he appears to have expected only honors, only acclamation, admiration, and applause. He returned to accept a triumph; he did not dream that he should have to face a trial.

The long years in India had served to confuse his perception of the conduct of affairs at home. He did not in the least appreciate the men with whom he had to deal. If he gauged pretty closely the malignity of Francis, he may have fancied that the malignity was not very likely to prove dangerous. But he wholly misunderstood the character of the other foes, as

important as Francis was unimportant, who were ranged against him. He made the extraordinary mistake of despising Burke.

Hastings had certain anxieties on his return to England, His first was caused by his disappointment at not finding his wife in London to greet him on his arrival, a {276} disappointment that was consoled two days later when, as he was journeying post-haste to the country to join her, he met her on Maidenhead Bridge driving in to join him. His second was the pleasurable anxiety of negotiating for the purchase of Daylesford, the realization of his youthful dream. He was made a little anxious too, later on, by the delay in the awarding to him of those honors which he so confidently expected. But he does not seem to have been disturbed in any appreciable degree by the formidable preparations which were being made against him by Burke and Fox and the followers of Burke and Fox.

It is just possible that those preparations might have come to little or nothing but for the folly of Major Scott. Major Scott was mad enough to try and force the hand of the enemies of Hastings by calling upon Burke and Fox to fix a day for the charges that they were understood to be prepared to bring against him. Fox immediately rose to assure Major Scott that the matter was not forgotten. Burke, with grave composure, added that a general did not take choice of time and place of battle from his adversaries. It has been suggested that but for Major Scott's ill-advised zeal the attack might never have come to a head. But the conclusion is one which it would be rash to draw. Burke was not the man to forego his long-cherished hope of bringing a criminal to justice. If he had been inclined to forego it, he was not the kind of man to be goaded into unwilling resumption of his purpose by the taunts of Major Scott. It may surely be assumed that the impeachment of Warren Hastings would have been made even if Major Scott had been as wise and discreet as he proved himself to be unwise and indiscreet.

Even when the attack was formally begun, Hastings failed to grasp its gravity or guess the best mode of meeting it. He insisted upon being heard at the Bar of the House in his own defence. A man of rare oratorical ability, gifted with special skill in the selection of his material and the adjustment of his arguments, might have done himself a good turn by such a decision. But Hastings was not so endowed, and he would have done far better in {277} following the example of Clive and of Rumbold. He committed the one fault which the House of Commons never forgives, he wearied it. Such dramatic effect as he might have got out of his position as a proconsul arraigned before a senate he spoiled by the length and tedium of his harangue. He took two days to read a long and wordy defence, two days which he considered all too short, and which the House of Commons found all too long. It yawned while Hastings prosed. Accustomed to an average of eloquence of which the art has long been lost, it found Hastings's paper insufferably wearisome.

Although he was the target for the eloquence of Burke, of Fox, and of Sheridan, still Hastings's hopes were high, and they mounted higher when the Rohilla war charge was rejected by a large majority. But they were only raised so high to be dashed to earth again in the most unexpected manner. The friends of Hastings were convinced that he would have the unfailing support of Pitt in his defence. He was now to learn that he was mistaken.

[Sidenote: 1787—Pitt and the impeachment]

Hastings had one very zealous champion in the House of Commons. This was a young member, Sir James Bland-Burges. He rose not merely with the approval of Pitt, but actually at Pitt's instigation, to defend Warren Hastings on the question of the treatment of the Rajah of Benares. It is scarcely surprising that the House did not pay him any great attention. Having just come under "the spell of the enchanter," it would hardly have listened with

attention to an old and well-known member, and Bland-Burges was a young and unknown man. He could not command a hearing, so, whispering to Pitt that he would leave the remainder of the defence to him, he sat down, and the debate, on Pitt's suggestion, was adjourned.

On the following day the young defender came to the House hot to hear Pitt deliver to an attentive senate that defence which he had striven unsuccessfully to make. He has recorded the astonishment, indignation, and despair when Pitt rose to make his declaration concerning the charge against Hastings. The minister in whom Hastings trusted to find an ally offered some cold condemnation of {278} the intemperance of the attack, proffered some lukewarm praise to Hastings, and then announced that he would agree to the motion. To most of Pitt's supporters Pitt's action came as an unpleasant surprise; but to Bland-Burges, from his previous conversation with the minister, it seemed like an act of treason. There was little for Bland-Burges to do, but it is to his credit that he did that little. It required no small courage for a follower and a friend of Pitt to defy his authority in the House. Yet that is practically what Bland-Burges did. Raging with indignation at what he conceived to be the tergiversation of his leader and the treachery to his hero, Bland-Burges once again forced himself upon the attention of the House. The leaders on both sides being agreed, it was expected that the matter would be settled out of hand, and the Speaker had actually put the question and declared it carried when Bland-Burges leaped to his feet and challenged a division. He acted with the courage of his despair, but, as he says, few unpremeditated enterprises ever succeeded better than this one. "The question indeed was carried by a great majority, but those who were against it were almost entirely of those who till then had implicitly voted with the minister. This was not only mortifying to Mr. Pitt, but highly encouraging to Mr. Hastings and his steadfast friends."

Bland-Burges did not escape an early intimation of the disapproval of his chief. When the House broke up, Pitt said to him, with an austere look, "So, sir, you have thought proper to divide the House. I hope you are satisfied." Bland-Burges answered that he was perfectly satisfied. "Then you seem satisfied very easily," the minister retorted; to which Bland-Burges replied, "Not exactly so, sir. I am satisfied with nothing that has passed this evening except the discovery I have made that there were still honest men present." "On that," Bland-Burges continues, "with a stern look and a stately air he left me."

[Sidenote: 1787—Bland-Burges and Hastings]

Bland-Burges won a reward for his courage which outweighed the disapproval of Pitt. When he had thus {279} volunteered on behalf of Warren Hastings he was so entirely a stranger to him that he did not even know him by sight. Naturally enough, however, the arraigned man was desirous to become acquainted with the stranger who had stood by him when his own friends had abandoned him. He lost no time, therefore, in calling upon Bland-Burges to thank him for the part he had played. Bland-Burges says that the conversation was deeply interesting, but that he only made a note of one passage, in which he explained that, independently of his own conviction that the cause of Warren Hastings was just and honorable, he had been moved to take part in his defence by the positive instructions of his father, who had died about two years previously. Bland-Burges's father, attributing the preservation of England's power in India to Hastings, had enjoined his son, if ever an attack were made upon Hastings, to abstract himself from all personal and party considerations and to support him liberally and manfully. Whatever we may think of the conduct of Warren Hastings, it is a pleasure to find that those who thought him to be in the right stood up for their belief as honorably and as gallantly as Bland-Burges. It is not surprising that Warren Hastings was moved to tears. That

day's interview was the beginning of a friendship that endured unbroken until the death of Warren Hastings.

The reason which Pitt gave for his action on the Benares vote was simple enough. He said that, although the action of Hastings towards the Rajah was in itself justifiable, yet that the manner of the action was not justifiable. Chait Singh deserved to be fined, but not to be fined in an exorbitant and tyrannical manner. The explanation might very well be considered sufficient. A high-minded minister might feel bound to condemn the conduct of an official whom he admired, if that conduct had pushed a legal right to an illegal length. But Pitt's decision came with such a shock to the friends, and even to the enemies of Hastings, that public rumor immediately set to work to find some other less simple and less honest reason for Pitt's action. One rumor ascribed it to an {280} interview with Dundas, in which Dundas had succeeded, after hours of argument, in inducing Pitt to throw Warren Hastings over. Another suggested that Pitt was spurred by anger at a declaration of Thurlow's that he and the King between them would make Hastings a peer, whether the minister would or no. A third suggested that Pitt was jealous of the royal favor to Mr. and Mrs. Hastings; while a fourth asserted that Pitt deliberately sacrificed Hastings in order to afford the Opposition other quarry than himself. But there is no need to seek for any other motive than the motive which Pitt alleged. It was quite sufficient to compel an honorable man to give the vote that Pitt gave.

Blow after blow fell upon Hastings. The terrible attacks of Burke were for a time eclipsed by the dazzling brilliancy of Sheridan's attack upon him in the famous Begum speech. Those who heard that speech speak of it with reverence and with passion as one of the masterpieces of the world. In the form in which it is preserved, or rather in which it has failed to be preserved for us, it is hard, if not impossible, to find merit calling for the rapture which it aroused in the minds of men familiar with magnificent oratory, and

perfectly competent to judge. That it did arouse rapture is beyond doubt, and for the moment it was even more effective in injuring Hastings than the more profound but less flaming utterances of Burke. The testimony of Fox, the testimony of Byron, alike are offered in its unqualified praise.

It was decided by the House of Commons, with the consent of Pitt, that Hastings should be impeached. One indignity Pitt spared him, one danger Pitt saved him from. Burke was, somewhat incomprehensibly, anxious that the name of Francis should be placed upon that Committee of Impeachment to which Burke had already been nominated as the first member by Pitt. But here Pitt was resolute. Francis was flagrantly hostile to Hastings, hostile with a personal as well as a public hatred, and Pitt could not tolerate the notion that he should find a place upon the Committee of Impeachment. Burke protested, and the {281} very protest was characteristic of Burke's high-mindedness. For to Burke the whole business was a purely public business, in no sense connected with any private feelings, and it seemed to him as if the exclusion of any one of those who had been conspicuous in the arraignment of Hastings from a responsible place on the Committee of Impeachment on the ground of personal feeling was to cast something like a slur upon the purity of motive of the men engaged in the attack. But Pitt was in the right, and the name of Francis was, by a large majority, not suffered to appear upon the committee.

[Sidenote: 1787—The impeachment trial]

In the May of 1787 Burke formally impeached Warren Hastings at the Bar of the House of Lords. Hastings was immediately taken into custody by the Sergeant-at-Arms, and was held to bail for 20,000 pounds, with two sureties for 10,000 pounds each. The delay which was to be characteristic of the whole proceedings was evident from the first. Though Hastings was taken into custody in the May of 1787, It was not until February 13 of the

following year, 1788, that the impeached man was brought to his trial in Westminster Hall.

Before the trial began, popular feeling was roused against Hastings more keenly by the action of the Court than by the action of Burke and of his colleagues. The Court was inclined to be even more than friendly to Hastings and to his wife, and both Hastings and his wife, who were not in touch with English public opinion, took the unwise course of making the very most of the royal favor, and of displaying themselves as much as possible in the royal sunlight. The London public, always jealous of any Court favoritism, resented the patronage of Hastings, and while it was in this temper an event took place which served to heighten its resentment. The Nizam of the Deccan had sent a very magnificent diamond to the King as a present, and, being ignorant of what was going on in England, he chose Hastings, naturally enough, as the medium through which to convey his diamond to the King. Hastings, with the want of judgment which characterized him at this time, accepted a duty which, delicate at any {282} time, became under the conditions positively dangerous. He was present at the Levee at which the diamond was presented to the King. Immediately rumor seized upon the incident and distorted it. It was confidently asserted that Hastings was bribing the Sovereign with vast presents of precious stones to use his influence in his behalf. The solitary diamond became in the popular eye more numerous than the stones that Sinbad came upon in the enchanted valley. The print-shops teemed with caricatures, all giving some highly colored exaggeration of the prevailing impression. Every possible pictorial device which could suggest to the passer-by that Hastings was buying the protection of the King by fabulous gifts of diamonds was made public. In one Hastings was shown flinging quantities of precious stones into the open mouth of the King. In another he was represented as having bought the King bodily, crown and sceptre and all, with his precious stones, and as carrying him away in a wheelbarrow. So high did popular feeling run

that the great diamond became the hero of a discussion in the House of Commons, when Major Scott was obliged to make a statement in his chief's behalf giving an accurate account of what had really occurred.

The trial of Warren Hastings is one of the most remarkable examples of contrasts in human affairs that is to be found in the whole course of our history. It began under conditions of what may fairly be called national interest. It came to an end amid the apathy and indifference of the public. When it began, the Great Hall of Westminster was scarcely large enough to contain all those who longed to be present at the trial of the great proconsul. All the rank, the wealth, the genius, the wit, the beauty of England seemed to be gathered together in the building, which is said to be the oldest inhabited building in the world. When it ended, and long before it had ended, the attendance had dwindled down to a mere handful of spectators, some two or three score of persons whose patience, whose interest, or whose curiosity had survived the indifference with which the rest of the world had come to {283} regard the whole business. The spirit of genius and the spirit of dulness met in close encounter in that memorable arena, and it must be admitted that the spirit of dulness did on the whole prevail. There seemed a time when it was likely that the trial might go on forever. Men and women who came to the first hearing eager on the one side or the other, impassioned for Hastings or enthusiastic for Burke, died and were buried, and new men and women occupied themselves with other things, and still the trial dragged its slow length along.

[Sidenote: 1788-95—Hastings's Oriental fortitude]

It may be unhesitatingly admitted that during the long course of the trial Warren Hastings bore himself with courage and with dignity. He was firmly convinced that he was a much-injured man, and if the justice of a man's cause were to be decided merely upon the demeanor of the defendant,

Hastings would have been exonerated. He professed to be horrified, and he no doubt was horrified, by what he called "the atrocious calumnies of Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox." He carried himself as if they were indeed atrocious calumnies without any basis whatsoever. His attitude was that of the martyr supported by the serenity of the saint. He had lived so long in the East that he gained not a little of that Eastern fortitude which is the fortitude of fatalism. While the trial was progressing he told a dear friend that he found much consolation in a certain Oriental tale. The story was of an Indian king whose temper never knew a medium, and who in prosperity was hurried into extravagance by his joy, while in adversity grief overwhelmed him with despondency. Having suffered many inconveniences through this weakness, he besought his courtiers to devise a sentence, short enough to be engraved upon a ring, which should suggest a remedy for his evil. Many phrases were proposed; none were found acceptable until his daughter offered him an emerald on which were graven two Arabic words, the literal translation of which is, "This, too, will pass." The King embraced his daughter and declared that she was wiser than all his wise men. "Now," said Hastings, "when I appear at the Bar and hear the violent invectives {284} of my enemies, I arm myself with patience. I reflect upon the mutability of human life, and I say to myself, 'This, too, will pass.'"

It did pass, but it took its long time to pass. The trial lasted seven years. Begun in the February of 1788, it ended in the April of 1795. In that long space of time men might well be excused if they had grown weary of it. Had its protracted course been even pursued in colorless, eventless times it would have been hard to preserve the public interest in the trial so terribly drawn out. But it was one of the curious fortunes of the trial to embrace within its compass some of the most thrilling and momentous years that have been recorded in the history of mankind. In the year after the trial began the Bastille fell. In the year before the trial closed the Reign of Terror came to an end with the deaths of Robespierre and St. Just. The interval had

seen the whole progress of the French Revolution, had applauded the constitutional struggle for liberty, had shuddered at the September massacres, had seen the disciplined armies of the great European Powers reel back dismayed before the ragged regiments of the Republic, had seen France answer Europe with the head of a king, with the head of a queen, had observed how the Revolution, like Saturn, devoured its own children, had witnessed with fear as well as with fury the apotheosis of the guillotine. While the events in France were shaking every European State, including England, to its centre, it was hard for the public mind to keep itself fixed with any degree of intentness upon the trial of Warren Hastings.

