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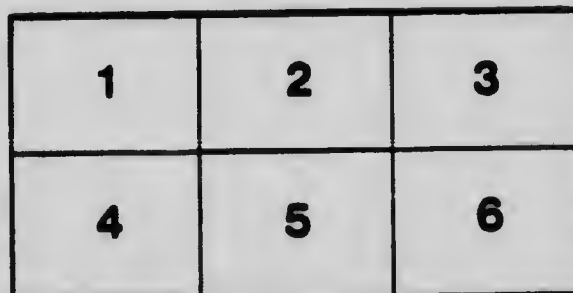
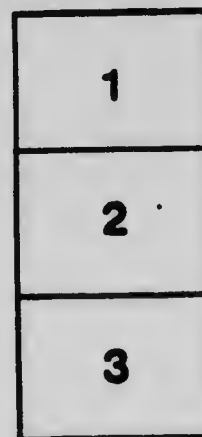
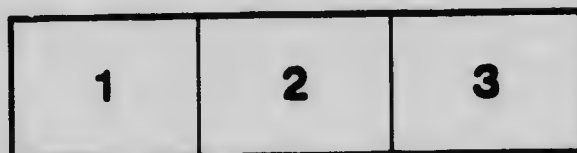
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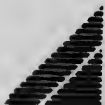
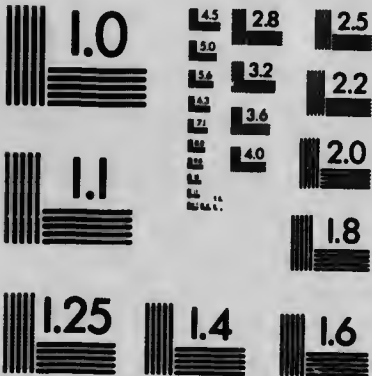
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GEORGE III IN HIS CORONATION ROBES
FROM THE PAINTING BY ALLAN RAMSAY, 1760.

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GEORGE·III
AS·MAN·MONARCH
AND·STATESMAN
BY
BECKLES·WILLSON



WITH TWENTY-FIVE PORTRAITS AND
THREE FACSIMILIA

LONDON: T. C. & E. C. JACK
16 HENRIETTA STREET, W.C.
1907

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22948

ERRATUM

Page 168, line 23, for "Francis" read "Frederick."

PREFACE

As we, living in more tranquil days, recede from the eighteenth century we recede also from the historical judgments passed upon its leading events by the critics of the nineteenth. We overlook, as from an eminence, the rugged plain traversed by our race, and reflect wonderingly on the ignorance of fundamental conditions and natural tendencies which brought disaster to that eighteenth century army. They mistook hillocks for mountains, in tiny creeks they greeted mighty rivers, and abandoning humanity's broad high-road, lost themselves in the thickets of controversy, moral, social, political; of insane altruism, of ethical delirium. They sought Utopia, and lo, were enmeshed in a jungle. What touching trust humanity reposed in those deluded and self-appointed forerunners, of intellectual vision so distorted, whose counsels led to anarchy and death! Rousseau, Priestley, Paine, Stanhope, Marat, Jefferson, Fox! what scouts for this poor blind Samson of a century as it went blundering on to meet its doom so sardonic and withal so merited at Marengo!

We feel—perhaps it is but the self-flattery of youth—we feel ourselves wise to-day. From the vantage ground of the twentieth century we believe

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that those restless centurions who led Humanity away from Kingship, from Social Order, from Reverence, from Tradition, from Symbols, from Ornament, were in error far deeper than the error of the Tories, Loyalists, Feudalists, Ritualists, whose importunities were so diametrically opposed. Civilization finds that it need not smash the bridges in its rear. The enemy is in front—this is the lesson we have learnt. In the virtues, the attributes, the ideals of the past we discern only our friends.

So, in this purged and uplifted temper Rousseau, Priestley, Paine, and Jefferson, we may admire and—forgive. But in what vein shall we judge those living critics of the conflict of yesterday who applaud the ambuscades into which our forefathers were led, who still deplore their triumphant escapes, and who yet continue to mistake the benevolence of Heaven for austere calamity? The teachings of this school of historians pervade our seminaries, blurring the lens of history, which constant rubbing had else made so bright.

Take the cardinal facts of the American Revolution as they seem to us. The first we hold to be that an Imperial schism was inevitable—all omens heralded it from the date of Walpole's resignation in 1741. The second fact is, that this tremendous and fateful schism has not only been beneficial to humanity at large, but also to the British Empire: it marked the real foundation of modern Canada, and a wider, freer, wholesomer Imperial policy. Clear enough, clear as crystal, do these truths seem to us: yet how can we reconcile with

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them the theories of the historians from Massey to Bancroft and Trevelyan? Is it not frequently stated that the separation of the American Colonies was owing to this or to that secondary cause, to this or that ulterior circumstance, and chiefly and supremely to the "obstinacy" of King George III., whose whole energy was directed from the beginning against injustice, who was opposed to disunion, and who carried half (and not the least intelligent half) of the American people with him to the end of a protracted civil war? "We do not rebel against the King," said Franklin, "but against the pretensions of the British Parliament."

We who see and realise truths so salient marvel much to hear the American Separation spoken of with regret. Conscious of the great lesson it has taught us, of the boon it has conferred upon mankind, with the New Empire confronting us so much vaster and more splendid than the old, and, let us add, to the full as loyal, we might have hoped that the eighteenth century regret would have been buried, beyond all chance of resurrection, seven seas deep.

Historians with these perverted views necessarily are led to a perversion of the characters and deeds of the public men implicated in the American schism. Of all the perversions, of all the distortions of which these writers are guilty, by far the profoundest concerns the character of George the Third. This great man has long been deluged from the Whig fountains of malice. At a critical point in the conflict th : more astute and unscrupulous

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American insurgents saw in George their chief danger, and he became forthwith a target for their weapons. Such were not without expert instruction. Wilkes, Francis, and Tom Paine in England were the exemplars of Jefferson in penning the Declaration of Independence.

America—it cannot be too often emphasised—had no real quarrel with the King; therefore the King, whose honesty, benevolence, and virtue so impressed Franklin, must be pilloried as the incarnation of tyranny and oppression—the object of their distrust and anger. As such George the Third figures in the famous Declaration. But all the people were not always deceived. Washington, Hamilton, and Jay spoke of the King with respect. John Adams has given us a narration of a personal interview with George which is one of the best tributes to the King's qualities and motives extant. Just as the people were not all deceived, so it was the passionate loyalty of a minority, not to the Mother Country, not to the British Legislature, but to King George the Third, that kept them steadfast, and sent them forth at the close of the war into the northern wilderness to found there a new British realm. This fealty sustained them in all their vicissitudes, and the knowledge that the chief of their race held them dear brought to many all the solace and reward they were destined ever to know.

The question which I have set myself in these pages to answer may be resolved thus: Was the confidence of the United Empire Loyalists misplaced? Were their vows bestowed and their blood

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spilt for an unworthy prince? We marvel at the sacrifice made by stout hearts to Charles I. and to his grandchildren the Pretenders; we weep when we think of the hearts broken for Louis XV., of the blood and treasure and tears lavished upon that shallow nature.

George the Third of England was a man—strong, earnest, virile, brave, loyal, kind-hearted, religious. He was a plain liver, a hard worker, and devoted to his duty. If he could not, owing to the feebleness of his generals and the party schisms at home, crush the revolt, he at least stemmed the tide of republican success in America. He prevented the continent from falling into the hands of the demagogues and the slowly disillusioned heirs of demagogues.

This is true: it is much: but it is not all. Has the day not come when it can be seen clearly that an even greater task than this he achieved in Europe? Is it of no significance in a luxurious age that the King was simple, in an age of unrest that he was steadfast, in an age of libertinism that he was virtuous, in an age of pretence that he was sterling? This it was, and the fact that the people of Britain learnt at last to reverence their ruler—this, and not the writings of Burke or the policy of Pitt, breastcd the tide of the French Revolution. Between George the Third and the "patriots"—Chatham, Fox, Sheridan, and Francis—let posterity judge which was the sincerest lover of his country, which did most by public and private example for his countrymen.

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After all, it is as our King, as the wise and able and virtuous sovereign in whose name the British forefathers of Canada went forth into the wilderness, and for whom they endured contumely and sacrifices, that Canadians should regard the figure of George. From this standpoint I have regarded him in these pages.

Democracy has, with many, come to have an evil sound, as the resort of the unkempt in thought as well as in body and estate, but if a true and decent democracy has preserved any admiration for honesty, vigour, sincerity, and consistency it may yet find something to admire in George the Third as monarch of a free people, and even when divested of the ornaments and symbols of the kingly office it scrutinises him as man and as statesman.

4th July 1907.

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CHAPTER I

THE YOUNG PRINCE

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IN the third decade of the eighteenth century there appeared throughout Europe the symptoms of that dire social fever for which only the French theorists and political philosophers were long afterwards able to prescribe. In Great Britain discontent was only too manifest. We may not accept all the gloomy testimony of the memoir and letter-writers, the preachers and tractarians of the time, but a case is, nevertheless, clearly established.

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Religion had sunk into a mere show, and that Church, whose influence had been so important in William III.'s day—forty years before—was now almost divested of political significance. As to its influence on the people, the observant Montesquieu, who visited England at this time, declared "that if one talks of religion every one laughs." Most English statesmen of the day were infidels. Immorality, even in its grossest form, had almost ceased to offend. To the ignorance and brutality of the lower classes all authorities bear witness. The increase of commerce and population in the towns

GEORGE THE THIRD

had been unaccompanied by any religious or educational advancement, and the inhabitants of the rural parishes were not merely benighted, but half starved. In many whole parishes there was not a single Bible or book of any sort, and the people subsisted entirely upon coarse bread and occasional bacon. If the squirearchy kept them cowed in the country, it was otherwise in the towns, where violence flourished almost unchecked. Although bloody laws inflicted capital punishment for the most trifling offences, and pilferers were hanged in public by dozens, yet so desperate were the lower classes that they callously braved death in order to rob, pillage, rape, and burn. Frequent mobs broke open the gaols and terrorised whole communities. Their ferocity was greatly increased by the introduction of gin, which was sold so cheap that a man could get drunk for the price of a small loaf.

What was true of the religious and moral was true of the political world. Walpole's tranquil day was over. Opposition was offered to every measure of administration. The Excise Bill of 1733 had plunged the country into rioting, and Walpole was forced to withdraw the very same measure which afterwards became law, and continues on the statute-book to this day. Anti-ministerialists grouped itself into two factions of self-styled "Patriots." In 1738 the preposterous tale of Jenkins's Ear inflamed the masses to demand war against Spain. Any brand would have served the purpose, when public opinion was so combustible. The heir-apparent to the throne sided with the Patriots against Walpole,

LOYALTY IS DORMANT

and that astute Minister, who had found peace his best policy, but had offered the people no glories in exchange for war, reluctantly gave way.

The antagonism subsisting between St. James's Palace and Leicester House deepened. Of the intrigues and petty conspiracies which occupied the Court party and that of the followers of the Prince of Wales, the reader will scarce need to be reminded.

Something less than justice, it seems to us, has been done to the character of Frederick, Prince of Wales. He has been called shallow and a dilettante, but at least he was perspicacious enough to see the defects of the régime. He realised that he lived in a society from which the great factor of sincerity had been withdrawn. It was an engine side-tracked and pistonless, wasting its steam in impotent sibilation. The example of the Court of his father, George II., although not as profligate as that of Louis XV., on the other side of the Channel, was yet vulgar and uninspiring. How, indeed, could loyalty thrive?

Loyalty requires to be nourished by grace, outward or inward, and George II. no more than George I. could nourish it. There was no poetry—nothing even respectable—in the monarchy; there was nothing save a traditional veneration for the kingly institution to allure men's minds, hearts, or sympathies to the monarch. Albeit if no young squire's eye flashed, or his bosom heaved, or his voice broke into melodious roundelays at the toast of the phlegmatic, commonplace Hanoverian who sat on the British throne, yet he had at least two good reasons for keeping him in that posture. There

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was the dread of the Stuarts, and distrust and dislike of the Scots. At any moment the Pretender might land in Britain. England might not be jealous of her neighbours or of her virtue, but as the "pre-dominant partner" she was jealous of her hegemony.

It is fit thus to emphasise the state of the time in order that we may have a background for our central figure, that we may see what were the forces and conditions which, beginning at his birth, and rendered inveterate during his minority, the official head of society had during his long reign to combat.

In a brick mansion differing but little from its neighbours, in the south-eastern corner of St. James's Square, London, George William Frederick, sixth in descent from James I., and afterwards King of Great Britain and Ireland, was born on the 4th June 1738.¹

His mother, Augusta, Princess of Wales, daughter of the Duke of Saxe-Gotha, had so little expected her labour, that a few hours previously she had been strolling in St. James's Park with the Prince, her husband. The fortunes of this royal pair shared the confusion and instability of the times. Less than a twelvemonth after their marriage Frederick had quarrelled openly with his father, George II., who took the very violent, but on the whole not unreasonable, measure of turning the couple out of his palace. Norfolk House, unpalatial as it was, afforded them temporary refuge, and here into such

¹ 24th May, O.S.

CHARACTER OF GEORGE'S MOTHER

an England as we have briefly attempted to describe the infant prince was prematurely ushered.¹

Augusta, who had already given birth to a daughter, afterwards Duchess of Brunswick, was a woman of strong character, pious, and with an uncompromising horror of laxity and licentiousness. Proud and reserved, she had few intimates; her chief joy in life was in the bosom of her family, while others of high rank found theirs in the diversions of masquerades, gambling, and scandalmongering. At Leicester House or Cliveden the utmost propriety was observed. "The Prince's family," wrote Lady Hervey in 1748, "is an example of innocent and cheerful amusement. All this last summer they played abroad, and now in the winter in a large room they divert themselves at baseball, a play all who are or have been schoolboys are well acquainted with. The ladies as well as gentlemen join in this amusement, and the latter return the compliment in the evening by playing for an hour at the old and

¹ Concerning George's birthplace, the present Duke of Norfolk courteously writes: "The house in which George III. was born is old Norfolk House, which stands behind the present house in St. James's Square. The back part of Norfolk House was pulled down for the making of Waterloo Place, but the front face was preserved, and looks upon the small garden behind the present Norfolk House. I do not know in what room George III. was born. There is a large room with a zoned painted ceiling called the Painted Chamber, which I have heard stated was the room in question. I think this is extremely improbable, as it was clearly the largest Drawing Room, or State Room, in the house. It has since been broken up into smaller rooms with partitions, and it is very probable that the room in which George III. was born may have been among those pulled down."

