

were held by men sometimes of high ability, but of whom not a few divided their lives among politics, cards, wine, horse-racing, and women, till time and the gout sent them to the waters of Bath. The dull, pompous, and irascible old King had two ruling passions, — money, and his Continental dominions of Hanover. His elder son, the Prince of Wales, was a centre of opposition to him. His younger son, the Duke of Cumberland, a character far more pronounced and vigorous, had won the day at Culloden, and lost it at Fontenoy; but whether victor or vanquished, had shown the same vehement bull-headed courage, of late a little subdued by fast growing corpulency. The Duke of Newcastle, the head of the government, had gained power and kept it by his rank and connections, his wealth, his county influence, his control of boroughs, and the extraordinary assiduity and devotion with which he practised the arts of corruption. Henry Fox, grasping, unscrupulous, with powerful talents, a warm friend after his fashion, and a most indulgent father; Carteret, with his strong, versatile intellect and jovial intrepidity; the two Townshends, Mansfield, Halifax, and Chesterfield, — were conspicuous figures in the politics of the time. One man towered above them all. Pitt had many enemies and many critics. They called him ambitious, audacious, arrogant, theatrical, pompous, domineering; but what he has left for posterity is a loftiness of soul, undaunted courage, fiery and passionate eloquence, proud incorruptibility, domestic virtues rare in his day,