The events of that interval had affected too, profoundly, the chief actor in the trial. Burke entered upon the impeachment of Warren Hastings at the zenith of his great career, at the moment of his greatest glory. The rise and progress of the French evolution exercised a profound, even a disastrous, effect upon him. For once his fine intellect failed to discriminate between the essentials and the non-essentials of a great question. His horror at the atrocities of the Revolution blinded him to all the advantages that {285} the success of the Revolution brought with it. The whole framework of that great event was to him so hideously stained with the blood of the Queen, with the blood of so many innocent persons, that he could see nothing but the blood, and the influence of this is to be noticed in Burke's final speech with its almost confident expectation that the guillotine would sooner or later be established in England. Burke's frenzy against the French Revolution made it appear to many as if his reasoned and careful indictment of the erring Governor-General might after all be only mere frenzy too.

[Sidenote: 1788-95—Acquittal of Hastings]

Such as it was, and under such conditions, the trial did come to an end at last, after such alternations of brilliant speeches and dull speeches as the

world had never witnessed before. Sheridan again added to his fame by a speech of which, unhappily, we are able to form no very clear idea. Law defended Hastings in detailing the whole of the history of Hindostan. Hastings again and again appealed piteously and pathetically that the trial might be brought somehow or other to an end. He was growing old, he had been for years a nominal prisoner, he was very anxious that the terrible strain of waiting upon the slow proceedings of the tribunal should be relieved. At last the end came after weary years of controversy, in which Hastings had been loaded with more contumely and lauded with more extravagance than it were possible to conceive him good enough or bad enough to deserve. Finally, in the April of 1795, Warren Hastings was acquitted by a large majority on every one of the sixteen counts against him that were put to the vote. Burke could not conceal his chagrin at this unexpected result. He had expected, he declared afterwards, that the corruption of the age would enable Hastings to escape on some of the counts, but he was not prepared for the total acquittal. It is probable that Hastings himself was not prepared for it, but the relief it afforded him was tempered by the grave financial difficulties into which he found himself plunged. The conduct of that long defence had well-nigh exhausted all his available resources. After a vain appeal to Pitt to {286} indemnify him for his legal expenses, an arrangement was come to between the Government and the Company by which Hastings was enabled to live at first in straitened, afterwards in moderate, circumstances for the rest of his life.

[Sidenote: 1788-95—Effect of the impeachment trial]

It can scarcely be questioned but that Burke was in some degree responsible for the result of the trial. His burning sense of injustice, his passionate righteousness, and the perfervid strength of his convictions betrayed him into an intemperance of language that inevitably caused a reaction of sympathy in favor of the man so violently assailed. It is

impossible to read without regret the actual ferocity of the epithets that Burke hurled against Warren Hastings. In this he was followed, even exceeded, by Sheridan; but the utterances of Sheridan, while they enraptured their hearers by their brilliancy, did not carry with them the weight that attached to the utterances of Burke. Burke's case was too strong to need an over-charged form of expression. The plain statement of the misdeeds of Warren Hastings was far more telling as an indictment than the abuse with which Burke unhappily was tempted to overload his case. Those who were amazed and sickened, with Macaulay, to think that in that age any one could be found capable of calling the greatest of living public men, "that reptile Mr. Burke," must reluctantly be compelled to admit that Burke set his enemies a bad example by his own unlicensed use of opprobrium. In justifying, for instance, the application to Warren Hastings of Coke's savage description of Raleigh as a "spider of hell," Burke allowed his fierce indignation to get the better of his tongue, to the detriment of his own object, the bringing of an offender to justice. Miss Burney in her memoirs affords a remarkable instance of the injury which Burke did to his own object by the exuberance of his anger. She tells us how, as she listened to Burke's arraignment of Hastings, and went over the catalogue of his offences, she felt her sympathy for Hastings slowly disappear, but that as Burke increased in the fury of his assault, and passed from accusation to invective, the convincing effect {287} of his oratory withered, and the effect which he had so carefully created he himself contrived to destroy.

In spite of defects which in some degree brought their own punishment with them, Burke's speeches against Warren Hastings must ever remain among the highest examples of human eloquence employed in the service of the right. The gifts of the statesman, the philosopher, the orator, the great man of letters, are all allied in those marvellous pages which first taught Englishmen how closely their national honor as well as their national prosperity was involved in the administration of justice in India. If Burke

failed to convict Warren Hastings, he succeeded in convicting the system which made such misdemeanors as Warren Hastings's possible. We owe to Burke a new India. What had been but the appanage of a corrupt and corrupting Company he practically made forever a part of the glory and the grandeur of the British Empire.

Abuse and invective were not confined to Burke nor to the side which Burke represented. Warren Hastings, or those who acted for Warren Hastings, employed every means in their power to blacken the characters of their opponents and to hold them up to public ridicule and to public detestation. The times were not gentle times for men engaged in political warfare, and the companions of Hastings employed all the arts that the times placed at their disposal. Burke and Sheridan, and those who acted with Burke and Sheridan, were savage enough in the tribune, but they did not employ the extra-tribunal methods by which their enemy retaliated upon them.

Hastings is scarcely to be blamed, considering duly the temper of his age, for doing everything that party warfare permitted against his opponents. He was fighting as for his life; he was fighting for what was far dearer to him than life—for life, indeed, he had ever shown a most soldierly disregard; he was fighting for an honorable name, for the reward of a lifetime devoted to the interests of his country, as he understood those interests; he was fighting for fame as against infamy, and he fought hard and he {288} fought after the fashion of the time in which he lived. The newspaper, the pamphlet, the lampoon, the caricature, the acidulated satire, the envenomed epigram, all were used, and used with success, against the promoters of the impeachment.

The caricatures were not all on one side, but the most numerous and the most effective were in favor of the impeached statesman. If the adversaries

of Hastings naturally seized upon the opportunity of a classical effect by presenting Burke and Hastings in the character of Cicero and Verres, the friends of Verres replied by the pencil of Gillray, representing Hastings as the savior of India defending himself heroically against assassins with the faces of Burke and of Fox. As the interest in the trial flagged the caricatures grew fewer and fewer, to revive a little at the close of the case. The popular view of the trial was then represented fairly enough by a large print called "The Last Scene of the Manager's Farce," in which Hastings was represented as rising in glory from the clouds of calumny, while Burke and Fox are represented witnessing with despair the failure of their protracted farce, and the crafty face of Philip Francis peeped from behind a scene where he was supposed to be playing the part of the prompter—"no character in the farce, but very useful behind the scenes," a description which sums up smartly enough the part that Philip Francis played in the whole transaction from first to last.

[Sidenote: 1818—Death of Hastings]

The eve of Hastings's life was as peaceful as its noon and day had been stormy. The proconsul became a country squire; the ruler of an empire, the autocrat of kings, soothed his old age very much after the fashion of Diocletian and of Candide, in the planting of cabbages. For three-and-twenty years he dwelt at Daylesford, happy in his wife, happy in his friends, happy in his health, in his rustic tastes, in his simple pleasures, in his tranquil occupation. He and his wife often visited London, but Hastings seems to have been always happiest in the country, and he gradually declined into extreme old age with all the grace and dignity of a Roman gentleman, loved by his {289} friends, dearly loved by those who were young. Once in those long quiet years, after the death of Pitt, Hastings, to please his wife, pleaded for public reparation of the wrong which he believed had been done him. Grenville professed every willingness to grant

him a peerage, but refused to entertain the idea of inducing the Commons to reverse their former judgment. On those terms Hastings declined the peerage. The nearest approach to anything like public consolation for his sorrows came to him in 1813, when, at the age of eighty, he came once more to the Bar of the House of Commons, this time to give evidence on the question of renewing the Charter of the East India Company. By both Houses, Commons and Lords alike, the old man was greeted with the greatest enthusiasm, saluted with rapturous applause on his arrival, with reverential salutations on his departure. In 1818 the health which he had preserved so well till then broke, and he died after some severe suffering on August 22 in that year, and was laid in the earth that he had always loved so well.

One of the latest acts of his life was to appeal to the Court of Directors to make some provision for his wife, by extending to her the annuity that had been accorded to him. They gave, says his most devoted biographer, no more heed to his dying entreaties than they would have given to the whine of a self-convicted beggar. Yet surely Hastings had deserved well of the East India Company. His faults had been committed in their service and had given them, not himself, wealth and power. But England is not always grateful to her servants. It is not wonderful, says Sir Alfred Lyall, that Hastings's application failed entirely, "remembering that even Lord Nelson's last testamentary appeal on behalf of a woman—'the only favor I ask of my King and my country at the moment when I am going to fight their battle'—had been rejected and utterly disregarded." Mrs. Hastings survived her husband for some years, and was over ninety years of age when she died.

CHAPTER LX.

THE CHANGE OF THINGS.

[Sidenote: 1789—The political condition of France]

The establishment of the American republic meant something more for England than the loss of her fairest colonies, and meant much more for Europe than the establishment of a new form of government in the New World. While the United States were acclaiming Washington as their first President and rejoicing over the excellence of their carefully framed Constitution, the principles which had elected the one and had created the other were working elsewhere to unexpected and mighty issues. French gentlemen of rank and fortune, fired by a philosophic admiration for liberty, had fought and fought well for the American colonists. When the revolt had become a revolution, and the revolution a triumph, the French gentlemen went back to France with their hearts full of love and their lips loud in praise for the young republic and its simple, splendid citizens. The doctrines of liberty and equality, which had been so dear to the Philosophers and the Encyclopaedists, were now being practically applied across the Atlantic, and the growth of their success was watched by the eager eyes of the wisest and the unwisest thinkers in France. Within five years from the time when the American army was disbanded French political philosophy found itself making astonishing strides towards the realization of its cherished ideals. It had long felt the need of some change in the system of government that had prevailed in France, but its desires had seemed dim as dreams until the success of a handful of rebellious colonists in a distant country had made the spirit of democracy an immediate force in the life and the thought of the world. Undoubtedly the condition of France was bad. {291} The feudal system, or what was left of the feudal system, worn out, degraded, and corrupt, was rapidly reducing France to financial, physical, and political ruin. It is no part of the business of this history to dwell upon the conditions

prevailing in France towards the close of the eighteenth century, conditions which prevailed in varying degree over the most part of Europe. Great French financiers like Turgot, great French thinkers like Voltaire and Rousseau and the company of the "Encyclopaedia," had been keenly conscious of the corroding evils in the whole system of French political and social life, and had labored directly and indirectly to diminish them. Keen-eyed observers from abroad, men of the world like Chesterfield, philosophers like Arthur Young, had at different epochs observed the symptoms of social disease and prognosticated the nature of its progress. The France of that day has been likened to a pyramid with the sovereign for its apex, with the nobility, a remnant of antique feudalism, for its next tier, with the wealthy and influential Church for the next, and below these the vast unrecognized bulk of the pyramid, the unprivileged masses who were the people of France. In the hands of the few who had the happiness to be "born," or who otherwise belonged to the privileged orders, lay all the power, all the authority which for the most part they misused or abused. It has been said with truth that the man who did not belong to the privileged orders had scarcely any more influence upon the laws which bound him and which ground him than if he lived in Mars or Saturn instead of in Picardy or Franche Comté. Such a system of government, which could only have been found tolerable if it had been swayed by a brotherhood of saints and sages, was, as a matter of fact, worked in the worst manner possible and for the worst purposes. The conditions under which the vast mass of the French people lived, struggled, suffered, and died were so cruel that it is hard indeed to believe them compatible with the high degree of civilization which, in other respects, France had reached. A merciless and most comprehensive process of taxation squeezed life and hope out of the French nation {292} for the benefit of a nobility whose corruption was only rivalled by its worthlessness and an ecclesiasticism that had forgotten the Sermon on the Mount and the way to Calvary.

But if the condition of France was bad it contained the germs of improvement. A greater freedom of thought, a greater freedom of speech were beginning, very gradually, to assert themselves and to make their influence felt. Philosophical speculation on sorrow and suffering turned the minds of men to thoughts of how that sorrow might be stanched and that suffering abated. The slowly rising tide of thought was blown into an angry sea by a wind from the west, and in a little while a scarcely suspected storm became a hurricane that swept into a common ruin everything that opposed its fury. England had long been looked up to by French reformers as the pattern for the changes they desired to see brought about in their own country. The moderation and equality of its laws, as compared with those of France, the facilities of utterance afforded to the popular voice, made it seem a veritable Utopia to eyes dimmed by the mist of French feudality. But now another and a greater England had arisen in the New World. Across the Atlantic the descendants of the men who had overthrown a dynasty and beheaded a king had shaken themselves free from forms of oppression that seemed mild indeed to Frenchmen, and had proclaimed themselves the champions of theories of social liberty and political freedom which had been dreamed of by French philosophers but had never yet been put into practice. Rebellious America had fired the enthusiasm of gallant French adventurers; successful, independent America animated the hopes and spurred the imaginations of those whose eyes turned in longing admiration from the seasoned constitution of monarchical England to the as yet green constitution of republican America.

[Sidenote: 1789—Revival of the States-General in France]

Those Englishmen whose tastes and sympathies induced them to keep in touch with political opinion in France, and to watch with interest the spread of ideas which they themselves held dear, noted with approval many remarkable {293} signs of activity across the Channel. While the strain

upon the false financial system of France had become so great that the attempt to stop the hole in the money chest broke the spirit of finance minister after finance minister, a feeling in favor of some change in the system that made such catastrophes possible seemed to be on the increase in educated and even in aristocratic circles. Many Englishmen of that day knew France, or at least Paris, fairly well. If Pitt had paid the French capital but a single visit, Fox was intimately acquainted with it, and Walpole was almost as familiar with a superficial Paris as he was with a superficial London. Dr. Johnson, not very long before the time of which we write, had visited Paris with his friends the Thrales, and had made the acquaintance of a brewer named Santerre. Arthur Young travelled in France as he travelled in England and in Ireland. On the other hand, Frenchmen who were soon to be conspicuous advocates of change were not unknown on the English side of the Channel. Mirabeau was known in London—not too favorably—and the cousin of the French King, the Duke de Chartres, afterwards Duke of Orleans, had moved in London society and was to move there again. So when educated Englishmen heard that Lafayette had demanded the revival of the States-General, unused and almost forgotten these two centuries, they knew that the friend of Washington was not likely to ask for impossibilities. When the Duke of Orleans set himself openly in opposition to the King, his cousin, they recognized a significance in the act, and when Mirabeau asserted himself as the champion of a growing agitation in favor of an oppressed and unrepresented people they remembered the big, vehement man who had passed so much of his life in prisons and had played the spy upon the Prussian Court. Gradually prepared for some change in the administrative system of France, they were not prepared for the rapid succession of changes that followed upon the formal convocation of the States-General in the spring of 1789.