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innocent game of push-pin." When a frivolous French marquis called at Leicester House, expecting the diversions of faro and scandal, he was asked to choose between "rounders" and a reading from Addison.

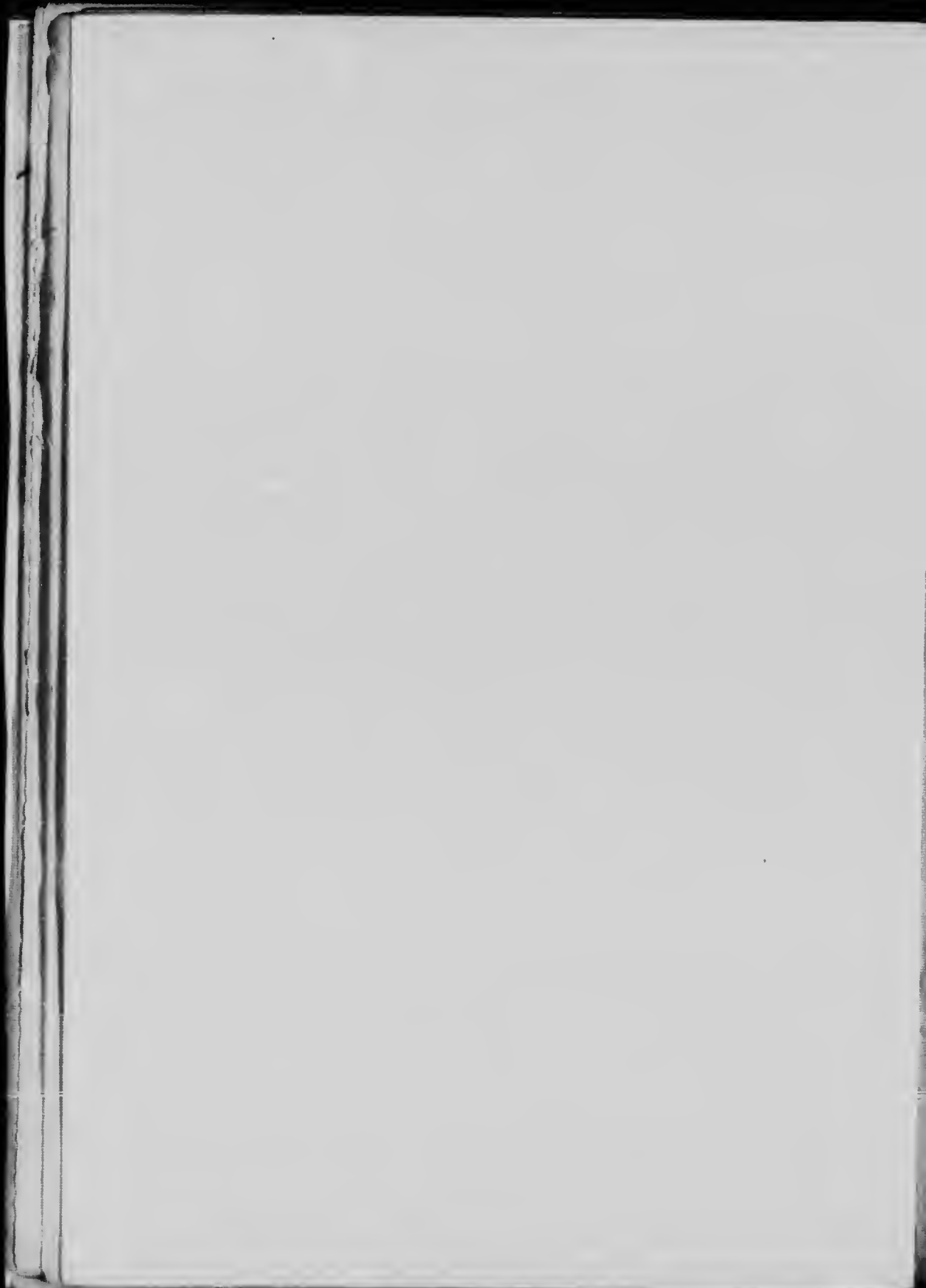
Prince George, with his brothers and sisters, seems to have passed his childhood in simple, pleasant fashion, similar to that of many noblemen's sons of our own day. He was hardly seven when Dr. Francis Ayscough, afterwards Dean of Bristol, was appointed preceptor to him and his brothers. "I thank God," writes Ayscough to a friend in February 1745, "I have one great encouragement to quicken me in my duty, which is, the good disposition of the children entrusted to me. As an instance of it, I must tell you that Prince George, to *his* honour and *my* shame, has learned several pages in your little book of verses without any directions from me. And I must say of all the children—for they are all committed to my care—that they are as conformable and as capable of receiving instruction as any I ever yet met with. How unpardonable then should I be in the sight of God and man if I neglected my part towards them! All I can now say is that no care or diligence shall be wanting in me, and I beg the prayer of you and every honest man for the Divine blessing on my endeavours."¹

Ayscough, however, was, unhappily, kept too busy as Clerk of the Closet to Frederick to attend

¹ *Life and Times of Countess Huntingdon*, vol. i. pp. 175-6.



AYSCOUGH AND HIS ROYAL PUPILS
(From the Picture in the National Portrait Gallery)



A TYPICAL ENGLISH BOY

as fully to his duties as he perhaps desired, or his friends expected. Accordingly a sub-preceptor, in the person of George Scott, was found, a man to whose honour, temperance, and sweet disposition his friends were ready to testify.¹

At ten years of age George seems to have struck all those who met him as being a good sample of the juvenile Englishman—fair, ruddy checked, and sturdy, added to a most amiable disposition. During the holidays Prince Frederick's fondness for private theatricals, and his belief that they were useful in teaching declamation and deportment to children, led him to encourage several of these at Leicester House. The celebrated actor Quin was sent for to superintend rehearsals. Quin spared no pains to make these juvenile theatricals a success, and, by Frederick's directions, paid special attention to the elocution of little Prince George. He found an apt pupil, and George never forgot the lessons he received from Quin, nor was the actor likely to forget that he had coached his future monarch. "Ay," said Quin, a dozen years later, when George III.'s first speech from the throne had excited general approval for the grace and clarity with which it was delivered, "it was I who taught the boy to speak."

Addison's "Cato" was staged at Leicester House on the 4th January 1749, the part of Portius being played by Prince George. Prince Edward, his junior by a year, Princess Augusta, and Princess Elizabeth

¹ Rose's *Diaries*, vol. ii. p. 188, note.

GEORGE THE THIRD

also took part in the performance. The full cast was as follows:—

Portius	Prince George.
Juba	Prince Edward.
Cato	Master Nugent.
Sempronius	Master Evelyn.
Lucius	Master Montague.
Decius	Lord Milsington.
Syphax	Master North.
Marcus	Master Madden.
Marcia	Princess Augusta.
Lucia	Princess Elizabeth.

“Master North,” it may be noted, was Lord North’s son, afterwards first Minister of the Crown. Prince George and he had first met at Eton. On this occasion “Cato” was preceded by a prologue, spoken by George, the authorship of which we are inclined to ascribe to a talented young nobleman, one of Frederick’s friends, of whom we shall hear much in the course of this narrative, the Earl of Bute.

Although of little worth as poetry, yet the sentiments they contained, and the character of the one who uttered them, make the stanzas of exceeding interest:—

“To speak with freedom, dignity, and ease,
To learn those arts, which may hereafter please,
Wise authors say—let youth, in earliest age,
Rehearse the poet’s labours on the stage.
Nay more! a nobler end is still behind,
The poet’s labours elevate the mind;
Teach our young hearts with gen’rous fire to burn,
And feel the virtuous sentiments we learn,

A PATRIOTIC PROLOGUE

'T' attain these glorious ends, what play so fit,
As that where all the powers of human wit
Combine to dignify great Cato's name,
To deck his tomb, and consecrate his fame?
Where Liberty—Oh name for ever dear!
Breathes forth in every line, and bids us fear
Nor pain nor death, to guard our sacred laws,
But bravely perish in our country's cause,
Patriots indeed! nor why that honest name,
'Through every time and station still the same,
Should this superior to my years be thought,
Know, 'tis the first great lesson I was taught.
What, though a boy! it may with pride be said,
A boy in England born, in England bred;
Where freedom well becomes the earliest state,
For there the love of liberty's innate.
Yet more—before my eyes those heroes stand
Whom the great William brought to bless this land,
To guard with pious care that gen'rous plan,
Of power well bounded, which he first began.
But while my great forefathers fire my mind,
The friends, the joy, the glory of mankind;
Can I forget that there is one more dear?
But he is present—and I must forbear."¹

We can picture the smiling approbation of Frederick as he acknowledged this tribute from his eldest-born. Such sentiments would not easily be forgotten by such a boy as George. The masque, too, of "Alfred," in which "Rule Britannia" was sung for the first time, had been performed at Cliveden a year or two before. On another occasion we find Rowe's tragedy of "Lady Jane Grey" being acted by the royal children.

¹ Lady Hervey, *Memoirs*.

GEORGE THE THIRD

In his thirteenth year Prince George, together with his brother Edward, was put in charge of a governor, Lord North. There still exists a memorandum for Lord North's use in the handwriting of Frederick which evinces his careful attention to the education of his sons.¹

"The Hours for the two Eldest Princes.

"To get up at 7 o'clock.

"At 8 to read with Mr. *Scot* till 9, and he to stay with 'em till the *Doctor* comes.

"The *Doctor* to stay from 9 till Eleven.

"From Eleven till Twelve, Mr. *Fung*.

"From Twelve to half an hour past Twelve, *Ruperti*; but Mr. *Fung* to remain there.

"Then to their Play hour till 3 o'clock.

"At 3 Dinner.

"Three times a week, at half an hour past four, *Denoyer* comes.

"At 5, Mr. *Fung* till half an hour past 6.

"At half an hour past 6 till 8, Mr. *Scot*.

"At 8, Supper.

"Between 9 and 10 in Bed.

"On Sundays, Prayers exactly at half an hour past 9 above stairs. Then the two Eldest Princes, and the two Eldest Princesses, are to go to Prince George's apartment, to be instructed by Dr. Ayscough in the Principles of Religion till 11 o'clock."

With such a course of Latin, music, fencing, dancing, history and mathematics, it could hardly be supposed that there could be much time for idleness. Yet the royal children were probably happy enough until the sudden death of their father, the Prince of Wales, altered the family fortunes. By that event, which happened 20th March 1751,

¹ It bears the date "Clifden, Oct. the 14th, 1750."



FREDERICK, PRINCE OF WALES

(From the Portrait by Dandridge)



HIS FATHER'S SUDDEN DEATH

the Court opposition was dealt a serious, almost a fatal blow. The time-servers and opportunists were plunged into confusion. Many hastened to attempt their rehabilitation at Court. The breath had scarcely left the Prince's body, his weeping widow had not yet risen from her knees, ere the Prince's "faction," as it was called, melted away, and only a few tried and trusted spirits now dared to do even so much as to pay common tribute to his remains. Prince George, his son, was not yet fourteen years of age, the old King was lusty and vigorous, good for at least twenty years of life. The homely proverb of "A bird in the hand is worth two in a bush" is the eternal motto of Court sycophants.

Exactly a month after his father's death George was created Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester, and soon afterwards the dreaded separation from his mother took place, and he went to reside with the King for a time at Hampton Court. Thus severed from those he loved at the beginning of his fifteenth year, George entered on a humiliating and unhappy youth. His boyhood of freedom and felicity, under the loving eye of a tender and indulgent parent, was now a closed chapter. He very quickly tasted the bitter fruit of dependence on those he did not and could not bring himself to love, as well as that far bitterer fruit which must ever form the diet of princes. He found himself regarded as a puppet in the hands of Court faction. He found that he was to be a cipher, that he was to have no thought or volition of his own, that his every act and opinion to be harmless must be

GEORGE THE THIRD

colourless. George was not born for such a rôle. His native sturdiness, his acute understanding, rebelled against those who were seeking to enmesh him as in a net, to stifle his intellect. He very quickly discovered that in spite of the formal respect which the King paid his mother, the real feeling which he entertained towards the Princess Dowager, as well as towards those who still clung to her, was dislike and ill-will. In the palace George was daily witness of the jealousy and distrust with which his mother was regarded. He perceived that all who wished to be acceptable at Court were forced to disavow all connection with Leicester Fields. More than once his cheek flamed with anger at hearing some disrespectful allusion to his mother, but he never forgot himself or his position, and to surmount these trials proved excellent discipline for the lad. He soon came to welcome any neglect which was shown him, and to consider those in whose immediate charge he was placed with suspicion.

Nor was this suspicion misplaced, inasmuch as it was the intention of the Pelham Ministry, now in power, to procure an influence over the mind of the youthful heir-apparent. To this end Lord North, the father of the future Premier, to whom George had become attached, was dismissed, and Simon Lord Harcourt appointed in his stead. This nobleman is described by Horace Walpole as a "civil, sheepish peer," more in want of a governor himself than to be a governor of others. Harcourt was not under any misapprehension as to what

HIS NEW TUTORS

was expected of him. "He is a cipher," observed Lord Mansfield to the Bishop of Norwich; "he must be a cipher, and was put in to be a cipher."

Ayscough was in like manner removed. His successor was Thomas Hayter, Bishop of Norwich, a man of considerable learning and sense, but too obviously a creature of the Pelham Ministry.