The States-General was the nearest approach to a representative parliamentary system that was known to France. {294} But the States-

General had not been summoned to aid the deliberations of a French monarch in the course of many reigns. France had lived under what was practically a despotism untempered by an expression of organized public opinion for several generations. It was so long since the States-General had been convoked that the very forms and ceremonies incidental to or essential to its convocation had passed out of living memory, and had to be painfully ascertained by much groping after authority and precedent. In the end, however, authority and precedent were ascertained, and the States-General, composed of representatives of the three estates of the realm—the Church, the Nobility, and the People—met with much ceremony at Versailles. They were called together for the ostensible purpose of dealing with the financial difficulties that threatened to make the country bankrupt. But it was soon clear that they, or at least the majority of their members, intended to accomplish much more than that. The news that travelled slowly in those days from the capital of France to the capital of England grew to be interesting and important with an interest and an importance that were not to cease in steady activity for more than a quarter of a century. Event followed event with startling rapidity. The members of the Third Estate severed themselves from the Church and the Nobility, met in the Tennis Court in Versailles, and declared themselves a National Assembly. The people of Paris, profoundly agitated, and fearing that the King intended to suppress the insurgent National Assembly by force, broke out into riots, which culminated in an attack upon the famous and detested prison in the Faubourg St. Antoine, the Bastille. The Bastille had not for many years been a serious instrument of oppression, but its record was an evil record, and it represented in the eyes of the people of Paris all that was most detested and most detestable in the old order. The Bastille was captured; its few prisoners were borne in triumph through the streets, while its commander, De Launay, was decapitated and his head carried about on the point of a pike.

[Sidenote: 1789—The French Revolution]

If the King of France had been a different man from {295} Louis the Sixteenth he might have faced the rising storm with some hope of success. But he could do nothing, would do nothing. His advisers, his intimates, his kinsmen, his captains, despairing at his vacillation and fearing that they would be abandoned to the fury of insurgent Paris, fled for their lives from a country that seemed to them as if possessed by a devil. The country was possessed, possessed by the spirit of revolution. After ages of injustice a chance had come for the oppressed, and the oppressed had seized their chance and misused it, as the long oppressed always misuse sudden power. Rebellious Paris marched upon Versailles, camped outside the King's palace; broke in the night time into the King's palace, slaying and seeking to slay. The Royal Family were rescued, if rescue it can be called, by the interposition of Lafayette. They were carried in triumph to Paris. Still nominally sovereign, they were practically prisoners in their palace of the Tuileries. Europe looked on in astonishment at the unexpected outbreak. In England at first the leaders of liberal opinion applauded what they believed to be the dawn of a new and glorious era of political freedom. Fox hailed in a rapture of exultation the fall of the Bastille. The Duke of Dorset, the English ambassador to France, saluted the accomplishment of the greatest revolution recorded by history. Eager young men, nameless then but yet to be famous, apostrophised the dawn of liberty. "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, but to be young was very heaven," Wordsworth wrote, with a wistful regret, fifteen years after the Bastille had fallen, recalling with a kind of tragic irony the emotions of that hour and contrasting them with his thoughts on the events that had followed through half a generation. All over England strenuous politicians, catching the contagion of excitement from excited France, formulated their sympathy with the Revolution in ardent, eloquent addresses, formed themselves into clubs to propagate the principles that were making France free and illustrious, and sent delegates

speeding across the Channel to convey to a confident, constitution-making National Assembly the {296} assurance that the best hearts and the wisest brains in England pulsed and moved in unison with their desires.

[Sidenote: 1790—Burke and the French Revolution]

Such assurances were inaccurate and misleading. There was one man in England the goodness of whose heart, the wisdom of whose brain could scarcely be questioned, whose censure in England, and not in England alone, was more serious than the applause of a whole theatre of others. At a moment when all who represented liberal thought in politics, all who some ten years earlier had sympathized with the American colonists, were showing a like sympathy for the insurgent people of France, Edmund Burke made himself conspicuous by the vehemence and the vigor of his opposition to a movement which commanded the admiration of his most intimate friends and closest political allies. While the Revolution was still almost in its infancy, while Sheridan and Fox vied with each other in the warmth of their applause, Burke set himself to preach a crusade against the Revolution with all the unrestrained ardor of his uncompromising nature. No words of Fox or of Sheridan, no resolution of clubs, no delegated enthusiasm had anything like the same effect in aiding, that Burke's famous pamphlet had in injuring the French Revolution, in the eyes not merely of the mass of the English people, but in the eyes of a very great number of people in the countries of Europe. People whose business it was to be king, to use the famous phrase of a then reigning prince, readily welcomed Burke's "Reflexions on the French Revolution," which was soon disseminated all over the Continent in a French translation. Naturally enough it appealed to the Emperor of Germany, to the Empress Catherine of Russia, to the French princes sheltering in Coblentz and boasting of the revenge they would take on the Revolution when the King should enjoy his own again. Naturally enough it appealed to George the Third as a book

which every gentleman ought to read. Kings and princes everywhere, who felt that at any moment their own thrones might begin to rock unsteadily beneath them, inevitably applauded the unexpected assistance of the greatest orator and thinker of his age.

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Such applause alone would not have made Burke's pamphlet the formidable weapon that it proved to be in the hands of reaction, or have brought about the grave results that may be directly attributed to Burke's pen. The words of Burke created, the breath of Burke fanned, a public opinion in England and abroad that was in direct antagonism to everything that was meant by those who formed and who guided or were driven by the Revolution. It would be hard to find a parallel in history for the influence thus exerted by a single man against so great a force. All the conservatism of Burke's nature—the conservatism that led him to regard the English Parliamentary system of his day as well-nigh ideally perfect, and that prompted him to resist so steadily and so successfully Pitt's proposals of Parliamentary reform—concentrated itself against what he believed to be the spirit of anarchy newly arisen in France. The Revolution was but a year old, and was as yet unstained by the worst excesses of the Terror, when Burke launched his bolt, shouted his battle-cry, and animated Europe to arms. It must be admitted that many of the evils which Burke prophesied in his review of the nascent revolution were the stigmas of its prime. From the premises he beheld he drew clear and definite conclusions, which were only too unhappily verified as the tide of revolution flowed. But it must also be remembered that Burke was himself in no small measure the cause of the realization of his own dark and tragic prognostications. Burke's arguments, Burke's eloquence, Burke's splendid ability were among the most potent factors in animating the hopes of the refugee princes, of inspiriting their allies, and of forming that ill-advised and disastrous coalition of the Powers

against France which Danton answered with the head of a king. It was the genius of Burke that stemmed the sympathy between England and a nation struggling to be free; it was the genius of Burke that fostered the spirit of animosity to France which began with the march upon Paris, and which ended after the disastrous defeats of the invaders, the deaths of the King and Queen, and all the agonies of the Terror, in {298} creating for England, in common with Europe at large, the most formidable enemy that she had ever known.

In spite of Burke and Burke's melancholy vaticinations the course of the Revolution in France seemed at first to most liberal-minded Englishmen to move along reasonable lines and to confine itself within the bounds of moderation. The excesses and outrages that followed immediately upon the first upheaval, the murders of Foulon and Berthier in Paris, the peasant war upon the castles, were regarded as the unavoidable, deplorable ebullitions of a long dormant force which, under the guidance of capable and honorable men, would be directed henceforward solely to the establishment of a stable and popular system of government. The men who were, or who seemed to be, at the head of affairs in France had names that for the most part commended themselves to such Englishmen as had anything more than a superficial knowledge of the country. The fame of Lafayette, the hero of the American war, seemed to answer for the conduct of the army. In Bailly, the astronomer whom unhappy chance had made Mayor of Paris, constitutionalism recognized a man after its own heart. The majority of the members of the National Assembly seemed to be gloriously occupied in evolving out of the chaos of the old order a new and entirely admirable framework of laws modelled boldly after the English pattern. Most English observers thought, in opposition to Burke, what the majority of the members of the National Assembly themselves thought, that the Revolution was an accomplished fact, a concluded page of history, brought about not indeed bloodlessly, but still, on the whole, with comparatively slight

shedding of blood, considering the difficulty and the greatness of the accomplished thing. The practical imprisonment of the King and Queen within the walls of Paris, within the walls of the Tuileries, seemed no great hardship in the eyes of the Englishmen who sympathized with the aims of those of the French revolutionaries with whom they were acquainted. The French King himself seemed to be reconciled to his lot, to have joined himself frankly and {299} freely enough to the party of progress within his dominions, and to be as loyally eager to accept the new constitution which the National Assembly was busy framing as the most ardent patriot among its members. Even the flight of the Royal Family, the attempted flight that began with such laborious pomp at Paris to end in such pitiful disaster at Varennes, the flight that condemned the King and Queen to a restraint far more rigorous than before, did not greatly disturb British equanimity.

[Sidenote: 1791—Burke and the coalition against France]

To the mind of Burke, however, his prophecies were already justifying themselves. He could see nothing in the Revolution but its errors, and he hailed the coalition of Europe against France as a league of light against the powers of darkness. He broke away furiously from his friends and allies of so many great political battles. He could not understand, he could not bear to realize that men who had struggled with him to champion the rights of the American colonists, and to punish the offences of Warren Hastings, should now be either avowed sympathizers with or indifferent spectators of the events that were passing in France. He had loved Charles Fox greatly ever since Fox had shaken off the traditions of Toryism and become the most conspicuous champion of liberal ideas in England. But he could not and would not forgive him for his attitude towards the French Revolution and the French Revolutionists. Burke saw nothing but evil in, thought nothing but evil could come of, what was happening in France, and he feared disasters for his own country if it became impregnated with the

poison of the revolutionary doctrine. That Fox should in any way advocate that doctrine made him in Burke's eyes an enemy of England, and not merely of England but of the whole human race. There was no middle way with Burke. Those who were not with him were against him, not merely as a politician, but as a man. To the day of his death, in 1797, he hated the Revolution and denied his friendship to those who expressed anything less than execration for its principles and its makers. Although it is always easy to exaggerate the influence that any single spirit may have upon a movement embracing {300} many nationalities and many different orders of mind, it would be difficult to overestimate the effect of Burke's words and Burke's actions in animating the coalition of monarchical Europe against insurgent France. And upon a responsibility for the intervention of other States in the affairs of France depends also a proportionate degree of responsibility for the results of that intervention. Burke was to see all the horrors he had so eloquently anticipated realized as the direct consequence of the invasion of France by the allied armies. The French people in the very hour in which they believed their cherished revolution to be an accomplished fact saw it menaced by the formidable league which proposed to bring the King's brothers back in triumph from Coblentz, and which threatened, in the extraordinary language to which Brunswick put his name, to blot Paris from the map of Europe if any injury were done to the King, who had already formally accepted the constitution that the Revolution had created. Paris went mad with fear and rage. The September massacres, the attacks upon the Tuileries, the proclaimed republicanism of the Convention, the rise of the men of the Mountain, Marat, Danton, and Robespierre, the execution first of the King and then of the Queen, the dominion of the guillotine and the Reign of Terror, were the direct results of a coalition whose only excuse would have been its complete success. The coalition proved to be an absolute failure. To the cry that the country was in danger ragged legions of desperate men rushed to the frontiers, and, to the

astonishment of the world, proved more than a match for the armies that were sent against them.

[Sidenote: 1789-92—Pitt and the French Revolution]

Pitt was not himself eager to see England dragged into the European quarrel with France. But it was not easy for a minister who loved popularity, and who very sincerely believed his presence at the head of affairs to be essential to the welfare of the State, to avoid being involved in the controversy. The result of the unsuccessful coalition had been to increase the crimes that marked the course of the French Revolution, and seemingly to justify the fierce indignation of Burke. The country that had {301} been profoundly impressed by Burke's eloquence was profoundly shocked by the horrors that lost nothing of their magnitude in the reports that crossed the Channel. The country was flooded with fugitives from France, emigrants who presented in themselves moving pictures of the sufferings of those who were opposed to the Revolution, and who were not slow to express their sense of the ruin that had fallen upon their country. King George's native shrewdness and native narrowness of mind had made him from the first an active opponent of the Revolution. He declared that if a stop were not put to French principles there would not be a king left in Europe in a few years. To him, whose business above all things it had been to be king, the prospect was unlovely and alarming. The fear that he felt for his office was shared in varying degree by all those who felt that they would have much to lose if the example set by France came to be followed in England. The Church and the aristocracy, with all wealthy and vested interests, were naturally ranked to resist by all means the spread of the new doctrines. There were a few noblemen who, like Lord Stanhope and Lord Lauderdale, professed themselves to be champions of the French Revolution; there were some statesmen among the Opposition who were either sympathizers with the Revolution or asserters of the doctrine that it

was no part of England's duty to interfere with the way in which another nation chose to govern herself. But the strength of public opinion was against these, as it was against the minister who was as eager as any Englishman living to remain on good terms with France.

Pitt from the first had looked with a favorable eye upon the changes that were taking place across the Channel. To maintain a friendship with France was a radical part of his policy. Friendship with France was essential in his mind in order to combat the aggrandizement of Russia and Prussia, and friendship with France seemed more possible under an enlightened constitution than under a despotic king. While Burke, who could only make the House of Commons smile and sneer by his denunciations {302} of Jacobin intrigues and his display of Jacobin daggers, was playing on the heart-strings of England and reviving all the old hostility to France, Pitt pursued as long as he was allowed to pursue it a policy of absolute neutrality. But he was not long allowed to pursue that policy, although he reaped some reward for it in a proof that the French Government appreciated his intentions and shared his desire for friendship. An English settlement at Nootka Sound, in Vancouver Island, had been interfered with by Spain. England was ready to assert her rights in arms. Spain appealed to France for her aid by the terms of the Family Compact. The French King and the French Ministers were willing enough to engage in a war with England, in the hope of diverting the course and weakening the power of the Revolution. But the National Assembly, after a long and angry struggle, took away from the King the old right to declare war, save with the consent of the National Assembly, which consent the National Assembly, in that particular crisis, was decided not to give. Pitt was delighted at this proof of the friendly spirit of the French people and the advantage of his principle of neutrality. But he was not able to act upon that principle. The forces brought against him were too many and too potent for him to resist. From the King on the throne to the mob in the streets, who sacked the houses of citizens

known to be in sympathy with the Revolution, the English people as a whole were against him. The people who sympathized with the Revolution, who made speeches for it in Westminster and formed Constitutional Clubs which framed addresses of friendship to France, were but a handful in the House of Commons, were but a handful in the whole country. Their existence dazzled and deluded the French Revolutionists into the belief that the heart of England was with them at a time when every feeling of self-interest and of sentiment in England was against them. Pitt clung desperately to peace. He thought, what the Opposition thought then and for long years later, that it was wisest to leave France to settle her internal affairs and her form of government in her own way. When England {303} no longer had an ambassador at the French capital Pitt adhered doggedly, tenaciously, to a peace policy; persisted in preserving the neutrality of Holland; was ready, were it only possible, only permitted to him, to recognize the new Republic. But even if the execution of Louis the Sixteenth had not roused irresistible indignation in England the action of the new Republic made the prolongation of peace an impossibility. When, in the winter of 1792, the Convention made the famous offer of its aid in arms to all peoples eager to be free, it must have been plain to Pitt that, with France in that temper and England tempest-tossed between hatred of the Revolution and fear lest its theories were being insidiously fostered in her own confines, the preservation of peace was a dream. The dream was finally dissipated when France made ready to attack Holland and, rejecting all possible negotiations, declared war in the early days of 1793.