The two persons, however, with whom the young Prince came in daily touch were the sub-governor, Andrew Stone, and his sub-preceptor, George Scott. The former was private secretary to the Duke of Newcastle, and an excellent scholar. Something was said about removing Scott, but Augusta took alarm, and the Prince himself threatened to burn his books if Scott were taken away. It may have been on this occasion at Hampton Court that George II., unaccustomed to any exhibition of spirit amongst his family and entourage, actually attempted physical chastisement of his grandson. More than sixty years later the Duke of Sussex, one of the sons of George III., passing through the apartments of Hampton Court, observed, "I wonder in which of these rooms it was that George II. struck my father. The blow so disgusted him with the place that he could never afterwards think of it as a residence."

It was in the nature of things that these four men entrusted with the spiritual and intellectual guidance of the Prince should themselves be little guided by any spirit of harmony. Unseemly bickerings soon occurred, Lord Harcourt and Bishop Hayter indulging in mutual charges. Stone and

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Scott followed the example of their superiors. The one thing which the Whigs dreaded was a Jacobite, and Stone was suddenly discovered by the Bishop to be a Jacobite. The sub-preceptor was charged by the Bishop with insulting language and personal violence. As for the Princess, she instantly championed the cause of the sub-governor and the sub-preceptor. Formal charges were instituted, and an appeal was made to the King. It was alleged that Stone had repeatedly drunk the health of the Pretender, and had aided and abetted Jacobitical improprieties. The governor and preceptor threatened to resign unless Scott, Stone, and Cresset, the Princess's secretary, were dismissed. The King was sagacious enough not to become the dupe of these wretched factions. He ordered a committee to inquire into the truth of the charges. It appeared that the Prince had happened one day to pass through a room where Père d'Orleans' "Revolutions d'Angleterre," translated by Archdeacon Echard, was lying on a table. He took the volume with him to his chamber, and became deeply interested in the worthy father's defence of the reign and measures of James II. This incident having attracted the attention of a nobleman at Court, he instantly reported it to Lord Harcourt, who ascertained that other works, which were anathema to the Whigs, such as Ramsay's "Travels of Cyrus," Sir Robert Filmer's "Patriarch," Père Perefixe's "History of Henry IV.," had also been perused by the heir-apparent. Although the Whigs were shocked by these scandalous disclosures, yet the charges were declared to be baseless. Even if

ALLEGED YOUTHFUL INDOLENCE

a few suspicious volumes had by accident reached the Prince's hands, there was no ground for supposing that he had been induced by any designing Jacobite to read them. Harcourt and the Bishop resigned.

The new governor was the Earl of Waldegrave, who was proud to be known under the title of "a man of the world." George III. himself long afterwards furnished a less flattering description: "Lord Waldegrave," he said, "was a depraved, worthless man." The new preceptor was the Bishop of Peterborough, Dr. John Thomas, who was believed by some to possess Tory predilections.

Even thornier than before the royal lad found his pathway to knowledge. His own bent lay in the direction of steadiness, sobriety, and virtue; Lord Waldegrave's principles were all in a contrary direction. "I found his Royal Highness," he writes, "uncommonly full of princely prejudices contracted in the nursery, and improved by Bedchamber women and Pages of the Back Stairs." Under these circumstances it was not wonderful that the boy's mind did not show any striking advance during the next three years. He was said to be indolent, but we remember that the same charge was brought against Sheridan, Byron, and Wellington at a similar period of their lives. It is very likely that, debarred from the mental nourishment he desired, he refused what those around him proffered.

Dodington, afterwards Lord Melcombe, a personal friend of the Princess, occasionally ventured to interrogate her concerning her eldest son.

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Thus, when George was sixteen, we find Augusta lamenting "the consuming state of the nation." "It was of infinite consequence," she said, "how a young reign began, and it made her very uneasy. She was highly sensible how necessary it was that the Prince should keep company with men: she well knew that women could not inform him, but if it was in her power absolutely, to whom could she address him? What company could she wish him to keep? What friendships desire he should contract? Such was the universal profligacy, such the character and conduct of the young people of distinction, that she was really afraid to have them near her children. She should even be in more pain for her daughters, than for her sons, if they were private persons; for the behaviour of the women was indecent, low, and much against their own interest, by making themselves so very cheap."¹

"George," she said, "seemed to have a very tender regard for the memory of his father," which she encouraged as much as she could. "When they behaved wrong, or idly (as children will do), to any that belonged to the late Prince, and who are, now, about her, she always asked them, how they thought their father would have liked to see them behave so to anybody that belonged to him, and whom he valued; and that they ought to have the more kindness for them, because they had lost their friend and protector, who was theirs also; and she said that she found it made a proper impression upon

¹ Dodington's *Diary*, p. 325.

MATERNAL SOLICITUDE

them." Dodington begged that she would cultivate and improve the personal influence, which her many virtues, as well as natural affection, gave her over the Prince. "I was sure that, from her influence, and the settled opinion of her prudence with all mankind, all the disinterested and sensible amongst us hoped for a happy settlement of the new reign. I did not mean authoritatively and during a legal minority, but during the very young part of the King's life, and till time and inclination had brought him thoroughly to weigh and understand what the government of a great country was. She expressed herself civilly for the regard I testified for her, and said she could have nothing so much at heart as to see him do well, and make the nation happy."¹

In a knowledge of society and mankind, George at sixteen years of age may have been deficient. But to enlarge the circle of her son's acquaintances in the society of that age was a responsibility the Princess declined to undertake. The Prince, she said again, if not quick was at least intelligent, and though his mind had a tendency to seriousness, he was both good-natured and cheerful.²

It is undoubtedly owing to the strict régime pursued in his youth that George owed his virtuous disposition and his strong religious principles. Many years afterwards his youngest brother, the Duke of Gloucester, told Hannah More that the pure and sinless home of his boyhood was ever a sweet

¹ Dodington's *Diary*, p. 174.

² *Ibid.*, p. 356.

GEORGE THE THIRD

memory to him. "No boys," he remarked, "were ever brought up in a greater ignorance of evil than the King and myself." "We retained," he added, "all our native innocence." It may be that in another age greater latitude might have wrought little influence either on the Princess character or upon his future subjects, but in this case Britain had, as we shall see, great reason to congratulate herself that the early youth of her monarch was unspotted from the world, and that amidst the levity and corruption of the times George III. was neither light nor corrupt.

George was never a prig. He had a fund of natural resolution and manliness of character to sustain him in his seclusion. Gradually the suspicions which had been directed against the Princess were removed from the public mind, and the efforts made to separate mother and son were abandoned.

Under this new régime an old friend reappeared on the scene, and began by degrees to take part in the counsels of the Princess and her son. This was John Stuart, third Earl of Bute. Bute was a singularly brilliant and engaging man. His frequent guest, M. Dutens's, testimony is worth giving: "I never knew," he wrote, "a man with whom one could be so long *tête-à-tête* without being tired, as Lord Bute. His knowledge was so extensive, and consequently his conversation so varied, that one thought oneself in the company of several persons, with the advantage of being sure of an even temper in a man whose goodness, politeness,

LORD BUTE

and attention were never wanting towards those who lived with him."

Even Lord Chesterfield, no friend to the Earl, writes: "Bute had honour, honesty, and good intentions." But Bute, handsome in person, cultivated in mind, honourable in conduct, had three serious disqualifications—he was a Scotsman, he was no party man, and he loved his country. The prejudice against the Scots ran high at that time in England. The '45 rebellion was fresh in men's minds. Since the death of Frederick, Bute had retired to his native land. His one ardent desire was to bring about a better feeling, a true union between the two halves of the kingdom. He felt deeply the humiliation to which his countrymen were subjected. He was sick of the taunts continually levelled against their poverty, their disloyalty, their supposed national traits. He knew that North Britain was as rich in genius, in intelligence, in courage and manliness, as was South Britain. He patronised Hume, Smollett, Home, Macpherson. Yet there was nothing narrow-minded about Bute. He also loved and honoured England. In a word, Bute was a British Nationalist.

Between Bute and the Princess Dowager it was rumoured that an improper connection existed. This rumour, which was afterwards given popular credence, was absolutely devoid of foundation. We may confidently disregard all the base suspicion and scurrility of the day. No eminent person's reputation was safe, royalty least of all. Were we to credit such writers as Horace Walpole, indecency, hypocrisy, and duplicity pervaded every great household in

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the land. The Princess Dowager was a lonely woman, of strong moral and religious principles. She perceived in Lord Bute a sympathising, intelligent, forceful friend. That the Princess had long sought for such a counsellor we may gather from her conversation with Lord Melcombe. Melcombe himself was of too unstable, intriguing a disposition ever to commend himself entirely to the Princess. Bute had been known for some years to her; he had been a friend of her husband's, and she recognised his sterling worth.

George himself had already conceived for Lord Bute a strong affection. He welcomed his return to Court with pleasure. Although at first Bute did not hold any nominal post in the Prince's service, yet, at the Princess Dowager's request, he took part in his education.

Gradually Bute's good qualities and gentle, refined manners rendered him indispensable at Leicester House, and finally, although with no very hearty concurrence on the part of the King, he became governor to the heir-apparent. George now began under his friendly auspices to learn to some purpose, and his happiness and spirits were restored to him. Bute undoubtedly took his office seriously. He was a sincere believer in the monarchical principle, and beyond all question held that when the royal prerogatives are hedged about by a wall of aristocratical privileges, so far from the people gaining they are the losers from this limitation of the power of the Crown.

From him the Prince derived his first knowledge

FUNCTIONS OF MONARCHY

of the British Constitution. Bute's friendship with Blackstone enabled him to possess a copy of the famous "Commentaries" before they had been sent to press. This work Bute actually read to the Prince, and discussed it with him.

Monarchy under George II. was in reality a dogeship. In a striking passage on the functions of a king of England, Mr. Lecky observes that "The great majority of men in political matters are governed neither by reason nor by knowledge, but by the associations of the imagination, and for such men loyalty is the first and natural form of patriotism. In the thrill of common emotion that passes through the nation when some great sorrow or some great happiness befalls the reigning dynasty, they learn to recognise themselves as members of a single family. The throne is to them the symbol of national unity, the chief object of patriotic interest and emotion. It strikes their imaginations. It elicits their enthusiasm. It is the one rallying cry they will answer and understand. Tens of thousands of men who are entirely indifferent to party distinctions and to ministerial changes, who are too ignorant or too occupied to care for any great political question, and to whom government rarely appears in any other light than as a machinery for taxing them, regard the monarch with a feeling of romantic devotion, and are capable of great efforts of self-sacrifice in his cause. The circle of political feeling is thus extended. The sum of enthusiasm upon which the nation in critical times can count is largely increased, and, however much speculative critics may

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disparage the form which it assumes, practical statesmen will not disdain any of the tributary rills that swell the great tide of patriotism. Even in the case of more educated men it is extremely conducive to the strength, unity, and purity of the national sentiment that the supreme ruler of the nation should be above the animosities of party, and that his presence at the head of affairs should not be the result of the defeat of one section of his people."¹

Nothing is clearer than that to a young prince in immanence of kingship some knowledge should be imparted of his functions and privileges. These functions and privileges Blackstone sedulously endeavours to explain. "The King of England," he says, "is not only the chief, but properly the sole magistrate of the nation, all others acting by commission from and in due subordination to him. He may reject what bills, may make what treaties, . . . may pardon what offences he pleases, unless where the Constitution hath expressly, or by evident consequence, laid down some exception or boundary." He has the sole power of regulating fleets and armies, of manning all forts and other places of strength within the realm, of making war and peace, of conferring honours, offices, and privileges. He governs the kingdom; statesmen, who administer affairs, are simply his ministers.

George viewed the rôle he would one day fill with great seriousness, esteeming it a mighty public trust. He had no taste for pomp. Power, except

¹ *England in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. iii, p. 6.

ROYAL LIMITATIONS

in the interests of his people, was without attraction for him; he despised vainglory. He could not be blind to the fact, even unaided by the judgment of Bute, that the royal power in England had undergone a decline, and that no class of the King's subjects was the better for that decline. The Whigs were gradually crushing out kingship.

"Surely," says Lord Brougham, with a burst of liberality strangely in dissonance with the tenor of his extreme Whig principles, "surely the meaning of having a sovereign is, that his voice should be heard and his influence felt in the administration of public affairs. Unless the whole notion of a mixed monarchy and a balance of three Powers is a mere fiction and a dream, the royal portion of the composition must be allowed some power."¹

The limitations to which the English sovereign had become subject went far beyond the letter of the law. As Mr. Lecky points out, even after the Revolution William III. had been a great political power; and Anne, though a weak and foolish woman, had exercised no small amount of personal influence. Another such monarch as George II. and Britain would be an oligarchy, open and avowed.

The vast body of Britons were still ready to exclaim, with Oliver Goldsmith, "I am then for, and would die for monarchy, sacred monarchy; for if there be anything sacred amongst men, it must be the anointed sovereign of his people; and every diminution of his power, in war or in peace, is an infringement

¹ *Statesmen of the Time of George III.*

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ment upon the real liberties of the subject. . . . I have known many of these pretended champions for liberty in my time, yet do I not remember one that was not in his heart and in his family a tyrant."¹

Bute's Tory views being advertised, the Whig Ministry once more took alarm. They were terribly afraid that the mind of the young Prince would become "tainted" with Tory principles. "The Princess Dowager and Lord Bute," wrote Lord Chesterfield, "agreed to keep the Prince entirely to themselves. None but their immediate and lowest creatures were ever allowed to approach him, excepting at his levées, when none are seen as they are, he saw no one and none saw him."

All previous attempts to detach the Prince from his mother having failed, a new ruse was projected, the credit for which is attributed to the King himself. "A bigoted nature and chaste," as Walpole puts it, "what influence might not a youthful bride attain over the Prince." Shortly before the King had, during a visit to his dominion of Hanover, received in frequent audience the two clever, pretty daughters of the Duchess of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel. Of the eldest of these the monarch expressed the gallant regret that the discrepancy in their years prevented his offering himself in marriage, but if the young Princess could not contract an alliance with the reigning monarch, she was in every way suitable to wed the heir-apparent.