[Sidenote: 1793—France declares war against Holland]

At first the war went ill with France, and if the German Powers had co-operated earnestly and honestly with England it is at least within the limits of possibility that Paris might have been occupied and the Revolution for the time retarded. France seemed to be circled by foes; her enemies abroad

were aided by civil war at home. La Vendée was in Royalist revolt; Marseilles and Lyons rose against the tyranny of Paris; Toulon, turning against the Republic, welcomed an English fleet. For a moment the arms of England and the aims of the Allies seemed to have triumphed. But the passionate determination of the French popular leaders and the mass of the French people to save the Revolution seemed to inspire them with a heroism that grew in proportion to the threatened danger. Her armies were swollen with enthusiastic recruits. Her internal revolts were coped with and crushed with savage severity. Loyal La Vendée was beaten. The rebellious towns of Lyons and Marseilles almost ceased to exist under the merciless repression of their conquerors. Many of the allied armies were defeated, while those of the two German Powers for their own selfish ends played the game of revolutionary France by abstaining from any serious effort to {304} advance into the country. Germany and Austria were confident that they could whenever they pleased crush revolutionary France, and they preferred to postpone the process, in order to occupy themselves in a new partition of Poland, which they could scarcely have carried out if the French monarchy had been restored. If there was nothing to justify the conduct of the two German Powers, there was much to warrant their confidence in their own strength when they judged that the time had come for them to exert it. They counted upon the known when they measured their forces with those of revolutionary France; they could not count upon the unknown quantity which was to disturb all their calculations. The unknown quantity asserted itself just at the moment when France, in spite of some successes, seemed to be deeply wounded by the loss of Toulon.

With the great port of Toulon in their hands the adversaries of France might well believe that a serious blow had been struck at her strength, and that the spirit which so long had defied them might yet be broken. But the success which had seemed to menace France so gravely proved to be but the point of departure for a new era of French glory. The occupation of

Toulon is forever memorable, because it gave an opportunity to a young lieutenant of artillery in the French service, quite obscure in that service and wholly unknown outside of it. The quick intelligence of this young soldier perceived that the seizure of a certain promontory left unguarded by the invaders would place Toulon and those who had held it at the mercy of the French cannon. The suggestion was acted upon; was entirely successful; the English admiral was obliged to retire with all his fleet, and Toulon was once again a French citadel garrisoned by French soldiers. But the importance of the event, for France and the world lay not in the capture but in the captor. Though Barras, confident in his dominion over the Directory, might sneer at the young adventurer from Corsica and minimize his share in a success that had suddenly made him conspicuous, the name of Bonaparte then for the first time took its {305} place in the history of Europe. The youth whose military genius had enabled him to see and to seize upon the fatal weakness in a well-defended city was destined to prove the greatest soldier France had ever known, the greatest as well as the most implacable enemy England had ever to reckon with, and one of the greatest conquerors that ever followed the star of conquest across the war-convulsed earth.

[Sidenote: 1793—Napoleon Bonaparte]

This is the story of England, not the story of France, and Napoleon was at his best and worst rather an influence upon than an integral part of English history. It must be enough to say here that he is assumed to have been born in Ajaccio, in Corsica, in 1769; that when he was ten years old he tried to become French rather than Italian—a feat which he never successfully accomplished—by entering the military school of Brienne; that he served Louis the Sixteenth with indifference and the Revolution with an ambition that was often baffled, and that he struck the first of his many strokes at England when he won Toulon for France.

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CHAPTER LXI.

"NINETY-EIGHT."

[Sidenote: 1798—Irish Catholic disabilities]

England was not concerned merely with the successes of France upon the Continent, with the French power of resisting invasion and preserving its capital and its constitution. The time was at hand when England was to take the French Republic into consideration as a more active enemy, whose enmity might take effect and be a very serious menace at her own doors. The breath of the French Revolution was to Great Britain like that of a sudden storm which sweeps round some stately mansion and finds out all its weak places and shatters some of its outlying buildings, although it cannot unroof its firmest towers or disturb its foundations. The weakest spot in Great Britain, and indeed we might almost say in the whole British Empire, was the kingdom of Ireland. Ireland had for long been in a state of what might almost be called chronic rebellion against the rule of England. England's enemies had always been regarded as Ireland's friends by the Irishmen who claimed especially to represent the national aspirations of their country. This is a fact which cannot be made too clear to the minds of Englishmen even at the present day, for the simple reason that no one who is capable of forming a rational idea on the subject can doubt that where a government is persistently hated that government must have done much to deserve the hate.

It is not necessary here to undertake a survey of the many grievances of which Ireland complained under the rule of Great Britain. One grievance which was especially felt during the reign of George the Third came from the persistent refusal of the Hanoverian Sovereign to listen {307} to any

proposals for the relief of the Roman Catholics from the civil and religious disabilities under which they suffered. The Catholics constituted five-sixths of the whole population of Ireland, and up to the time of the War of Independence in America no Catholic in Great Britain or Ireland could sit in Parliament, or vote for the election of a member of Parliament, or act as a barrister or solicitor, or sit on a bench of magistrates or on a grand jury, or hold land, or obtain legal security for a loan. No doubt the state of the penal laws as they then existed was mitigated when compared with that which had prevailed but a short time before, when an ordinary Catholic had hardly any right to do more than live in Ireland, and a Catholic priest had not even a legal right to live there. But up to the time when the growing principles of liberty manifested themselves in the overthrow of the feudal system in France the Catholics in Great Britain and Ireland were practically excluded from any approach to civil or religious liberty. Ireland had a Parliament, but it was a Parliament of Protestants, elected by Protestants, and it was in fact a mere department of the King's Administration. The American War of Independence suddenly awakened wild hopes in the breasts of all oppressed nationalities, and the Irish Catholic population was among the first to be quickened by the new life and the new hope. The national idea was not, however, at first for a separation from England. Ireland was then for the most part under the leadership of Henry Grattan, a patriot, statesman, and orator—an orator whom Charles James Fox described as the "Irish Demosthenes," and whom Byron glorified as "with all that Demosthenes wanted endued, and his rival and victor in all he possessed."

Grattan's purpose was not separation from England or the setting up of an independent republic. An Ireland enjoying religious equality for all denominations and possessing a Parliament thoroughly independent of that sitting at Westminster would have satisfied all his patriotic ambition. In fact, what Grattan would have desired for Ireland is exactly such a system as is now possessed by one {308} of the provinces of Canada or Australia. When

the alliance between France and independent America began to threaten Great Britain, and the English Government practically acknowledged its inability to provide for the defence of Ireland, Henry Grattan, with other Irish patriots of equal sincerity, and some of them of even higher social rank, started the Irish Volunteer movement, to be a bulwark of the country in case of foreign invasion. When the Irish patriots found themselves at the head of an army of disciplined volunteers they naturally claimed that the country which was able to defend herself should be allowed also an independent Parliament with which to make her domestic laws. They obtained their end, at least for the moment, and at least to all outward appearance, and Grattan was enabled to declare that for the first time he addressed a free Parliament in Ireland and to invoke the spirit of Swift to rejoice over the event. Catholic emancipation, however, had not yet been secured, although Grattan and those who worked with him did their best to carry it through the Parliament in Dublin. The obstinacy of King George still prevailed against every effort made by the more enlightened of his ministers. Pitt was in his brain and heart a friend of Catholic emancipation, but he had at last given way to the King's angry and bitter protests and complaints, and had made up his mind never again to trouble his Sovereign with futile recommendations. It so happened that a new Viceroy sent over to Ireland in 1794, Earl Fitzwilliam, became impressed with a sense of the justice of the claims for Catholic emancipation, and therefore gave spontaneous and honorable encouragement o the hopes of the Irish leaders. The result was that after three months' tenure of office he was suddenly recalled, and the expectations of the Irish leaders and the Irish people were cruelly disappointed.

From that moment it must have been clear to any keen observer in Ireland that the influence of Grattan and his friends could no longer control the action of Irish nationalists in general, and that the policy of Grattan would no longer satisfy the popular demands of Ireland. Short {309} as had

been the Irish independent Parliament's term of existence, it had been long enough to satisfy most Irishmen that the control of the King's accepted advisers was almost as absolute in Dublin as in Westminster. To the younger and more ardent spirits among the Irish nationalists the setting up of a nominally independent Irish Parliament had always seemed but a poor achievement when compared with the change which their national ambition longed for and which the conditions of the hour to all appearance conspired to render attainable. These young men were now filled with all the passion of the French Revolution; they had always longed for the creation of an independent Ireland; they insisted that Grattan's compromise had already proved a failure, and in France, the enemy of England, they found their new hopes for the emancipation of Ireland.

[Sidenote: 1791—The United Irishmen]

There were among the Irish rebels, as they were soon to declare themselves, many men of great abilities and of the purest patriotic purpose. Among the very foremost of these were Theobald Wolfe Tone and Lord Edward Fitzgerald. Both these men, like all the other leaders of the movement that followed, were Protestants, as Grattan was. Wolfe Tone was a young man of great capacity and promise, who began his public career as secretary to an association formed for the purpose of effecting the relief of the Roman Catholics from the civil and religious disabilities which oppressed them. This society, after awhile, was named the Association of United Irishmen. The United Irishmen were at that time only united for the purpose of obtaining Catholic Emancipation. The association, as we shall soon see, when it failed of its first object became united for other and sterner purposes. Wolfe Tone was a young man of a brilliant Byronic sort of nature. There was much in his character and temperament which often recalls to the mind of the reader the generous impulse, the chivalric ardor, and the impetuous eccentricity of Byron. Tone, as a youth, was a careless

student, or, indeed, to put it more distinctly, he only studied the subjects he cared about and was in the habit of neglecting his {310} collegiate tasks until the hour arrived when it became absolutely necessary that he should master them enough at least to pass muster for each emergency. He was a keen and close student of any subject which had genuine interest for him, but such subjects were seldom those which had anything to do with his academical career. He studied law after a fashion in one of the London Inns of Court, and he was called to the Bar in due course; but he had no inclination whatever for the business of an advocate, and his mind was soon drawn away from the pursuit of a legal career. He had a taste for literature and a longing for travel and military adventure in especial, and for a time he lived a pleasant, free and easy, Bohemian sort of life, if we may use the term Bohemian in describing days that existed long before Henri Murger had given the word its modern application.

[Sidenote: 1763-89—Theobald Wolfe Tone]

One of the many odd, original ideas which floated like bubbles across Wolfe Tone's fancy was a scheme for founding a sort of military colony in some island in the South Seas, to act as a check upon the designs and enterprises of Spain against the British Empire. Tone took his idea so seriously that he wrote to William Pitt, the Prime Minister, describing and explaining his project and asking for Government help in order to make it a reality. As will be easily understood, Pitt took no notice of the proposal, having probably a good many more suggestions made to him every day as to the best defences of England than he could possibly consider in a week. It is somewhat curious, however, to find that Wolfe Tone should at one period of his life have formed the idea of helping England to defend herself against her enemies. Some historians have gone so far as to opine that if Pitt could have seen his way to take Tone's proposition seriously, and to patronize the young man, the world might never have heard of the

insurrection of "Ninety-Eight." But no one who gives any fair consideration to the whole career and character of Tone can have any doubt that Tone's passionate patriotism would have made him the champion of his own country, no matter what prospects the patronage of an {311} English minister might have offered to his ambition. At the time when Tone was scheming out his project for the island in the South Seas the leaders in the national movement in Ireland still believed that the just claims of their people were destined to receive satisfaction from the wisdom and justice of the English Sovereign. When it became apparent that Catholic Emancipation was not to be obtained through George the Third and through Pitt, then Wolfe Tone made up his mind that there was no hope for Ireland but in absolute independence, and that that independence was only to be won by the help of Napoleon Bonaparte and of France. In the mean time Tone had taken a step which brilliant, gifted, generous, and impecunious young men usually take at the opening of their career—he had made a sudden marriage. Matilda Witherington was only sixteen when Tone persuaded her to accept him as her husband and to share his perilous career. Romance itself hardly contains any story of a marriage more imprudent and yet more richly rewarded by love. Tone adored his young wife and she adored him. Love came in at their door and, though poverty entered there too, love never flew out at the window. The whole story of Wolfe Tone's public career may be read in the letters which, during their various periods of long separation, no difficulties and no dangers ever prevented him from writing to his wife. When he made up his mind to consecrate himself to the national cause of Ireland, and, if necessary, to die for it, he set forth his purpose to his wife, and she never tried to dissuade him from it. It is told of her that at one critical period of his fortunes she concealed from him the fact that she expected to become a mother, lest the knowledge might chill his patriotic enthusiasm or make him unhappy in his enterprise.

Tone went out to America and got into council with the representative of the French Republic there; then he returned to Europe, and he entered into communication with Carnot and with Napoleon Bonaparte. To these and to others he imparted his plans for a naval and military expedition from France to approach the coast of Ireland, to {312} land troops there, and to make the beginning of a great Irish rebellion, which must distract the attention and exhaust the resources of England and place her at the feet of all-conquering France. Tone felt certain that if an adequate number of French troops were landed on the western or southern shore of Ireland the whole mass of the population there would rally to the side of the invaders, and England would have to let Ireland go or waste herself in a hopeless struggle. Tone insisted in all his arguments and expositions that Ireland must be free and independent, and that no idea of conquering and annexing her must enter into the minds of the French statesmen and soldiers. Napoleon and Carnot approved of Tone's schemes as a whole, but Tone could not help seeing that Napoleon cared nothing whatever about the independence or prosperity of Ireland, and only took up with the whole scheme as a convenient project for the embarrassment and the distraction of England. Tone received a commission in the army of the French Republic, and became the soul and the inspiration of the policy which at fitful moments, when his mind was not otherwise employed, Napoleon was inclined to carry out on the Irish shores.

[Sidenote: 1763-98—Lord Edward Fitzgerald]

Lord Edward Fitzgerald was a son of the great ducal house of Leinster. He was born in the same year as Wolfe Tone; he was to die in the same year. It was his evil fortune to have to fight for the cause of King George against the uprising of the patriotic colonists of North America. He afterwards became filled with the ideas of the French Revolution, and got into trouble more than once by expressing his sentiments too freely while yet he wore

the uniform of the British army. In Paris he became acquainted with Thomas Paine and was greatly taken with the theories and charmed with the ways of the revolutionary thinker, and in the company of Paine and congenial associates he took part in Republican celebrations which became talked of in England and led to his dismissal from the army. Lord Edward Fitzgerald had a strong love of adventure and exploration, and had contrived to combine with his military career in the New {313} World a number of episodes almost any one of which might have supplied the materials for a romance. He was a man of a thoroughly lovable nature, gallant, high-spirited, generous. Like Wolfe Tone, he had made a romantic marriage. His wife was the famous Pamela, the beautiful girl who was ward to Madame de Genlis, and commonly believed to be the daughter of the Duke of Orleans, Philippe Egalité. Louis Philippe, afterwards King of France, was one of the witnesses at the marriage ceremony. Lord Edward was perfectly happy with his young and beautiful wife until the political events came on which gave the sudden and tragic turn to his life. He was a member of the Irish Parliament for many years, and had on several occasions supported the policy which was advocated by Grattan. He too, however, soon made up his mind, as Wolfe Tone had done, that there was nothing to be expected from the Sovereign and his ministers, and he became an active member of the Society of United Irishmen when that association ceased to be a constitutional body and set its heart on armed rebellion. Lord Edward went over to France and worked hard there for the purpose of obtaining armed assistance for the Irish cause, but he returned to Ireland to work up the rebellious movement there while Tone remained in France to influence as well as he could the policy of Napoleon and Carnot.

Among the other distinguished Irishmen who worked at home or in France—sometimes at home and sometimes in France—to promote the rebellion were Arthur O'Connor and Thomas Addis Emmet. Arthur O'Connor came of a great Irish family; Thomas Addis Emmet, after the

failure of the rebellious movement, escaped to the United States and made a great position for himself as an advocate in New York. A younger brother of Thomas Emmet also took part in the organization of "Ninety-Eight," but the fate of Robert Emmet will have a place to itself in this chapter of our history.

One fact has to be mentioned, and must be kept constantly in mind when we are studying the grim story of "Ninety-Eight." Every step taken by the rebel leaders {314} was almost instantly made known to the English Government. The spy, the hired informer, was then, as he has always been, in the very thick of the Irish national movement. Some of the informers in "Ninety-Eight" were of a different class from that of the ordinary police spy; and it has been made quite certain by subsequent discoveries that Wolfe Tone and Fitzgerald, Arthur O'Connor and the Emmets were in the closest friendly association with men whom they believed to be as genuine Irish patriots as themselves, but who were all the time in the pay of Pitt, and were keeping him well informed of every plan and project and movement of their leaders. As political morals were then and are perhaps even now, it would be absurd to find fault with Pitt because he made use of the services of spies and informers to get at the plans of a number of men who proposed to invite a foreign enemy of England to invade the Irish shores, and were doing all they could to secure by armed rebellion the independence of Ireland. The wonder that will now occur to every reasonable mind is that the Irish leaders should have failed to guess that whatever money would do would be done by the English Government, as it would have been done by any other Government under similar conditions, to get at a knowledge of their designs and to counteract them. At all events, it is quite certain that while Tone and Fitzgerald and their comrades were playing their gallant, desperate game, the British Minister was quietly looking over their shoulders and studying their cards.

[Sidenote: 1797—A French fleet in Bantry Bay]

Napoleon Bonaparte, meanwhile, seems to have been but half-hearted about the scheme for the invasion of Ireland. He had many other schemes in his mind, some of which probably appeared more easy of accomplishment, and at all events promised a more immediate result than the proposed flank attack on the power of England. It is certain that Wolfe Tone had long intervals of depression and despondency, against which it needed all the buoyancy of his temperament to sustain him. At last a naval expedition was resolved on and despatched. In the late December of 1796 a small French fleet, with about 14,000 troops {315} on board, under the command of General Hoche, made for the southwestern shores of Ireland. Tone was on board one of the war vessels in his capacity as a French officer serving under General Hoche. The weather proved utterly unfavorable to the expedition. The war vessels were constantly parting company. The admiral's vessel, together with several others, was lost to sight on the very first night, and the heart of Tone grew sick as he saw that with every fresh outburst of the tempest the chances even of effecting a landing grew less and less. Most of the vessels entered Bantry Bay and lay helplessly at anchor there, but there was no landing. Tone's despondency and powerless rage as he foresaw the failure of his project might have been still deeper if he could have known how utterly unprepared the authorities of Dublin Castle were for any sort of invasion. Tone had observed already, as the expedition made its way from Brest, that they had not seen a single English vessel of war anywhere on the sea or around the Irish coasts. But he could have had no idea of the manner in which the British Government had intrusted the keeping of the island to the protection of the winds and of the fates. A letter written from Dublin by Elizabeth Moira Hastings, widow of the first Earl of Moira, throws a curious light on the state of things which existed among the governing authorities at the time of the invasion, and amazingly illustrates the odd rumors and wild conjectures which were floating about at the time.

Writing to a friend in a different part of Ireland on January 19, 1797, Lady Moira says:

"Our escape has been miraculous: the French fleet left Brest . . . mistook the Durseys for Mizen Head, and therefore did not make their entrance into Bantry Bay till the 24th, on which very day the storm arose and prevented the greater part of their fleet getting into the Bay, driving the greatest part of them out to sea. You will observe that it was on the 19th Lord Malmesbury had orders to quit Paris. He undoubtedly had purchased intelligence at a high price, being duped in that inquiry by the manoeuvres of the Directory, and gave false information {316} to England. Had the French landed on the 18th or 19th, which they might have done, had they not mistaken the Durseys, we should have had the French now governing in this metropolis. All agree that there never was an expedition so completely planned, and in some points so curiously furnished—the most beautiful ladies of easy virtue from Paris were collected and made a part of the freight. Hoche's mistress accompanied him, and his carriage was on board 'La Ville d'Orient,' taken by the 'Druid.' The hussars taken on board that vessel were those who guarded the scaffold at the execution of the unfortunate Lewis—they are clothed in scarlet jackets trimmed with gold and fur, and wear each the butcher's steel, on which they whet their knives, to whet their swords with. It is reported that Hoche and Reilly (one of the admirals) are gone off to America with seven hundred thousand pounds in specie that was on board their vessel to pay the troops. Others think the vessel has sunk, for neither of these personages or the frigate 'La Fraternité,' which they were on board, has been seen since they quitted Brest by any of the French vessels. What a fortunate person Mr. Pitt is! and what a benefit is good luck to its possessor! The troops are all marching back to their old quarters; Cork and its environs indignant at Government for leaving them again to the entire care of Providence. . . . It is a general belief among all parties that the French will revisit Ireland, and at no distant period—probably the next dark nights. If

the storms now prevented them they have learned how possible the attempt is, and how can such a coast be guarded? There has been much show of spirit and loyalty, and yet I thank God they did not land!"

The words of Wolfe Tone, taken from his journal, may be accepted as the epitaph of the first French expedition. "It was hard," says Tone, "after having forced my way thus far, to be obliged to turn back; but it is my fate, and I must submit. . . . Well, England has not had such an escape since the Spanish Armada; and that expedition, like ours, was defeated by the weather; the elements fight against us, and courage is of no avail."

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[Sidenote: 1797—The French and Dutch to aid Ireland]

The French did return, as Lady Moira had predicted. They returned more than once, but there was a long interval between the first and the second visitation, and there were negotiations between the French and the Dutch Republic—the Batavian Republic, as it was called—which had been forming an alliance with France. Neither the French Republic nor the Batavian felt any particular interest in the Irish movement, or cared very much whether Ireland obtained her national independence or had to live without it. France, of course, was willing to make use of Ireland as a vantage-ground from which to harass Great Britain, and the Batavian Republic, which had for some time been lapsing out of European notice, was eager to distinguish herself and to play a conspicuous political part once again. The idea at first was that Holland should furnish the naval expedition and France contribute the troops—5000 Frenchmen, under the command of General Hoche, who were to land in Ireland and form the centre and rallying point for the United Irishmen. The Batavian Republic, however, did not seem anxious to give all the military glory of the affair to France, and some excuses were made on the ground that the discipline of

the Dutch navy was somewhat too severe for the soldiers of France to put up with. General Hoche seems to have acted with great disinterestedness and moderation under trying conditions. He saw that the Dutch were anxious to make a name for themselves once more, and he feared that if he were to press for the embarkation of the French soldiers it might lead to the abandonment of the whole expedition. Longing as he was for the chance to distinguish himself in any attack upon England, he controlled his eagerness and consented that the Dutch should have the undertaking all to themselves. Poor Wolfe Tone had to wait and look on all this time, eating his own heart, according to the Homeric phrase. He has left us in his journal a description of his feelings as he saw the days go by without any movement being made to harass the English enemy, and of his own emotions when what might have seemed the heaven-sent chance of the mutiny at the {318} Nore broke out in the English fleet and no advantage could be taken of it to forward the chances of the expedition from the Texel. For now again the skies and the winds had come to the defence of England, and the Dutch fleet was kept to its anchorage in its own waters. Various plans of warfare were schemed out by the Batavian Republic, with the hope of putting the English naval authorities on a wrong scent, but all these schemes were suddenly defeated by the orders given to the Dutch admiral to put to sea at once. He did put to sea, and was encountered by Admiral Duncan, and the result was the great victory of Camperdown, won by the English over the Dutch after splendid fighting on both sides. Admiral Duncan thereby became Lord Camperdown and the Batavian Republic dropped all ideas of a naval expedition against England. Meanwhile the gallant General Hoche had died, and Wolfe Tone lost a true friend, with whom, from the beginning of their acquaintance, he had been in thorough sympathy.

[Sidenote: 1798—The brink of an Irish rebellion]

All this time the condition of things in Ireland was becoming desperate. After the appearance of the fleet in Bantry Bay, and the hopes which it created on the one side and the alarms on the other, the ruling powers in Dublin Castle, and indeed at Westminster, had no other idea but that of crushing out the rebellious spirit of the Irish people by Coercion Acts and by military law. The national sentiment of Ireland counted for nothing with them. It may be safely laid down as an axiom in political history that the men who are not able to take account of the force of what they would call a mere national sentiment in public affairs are not and never can be fit to carry on the great work of government. Ireland was overrun by militia regiments, sent over from England and Scotland, who had no sympathy whatever with the Irish people, and regarded them simply as revolted slaves to be scourged back into submission or shot down if they persevered in refusing to submit. Other forces representing law and order were found in the yeomanry, who were chiefly Orangemen and officered by Orangemen, and who regarded the Catholic peasantry as their born enemies. A state of tumult raged {319} through the greater part of the unhappy island, and there cannot be the slightest doubt that the floggings, hangings, and shootings inflicted by the militia and by the yeomen were in many cases done not so much in punishment as in anticipation of rebellious movements on the part of the Catholics. In the mean time preparations were unquestionably going on in many Irish counties, more especially in Ulster, for an outbreak of rebellion. The organization of United Irishmen was adding to its numbers of sworn-in members every day, and the making of pikes was a busy manufacture all over many of the counties. Grattan and some of his friends made many efforts in the Irish House of Commons to induce the Government to devise some means for the pacification of Ireland other than Coercion Acts, the scourge, the bullet, and the gallows. Finding their efforts wholly in vain, Grattan, Arthur O'Connor, Lord Edward Fitzgerald and his brother, and many other men of high character and position withdrew from

the Dublin Parliament altogether, and left to the Government the whole responsibility for the results of its policy. It is always to be regretted that a man like Grattan should ever recede from his position as a constitutional patriot in the assembly where alone his counsels can have any practical weight; but of Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Arthur O'Connor the same is not to be said, for these men and many of their friends had made up their minds that the time had come when only in armed rebellion there remained any hope for Ireland. In the English Parliament some efforts were made by Charles James Fox and by Whitbread to obtain an inquiry into the real cause of the troubles in Ireland, but the attempts were ineffectual, and the authorities at Dublin Castle were allowed to carry out their own peculiar policy without control or check of any kind.

Once again the fates were suddenly unpropitious to the Irish national movement. The force which was intended for Ireland was suddenly ordered to form a part of the expedition which Bonaparte was leading against Egypt. Thereupon the chiefs of the United Irishmen began to see {320} that there was not much hope to be founded on any help to come from France, and it was decided that Ireland should enter into open armed rebellion under the command of Lord Edward Fitzgerald. It was confidently believed that all but a small number of the Irish counties would rise to arms at once under such leadership, and the Irish leaders little knew how completely the Government was supplied with the knowledge of all the Irish national plans and movements. Indeed, there seems only too much reason to believe that the policy of Pitt had long been to force the Irish into premature rebellion by the persistent application of the system of coercion, represented by what were called "free quarters"—in other words, the billeting of soldiers indiscriminately among the houses of the peasantry, thereby leaving the wives and daughters of Irish Catholics at the mercy of a hostile soldiery—by the burning of houses, the shooting down of almost defenceless crowds, and the flogging and hanging of men and women. Certain it is that many of

the British officers high in command protested loudly against such a policy, and that some of them positively refused to carry it out, and preferred to incur any rebuke rather than be the instruments of such indiscriminate oppression. Pitt and the authorities at Dublin Castle probably reasoned with themselves that since the rebellion was certain to come it was better to press it on prematurely, so that it might be easily crushed, rather than leave it to take its own time and put its plans into execution when they should have arrived at a formidable maturity.

[Sidenote: 1798—Father John Murphy and Miles Byrne]

The rebellion broke out in the early part of 1798. It had some brilliant temporary successes in Wexford County and in other counties. In one part of Wexford the movement was literally forced upon the people by the outrageous conduct of the militia and the yeomanry. One of the local Irish priests, Father John Murphy, had used all his efforts up to the last in the cause of order, and had been most energetic in persuading the people to give up their pikes and other weapons to the local authorities. After the people had surrendered their arms the scourging, {321} shooting, and hanging went on just the same as before, and Father John Murphy and numbers of his parishioners were forced to take refuge in the woods. Then for the first time Father Murphy became a rebel. More than that, he became all at once an insurgent general. He put himself at the head of the despairing peasantry, and he suddenly developed a decided talent for the work of an insurgent chief. His people were armed for the most part only with pitchforks and with spades. Their pikes had nearly all been surrendered; only some few of the farming class had guns; and there was, of course, no sort of heavy artillery. Father Murphy showed his people how to barricade with carts the road through which a body of cavalry were expected to pass, and at the right moment, just when the cavalry found themselves unexpectedly obstructed, the insurgents suddenly attacked them with

pitchforks and spades, won a complete victory, and utterly routed their opponents. By this success the rebels became possessed of a considerable number of carbines, and were put in heart for further enterprises. Father John Murphy won several other victories, and for the hour was master of a large part of Wexford. One of those who took service under him was a young man, Miles Byrne, scarcely eighteen years of age, who afterwards rose to high distinction in the French army under Napoleon, and maintained his position and repute under the Restoration, and might have been seen up to the year 1863, a white-headed, white-bearded veteran, sunning himself in the gardens of the Tuileries. Father Murphy, however, was not able long to hold out. The want of weapons, the want of money and of all other resources, and no doubt the want of military experience, put him and his men at a hopeless disadvantage, and he was defeated in the end, and was executed in the early summer of 1798.