Albeit, to this scheme came decided opposition

¹ *The Vicar of Wakefield*, p. 91.

A BRIDE REFUSED

on the part of the Princess Dowager. She thought George too young for matrimony. Nor were these the only considerations. She was the mother, as she explained to Melcombe, of eight other children, for whom she trusted the King would make some provision before he disposed of her eldest son in marriage. Moreover, George might himself become the father of a numerous family, whose interests he would naturally entertain in preference to those of his brothers and sisters. "The King has not condescended to speak to me on the subject," she said, "but should he do so, I shall certainly tell him how ill I take it." Not that the Prince was averse from the attractions of the fair sex. On the contrary, he possessed a warmth of temperament rendering him most susceptible to female fascinations. He was indeed at this very time filled with a passionate attachment for a beautiful girl whose acquaintance he had made in a romantic manner. But of this more hereafter. Enough that his mother had no difficulty in persuading her son to share her views with regard to the young Princess who had so caught the fancy of her royal father-in-law. "Her ladyship's boy," to quote Walpole, "declares violently against being *be-Wolfenbittel-ed*, a word I do not pretend to understand, as it is not in Johnson's new dictionary."¹

Annoyed and disappointed, George II. abandoned his ingenious plan. "If I were twenty years younger," he said of the young Princess to Walde-

¹ *Letters*, vol. ii. p. 475.

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grave, "she should never have been refused by the Prince of Wales, and should at once be Queen of England."¹

There was still another plan by which the King and his Ministers could effect their pious purpose. George was to come of age on the 4th June 1756. He would have completed his eighteenth year, and the formation of a separate establishment according to custom followed. His royal grandfather graciously consented to settle on the Prince an income of £40,000 a year and apartments in St. James's and Kensington Palaces. To Waldegrave was entrusted the mission of advising the Prince of these generous dispensations, which they made to appear as if conditional on his removal from Leicester House and his mother.

George, while grateful for the royal benevolence, was clear and resolute on one point: he would not leave his mother. "A separation at that time," he told Waldegrave, "would entail great affliction upon both. He earnestly hoped the King might be graciously pleased to reconsider his proposition." Eventually the Whig oligarchy found all their plans for alienating Prince George and his mother utterly foiled, and short of having recourse to violent measures they were now finally helpless.

In the list of appointments to his own personal household George resolved that his friend, Lord Bute, should be made Groom of the Stole. The old King protested that he did not know or esteem

¹ Waldegrave's *Memoirs*, p. 40.

HIS ROYAL MAJORITY

Lord Bute, he was not one of his friends, he was not one of his courtiers. Certainly Bute was not one of that band of sycophants and place-hunters of whom George II. was daily surrounded. Nevertheless, here again the Prince carried his point.

We now see George at eighteen established on his own account, and already being slowly drawn into the toils of party; or rather, without himself being a contributory factor, his name and royal influence were employed to serve the ends of Opposition. The enemies of the Newcastle party and of the Ministry of Henry Fox, first Lord Holland, met almost daily at the levées at Leicester House. Pitt, Temple, and the Grenvilles were frequently in attendance. But it was far from the Prince's intention to support any faction. He had become imbued, largely through the teachings of Lord Bute, not merely with the love of country—which is an empty platitude on the lips of politicians of both complexions, those who build up and those who cast down—but with an active desire to further the best interests of all. His serious aims did not prevent him from being an honest, healthy, wholesome youth, fond of exercise, of hunting and outdoor games, and as great a contrast to the affected, sensual, narrow-minded youths of that day as can well be conceived. "I had frequent opportunities," writes Mrs. Calderwood, "of seeing George Scott, and asking him questions about the Prince of Wales. He says he is a lad of very good principles, good-natured and extremely honest; he has no heroic strain, but loves peace, and has no turn for extrava-

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gance; modest, and has no tendency to vice, and has as yet very virtuous principles; has the greatest temptation to gallant with the ladies, who lay themselves out in the most shameful manner to draw him, but to no purpose. He says if he were not what he is they would not mind him. Prince Edward is of a more amorous complexion, but no court is paid to him because he has so little chance to be king."

In the galleries of Knole Park, in Kent, the seat of the Sackville family, is a portrait described in the catalogue as "Mrs. Axford." The picture recalls an almost forgotten romance in the life of George III., for Mrs. Axford is none other than Hannah Lightfoot, the innamorata and reputed mistress of the young Prince. To endeavour to separate fact from legend in the various accounts of this transaction were idle. What seems plausible is, that walking unattended one afternoon in St. James's Street the Prince's attention was attracted by a beautiful young woman gazing into a printseller's window. Their eyes met, Cupid shot his shaft, and the Prince returned to Leicester House. Again a meeting took place. This time the Prince desired his attendant to ascertain the identity of the lady who had so smitten his fancy. It appeared that her father was a respectable tradesman, a Quaker; her uncle, a well-to-do linen-draper of the name of Wheeler, in Carlton Street, Pall Mall. Investigations have proved the absolute falsity of the contemporary reports that a marriage ever took place between the Prince and the fair Quakeress. How long George's youthful passion lasted cannot be ascertained. Hannah Lightfoot was, it appears, led

HANNAH LIGHTFOOT

to the altar, but the groom on that occasion was Isaac Axford, a respectable tradesman, who survived until the year 1816. There is every reason to believe that this marriage was arranged by the lady's own family, and it is highly improbable that after 1758 the future king ever saw his mistress again.¹

A new turn of political affairs fired the Prince's bosom to another purpose, and left him little time or inclination for amorous dalliance.

In 1755 the Seven Years' War had begun. The next year the incapable Newcastle found himself with only three British regiments fit for service in the kingdom. Newcastle, as has been said, was too weak and ignorant to rule alone, too greedy of power to share it with more capable men. With incredible vigour France launched into the conflict, threatening to land a French army on British shores. In common with the rest of his fellow-subjects Prince George viewed the situation with concern yet confident that Britons were able to resist any invader. A wave of enthusiasm and patriotic zeal swept over the country. "All the country squires," wrote Walpole, "are in regimentals." One of the first to apply eagerly for military appointment was the Prince himself. He wrote to the King offering his services. "It was a crisis," he said, "when every zealous subject was offering his service for the defence of the king and his country, and he, as Prince of Wales, would be uneasy in inactivity." He reminded his grandfather how he in his youth

¹ See Thoms' *Hannah Lightfoot, &c.* For further entertaining particulars, see letter to Lord Sackville, Appendix B.

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had sought and attained a soldier's reputation on the field of battle. The same blood, he urged, flowed in the veins of both, and could his Majesty be surprised if it inspired him with corresponding sentiments. It was true that he was young and inexperienced, but he hoped that personal courage, as well as the example he hoped to set, as the highest in rank, sharing the common peril, would make up for other deficiencies.¹ This spirited appeal of a youthful and ardent nature was received with marked coldness by the King. Cynical and practical by nature, his cynicism had only been strengthened by age and the experience of his Court. When the Duke of Newcastle entered the royal closet the old King handed him his grandson's letter. "The Prince," he observed, "was evidently intent upon elevating himself" (*Il veut monter un pas*). The Duke said he hoped his Majesty would return a kind answer, that the letter was very respectful and submissive. But the King dismissed the formal application with a mere line of acknowledgment. He misconstrued it as a presumptuous hint from a mere boy that royalty should take the lead in war. The old monarch needed no such hint. Deficient neither in courage nor energy on the field, he gave orders that his tents and equipment should be ready at an hour's notice.

¹ Harris's *Life of Hardwicke*, vol. iii. p. 182.



HANNAH LIGHTFOOT
(MRS. AXFORD)

(From the Portrait by Reynolds at Knole Park)

CHAPTER II

THE PRINCE'S ACCESSION

DEBARRED by his grandfather's rather ungrandfatherly jealousy from taking any active part in the military preparations which were everywhere going forward, the high-spirited young Prince nevertheless took a deep interest in the progress of the war and its political complications. Newcastle was driven from office, and, in November 1756, Pitt became Prime Minister.

As we have seen, Pitt, in spite of his ability, was disliked by the King, and regarded with jealousy by the Whig leaders. Four months later, unable to make any headway in the gigantic task before him, he resigned. It then appeared that Newcastle, himself distrusted and discredited, was equally impotent to enlist the services of men of credit and ability to form a Ministry. A compact was agreed upon. All Newcastle wanted was the control of official patronage; all Pitt coveted was power, especially as regarded foreign policy in the direction of the war. "Mr. Pitt does everything, and the Duke gives everything," as Walpole put it; "so long as they agree to this position they may do as they please." And so began the Pitt-Newcastle

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administration, destined to be the last of the purely Whig Governments.

The life and soul of that administration was William Pitt. Looking back now on the character of this statesman, revealed to us not so much in the opinions of his contemporaries as in his own public acts and utterances, we are left in some doubt as to whether to consider him an unalloyed benefit to his generation. To-day we have different standards of conduct and patriotism. No longer are we the mere slaves of headlong oratory; we have other rules to guide us in our estimates of public men. That Pitt was a great man in the sense of owning an abnormal personality, fiery energy, and a loftiness of tone, is undeniable. He was magnificently eloquent in an age when eloquence was the first test and requisite of a statesman. But such qualities as these may be possessed, and have been possessed, by men who have done far less for their country's real good than quiet, taciturn, unmagnetic spirits. Artificiality is the whole keynote of Pitt's life as we know it. He acted, spoke, and wrote in a theatrical manner; he was a stage tragedian, basking perpetually in the limelight. Even when he first entered the House of Commons, Walpole spoke of his "gestures and emotions of the stage." His speeches have fire and passion, but they seem to us to have neither knowledge, clarity, nor precision. Pitt was perpetually appealing to the emotions, and he was one of the greatest demagogues that ever lived. He was always talking of the people; he was for ever appealing from his opponents to the people.

ESTIMATE OF CHATHAM

Upon the imagination of the people he impressed himself very much as every demagogue has done. They regarded him with matchless enthusiasm until in an unguarded moment he nearly betrayed himself and them. And who were the people to whom Pitt incessantly referred? Not surely the most cultured, intelligent, and decent of the community of Pitt's day, the era of public executions, public execrations, rioters, and rnegades? No; they were largely the mob, the "mob" in the sense connoted by Fielding in Pitt's day: "Wherever this word occurs in our writings it intends persons without virtue and sense in all stations; and many of the highest rank are often meant by it." Not altogether, but largely, these were the constituents of Pitt.

Pitt was a man of ability, but it was not trained ability. He threw himself with a wealth of passionate declamation and lofty vehemence into the task of making England successful where before she had failed. Not for a moment do we wish to detract from Pitt's achievements, where those achievements rest on a solid foundation. But to attribute to Pitt all that the British armies accomplished in the latter half of the Seven Years' War in India, in Canada, the victories of Pocock and Rodney, and of Hawke, Granby, and Draper, reaches a summit of eucomiastic extravagance too high for its base to rest on earth.

Is it contended that Clive and Hawke were the products of Pitt's genius? Wolfe's conduct at Rochefort, where he alone emerged with any credit, and earned Hawke's regard, was surely not inspired by Pitt, who here blundered terribly. Is it

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not a reflection on Amherst's valour and strategy to say that if Newcastle or the first Lord Holland had been Prime Minister of England he would not have effected the capture of Louisburg?

It is a mistake to suppose that the English are a prosaic people. There is no nation in Europe so alert to seize upon the romantic in politics. The picturesque, eloquent figure engages their hearts and suffrages to a degree which makes the political prepossessions of a Frenchman or a Spaniard seem gelid and inert. The phenomenon of an obscure Jew, by the mere force of an exotic personality, his energy and his picturesque paradoxes, emerging from his obscurity to take his place at the head of the aristocratic party, the most exclusive in Europe, to become first Minister of the English Crown, is to foreigners an eternal source of wonder. In no country is personal affectation surer of regard, have meretricious advantages a more practical value, than in downright, sober England.

Pitt's acting was so intense, his figure so commanding, his words of command rang out with such resonance, that they awakened that frantic applause, that turbulence of approval, which invariably awaits a great actor in a crowded theatre. The greatness of the histrion is in the opinion of his contemporaries. Only those who actually witnessed his performances can be heard as testimony. It is so with such an actor as Pitt. How otherwise could we esteem him the matchless statesman, the brilliant diplomat, the wise counsellor—the pure patriot he appeared to some, though not all, of his contemporaries? Is it the

THE MOB'S REPRESENTATIVE

general who shouts the loudest, who urges his troops forward most dramatically, who wears the gaudiest uniform, is it he who is the best master of strategy, the coolest in the field, and the wisest after the victory?

Nothing seems to us clearer than that George, young as he was, had taken a far truer measure of Pitt than his grandfather. George II. disliked and distrusted the Great Commoner because he was a demagogue, and in his opinion only kings could afford to be demagogues. Reserved and cynical himself, he did not love high-flown phrases and theatrical attitudes. When he heard that Pitt had said to the Duke of Devonshire on entering the Cabinet, "I know that I can save the country, and I know no other man can," George naturally took offence at his audacity. The King well knew that he himself did not possess the attributes which attract the mob, but as Constitutional monarch he distrusted any man who openly boasted in his face, "It is the people who have sent me here." That Pitt was the representative of the mob, and the mob's power, in that day of limited suffrage, the King was fully aware. Once Pitt, in a vain endeavour to induce George II. to relieve Admiral Byng, urged the sentiments of Parliament as being in Byng's favour. The King made a dry comment, "You have taught me," he said, "to look for the voice of my people elsewhere than in the House of Commons."

But his grandson, Prince George, regarded Chatham in a manner more friendly and more just.