While the rebellion lasted there were, no doubt, many excesses on both sides. The rebels sometimes could not be prevented by their leaders from fearful retaliations on those at whose hands they had seen their kindred suffer. The gallant Miles Byrne himself has told us in his memoirs {322} how in certain instances he found it impossible to check the rage of his followers until their fury had found some satisfaction in what they believed to be the wild justice of revenge. No one, however, who has studied the history of the times even as it is told by loyalist narrators will feel surprised that the policy which had forced on the outbreak of the rebellion should have driven the rebels into retaliation on the few occasions when they had the upper hand and found their enemies at their mercy. It has never been denied that the excesses committed by the rebels were but the spasmodic outbreaks of the passion of retaliation, and that the Irish leaders everywhere did all they could to keep their followers within the bounds of legitimate warfare. It is not necessary to follow out in detail the story of the rebellion. With no material help from abroad there could have been but one end to it,

and the end soon came. A peasantry armed with pikes could hardly hold their own for very long even against the militia imported from Great Britain, the Orange yeomanry, and the Hessian troops hired from Germany, to say nothing of the regular English soldiers, who were armed and trained to war. Even the militiamen and the yeomanry had better weapons than the pikemen who followed their Irish leaders to the death. Before the rebellion was wholly crushed Lord Edward Fitzgerald was dead. The plans arranged by the leaders of the movement had appointed a certain day for the rising to begin; the outbreak in Wexford, as has already been shown, was entirely unpremeditated, and merely forced on by events; and, as might have been expected, the plans were betrayed to the authorities of Dublin Castle. Some of the leaders were instantly arrested, and Lord Edward had to fly and conceal himself. His hiding-place was soon discovered, and he was arrested in Thomas Street, Dublin, on May 19, 1798. Lord Edward at first refused to surrender, and fought desperately for his life. He wounded some of his assailants, and received himself a bullet in his body. He was then carried to prison, where he died sixteen days after. "Fitly might the stranger lingering here," as Byron says of another hero, {323} "pray for that gallant spirit's bright repose." Even George the Third himself might have felt some regret for the state of laws which had turned Edward Fitzgerald into an enemy.

[Sidenote: 1798—Ireland invaded by General Humbert]

Suddenly another attempt to help Ireland and harass England was made from the French side of the English Channel. Bonaparte was away on his Egyptian expedition, and the Directory in his absence did not wish to forego all idea of sending a force to Ireland, but were evidently not very strong on the subject and did not seem quite to know how to set about such a business. For awhile they kept two or three small bodies of troops ready at certain ports within easy reach of the English shores, and a number of vessels at each port waiting for sudden orders. General Humbert, an

adventurous soldier of fortune, who had courage enough but not much wisdom, grew impatient at the long delay of the Directory, and thought he could not do better to force the hand of the Directory than to start an expedition himself. Accordingly he took command of a force of about a thousand men in number which had been placed at his disposal for an undefined date, and with three or four ships to convey his men he made for the Irish shores. He landed at Killala Bay, in the province of Connaught, and he made his way inland as far as the county of Longford. The Irish peasantry rallied round him in considerable numbers, and were received by him as part of the army and invested with the French uniform. He began his march with a sudden and complete victory over a body of English troops considerably outnumbering his own force, but whom he managed cleverly to surprise, and among whom a regular panic seems to have set in. Humbert's scheme was, however, hopeless. The part of the country through which he was marching was thinly populated, and large bodies of English troops, under experienced commanders, were approaching him from all sides. By the time he had reached the county of Longford he found himself faced, or indeed all but surrounded, by the royal troops under the command of Lord Cornwallis. There was nothing for Humbert but to {324} surrender, and he and his French followers were treated as prisoners of war after a final and brilliant fight and sent back to France. The Irish insurgents who had fought under his leadership dispersed and fled after the surrender, well knowing that they would not be included in its terms and treated as prisoners of war, and they were pursued by the royal troops and most of them were killed. Matthew Tone, a brother of Wolfe Tone, was one of those who had fought under Humbert. He was made prisoner, taken to Dublin, and executed there within a few days. Thus ended the second expedition from France for the relief of Ireland.

Wolfe Tone meanwhile was waiting in France, hoping against hope. He had as yet known nothing of the fortunes and failure of Humbert's

expedition. Some extracts from a letter written to his wife about this time have a melancholy interest.

"Touching money matters, I have not yet received a sou, and last night I was obliged to give my last five guineas to my countrymen here. I can shift better than they can. I hope to receive a month's pay to-day, but it will not be possible to remit you any part of it; you must therefore carry on the war as best you can for three or four months, and before that is out we will see further. . . . I am mortified at not being able to send you a remittance, but you know it is not my fault.

"We embark about 3000 men, with 13 pieces of artillery, and I judge about 20,000 stand of arms. We are enough, I trust, to do the business, if we arrive safe.

"With regard to myself, I have had every reason to be satisfied; I stand fair with the General and my *camarades*; I am in excellent health and spirits; I have great confidence in the success of our enterprise; and, come what may, at least I will do what is right. The time is so short that I must finish this; I will, if possible, write to you again, but if we should unexpectedly sail my next will be, I hope, from Ireland."

[Sidenote: 1798—The capture of Wolfe Tone]

The embarking to which Tone referred was that of an expedition which the Directory had at last resolved to {325} despatch from Brest for the Irish shore. By a somewhat touching coincidence Tone found himself on board a war-vessel called the "Hoche," which was under the command of the admiral of the little fleet. This expedition consisted of one sail of the line and eight frigates, with 3000 French soldiers. It sailed on September 30, 1798; but the destinies were against it, as they had been against its predecessors, and contrary winds compelled the admiral to make a wide

sweep out of what would otherwise have been its natural course. It was not until October 10 that the little fleet, then reduced to four vessels—the others had been scattered—reached the shore of Lough Swilly, on the northwest coast of Ireland, and was there encountered by a fleet of six English sail of the line and two frigates. The admiral of the French fleet saw that there was no chance whatever of his fighting his way through such an opposition, and he made up his mind to offer the best resistance he could for the honor of the French flag. He promptly gave signals for the lighter vessels, which would have been of little practical service in such a struggle, to make the safest retreat they could, and with his own vessel resolved rather perhaps to do and die than to do or die. A boat came from one of the frigates to take his final instructions, and he and all the French officers, naval and military, who were on board the "Hoche" strongly urged Wolfe Tone to go to the frigate in the boat and thus save his life. They pointed out to him that if they were captured they must be treated as prisoners of war, but that no mercy would be shown to him, a subject of King George, taken in French uniform. Wolfe Tone peremptorily declined to accept the General's advice. It should never be said of him, he declared, that he saved his life and left Frenchmen to fight and die in the cause of his country. A fierce naval battle took place, and the French admiral fought until he was overpowered, and had no course left to him but to surrender. The French officers who had survived the fight were all taken to Letterkenny, Tone among the number. Tone was in French uniform, and might have passed unrecognized as a French officer but that {326} an Ulster magnate, Sir George Hill, who had known him in earlier days, became at once aware of his identity, and addressed him by name. Tone calmly and civilly replied to the greeting, and courteously asked after the health of the wife of his discoverer. Then all was over so far as Tone was concerned. He was conveyed to Dublin and tried by court-martial as a rebel and a traitor to George the Third. He defended himself in a speech of remarkable eloquence—that is, if he can be said to have defended himself

when his whole speech was a frank avowal of his purpose to fight for the independence of Ireland. He declared that he thoroughly understood the consequences of his failure, and was prepared to abide by them. "Washington," he said, "succeeded, and Kosciusko failed;" and he only insisted that in his case, as in that of Kosciusko, failure brought with it no dishonor. The one sole appeal which he made was that he might be allowed to die a soldier's death—that he might be shot and not hanged. Tone was found guilty, of course; there was no choice left to the court-martial on that question, and his appeal as to the mode of his death was refused by the Lord-Lieutenant. John Philpot Curran, the great advocate, made a motion in the King's Bench to the effect that Tone should be removed from the custody of the Provost-Marshal and tried before a civil tribunal, on the ground that Tone was not in the English army, and that, as the civil courts were sitting, there was no warrant for the interference of martial law. The Lord Chief Justice, Lord Kilwarden, a man whose public spirit and whose devotion to law and justice would have done honor to any bench, ruled in favor of Curran's appeal, and ordered that Tone be removed from the custody of the Provost-Marshal. When the Provost-Marshal declined to obey the order the Chief Justice directed that the Provost-Marshal be taken into custody, and that he, along with Tone, be brought before the Court. The decision came too late so far as Tone was concerned. Bather than endure the ignominy of a public execution by the gallows, which he believed to be awaiting him, he had found means to open a vein in his throat. {327} "You see I am but a poor anatomist," he said with a quiet smile to the surgeon who was brought to his bedside. He lingered in a half-unconscious state for a few days and then died. His death was the closing event of the Irish insurrection of 1798.

[Sidenote: 1778-1803—Robert Emmet]

There was, however, a sort of afterbirth of the struggle of "Ninety-Eight" in the attempt hazarded by Robert Emmet, to which we have already made anticipatory allusion. Robert Emmet, the brother of Thomas Addis Emmet, was a young Irishman of great abilities and of generous, unselfish, imprudent enthusiasm. He could not bring himself to believe that the hopes of Irish independence were buried even in the graves of Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Wolfe Tone. He had no trust whatever in any assistance to be given from France, but he set himself to organize a movement which should be Irish only and should find its whole organization and its battle-field on the soil of Ireland. He found numbers of brave and ardent young men to assist him, and he planned out another rising, which was to begin with a seizure of Dublin Castle and a holding of the capital as a centre and a citadel of the new movement for Irish independence. Emmet's passion for national independence had been strengthened by the passing of the Act of Union. The Act of Union had long been a project in the mind of Pitt, and indeed it was the opinion of many observers then, and of some historical students from that time to the present, that Pitt had forced on the Irish rebellion in order to give an excuse for the absolute extinction of the Irish Parliament and the centralization of the system of government in the Parliament sitting at Westminster. It is, at all events, quite certain that Pitt accomplished his scheme for a legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland by a wholesale system of bribery, the bribery taking the form of peerages, of high-salaried appointments, of liberal pensions, and even of sums of ready money. All that was really national in the Irish Parliament fought to the last against Pitt's Act of Union, but the Act was carried, and it came into operation on January 1, 1801. The Act itself and the methods by which {328} it was passed only gave to Robert Emmet a fresh stimulus to prepare his plans for the independence of Ireland. We need not follow in detail the story of these plans and the attempt to put them into execution. Robert Emmet's projects were, no doubt, all well known to the authorities

of Dublin Castle before any attempt could be made to carry them out. In any case their chances of success seem to have depended very much upon the simultaneous action of a great number of persons in a great number of different places, and the history of every secret revolutionary movement tells us of the almost insuperable difficulty there is in getting all the actors of such a drama to appear upon the stage at the same moment and at the right moment. Emmet's plan broke down, and it ended not even in a general rising of the nationalists of Dublin, but in a mere street riot, the most sad and shocking event in which was the murder of the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Kilwarden. While Emmet, in another part of the city, was vainly striving to retrieve the disorder into which the excesses of some of his followers had broken up the plan of attack, Lord Kilwarden's carriage was stopped by a body of undisciplined and infuriated rioters, and one man thrust a pike into Kilwarden's body. Emmet himself came too late upon the scene to rescue the Chief Justice, and from that moment he gave up all hope of anything like orderly action on the part of the insurgents, and indeed his whole effort was to get his followers to disperse and to stop any rising in the adjacent counties. Kilwarden died soon after he had received his wound, but not before he had uttered the noble injunction that no man should suffer for his death without full and lawful trial. Seldom has even the assassin's hand stricken a worse blow than that which killed Lord Kilwarden. In an age when corrupt judges and partial judges were not uncommon, Kilwarden was upright, honorable and just. The fiercest nationalist of the day lamented his death. He had again and again stood before the Crown officials and interposed the shield of law between them and the victims whom they strove by any process to bring to death. Emmet made his way into Wicklow with {329} the main purpose of stopping the intended outbreak of insurrection there, as he saw now that no such attempts could, under the conditions, end in anything but useless bloodshed. His friends urged him to make his escape to France, and he might easily have escaped but that he

went back to Dublin with the hope of seeing once again Sarah Curran, the youngest daughter of the great advocate, with whom he was devotedly in love. He was recognized, arrested, and sent to trial before Lord Norbury, a judge who bore a very different sort of reputation from that which honored Lord Kilwarden. Emmet made a brilliant and touching speech, not in defence of himself against the charge of trying to create a rebellion, for he avowed his purpose and glorified it, but in vindication of his cause and in utter denial of the accusation commonly brought against him that he intended to make his country the subject of France. [Sidenote: 1803—The execution of Robert Emmet] He was found guilty, sentenced to death, and executed on the morning after his trial. Thomas Moore, the Irish poet, who was a college friend of Emmet's, has embalmed his memory in three beautiful songs, "She is far from the land where her young hero sleeps," she being of course Sarah Curran, to whom Emmet addressed his last written words; "Oh, breathe not his name," and "When he who adores thee," an appeal to Ireland to remember him who had at least "the pride of thus dying for thee." Washington Irving, the American author, devoted a touching essay, called "The Broken Heart," to the story of Robert Emmet and his blighted passion. The lovers of romance may be somewhat disconcerted to hear that Sarah Curran married after her young hero's death; but she remained single many years, and there is no reason to suppose that she ever forgot or disclaimed her affection for Robert Emmet. Wolfe Tone's wife married again some sixteen years after the husband of her youth had passed away. Her grave is to be seen in a cemetery close to Washington, in the United States, the land in which Wolfe Tone's widow passed all the later years of her life.

With the failure and the death of Robert Emmet closed the last rebellious rising in Ireland which belongs to the {330} history of the Georges. Pitt's Act of Union is still in force, but it would be idle to say that it is anything more than in force. The union between England and Scotland, to which

Pitt's supporters so often triumphantly appealed, was made under conditions and on terms totally different from those which had to do with the union between England and Ireland.

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CHAPTER LXII.

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.

[Sidenote: 1793-1815—The genius of the great Bonaparte]

Nothing in the history of the world is quite as wonderful as the history of the first Napoleon. No other man ever rose from so little to so much, ever played a greater part in the eyes of the civilized world, was more monstrous in his triumphs or more tragic in his fall. Everything connected with his strange career was distorted, exaggerated, seemingly out of all proportion to the familiarities, the conventionalities, and even the possibilities of existence. As the ancient Greeks, in their sculpture, for the delineation of their gods permitted themselves the use of the heroic size and made their immortals and their demi-gods more than common tall, and more than common comely, so might the modern historian seem privileged in the use of a superlative style in dealing with a life so phenomenal, so unbounded by the average horizon, so ungoverned by the ordinary laws. And yet no more is needed than the cold statement of the stages in that great story, of the steps which conducted to the summit of the pyramid only to be descended on the other side. Such a statement is itself the sermon on an earthly glory that was almost unearthly in the vastness of its aims and of its gains, and on a humiliation that restored humanity to reason and reaffirmed the inexorable lesson. As the mere names of battles on the commemorative arch appeal to

the memories, the ambitions, and the passions of a military race with a monumental emphasis that is not to be rivalled by the painter or writer, so a few simple words serve to contrast with a simplicity that is in itself a pomp the crowns and the catastrophes of that amazing visitation. "Corsica," "St. Helena," "Brumaire," "Moscow," "Toulon," {332} "Waterloo." The chronicle of the great conqueror is written in little in the names of two islands, two battles, and two towns.