GEORGE THE THIRD

He went to the House of Commons ere he took his seat amongst the Peers and heard the Great Commoner speak. He thought him very eloquent, but that eloquence might be a danger. And in two words there lay the truth. A match will set a house on fire, a lake will hardly extinguish it. George's ideas of patriotism were strangely different from Pitt's. They belonged to different schools, and, strange as it may appear, George's was the newer. His is the patriotism we esteem to-day, less heroic perhaps than the love of country which Charles XII., Frederick, and Napoleon preached and practised, but far better grounded on the principles of fraternity and benevolence. George's reading of history, guided and strengthened by Bute, had taught him that the happiness of his people is the noblest end a sovereign can pursue. He started out on the true path, and never afterwards relinquished it. His creed was that industry, sobriety, piety, and self-respect are a far better foundation for a nation's glory than bloody and costly conquests, and the ruin of smaller States.

The opinion expressed by Bute many years afterwards was certainly held at this time by his master a year or two before he ascended the throne—that a nation cannot be happy that is degraded in her own estimation or in that of her neighbours, but that nothing will justify the expenditure of blood and treasure in order to gain a renown which the character and extent of the wealth of the people do not deserve and cannot support.

Yet, as we shall see, there was one point—and

THE PRINCE IN SCOTLAND

that a cardinal one—at which Prince George and Pitt were in agreement, namely, the danger and injustice of oligarchical rule, of government by family compact. Both saw too much of the evils of the party system to care greatly for parties.

George was only twenty when we find him writing to Lord Bute on the occasion of the repulse of General Abercrombie at Ticonderoga: “I fear this check will prevent Abercrombie’s pushing to Crown Point; but in this, as in everything else, I rely entirely on Providence and the gallant spirit of my countrymen. Continuing to trust in that superior help, I make no doubt that, if I mount this throne, I shall still, by restoring the love of virtue and religion, make this country great and happy.”¹

While thus a spectator from afar of the events which were taking place in various quarters of the globe and filled England with rejoicing, George undertook a tour of the kingdom in the company of his friend and counsellor Lord Bute. They travelled to Edinburgh as private gentlemen, attended only by two servants. Scotland was an alien kingdom to Englishmen at large, and the Scots an alien people. We already know that in England the Scots were regarded with contempt. What is remarkable is that the Scots, instead of the fierce resentment of this attitude which might

¹ *Chatham Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 336. Pitt might himself have expressed a similar aspiration for his country, although it is doubtful whether he would propose to compass his ends by the same means.

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be expected of a high-spirited nation, seemed almost humbly to acquiesce in it. The English victory of Culloden and the attainting of so many of their chief nobles had perhaps humbled their pride. We are told that at Edinburgh while the party alighted to change horses a cavalry officer passed the inn and easily distinguished the features of the royal traveller under all the disguise. He immediately took horse and followed the travellers at a distance, eager to unriddle the important mission which he supposed to be the occasion of this journey. He followed the travellers from Edinburgh to Glasgow, and thence to the west of Scotland, and lastly to the Isle of Bute. After this he traced them by another route back to the inn where he first discovered them at Edinburgh, and having thereby gratified his curiosity, discontinued his observations.¹

On his return to London, after an absence of some weeks, the Prince took up residence at Saville House. Accounts of his behaviour and sentiments having by this time percolated through to the mob, George found himself already popular. On the 4th June 1759 a most brilliant Court was held in compliment to his birthday. At night the whole town was illuminated, the only recorded exception being the house of a certain woollen-draper, a Quaker in Cornhill. At this mark of disrespect, we are told, the mob were so much irritated that they pulled up the pavement and split the shutters of his shop with large stones; smaller stones were flung up as high as the third storey, the windows of which were

¹ *An Account of the Prince's Scottish Journey.*

ATTENDANCE AT DEBATES

shattered to pieces, as was the whole front of the house. What connection the dereliction of this Quaker had with the current rumours concerning Hannah Lightfoot is not known. Perhaps it had none.

In the social system of to-day the Prince would long ere this have figured frequently and in many and varied capacities before the gaze of his future subjects. But corner-stone laying and various inaugural proceedings at which the heir-apparent is the chief ornament and attraction were then unfrequent and unceremonial. The Prince made his entry into public life by heading a commission for giving in George II.'s absence the royal assent to several Bills. This was in February 1760.

There followed numerous other occasions in which the Prince took part, and he was an occasional attendant at the debates in the House of Lords. But he refused to be present at the trial of the wretched Lord Ferrers in April, lest he should be obliged to vote on the question of life or death of that hapless Peer.

No other subject in the realm rejoiced more heartily at the news of the capture of Quebec, or deplored more sincerely the death of the gallant Wolfe. George kept himself *au courant* with the affairs of the empire. He felt to the full, as we have seen, the responsibility which the death of his grandfather would entail upon him, and he resolved to shoulder that responsibility with firmness and courage. Much of his leisure was spent in rural pastimes at Kew, where his mother, the Princess

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Dowager, was greatly interested in making a collection of exotic plants, the nucleus of the present magnificent Royal Botanical Gardens.

On October 25th George II. had risen at his usual time, without any apparent signs of indisposition. He called his page, drank his chocolate, and inquired about the wind, as if anxious for the arrival of the mails, which had been detained in Holland a considerable time. He then opened the window and looked out upon Kensington Gardens, and seeing it a fine day, said he would walk in the garden. On leaving the room the royal page heard a noise "like the falling of a billet of wood from the fire." Returning hastily, he found the King prostrate on the floor. "Call Amelia," he muttered, and almost instantly expired.

An hour later the young Prince of Wales was riding from Kew Palace to London. He had just crossed Kew Bridge when he was accosted by a man on horseback, who handed him a piece of very coarse white-brown paper, on which was scrawled a single word, the name "Schrieder." The Prince knew Schrieder was the German valet-de-chambre of his grandfather. The man had hurried away while the surgeons were working over the body of his master. He reported that the King had been seized by an attack of illness which threatened to be fatal. George acted with great decision. "Say nothing further of your news," he enjoined, "and ride quietly forward." To his attendants the Prince coolly observed that his horse had become lame, and turning right about recrossed the bridge to Kew Palace.

HIS REIGN BEGINS

On receiving an authoritative note from the Princess Amelia directed "To his Majesty" he ordered his attendants to accompany him to the capital. They had scarcely proceeded far on the road when the royal party encountered a coach and six, the lackeys in the blue and silver liveries of Pitt. The Secretary of State had sped from London to convey formally to his master the intelligence of his accession. Together, and silently, they made their way to Saville House. Already we may well believe the "Great Commoner" was speculating on the character of his new and youthful monarch, and what effect this sudden turn of affairs would have on his own fortunes.

Amongst the crowd of courtiers hurrying to Saville House the King's eye caught that of Lord Bute. He summoned him to his side, and from that moment the Earl's brief career of glory and lifelong unhappiness began.

On the same day George sent for the Duke of Newcastle. On his arrival Newcastle met the Groom of the Stole, Lord Bute, who told him that he was the first person to whom his Majesty proposed to grant a private interview. The King desired to confer with him alone, before the first Council met. Nothing occurred in the royal closet to occasion the Duke any alarm. "His Majesty," he wrote to Lord Hardwicke, "informed me that he had always had a very good opinion of me, and that he knew my constant zeal for his family and my duty to his grandfather, which he thought would be pledges of my zeal for him." The Duke, ever prying and

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restless in his apprehension, murmured something about Bute. "My Lord Bute," said the King, "is your good friend; he himself will confirm my opinion." The phrase was twisted by Newcastle into a deep and sinister significance. He wrote to Hardwicke that the King had said, "My Lord Bute is your good friend; he will tell you my thoughts." His jealousy took instant alarm. "God knows, and my friends know, the distress I am in. Nobody's advice equals yours with me, and my fate, or at least my resolution, must be taken before to-morrow evening; therefore, I most ardently beseech your lordship to be in town so as to dine with me to-morrow." He adds: "My opinion is they will give me good words, and conclude, as is true, that I shall willingly go out."

As George had received the news of his accession without perturbation, so he continued tranquil and self-possessed. To avoid vain show and the acclamations of the mob he had decided that his first Privy Council should take place at Carlton House, where the Princess Dowager occasionally resided. Not knowing of this intention, the purlieus were comparatively deserted when the new King arrived. A small detachment of guards had, however, been hastily summoned thither to pay him honour. These George summarily dismissed, ordering their captain to conduct them to Kensington to attend his grandfather's remains.

At the foot of the staircase the Duke of Newcastle, Secretary of State, and nominally Prime Minister, bent the knee and kissed his young sove-

HIS FIRST COUNCIL

reign's hand. A brief colloquy took place, and the King entered the Council Chamber.

Pitt, who had taken care to be first in attendance, had presented George with a paper containing the outline of a speech which the Minister hinted it might be proper to repeat to the Privy Council. Pitt might have spared himself the trouble. The King fully understood Constitutional usage. This was an occasion when the King could speak his own mind in his own way. He therefore thanked his Minister for his loyal consideration. "He had," he said, "previously viewed the subject with some attention, and had himself already prepared the heads of what he should say at the Council table."

Although at first agitated and embarrassed by the novelty of his situation and in the presence of men whom he scarcely knew, George quickly recovered his self-possession. Even his bitter detractor, Horace Walpole, admits that his conduct this day was characterised by dignity and propriety. His speech had evidently been prepared with great care. He began by lamenting the death of his grandfather, especially at this critical juncture in the national affairs. After a modest allusion to his own insufficiency, George declared his determination to follow the impulse of the tenderest affection for his native country, depending upon the advice of the Lords of the Council, and resolving to make it the happiness of his life to promote the glory and welfare of the empire, to preserve and strengthen the constitution in both Church and State, and to promote the existing just and necessary

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with a due regard to the bringing it to an honourable and lasting peace. "The loss that I and the nation have sustained," said he, "by the death of the King my grandfather, would have been severely felt at any time; but, coming at so critical a juncture, and so unexpected, it is by many circumstances augmented, and the weight now falling on me much increased. I feel my own insufficiency to support it as I wish; but, animated by the tenderest affection for my native country, and depending on the advice, experience, and abilities of your lordships, and the support of every honest man, I enter with cheerfulness into this arduous situation, and shall make it the business of my life to promote in everything the glory and happiness of these kingdoms, to preserve and strengthen the constitution both in Church and State; and, as I mount the throne in the midst of an expensive, but just and necessary war, I shall endeavour to prosecute it in the manner the most likely to bring on an honourable and lasting peace in concert with my allies."

It would doubtless have been diverting to watch the expressions on the faces of the Ministers as they listened to this language of patriotism and propriety. They had no longer to do with a will entirely subservient to them in these matters. A new force had arisen in national affairs which would need all their skill and diplomacy to cope with, and even then they might be baffled. Only one man in the kingdom now held the reins, and that man was George the King.

Thus early Pitt trembled for his popularity,



JOHN, THIRD EARL OF BUTE
(From the Portrait by Ramsay)



BUTE SWORN A COUNCILLOR

Newcastle trembled for his place. But what seems to have affected Pitt and Newcastle most, was that they had not been party to the preparation of this speech. An epithet relating to the war caught Pitt's attention and gave his ridiculous supersensitiveness a shock. He asked Newcastle afterwards what the King had called the war. "I then," narrated the Duke, "repeated it to him from memory."¹ The Duke's memory was malicious. He was by no means averse from inflaming Pitt against the King. He told his colleague, therefore, that the King had said "a bloody war." Pitt expressed furious indignation that such words, without any previous communication with him, had been actually 'projected, executed, and entered on the Council Books!' But the phrase, as we have seen, was "expensive, but just and necessary war," and is so entered without subsequent emendation on the Council Book.

When the King's speech was concluded, without addressing either Newcastle or Pitt individually, he asked mildly if there was anything wrong in point of *form*? "We all bowed," related the Duke, "and went out of the closet."

At this Council the King's brother, the Duke of York, and Lord Bute were sworn in as members; the latter being introduced as Groom of the Stole in the new royal household, the same office he held in the Prince's establishment previous to the accession. Parliament was prorogued to the 18th November.

¹ Harris's *Earl of Hardwicke*, vol. iii. p. 214.

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Evidence of the popularity of the new King multiplied daily. On the third day of the reign the Lord Mayor and Aldermen waited on his Majesty at Saville House with a congratulatory address, and condolence upon George II.'s death. "Their peculiar happiness" was, they avowed, "to see that the youthful monarch's heart was truly English, he having discovered in his earliest years the warmest attention to the laws and constitution, so excellently formed as to give liberty to the people while they confer power upon the Prince, being thus a mutual support of the prerogative of the Crown and of the rights of the subject."

George's reply on this occasion, apparently his own, created an excellent impression.

A day or two later, according to custom, the Lord Chamberlain announced that Drawing Rooms would be held on Wednesdays, and on Sundays after divine service. This latter arrangement was promptly nullified by George himself. It was against good sense and decorum. In his opinion the Sabbath day might be employed to better uses than Court etiquette.

How the new reign was regarded by society in the capital we may readily learn from contemporary evidence. Lord Lyttelton writing to Mary Wortley Montagu a week after the accession says: "It is with great pleasure I can assure you that all parties unite in the strongest expressions of zeal and affection for our young King, and approbation of his behaviour since his accession. He has shown the most obliging kindness to *all* the royal family, and

EARLY POPULARITY

done everything that was necessary to give his Government quiet and unanimity in this difficult crisis. I have been told of some great and extraordinary marks of royal virtues in his nature, and royal wisdom in his mind, by those who do not flatter. There will be no changes in the Ministry, and I believe few at Court. The Duke of Newcastle hesitated some time whether he should undertake his arduous office in a new reign, but he has yielded at last to the earnest desire of the King himself, of the Duke of Cumberland, and of the heads of all parties and factions, even those who formerly were most hostile to him. His friend and mine, my Lord Hardwicke, has been most graciously talked to by the King in two or three audiences, and will, I doubt not, continue in the Cabinet Council, with the weight and influence he ought to have there."

George's first appearance amongst his subjects at large was on the very day this letter was written, when he laid the first stone of Blackfriars Bridge. His figure and carriage, we are told, charmed the people.

Walpole, who examined public characters as a connoisseur examines a picture or a medal, feels himself impelled to declare: "The new reign dates with great propriety and decency; the civilest letter to Princess Amelia; the greatest kindness to the Duke; the utmost respect to the dead body. No changes to be made but those absolutely necessary, as the household, &c.—and what some will think the most unnecessary, in the representative of power.