[Sidenote: 1803-15—England's fear of Napoleon]

To Frenchmen, even to the Frenchmen who are most opposed to him, Napoleon must always be an object for gratitude and for admiration. The most passionate champion of the Bourbon lilies and the doctrine of the divine right of kings cannot refuse to recognize that Napoleon Bonaparte gave to France a greater military glory than she had ever known or ever dreamed of before. The most devout disciple of the principles of '89, the fieriest apostle of the Revolution that went down into the dust before the cunning of Barras and the cannon of the Corsican adventurer, is obliged to admit the splendid services that Napoleon Bonaparte rendered to his adopted country. The one antagonist confesses that the Napoleonic eagles flew with the length of flight and the strength of wing of the Roman eagles. The other antagonist sees with approval the Code Napoléon and the Order of the Legion of Honor, the Simplon Road and the Canal of St. Quentin, the encouragement given to arts, to letters, and to commerce, the reorganization of finance and the reconstitution of the army. But to the average Englishman of that time, and for long afterwards, Napoleon was first and last and always the implacable enemy of Great Britain. From the day of Toulon to the day of Waterloo, Bonaparte was the Big Bogey of England; always either fighting against her openly or plotting against her secretly, always guided by one purpose, always haunted by one hope—the conquest of a country that had learned to look upon herself as unconquerable. Pitt, who hated war, was destined to play the uncongenial part of a War Minister, with one short interval, for the rest of his life, and to devote his genius and his energy to a life-and-death struggle with the soldier of fortune who was yesterday the hero of Italy, to-day First Consul, to-morrow to be Emperor of the French. The story of Pitt's life, for the rest of Pitt's life, is the story of a struggle against Napoleon, a struggle maintained under difficulties and

disadvantages that might well have {333} broken a strong man's heart, and that seemed to end in disaster when the strong man's heart was broken.

It looked for long enough as if nothing could withstand the military genius or sate the ambition of Napoleon. On his sword sat laurel victory, and smooth success was strewn before his feet. He overran Egypt, and dreamed of rivalling the Eastern conquests of Alexander. The Kingdoms of Europe crumpled up before him. On land he seemed to be little less than invincible. England was only safe from him because England held the supremacy of the sea. When the war with France began England was blessed with an effective navy, and England's fleet was England's fortune in the days when the conqueror of a continent was the nightmare of an island. A monstrous regiment of caricaturists were painting themselves into fame by fantastic and ferocious presentations of the man who was so fiercely hated because he was so greatly dreaded. Some of these caricatures are pitifully ignoble, some in their kind are masterpieces; all are animated by a great fury that is partly the outcome of a great fear. For years that fear was always present; for years it was always well within the bounds of possibility that the fear might be realized in a great national catastrophe. In every coast town of England men volunteered and drilled and manned defences, and scanned with anxious eyes the horizon for the sails that were to fulfil a menace more terrible than the menace of the Armada. England's military fame had dwindled on the battle-fields of Europe; England's strength at home was as nothing compared to the strength that France could employ against her if once France could obtain a landing on her shores. Napoleon had declared scornfully that the country with the few millions of men must give way to the country with many millions of men. All that he needed to reduce England, as he had reduced so many other of the kingdoms of the earth, was to place his armed majority where it could act with overwhelming force against an armed minority. Only one thing lay between him and his purpose, but that one thing was the navy of England. Napoleon

knew that if he had but {334} command of the Channel for a very few hours the landing of which he had dreamed, and for which he had schemed so long, would be a reality, and a march on London as easy as a march on Vienna. But he never got those few hours' command of the sea. Perhaps no greater monument of human vanity exists than the medal which Napoleon, madly prophesying, caused to be struck in commemoration of the conquest of England. Perhaps no pages of all the pages of history are more splendid than those which record the triumphs and the glories of the English fleet in the mortal struggle with France. When the great war began it was well for England that her navy was in effective condition; it was perhaps better still that the traditions of her navy were rich with heroic deeds, examples splendid to emulate, hard to surpass, but which, however, the sailors of King George the Third were destined to surpass.

[Sidenote: 1797—Mutinies in the British Navy]

Yet the conditions of life under which the English sailor lived were scarcely of a kind to foster the serene, austere virtues of patriotism and heroism. The English sailor was often snared into the active service of his country sorely against his will by means of the odious instrument for recruiting known as the press-gang. His existence on board the mighty and beautiful men-of-war was a life that at its best was a life of the severest hardship, and that at its worst was hard indeed to endure. He and his fellows were herded together under conditions of indescribable filth, squalor, and discomfort, often foolishly ill-fed, often cruelly ill-treated, often the victims of intolerable tyranny from brutal superiors. It is sometimes little short of marvellous that the sailors on whose faith the safety of England depended should have proved so faithful, so cheerful, so desperately brave. There was, indeed, a moment when the faith of some of them failed, and when the safety of England was in greater jeopardy than it had been in since the crescent of the Armada was reported off Plymouth or the Dutch ships lay in

the Medway. While the war with France was still in its gloomy dawn the unwisdom of treating British sailors worse than beasts of burden came near to wrecking the kingdom. In 1797 the crews {335} of very many of the King's ships were exasperated by ill-treatments and injustices of many kinds, exasperated most of all by the fatal folly of long arrears of pay—a folly which in France, but eight years earlier, had been one of the most powerful factors in aiding the spread of the Revolution. There came a point when the sense of injury seemed too hard to bear, and England was startled by the news of a mutiny at Spithead. But the mutiny, if alarming, was kept within moderate bounds and under control by the mutineers; it was temperately met and temperately dealt with by Lord Howe, and it soon came to an end. It was immediately followed by a far more alarming mutiny which broke out among the ships at the Nore. This mutiny, headed by a seaman named Parker, who proved himself a bold and daring spirit, swelled swiftly to serious proportions. Londoners saw the mouth of their river blockaded by the war-ships of England, saw their capital city fortified against the menaces of the men they relied upon as their saviors. Admiral Duncan, busily engaged in keeping a Dutch fleet cooped up in the river Texel, suddenly beheld almost the whole of his squadron desert him and sail away to join Parker and his fellow-mutineers at the Nore. It was one of the gravest crises in English history, one of the greatest perils that England had to face during the whole of the French war. But the danger was weathered, the peril overcome. The Government faced the dangers of mutiny as firmly as they had faced the dangers of the war. Whatever the provocation, mutiny at such a moment was a national crime. It flickered out as tamely as it blazed up fiercely. Parker and some of his fellow-conspirators were hanged, strong men dying unhappily, and once again England had only her foreign foes to reckon with. Over away by the Texel stout-hearted Duncan, with only his flagship and two frigates to represent the sea power of England, met the difficulty with a shiftiness worthy of Ulysses. Through all his long

hours of loneliness he kept on gallantly signalling away to an imaginary fleet, and the Dutchmen in the Texel little dreamed that they were held in check by a deserted admiral {336} upon a desolate sea. When at last they emerged, Duncan's danger was over; his faithless vessels had returned to their faith, and the crushing victory of Camperdown consoled one of the bravest of the brave for an agony unrivalled in the story of the sea.

[Sidenote: 1758-1805—Nelson]

The British admirals are the heroes of the dying eighteenth century. "Admirals all, they said their say, the echoes are rising still"—in the words of Henry Newbolt's gallant song. "Admirals all, they went their way to the haven under the hill." Dundonald was called, and finely called, the last of the sea-kings; but they were all true kinsmen of the Vikings, the admirals who were famous figures in Dundonald's fiery youth and famous memories in Dundonald's noble age. And as the admirals were, so were the captains, so were the men. Fearney sticking the surrendered swords in a sheaf under his arm; Walton calmly informing his superior that "we have taken or destroyed all the Spanish ships on this coast: number as per margin," are typical figures in a tradition of a courage so superlative that Admiral Sir Robert Calder, who fought very gallantly and took two ships, was tried by court-martial and severely reprimanded for not having destroyed the French fleet. The age of George the Third would be memorable, if it were memorable for nothing else, for the deeds and the glories of the great sea fights and the great sea fighters who saved England from invasion, knocking the tall ships of France to pieces, taking monstrous odds with alacrity, eager to engage in all weathers and under all conditions, cheerfully converting what seemed an impossible task into not merely a feasible but an easy piece of business. There are some sea battles of that time, fought out in storm and darkness, which read in the tamest statement with the pomp and beauty of the most majestic music. The names of the great admirals must

always be dear to English ears, must always sound sweet on English lips. St. Vincent, Collingwood, Howe, Duncan, the noble list proceeds, each name illuminated with its only splendid story of desperate enterprise and deathless honor, till the proudest name of all is reached, {337} and praise itself seems to falter and fall off before the lonely grandeur of Nelson. Never was a little life filled with greater achievements; never was a little body more compact of the virtues that make great captains and brave men. The life that began in the September of 1758 and that ended in the October of 1805 holds in the compass of its forty-seven years the epitome of what England meant for Englishmen in the days of its greatest peril and its greatest glory. Magnificent, magniloquent, turbulent, it is starred with glowing phrases as thickly as with glowing deeds. "Fear! I never saw fear: what is it?" "A peerage, or Westminster Abbey;" the immortal signal; the famous saying off Copenhagen: "It is warm work; this day will be the last to many of us, but I would not be elsewhere for thousands;" the pathos of the dying lover: "Let my dear Lady Hamilton have my hair;" and the pride of the dying hero: "Thank God, I have done my duty"—all these things are the splendid ornaments of a splendid career; they gleam on his story as his stars and orders gleamed upon his breast when the "Victory" renewed her name. With the battle of Trafalgar and the destruction of the allied French and Spanish fleets Napoleon's dream of England's conquest came to an end. The result was bought at a great price, the price of Nelson's life. But Nelson had done his work, and done it well. He saved his country; he had deserved well of his countrymen; he summed in himself all the qualities that made the English sailor the idol of his people and the terror of his foes.

While Nelson still lived and conquered, there came a check to the troubled supremacy of Pitt. In 1801—when the memories of the battle of the Nile and the defence of Acre were still fresh in men's thoughts, and Napoleon had been for a year First Consul—Pitt, baffled by circumstances, surrendered to mediocrity and Addington was Prime Minister in his place.

For three disastrous years Addington was permitted to prove his incompetency, till in 1804 Pitt, as the only possible man, came back to power to face a Napoleon more menacing than ever, a Napoleon now, in that same year, crowned and triumphant as {338} Emperor of the French. England was Mistress of the Seas, but Napoleon was Master of Europe. Pitt's health was fading swiftly; he watched with despair the progress of his enemy. Ulm came, and Austerlitz, and Austerlitz struck Pitt at the heart.

The closing hours of Pitt's career were as troubled and as gloomy as its dawn had been radiant and serene. It may have cost him little to be reconciled with the pompous mediocrity of Addington, and thereby to placate the King. His nature could afford to be magnanimous to the ungrateful incompetency that was able only in betrayal. It need not have given a pang to that proud and lonely spirit to welcome into the Cabinet the Earl of Buckinghamshire, who had wedded the one fair woman whose heart Pitt had won and lost. But the anguish of his soul was wrung into expression by the fall of Dundas. He had loved Dundas, who was now Lord Melville, long and well. Lord Melville's conduct as Treasurer to the Navy provoked from the Opposition a series of condemnatory resolutions. In spite of all that Pitt could do, the resolutions were supported by many of his followers, by many of his friends, by one friend conspicuous among all, by Wilberforce. The division was neck and neck, 216 to 216; the Speaker, "white as a sheet," gave the casting vote against Dundas which stabbed Pitt to the core. Whether it were or no, as Wilberforce maintained, a "false principle of honor" which led the great minister to support Melville, Pitt felt the blow as he had felt nothing before and was to feel but one thing again. Pitt pulled his little cocked hat over his forehead to hide his tears. One brutal adversary, Sir Thomas Mostyn, raised the wild yell of triumph that denotes to huntsmen the death of the fox. Another savage, Colonel Wardle, urged his friends to come and see "how Billy looked after it." But the young Tory gentlemen rallied around their hero. They made a circle of locked

arms, and with looks and words that meant swords they kept the aggressors off. In their midst Pitt moved unconsciously out of the House—a broken-hearted man.

[Sidenote: 1806—Death of Pitt]

The heart of Pitt was allowed to feel one pulse of pride {339} and pleasure before it ceased to beat. Pitt shared in the triumph of Trafalgar; he made his best and noblest appearance in public; made his last most splendid speech: "Europe is not to be saved by any single man," he said to those who saluted him at the Guildhall as the savior of Europe. "England has saved herself by her exertions, and will, I trust, save Europe by her example." A few weeks later, in the December of 1805, Pitt was at Bath, when a courier brought him the news of the battle of Austerlitz. The news practically killed him. He had long been ailing grievously. Sir Walter Farquhar's account of Pitt's health, lately made public by Lord Rosebery, proves that the body which cased that great spirit was indeed a ruined body. Grief and anxiety had stamped lines of care and sorrow upon his face, which gave it what Wilberforce afterwards called "the Austerlitz look." The phrase is famous and admirable, if not exactly accurate as used by Wilberforce, for Lord Stanhope shows that Wilberforce never saw Pitt after the battle of Austerlitz was fought. With the Austerlitz look on his face, Pitt travelled to London, to the villa now known as Bowling Green House at Putney. With the Austerlitz look on his face he surrendered himself to the care of his niece, Lady Hester Stanhope, who afterwards lived eccentric and died lonely in the East, a kind of desert queen. With the Austerlitz look on his face he bade that niece roll up the map of Europe: "It will not be wanted these ten years." With the Austerlitz look on his face he died on January 23, 1806.

England, that had lost in three months Nelson and Pitt, was to lose a third great man in only eight months more. Pitt's body lay in Westminster; Pitt's

Ministry was dissipated into air; Pitt's great opponent was called to the office for the last time, and for a very short time. Fox, as we are told by his biographer, Lord Russell, never felt personal enmity to Pitt. He said, with generous truth, that he never gave a vote with more satisfaction than his vote in support of the motion to pay Pitt's debts and to settle pensions on his nieces. He could not and did not indorse the proposal to confer honor on the memory of Mr. Pitt {340} as an "excellent statesman." He was ready to take office in the Ministry of All the Talents that Lord Grenville gathered together. He became Foreign Secretary and Leader of the House of Commons.

Fox, in office as out of office, had three great questions closely at heart: the treatment of Catholics, peace with France, and the Slave Trade. But Fox in office was obliged to face and recognize the difficulties, the solution of these questions. He admitted, reluctantly, the inadvisability of pressing the Catholic claims at a time when such pressure would prove destructive alike to the claims and to the Ministry that maintained them. He admitted, reluctantly, that the prospect of peace with France was very far from hopeful. He still dreamed of a speedy abolition of the Slave Trade, and to this end he attended Parliament too persistently in defiance of the warnings of his failing health. He was tapped for dropsy; his condition grew worse; in the evening of September 13, 1806, he died. He was the greatest liberal of his age; the greatest friend of liberty. The Irish poet bade the Irish banshee wail for him on whose burning tongue, truth, peace, and freedom hung.

Fox was not long dead when the Ministry of All the Talents found itself in direct collision with its royal master. It had ventured to suggest that it should be permitted to Catholics and to Dissenters to serve the King and the country in the Army and Navy. This small concession was too vast for the bigotry of George. He would have none of it, and the obsequious Ministry consented to abandon the measure. This was not enough for George. He

wanted to extract from the Ministry a formal promise in writing that it would never submit to the sovereign any measure that involved, or was in any way connected with, concessions to the Catholics. The Ministry was not obsequious to that ignoble degree. It refused to bind itself by any such degrading pledge; and, in consequence, it was turned out of office, and the Duke of Portland and Mr. Perceval reigned in its stead. The Ministry of All the Talents had lived neither a long nor a useful life.