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The young King has all the appearance of being amiable. There is great grace and temper, much dignity and good-nature, which breaks out on all occasions."

Walpole had been amongst the first to kiss hands on the King's accession. The King, he says, is "good and amiable in everything, having no view but that of contenting the world." To Horace Mann he also writes on the 1st November 1760: "His person is tall and full of dignity, his countenance florid and good-natured, his manner graceful and obliging. He expresses no warmth of resentment against anybody—at most, coldness. To the Duke of Cumberland he has shown even a delicacy of attention." Again, twelve days afterwards, Walpole writes to the same correspondent: "For the King himself, he seems all good-nature and wishing to satisfy everybody. All his speeches are obliging. I saw him yesterday, and was surprised to find the levée room had lost so entirely the air of the lion's den. The sovereign does not stand in one spot with his eyes fixed royally on the ground, and dropping bits of German news. He walks about and speaks freely to everybody. I saw him afterwards on the throne, where he is graceful and genteel, sits with dignity, and reads his answer to addresses well." The King's voice and delivery are described by others as having been remarkably full and fine.

Among other persons who have borne pleasing testimony to the virtues of the young King is Mrs. Montagu herself: "There is a decency and dignity

A CHAPLAIN REBUKED

in his character," she writes to Mrs. Carter, "that could not be expected at his years; mildness and firmness mixed; religious sentiments, and a moral conduct unblemished; application to business; affability to every one; no bias to any particular party or faction; sound and serious good sense in conversation, and an elevation of thought and tenderness of sentiment. There hardly passes a day in which one does not hear of something he has said or done which raises one's opinion of his understanding and heart."

At his first Sunday in church—at the Chapel Royal—one of his chaplains, Dr. Wilson, ventured to eulogise the young King from the pulpit. George at once took steps to prevent a recurrence of such ill-timed flatteries. He caused the worthy doctor to be informed that he went to church to hear the praises of God, not his own. "Thank Heaven!" writes Mrs. Montagu, "that our King is not like his brother of Prussia, a hero, a wit, and a freethinker, for in the disposition of the present times we should soon have seen the whole nation roaring blasphemy, firing cannon, and jesting away all that is serious, good, and great. Religious as this young monarch is, we have reason to hope that God will protect him from the dangers of his situation, and make him the means of bringing back that sense of religion and virtue, which has been wearing off for some generations."

George's reign was still only numbered by days when he issued a proclamation for the encouragement of piety and for the prevention and punishment of

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“vice, profaneness, and immorality” throughout his dominions. Addresses of loyalty poured in from all quarters of the kingdom in the course of the three weeks which elapsed before the meeting of Parliament. George showed, in spite of the scant sympathy which had subsisted between them, the deepest respect for his grandfather’s memory. He carried out his wishes with great fidelity; even those regarding George II.’s mistress, the Countess of Yarmouth. A sum of money, amounting to £8000 in bank notes, having been found in the late King’s private cabinet marked “Lady Yarmouth,” was at his grandson’s request immediately handed to her.

He sent for his uncle, the Duke of Cumberland, and expressed to him his earnest hope that they might thereafter associate on the best of terms. “He was aware,” he said, “that unanimity had not been hitherto a characteristic of the royal family, but he intended to inaugurate a new régime. If there were any future discord, it should not be his fault.” It is a pity Cumberland did not cordially repay this frankness sooner than he did. He would thereby have saved his nephew much tribulation of spirit. But Cumberland disliked Bute: he, the victor of Culloden, would not stoop to have any dealings with a Scotsman.

CHAPTER III

CHATHAM RETIRES FROM THE HELM

FEW historians of this period can forbear to relate that a favourite saying of the Princess Dowager to her son was, "George, be a king!" The quotation has been made with a malicious zest, as if in this wholesome maternal injunction there lurked an aspiration towards tyranny, the abuse of power, and a total deviation from constitutional principles. But if the widow of the highest judicial functionary in the realm should charge her son, "My son, be a Lord Chancellor," the adjuration would only provoke a benevolent applause. Were—to descend in the social scale—the relict of a grocer, or a tailor, or a tinker ardently to counsel her eldest born not only to follow in his father's footsteps, but to resolve upon being a *good* grocer, or tailor, or tinker, such counsel would have the approbation of every critic. Now, in the nice arrangement of the political machine in Britain, if not yet in its Empire, kingship is something more than a redundant, ornamental wheel; it is, and long may it continue to be, at once the tireless mainspring and the indispensable balance.

What, briefly, are the functions of a constitutional monarch. He is entitled to complete know-

GEORGE THE THIRD

ledge of all public transactions and to the amplest opportunities of discussing them with his Ministers. He may criticise, alter, or modify their decisions; he may suggest amendments, express doubts, put forward alternatives, and thereby assist in clarifying the judgment of the Cabinet. The King is permanent, his Ministers are fugitive. He is an impartial spectator, they are party combatants. Able to take a calm and comprehensive survey of a given situation, he can see what tends for the good or ill of the people at large, to view plainly, as from an eminence, the goal towards which certain movements are tending; while they, on the other hand, are obfuscated by details and the dust of partisanship.

“The middle order of mankind,” wrote Goldsmith at this very time, “may lose all its influence in a State, and its voice be in a manner drowned in that of the rabble; for, if the fortune sufficient for qualifying a person at present to give his voice in State affairs be ten times less than was judged sufficient upon forming the constitution, it is evident that great numbers of the rabble will thus be introduced into the political system, and they, ever moving in the vortex of the great, will follow where greatness shall direct. In such a State, therefore, all that the middle order has left is to preserve the prerogative and privileges of the one principal governor with the most sacred circumspection. For he divides the power of the rich, and calls off the great from falling with tenfold weight on the middle order placed beneath them.”¹

¹ *The Vicar of Wakefield*, p. 90.

THE WHIG OLIGARCHY

A very striking tract, entitled "Seasonable Hints from an Honest Man on the new Reign and the new Parliament," made its appearance supporting a new theory of Government. It quickly attracted attention, from the fact that it was understood to be the composition of Walpole's old rival, Lord Bath, the former colleague of Carteret. The question, stated the writer, for the King to determine was, "Whether he is to content himself with the shadow of royalty while a set of undertakers for his business intercept his immediate communication with his people, and make use of the legal prerogatives of their master to establish the illegal claims of factitious oligarchy." In his opinion "a cabal of Ministers had been allowed to erect themselves into a fourth estate, to check, to control, to influence, nay, to enslave the others"; it having become usual "to urge the necessity of the King submitting to give up the management of his affairs and the exclusive disposal of all his employments to some Ministers, or set of Ministers, who, by uniting together, and backed by their numerous dependents, may be able to carry on the measures of Government." "Ministerial combinations to engross power and invade the closet" were nothing less than a "scheme of putting the sovereign in leading-strings," and that their result had been the monstrous corruption of Parliament and the strange spectacle of a King of England unable to confer the smallest employment unless on the recommendation and with the consent of his Ministers. The writer urges the new King to put an end to this system by showing

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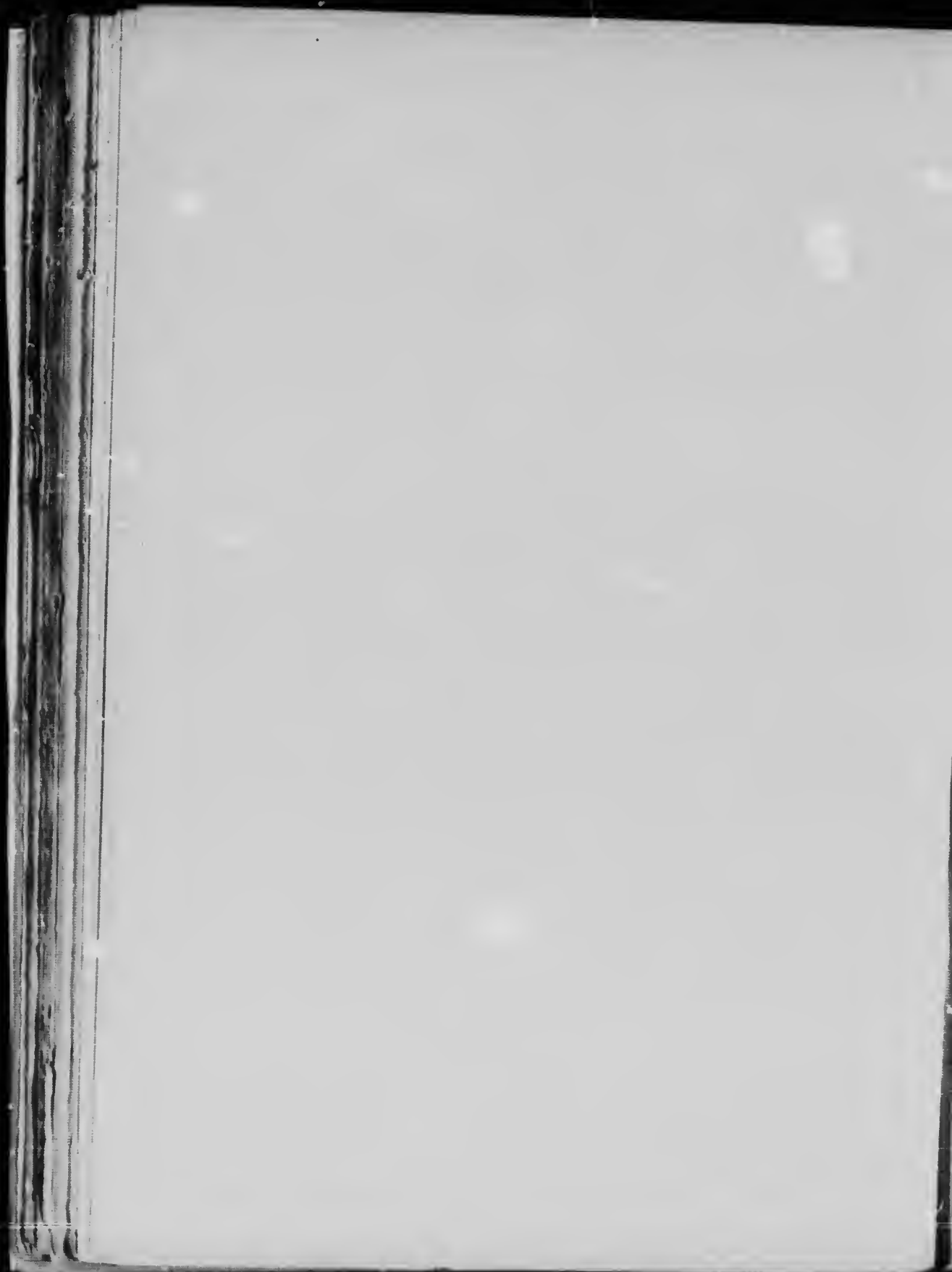
his resolution to break all factious connections and confederacies." Already he has "placed in the most honourable stations near his own person some who have not surely owed their place to Ministerial importunity, because they have always opposed Ministerial influence," and by steadily pursuing this course the true ideal of the Constitution will be attained, "in which the Ministers will depend on the Crown, not the Crown on the Ministers." But to gain this result it was requisite that the basis of the Government should be widened, the proscription of the Tories abolished, and the sovereign enabled to select his servants from all sections of politicians. The pamphlet from which we have just quoted clearly mirrored the King's ideas.

On the 18th November, amid a scene of much splendour, Parliament was opened by the young King. His speech on this occasion was awaited by the Whigs with anxiety as deep as the interest of the nation at large. Forty-eight hours before, the speech had been verbally composed by Hardwicke, and forwarded to the King by Newcastle. On its return into the Duke's hands a memorable interpolation was discovered. We are told that this interpolation occasioned grave dissatisfaction to the Cabinet. To understand why, it would be necessary to recite all the petty prejudices, racial hatreds and distrusts, party and personal jealousies of the period. What astonishes us is that subsequent commentators on this passage actually appear to participate in those contemporary prejudices and jealousies, and almost

+ Both & Educ'd in this Country, & born
in the Name of Britain, & the peculiar happiness
of my life will ever consist, in promoting the
Welfare of a people whose Loyalty & warm
affection to me, I consider, as the greatest & the
most permanent Security of my Throne.

FACSIMILE OF INTERPOLATED PASSAGE IN KING'S SPEECH, 1760

(Now in the British Museum)



THE NAME OF "BRITAIN"

to question the King's right to insert it in the speech from the throne. But surely our views on the limitations of monarchy have grown less severe in more modern times. Who questioned Queen Victoria's right to alter and amend the Queen's Speech on several momentous occasions? So far from condemning it, these Victorian interpolations have been received, when the facts became known, with universal applause by her subjects. If there ever was an occasion when the intervention of the sovereign was demanded, if there ever was an opportunity to be seized, it was upon George's first formal address to the representatives of his people.

"Born and educated in this country, I glory in the name of Britain; and the peculiar happiness of my life will ever consist in promoting the welfare of a people, whose loyalty and warm affection to me I consider the greatest and most permanent security of my throne."

There in a sentence is the definition, the best, the most essential definition of the aims and duties of a constitutional monarchy. But such is not the passage as it was given to the world, such is not the passage which stimulated the suspicion and provoked the scorn of the Whigs. A collation with the original text in the King's own handwriting shows that what he had actually penned was "Britain," not "Briton." The difference may seem trivial; but it was not trivial. Britain was a word familiar enough to connote the two kingdoms, and would have passed without comment, but "Briton" was yet unfamiliar, uncouth, and, to nine-tenths of English-

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men, unacceptable. It grated fiercely on the susceptibilities of the anti-Scottish party. It seemed an impertinence on the part of some secret adviser of the King. That secret adviser could be none other than Lord Bute. The rumour ran that the King had originally written the word "Englishman," but that Bute had induced him to alter it to "Briton." Newcastle wrote in haste to Hardwicke: "There must be some notice taken of these royal words, both in the Motion and Address. I suppose you will think Briton remarkable. It denotes the author to all the world."