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Spencer Perceval was an able lawyer, a dexterous debater, a skilful Parliamentarian. He was privately an excellent man, with an excellence that the irony of Sydney Smith has made immortal. He was not quite the man to sit in the Siege Perilous that had been occupied in turn by Pitt and Fox. He held his office under difficult conditions. In 1810 the King, whose ailing mind was unhinged by the death of his daughter Amelia, lost his reason irreparably. Perceval had to fight the question of the Regency with a brilliant Opposition and a bitterly hostile Prince of Wales. He succeeded, in the January of 1811, in carrying his Regency Bill on the lines of the measure proposed in 1788. In May, 1811, he was shot dead, in the Lobby of the House of Commons, by a madman named John Bellingham, who had some crazy grievance against the Government.

The years from the January of 1811 to the January of 1820 are technically the last nine years of the reign of George the Third; they are practically the first nine years of the reign of George the Fourth. The nine years of the Regency were momentous years in the history of England. The mighty figure of Napoleon, whose shadow, creeping over the map of Europe, had darkened and shortened the life of Pitt, was still an abiding menace to England when the Prince of Wales became Regent. But England, that had lost so much in her struggle with the Corsican conqueror, who had

now no Nelson to oppose to him on the high seas, and no Pitt to oppose to him in the council chamber, found herself armed against his triumphs in the person of a great soldier.

[Sidenote: 1769-1852—Arthur Wellesley]

In the same year that saw the birth of Napoleon, and on a date as little certain as that of the conqueror of Europe, a child was born to Garret Wellesley, first Earl of Mornington, in Dublin. The child was a son, the third that Anne Hill, Lord Dungannon's eldest daughter, had borne to her music-loving husband; the child was christened Arthur. Dates as various as May 1, May 6, and April 29, 1769, are given by different authorities in that very year, and the place of birth is as unsettled as the date, Dangan Castle in Meath, and Mornington House, Merrion Street, {342} Dublin, being the alternatives offered. Very little is known about the childhood and early youth of Arthur Wellesley. His mother seems to have considered him stupid, and to have disliked him for his stupidity. He went from school to school—first at Chelsea, then at Eton, then at Brussels—without showing any special gifts, except a taste for music, inherited no doubt from the father, whose musical tastes had earned him the affection of George the Third. An unamiable mother decided that he was "food for powder and nothing more;" and when he was sixteen years old he was sent to the French Academy at Angers, where he was able to learn all the engineering that he wanted, at the very same time that the young Napoleon Bonaparte was being trained for a soldier in the military college at Brienne. Of the little that can be known of the first seventeen years of Arthur Wellesley's life the clearest facts are that his childhood was not happy, that he was believed by many to be a dull and backward boy, and that he himself thought that if circumstances had not made him a soldier he would probably have become distinguished in public life as a financier.

[Sidenote—1786-97—Wellesley's military training]

Circumstance made him a soldier. Through the patronage of his eldest brother, who became Earl of Mornington on his father's death, in 1781, the young Arthur Wellesley entered the Army as an ensign in the Seventy-third Foot. The same influence that had got him into the army aided him to rise in it. When he was little more than of age he was captain of the Eighteenth Light Dragoons, aide-de-camp to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, and member of the Irish Parliament for his brother's borough of Trim. In the Irish Parliament he supported Pitt's measure to enfranchise Roman Catholics. It was characteristic of the young man that, when once a career had been chosen for him, he devoted himself to it with a cold, persistent zeal that accomplished as much for him as the most passionate enthusiasm would have done for another. He set before himself the principle that having undertaken a profession he had better try to understand it, and understand it he did with a determined thoroughness {343} that was rare indeed, if not unknown, among the young officers of his day. We are told that soon after he got his first commission he had one of the privates of the Seventy-third weighed, first in his ordinary military clothes, and then in heavy marching order, in order to ascertain what was expected of a soldier on service. This kind of thoroughness, at once comprehensive and minute, distinguished the conduct of his whole career. One of the maxims that regulated his life was always to do the day's business in the day. Long years later he and a friend were driving together along a coaching road, and amusing themselves by guessing what kind of country lay behind each hill they approached. When the friend commented upon the surprising accuracy of his companion's guesses the man who had been Arthur Wellesley answered: "Why, all my life I have been trying to guess what lay on the other side of the hill;" a stimulating piece of wisdom, to which he himself supplied the no less stimulating comment: "All the business of war, and, indeed, all the business of life, is to endeavor to find out what you don't know from what you do."

The youth who took soldiering in this iron spirit must have been more than a puzzle to many of his contemporaries, whose simple military creed it was that when an officer was not actually fighting he might best employ his time in drinking and gambling. Young Wellesley fell in love with Catherine Pakenham, Lord Longford's daughter, and she with him; but the means of neither permitted marriage then, and they did not marry until long years later. When the war with France was forced upon a reluctant minister, Wellesley went to the Continent under Lord Moira and saw some fighting. But his serious career began when he was sent to India with the Thirty-third Regiment in 1797.

It was in India that the young soldier was to learn those lessons in the art of war which were afterwards to prove so priceless to England, and to gain a fame which might well have seemed great enough to satisfy any ambition less exacting than his. But he had the generous greed of the great soldier, the restless, high-reaching spirit, to which {344} the success of yesterday is as nothing save as an experience that may serve for the success of to-morrow. No better field than India could have been found for a young and ambitious soldier who had devoted himself to his career almost by chance, but who was resolved to approve his choice by giving to the career of arms a zeal, a stubborn pertinacity, a very passion of patience, rare, indeed, at the time, and who was resolved to regard nothing as too great to attempt, or too trivial to notice, in the execution of his duty.

After a career of military honor and experience in India, Arthur Wellesley began his struggle with Napoleon on the battle-fields of the Spanish Peninsula, and ended it upon the battle-field of Waterloo. His was the hand that gave the final blow to the falling, failing Emperor. The career of so much glory and of so much gloom, of Corsican lieutenantship and Empire, of Brumaire and Bourbon Restoration, of Egyptian pyramids and Russian snows, of Tilsit and of Elba, and of the Hundred Days, ended in the Island

of St. Helena. There exists among the documents that are preserved from Napoleon's youth a geographical list made out in his own boyish hand of names and places, with explanatory comments. The name of St. Helena is on the list, and the only words written opposite to it are "Little Island." The Preacher on Vanities never had a better text for a sermon. The "little island" that had then seemed so unimportant became in the end more momentous than the Eastern Empire of his dreams. The man who had made and unmade kingdoms, who had flung down the crowns of Europe for soldiers of fortune to scramble for as boys unto a muss, was now the unhonored captive of ungenerous opponents, the unhonored victim of the petty tyrannies of Sir Hudson Lowe.

[Sidenote: 1812-15—The War of 1812]

As the most disastrous event of the reign of George the Third prior to the Regency was a war with America, so the most disastrous event of the Regency was a war with America. Napoleon's fantastic decrees of commercial blockade levelled against England, and known as the Continental system, had embroiled the young republic and England, and differences inflamed by the unwisdom of {345} Perceval were not to be healed by the belated wisdom of Castlereagh. Two keen causes of quarrel were afforded by England's persistent assertion of the right to stop and search American vessels on the high seas for British subjects and England's no less persistent refusal to recognize that naturalization as an American citizen in any way affected the allegiance of a British subject to the British crown. Wise statesmanship might have averted war, but wise statesmanship was wanting. The death of Spencer Perceval caused the elevation to the premiership of a man as incapable as his predecessor of dealing skilfully with the American difficulty. Robert Banks Jenkinson, who had been Lord Hawkesbury and who was now Lord Liverpool, was a curiously narrow-minded, hidebound politician who had never recovered from the shock of

the French Revolution, and who was chiefly conspicuous for his dogged opposition to every species of reform. He was five years old when the fight at Concord began the struggle that ended with American Independence, but the great event which overshadowed his childhood had no apparent effect upon his later judgment. This belated survival of the tradition of Hillsborough thought and said that America ought to look to England "as the guardian power to which she was indebted not only for her comforts, not only for her rank in the scale of civilization, but for her very existence." Folly such as this could only end in disaster. America, believing herself to be deeply wronged, declared war on Great Britain in the June of 1812. The war lasted more than two years with varying fortunes. Once again the scarlet coats of English soldiers were familiar, if detested, objects to many of the men who had made the Republic, and over bloody battle-fields fluttered that English flag which most of those who now opposed it had only seen as a trophy of their fathers' victories. Both sides fought under heavy disadvantages. If England was weakened by her struggle with Napoleon, America was hampered by internal dissensions, by a disorganized army and by a navy so small that it might almost have been regarded as not in existence. Yet it was this very navy which did most for {346} America in the struggle, and dealt England the most staggering blows inflicted upon her supremacy of the sea. The most shameful episode of the whole unhappy campaign was when the English General Ross captured Washington, and, in obedience to infamous orders from home, burned the Capitol and other public buildings. No more disgraceful act stains the history of the time. It proved as impossible for England to defend as for America to forget. The war ended at last, after the commerce of both countries had been gravely injured, in a grotesque treaty of peace, signed at Ghent, in which the principal cause of the war, the impressment of American sailors by English ships, was not even alluded to. But as the

impressment was abandoned by England, the war had not been waged wholly in vain.

In the year that followed upon the Battle of Waterloo, Sheridan died. He had outlived by ten years his great contemporaries Pitt and Fox, by nearly twenty years his greatest contemporary Burke, and by more than thirty years his great contemporary Johnson. The pompous funeral that carried his remains to Westminster Abbey was the funeral not merely of a man but of an age. He was almost the last of the great heroic figures that made the eighteenth century famous. He had long outlived all the friends, heroes, rivals of his glorious prime: he could talk to the children of the dawning century of Johnson, and Goldsmith, and Sir Joshua Reynolds; of Burke, and Pitt, and Fox; of poets and painters, players, and politicians, who seemed to his listeners to belong to a departed Age of Gold. Two years later, in the November of 1818, England, and indeed the whole civilized world, received a sudden and painful shock by the death, under conditions peculiarly harrowing, of Sir Samuel Romilly, the great lawyer, social reformer, and philanthropist. Romilly had been deeply attached to his wife, and on her death in October of that year, it would seem that he must have lost his reason, for, in the following month, he committed suicide. Romilly was a man of the highest principles, and the most austere conscience, and although the loss of his much-loved wife must have made the world but a mere {347} ruin to him, it is not believed that, if his mind had not suddenly given away, he would have done himself to death with his own hand. To Napoleon, then fretting in exile in St. Helena, the deed appeared to be one curiously characteristic of the English people. "The English character is superior to ours. Conceive Romilly, one of the leaders of a great party, committing suicide at fifty because he had lost his wife. They are in everything more practical than we are; they emigrate, they marry, they kill themselves with less indecision than we display in going to the opera." Napoleon was wrong in his estimate of Romilly's age. Romilly was sixty-

one when he died. He was one of the greatest legal and social reformers of his age. His father was a Huguenot watchmaker who had settled in London, and the young Samuel Romilly had only an imperfect education to begin with. By intense study he became possessed of wide and varied culture. He studied for the bar, became distinguished in Chancery practice, made his way in public life, sat in the House of Commons for several years, and finally represented Westminster. During successive visits to France he had made the acquaintance of Diderot and D'Alembert, and became the friend of Mirabeau. He won a noble fame by his persistent endeavors to mitigate the cruelties of the criminal laws, to introduce the principles of a free country into political prosecutions, to abolish the odious spy system, and to put an end to slavery at home and abroad. His name will be remembered forever in the history of political and social reform.

The Houses of Death and of Birth were busy for the royal family in the closing scenes of the King's tragedy. There had been very little happiness for George the Third in his long reign and his longer life. His childhood had been darkened by the shadow of a family feud that seemed traditional in his line. His marriage, indeed, fortunate if unromantic, the sequel of more than one unfortunate romance, gave him a companion whose tastes were as simple, and whose purposes were as upright as his own. But his private domesticity was not destined to be less troubled than his public fortunes. The grim tradition asserted {348} itself again for him whose childhood and manhood had been only too devoted to the influence of his mother. Few of his children were a cause of joy to him; some were a source of very poignant sorrow. He might have known content in a private station under conditions better fitted to strengthen his virtues and to lessen the force of his defects. If Farmer George had really been but Farmer George, his existence might tranquilly have followed the courses of the seasons through a prosperous manhood to a peaceable old age. But the curse of kingship was upon him very heavily, and his later years are very pitiful in their loneliness

and their pain. Of the course of events about him he, in the awful visitation of his infirmities, had long been unconscious. Blind and deaf and mad, he seems to have been haunted by the ghastly fancy that he was already dead. "I must have a suit of black," he is reported to have said, "in memory of George the Third, for whom I know there is a general mourning." George the Third was dead in life, and about him those he loved were dying fast. On November 6, 1817, the Princess Charlotte died, the only child of the Prince Regent. She was very popular, was in the direct succession to the throne; she hoped to be queen, and many shared her hope. The prisoner of St. Helena believed that in her lay his best chance of liberation. She married Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg on May 2, 1816, and died after giving birth to a still-born child in the following year. She was not quite twenty-two years old. The news of her death greatly affected the old queen, her grandmother. Her health, that had long been weak, grew weaker, and she died on November 17, 1818. She had lived her simple, honest, narrow, upright life for seventy-four years. On May 24, 1819, a daughter was born to the Duchess of Kent, the wife of Edward, Duke of Kent, the fourth son of George the Third. On January 23, 1820, the Duke of Kent died. Six days later the King ceased to exist. He was in the eighty-second year of his age and the sixtieth year of his reign. The most devoted loyalist could not have wished for the unhappy King another hour of life. "Vex not his ghost O! Let {349} him pass; he hates him that would upon the rack of this rough world stretch him out longer."

[Sidenote: 1760-1820—Progress under George the Third]

The reign that had ended was certainly the longest and perhaps the most remarkable then known to English history. The King's granddaughter, the Princess Victoria, born so short a time before his death, was destined to a reign at once longer and more remarkable than the reign of George the Third. The England of 1820 was not nearly so far removed from the

England of 1760 as the England of the last year of the nineteenth century was removed from 1837. But the changes that took place in England in the sixty years of the reign of the third George were changes of vast moment and vast importance. If England's political fortunes fell and rose in startling contrast, the progress of civilization was steady and significant. The social England of 1820 was widely different from the social England of 1760. The advance of population, the growth of great towns, the increase of means of intercourse between one part of the country and another by highways and waterways, the engineering triumphs that bridged rivers and cut canals, the marvels of industrial invention that facilitated labor, the patient pains of science on the edge of great discoveries, the slowly increasing spirit of toleration, pity, and humanity, the gradual spread of education, the widening realms of knowledge, the increasing appreciation of the decencies and amenities of life—all these things make the reign of George the Third the hopeful preface to the reign of greater length, greater glory, greater promise and greater fulfilment that was to dawn when two more sovereigns of the House of Hanover had ceased to reign over England. If George the Third had been a wiser man his reign would have been happier for the country he ruled; but the country at least was happy in this, that he was, as kings went, and according to his lights, a good man.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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