Having reviewed the prosperous efforts of the British forces in Canada and India, and the successes of the allied armies in Germany, together with the state of the nation at large, the speech concluded: "In this condition I have found things on my accession to the throne of my ancestors; happy in viewing the prosperous part of it; happier still should I have been had I found my kingdoms, whose true interest I have entirely at heart, in full peace; but, since the ambition, injurious encroachments, and dangerous designs of my enemies rendered the war both just and necessary, and the generous overture made last winter, towards a congress for a pacification, has not yet produced a suitable return, I am determined, with your cheerful and powerful assistance, to prosecute this war with vigour, in order to that desirable object, a safe and honourable peace. For this purpose it is absolutely incumbent upon us to be early prepared; and I rely upon your zeal and hearty concurrence to support

HIS ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION

the King of Prussia and the rest of my allies, and to make ample provision for carrying on the war as the only means to bring our enemies to equitable terms of accommodation."

In his separate address to the House of Commons, the speech recommended vigour, unanimity, and despatch as the best means of frustrating the ambitious and destructive views of his enemies: "In this expedition I am the more encouraged by a pleasing circumstance, which I look upon as one of the most auspicious omens of my reign. That happy extinction of divisions, and that union and good harmony, which continue to prevail among my subjects, afford me the most agreeable prospect. The natural disposition and wish of my heart are to cement and promote them; and I promise myself that nothing will arise, on your part, to interrupt or disturb a situation so essential to the true and lasting felicity of this great people."

The speech added greatly to the popular esteem in which the young King was already held. Everywhere was it noted with pleasure that a King's Speech was delivered for the first time within living memory with a purely English pronunciation. The grace and dignity of the King's bearing were universally praised. Hardwicke felt that this would be an ill time for cavilling. He counselled Newcastle to do nothing about the interpolation; it was inserted "by command," and he felt it was best therefore to allow it to stand without remonstrance. Newcastle prudently acquiesced, only remarking "That this method of proceeding cannot

GEORGE THE THIRD

last, though we must now, I suppose, submit." He would leave the forged "Briton" to work its effect amongst the disaffected and ignorant.

During the first brief session of Parliament, which was dissolved on 19th March, George added much to his popularity by a personal recommendation, originating in his own judgment and good sense. It displayed how little he sought to increase his own prerogatives at the expense of his subjects. By an Act of William III. judges were irremovable, except by intervention of Parliament, during the lifetime of the King, but on the demise of the monarch it was then expected of his successor to leave them at will. Both George I. and George II. had exercised this prerogative. George III. not only refused to tamper with the Bench, but recommended a law for making those commissions perpetual during life and good behaviour, notwithstanding any demise of the Crown. George freely recognised that the power to remove a judge was detrimental to the complete independence of the judicial office.

For this wise and liberal concession on the following day the whole ermined Bench waited upon the King to return thanks, and Parliament duly passed the measure into law. When writs were issued for the new elections, George seized the occasion to inform all his Ministers that no money should be spent to procure the election of persons favourable to the Government. "I will," he charged them, "be tried by my country." Would that it had been found possible to continue thus and forever to eschew the arts of bribery!

THE FIRST FIVE MONTHS

The first five months of George's reign were distinguished by no political event of importance. With the sanguine nature of youth, the King hoped that the public profession of his sentiments would have their due effect upon the temper of both politicians and people, and that after a time, of their own accord, unity and strength would supplant weakness and faction in the counsels of the day.

Bute was too much taken up with Court appointments and the petty business of his office to spare any time for the consideration of ulterior and graver subjects. His early promotion as Privy Councillor has often been considered something extraordinary and unprecedented. But it was customary for the monarch to continue his household servants in those capacities which they held under him while Prince of Wales. Lord Bute had been Groom of the Stole to Prince George. The holder of this office is always constituted a Privy Councillor.

"Mr. Glover was with me, and was full of admiration of Lord Bute," writes Dodington a few days before Christmas 1760; "he applauded his conduct and the King's, saying that they would beat everything; but a little time must be allowed for the madness of popularity to cool."

It was in these five months, when the madness of the King's popularity was still at boiling point, and ere it had begun sensibly to chill, that an episode of interest occurred. It is clear that George was resolving in his mind whether it would not be possible to crown both his patriotism and his love by placing an Englishwoman on the throne of England.

GEORGE THE THIRD

Lady Sarah Lennox was the youngest daughter of Charles, second Duke of Richmond, and therefore great-granddaughter of Charles II. Beautiful, bewitching, and accomplished, Lady Sarah, in her eighteenth year, was commonly spoken of as the chief ornament of the Court. "Lady Sarah Lennox," records that indefatigable chronicler of passing persons and events, Horace Walpole, describing the most beautiful women he saw at St. James's, "was by far the chief angel."

In January 1761 the play "Jane Shore" was acted at Holland House. The part of Jane Shore was taken by Lady Sarah, young Charles James Fox being the Hastings of the piece. Lady Sarah was then, in Walpole's opinion, "more beautiful than you can conceive, and her very awkwardness gave an air of truth to the sham of the part, and the antiquity of the time, which was kept up by her dress taken out of Montfauçon. Lady Susan was dressed from Jane Seymour. I was infinitely more struck with the last scene between the two women, than ever I was when I have seen it on the stage. When Lady Sarah was in white, with her hair about her ears, and on the ground, no Magdalen by Correggio was half so lovely and expressive."

In a very short time it began to be rumoured that the King and Lady Sarah had been seen much together. The Princess took alarm, but the King's infatuation was not easily to be diverted. It is known that they met frequently in the grounds of Holland House. Naturally Lady Sarah's family, notably her brother-in-law, Henry Fox, afterwards

LADY SARAH LENNOX

Lord Holland, lost no opportunity of bringing the young couple together.

On the occasion of the King's birthday St. James's Palace presented a scene of unusual splendour. In the midst of the bejewelled throng which there assembled to do honour to their young sovereign was the fair object of George's affections. He seems now to have almost made up his mind to oppose his mother and marry Lady Sarah Lennox. Six years later Chatham's brother, Thomas Pitt, told George Grenville that the King had freely unbosomed himself to Lady Susan Strangways, a close friend and kinswoman of his innamorata. "His Majesty," he said, "came to Lady Susan Strangways in the Drawing Room, asked her in a whisper if she did not think the Coronation [would be] a much finer sight if there was a queen. She said, 'Yes.' He then asked her if she did not know somebody who would grace that ceremony in the properest manner. At this she was much embarrassed, thinking he meant herself; but he went on and said, 'I mean your friend, Lady Sarah Lennox. Tell her so, and let me have her answer the next Drawing Room day.'" Lady Susan happening on one occasion to mention that she was about to leave London: "I hope not," said the King; and immediately afterwards he added: "But you return in the summer for the Coronation?" "I hope so, sir," replied Lady Susan. "But," continued the King, "they talk of a wedding. There have been many proposals, but I think an English match would do better than a foreign one. Pray tell Lady Sarah I say so." Other evi-

GEORGE THE THIRD

dence confirms our belief that the King really contemplated a union with his fair subject.

But George was no slave to his passion. He was well aware, as Wraxall said afterwards, that Edward IV. or Henry VIII. in his situation would have married and placed Lady Sarah on the throne; Charles II., more licentious, would have endeavoured to seduce her. Although it may have been the ardent wish of George's heart to make Lady Sarah his wife, yet further deliberations upon this matter showed him clearly that his mother was right, and that from a political point of view, and in the interests of his subjects, the match was undesirable. George was a man and a lover, as well as a king. It was not the least of his sacrifices for his people. We can well believe that the decision cost him many a pang, but having taken it he plunged deeply into business in order the more quickly to forget. But he never really forgot. Many years afterwards he attended a theatre where a charming actress, Mrs. Pope, whose resemblance to Lady Sarah was universally commented upon, was performing. Although the Queen and several of his Court were in the royal box, George could not conceal his agitation; he half rose with a changed countenance, and murmured to himself, "She is like Lady Sarah still."

The anodyne to which the King resorted in his distress was potent enough. Business of State there was, and plenty. Not merely did he find himself surrounded exclusively by Whig officials; it was that these Whigs, with few exceptions, were incompetent. The first to go was Lord Holderness. Holderness

WAR OR PEACE ?

was dismissed, because he was a *fainéant* ; Legge, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was discarded because he was arrogant and offensive, as well as idle. It was the King's desire that the other Ministers should be given every chance to end the war, and place the kingdom on a sound footing. Peace, if the reader will pardon the cant phrase of current politics, was the first plank in George's platform. The war had been popular owing to Wolfe's and Clive's victories, the victories of Frederick the Great and Prince Ferdinand, the decline of French prestige. But the war could not be prolonged, even with a continuance of successes, without great danger to Britain. France might go on fighting in Germany for ten years without increasing her debt five million sterling. Britain could not carry it on for the same period without increasing hers upwards of fifty millions; while all the advantages which might be gained over France would not compensate for such an enormous expenditure. The peace party treated the popular enthusiasm for a German war as a dangerous delusion. The London and Bristol merchants, of course, cried for it; but the landholders suffered, and the peasantry starved or were killed. The glory and advantage of sweeping the sea cost the land four or five millions a year. When the merchants ceased to make private fortunes out of contracts for supplies they would repent of their zeal for war. A reaction would come now the national honour was vindicated, and the national possessions were secured.

Peace now became the watchword of a new party

GEORGE THE THIRD

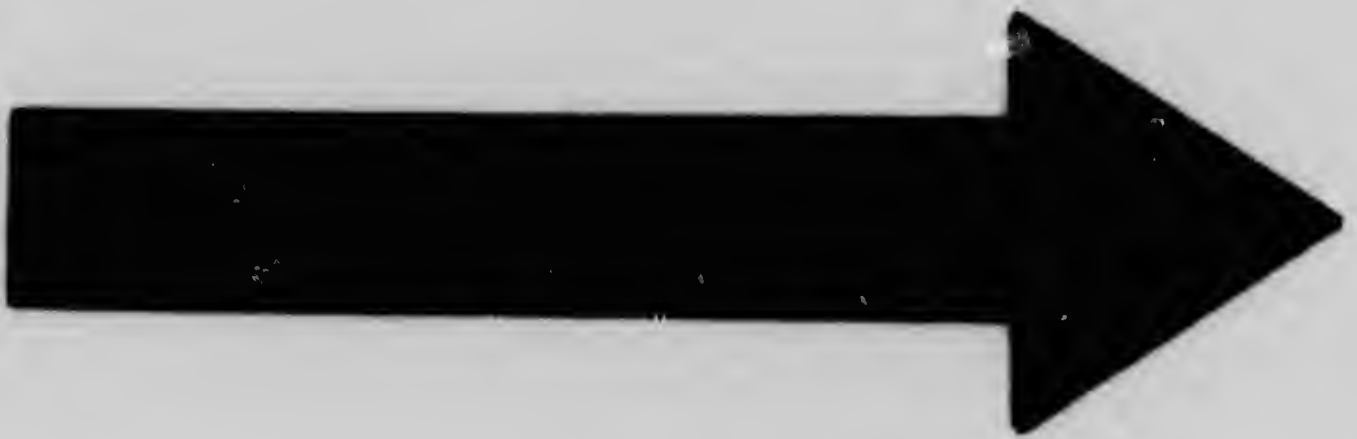
opposed to Pitt. The whole principle and consideration by which the war was continued were arraigned by this party, on whom an anonymous pamphleteer bestowed the title of the "King's friends." The Prussian subsidies were condemned. Frederick of Prussia received £650,000 a year to assist him to win victories, and England was bound to defend him without any sacrifice whatever on his part. The whole basis of the arguments of Pitt and his party was the value to this country of Hanover. George, unlike his grandfather, cared nothing about Hanover. The money which had been lavished in defence of his Hanoverian domains he would much prefer to have seen expended in compelling the French to make peace. But peace was no part of Pitt's plan. To make peace would have been to sap the foundations of his popularity and his power, and in this the mob, and especially the London mob, were with Pitt. George was not to be balked of his policy. He waited impatiently for the conclusion of hostilities. Once a phrase escaped him: "I have two Secretaries of State," he said, "one who can do nothing, and one who will do nothing."

It must not be supposed that these early months of the new reign had brought harmony and more unity to the Whig oligarchy. On the contrary, the great families became more and more divided. The Russell and Pelham factions were at open enmity. Newcastle was secretly intriguing to get rid of Pitt; Fox was as deep in a plot to have Newcastle dismissed. The Duke of Bedford, Lord Hardwicke, George Grenville, and Fox began to

BUTE IN THE CABINET

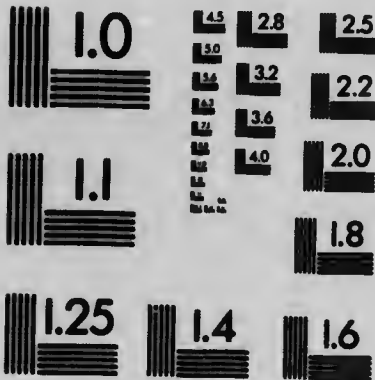
mutter that it was time Pitt's war came to an end. It was exhausting the resources of the country, the pride of France had been sufficiently humbled, and now was the propitious moment for England to propose terms. But Pitt and his brothers-in-law, Temple and James Grenville, stood firm against this unreasonable demand for peace. While they quarrelled amongst themselves, the *Gazette* announced that Lord Bute had been given the post vacated by the Earl of Holderness. Instantly the ignorant fears of the mob were aroused. Several popular demonstrations against Bute occurred, secretly fomented by his enemies. "No petticoat government—no Scotch Minister!" became the vulgar cry.

What would they have thought had they known that the man they loved to insult owed his appointment to the repeated solicitations of Newcastle, Devonshire, and Rockingham? But Bute was no seeker after popularity, and he held these scurrilous railings on the part of the ignorant multitude, aided and abetted by Grub Street, in contempt. He had his own concept of good government and good laws, and that concept he had resolved if ever he came into office to carry out, relying on the justice and good sense of the majority of his countrymen to justify and support him. It is said that the mistake Bute made was in his precipitancy. He should have been more politic and patient; he should have played a waiting game. The Newcastle-Pitt combination was clearly doomed; already was it inoculated with the fatal germs of animosity and distrust. Pitt's arrogance increased hourly, his colleagues in the



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GEORGE THE THIRD

Council were mere puppets. He would not even hearken to any criticism of his plans or conduct; he threatened with impeachment any Minister or official who dared to oppose him. Anson, the First Lord of the Admiralty, was not even permitted to read the orders he was compelled to sign. The responsible heads of departments found, to their disgust, that their subordinates were receiving instructions direct from Pitt of which they themselves were wholly ignorant.

True these things no doubt are, but they should not allow us to convict Bute of indiscretion. The real origin of Bute's precipitancy was Newcastle. Himself living, as has been said, "in a continual state of mingled terror and resentment," he turned to Bute as the one man in the King's confidence who could deliver him and his dissatisfied colleagues from the tyranny of Pitt. The Earl was disinclined to join openly in the national Councils. We find Melcombe incessantly urging the propriety of the step upon him. "He was bound," he said, "by every motive, both public and private, to take an active part in the Government." To Bute too turned the Tories, so long excluded from power. Sunlight suddenly irradiated and warmed the great Jacobite families, who had for decades languished in obscurity. As new hopes filled their bosoms, they with the dissatisfied anti-Pitt Whigs began to combine with the peace party to weaken and cast down the junta whose continued ascendancy was in their eyes dangerous to the State.

One might fancy that, apprised of this growing

CHATHAM'S WAR POLICY

opposition, Pitt would have somewhat lessened the scope of his ambitious operations. On the contrary, this was the moment when he cast a fresh bomb upon the bonfire.

Belleisle, off the coast of Brittany, to which he had despatched an expedition in the spring, had been captured by the English in June 1761. This happy victory, thought the nation, would hasten peace. But the French claims were still considered by Pitt exorbitant and presumptuous. In the midst of the haggling France presented a memorial on behalf of Spain, asking for restitution of certain ships flying the Spanish flag which had been captured during the war, the privilege to fish upon the banks of Newfoundland, and the demolition of the English settlements in the Spanish colony of Honduras.

To this memorial Pitt replied haughtily, that "he expected that France will not at any time presume a right of intermeddling with such disputes between England and Spain." As a punishment for French presumption Pitt proceeded to make terms, under which France would surrender all sources of wealth and political importance in North America, Africa, and Asia. The demolition of Dunkirk was peremptorily demanded as the price of liberty to fish on the banks of Newfoundland, and that permission was rendered less valuable by a refusal to cede Cape Breton. Belleisle was offered as an equivalent for Minorca; Guadeloupe and Marie Galante were to be restored. Canada was to be kept, but the limits were far from being accurately defined. The question of the conquests in India was left to the

GEORGE THE THIRD

English and French East India Companies to settle. The restitution of prizes was refused; and as to the war in Europe, the King would continue, as paymaster, to assist the King of Prussia in the recovery of Silesia. These terms were not too liberal: the manner of offering them was offensive.

“The equitable end of war,” comments Adolphus, “is not the political annihilation of an enemy, but the determination of disputes and the securing of an honourable and permanent peace. Neither of these objects could have been attained by this pacification, and France, however reduced in finance, could not be expected to receive such disgraceful conditions while she yet had the means of prolonging a contest which might produce a change in her favour, but could hardly reduce her to a more deplorable state of necessity.”

Spain had no desire for war: war could easily have been averted. But the result of Pitt's action was a secret alliance between France and Spain, known as the “Family Compact.” Stanley, the British Agent in Paris, obtained vague information of what was said to be one of the articles. Pitt wanted nothing more; he resolved to declare war against Spain. In his opinion, Spain was building ships to fight England, and it was good policy to launch at them a blow while they were still unprepared.

Pitt's colleagues were filled with amazement; they asked upon what basis a declaration of war could be maintained. The “Family Compact”

WAR AGAINST SPAIN

might or might not exist; nothing was certainly known. The Spanish Government vehemently disavowed all hostile intentions. The ships of war building in the Spanish dockyards were never intended to be used against Great Britain, but for convoying merchant vessels and repressing the Barbary pirates. "The King of Spain," so ran the Spanish despatch forwarded by Lord Bristol, the British Minister at Madrid—"the King of Spain will say, as the King of England does, that he will do nothing on account of the intimation of a hostile Power which threatens a future war. The Catholic King approves of and esteems in other monarchs those sentiments of honour he feels himself, and if he had thought that the delivery of the memorial had been construed as a threat, he would never have consented to it. Why has not England made the trial of concluding a peace with France, without the guaranty or intervention of Spain; and adjusted her differences with Spain, without the knowledge of France?" In a word, Spain was ready to forego every claim, consistent with dignity, to avoid a rupture with Britain. But Pitt was obdurate. He was sure Spain was plotting, and nothing but war with Spain would satisfy him.

The natural course would have been to advise his colleagues of his suspicions, to take them entirely into his confidence. What he told them was certainly no grounds for a declaration of war.

It must be owned, observes Mr. Lecky, that modern public opinion would have seldom acquiesced in a war the avowed and known reasons of which

GEORGE THE THIRD

were so plainly inadequate, and it was probably by no means only a desire to expel Pitt from the Ministry that actuated those who rejected his advice. George watched Pitt's conduct with distress. "The King," wrote Newcastle, "seemed so provoked and so weary that his Majesty was inclined to put an end, at all events, to the uncertainty about Mr. Pitt." On 26th September he writes: "The King seems every day more offended with Mr. Pitt, and plainly wants to get rid of him at all events."¹ At three successive Cabinet Councils the question was debated. Pitt stormed and vapoured. He wanted no opposition, he said. "He was called," he declared haughtily, "to the Ministry by the voice of the people, to whom he considered himself accountable for his conduct, and he would not remain in a situation which made him responsible for measures he was no longer allowed to guide." This was too much for Granville, the President of the Council. "I can hardly," he said, "regret the right honourable gentleman's determination to leave us, as he would otherwise have compelled us to leave him; but if he be resolved to assume the right of advising his Majesty and directing the operations of the war, to what purpose are we called to this Council? When he talks of being responsible to the people, he talks the language of the House of Commons, and forgets that at this board he is only responsible to the King. However, though he may possibly have convinced himself of his infallibility, still it remains

¹ Albemarle's *Life of Rockingham*, i. 42, 44.



EARL OF CHATHAM
(From the Portrait by R. Brompton)



CHATHAM RESIGNS

that we should be equally convinced before we can resign our understandings to his direction and join with him in the measures he proposes."

Pitt, therefore, decided to throw up the seals, and his proud and factious brother-in-law, Temple, came to the same decision.

George received his Minister's resignation graciously, but with firmness. He expressed concern at the loss of so able a Minister, but at the same time avowed himself satisfied with the opinion of the majority of the Council. He should, he could not help adding, have found himself under the greatest difficulty had they supported instead of rejecting the proposed measure. To show the favourable sense he entertained of Pitt's services, he begged him to name any rewards in the power of the Crown to bestow. Those superficially acquainted with Pitt's character might have looked for a pompous *Nolo episcopari* in response to the royal offer. Instead of which he fell on his knees, and, bursting into tears, exclaimed, "I confess, sire, I had but too much reason to expect your Majesty's displeasure. I did not come prepared for this exceeding goodness. Pardon me, sire; it overpowers, it oppresses me!" The scene was a painful one, and George was probably relieved when it was over. It is not necessary for us to dwell upon it.

To return to the negotiations. That very day Newcastle received from the Ambassador at Madrid the assurance that there never was a time when the King of Spain wished more to have friendly relations with the King of Britain than at present. "This,"

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commented the Duke, "seems a flat contradiction to all Mr. Pitt's late suppositions and assertions."

While the Cabinet were reading this despatch, Pitt was writing to Bute, mentioning that a pension of £3000 a year for three lives would be very acceptable to him, together with a title for his wife and her issue. Pitt alludes to "These most gracious marks of his Majesty's approbation of his services. They are unmerited and unsolicited, and I shall ever be proud to have received them from the best of sovereigns." Even his letters to Bute acknowledging the King's kindness were "couched in a strain of florid, fulsome, almost servile humility, lamentably unworthy of a great statesman."¹

What happened when the news transpired was only what might have been expected. Public opinion instantly underwent a change. All the credit which Pitt's resignation might have produced amongst the war party was momentarily eclipsed. "Oh, that foolishness of great men," says Walpole, "that sold his inestimable diamond for a paltry peerage and pension!" If Pitt had not previously held such high-flown language about disinterestedness and indulged in such heroic denunciation of pensioners, there would be nothing extraordinary in his claiming a reward which the greatest of English statesmen and soldiers have been glad and proud to receive.

The seals which Pitt resigned were immediately given to Charles, Earl of Egremont, nephew of Sir William Windham, the Tory leader of the last reign. The Duke of Bedford filled Temple's post as Privy

¹ Lecky, vol. iii. p. 37.

ELATION OF NEWCASTLE

Seal. Newcastle's joy was notorious. "I never," writes Sir George Colebrooke, "saw the Duke in higher spirits than after Mr. Pitt, thwarted by the Cabinet in declaring war against Spain, gave notice of his resignation." But his elation was soon followed by marked anxiety. "Do not," said Lord Talbot to him bluntly, "die for joy on the Monday, nor for fear on the Tuesday."

CHAPTER IV

MARRIAGE AND CORONATION

"I pity the young King," wrote Mary Wortley Montagu to a friend, "who in the season of life made for cheerfulness, and most exempt from care, has such a weight thrown upon him as the government at present. Dangers alarm the experienced, but must amaze and terrify the inexperienced."

If George felt the weight, he as yet bore it cheerfully. In the midst of the negotiations for peace with France he set about negotiations for his own future happiness. Lady Sarah Lennox being denied him, he would find another consort of whom his mother and the nation would approve. A suitable match for the sovereign was an urgent object of State policy. Augusta is said to have contemplated one of her own nieces, a Princess of the Saxe-Gotha family, but owing to some physical imperfection in the lady this plan could not be carried out. At George's request, Colonel Graeme, a confidential officer, was despatched to the lesser German Courts in search of the future Queen. His instructions were to find a princess perfect in appearance and health, accomplished, particularly in music, the King being of a very musical disposition, and last, but not least, a princess of an amiable temperament.

COLONEL GRÆME'S MISSION

In his travels, of which it is a pity he has left no account, the worthy Colonel discovered the Princess Dowager of Mecklenburg-Strelitz at Pyrmont. To this secluded spa she had resorted with her two daughters, living simply and without ceremony. No difficulty offered to Græme's becoming acquainted with their habits and characters. After making some necessary inquiries, the usual formulas were gone through with, and in a few weeks the Princess Charlotte of Strelitz was recommended as the future Queen of England.

George frankly told Lord Harcourt he had now "found such a partner as he hoped to be happy with for life." Yet some weeks elapsed ere he let the kingdom into the secret. Not until 8th July 1761 did he formally announce to his Council that, "Having nothing so much at heart as the welfare and happiness of his people, and that to render the same stable and permanent to posterity, after the most mature reflection and fullest information, he had come to a resolution to demand in marriage the Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, a Princess distinguished by every amiable virtue and elegant endowment, whose illustrious line had constantly shown the firmest zeal for the Protestant religion and a particular attachment to his Majesty's family."

A week later it was proclaimed that the double Coronation would be solemnised on the 22nd September, and preparations were at once commenced in England to welcome the royal bride. Earl Harcourt, together with the two finest women of

GEORGE THE THIRD

the Court, the Duchesses of Ancaster and Hamilton, were sent to fetch Princess Charlotte, while the fleet of convoy was under the command of the celebrated Lord Anson.

Naturally the greatest curiosity was expressed in circles, both high and low, as to the personal appearance and character of the fair newcomer. The sensations evoked are very much the same in all countries; from duke to peasant the whole nation is prepared to greet their new queen with joyous acclaim. The royal stranger, whatever her real endowments, will be considered beautiful and amiable, and be sure at least of a temporary popularity.

According to one of the numerous loyal versifiers who celebrated the royal nuptials, we are told of Charlotte that :

She comes ! I see her from afar,
Refulgent as the morning star,
Or as the midday sun.

Such extravagant encomiums, it is to be feared, were hardly justified in the Princess's person. Judging from the various portraits of her, what beauty she possessed was in expression, for her features were decidedly plain. Figure, carriage, and manner were, however, attractive, and of her amiability and goodness of heart there is a great weight of testimony.

"She is not tall, nor a beauty," writes Walpole, "pale and very thin, but looks sensible, and is genteel. Her hair is darkish and fine; her forehead low, and her nose very well, except the nostrils spreading too wide; her mouth has the same fault,

QUEEN CHARLOTTE

but her teeth are good. She talks a good deal, and French tolerably."

We are told that at his first glimpse of his consort an involuntary expression of the King's countenance revealed a slight disappointment; but it was a passing cloud. He soon regarded the young Princess with interest, which rapidly ripened into tenderness, and their affectionate relations were never seriously interrupted for more than half a century.

The Princess stayed the night she arrived at the house of the Earl of Abercorn at Witham, in Essex. She left early the next morning, arriving the same day at St. James's Palace, where she was received by the King and the rest of the royal family. That same evening, at nine o'clock, 7th September, the Archbishop of Canterbury performed the marriage ceremony in the Chapel Royal.

Walpole supplies us with some entertaining chit-chat relating to Charlotte, who was destined to a married life of fifty-seven years, and to bear her consort no fewer than fifteen children.

"On the road they wanted her to curl her toupee: she said she thought it looked as well as that of any of the ladies sent to fetch her; if the King bid her she would wear a periwig; otherwise she would remain as she was. When she caught the first glimpse of the palace she grew frightened and grew pale; the Duchess of Hamilton smiled. The Princess said, 'My dear Duchess, you may laugh; you have been married twice, but it is no joke to me.' Her lips trembled as the coach stopped, but she jumped out with spirit, and has

GEORGE THE THIRD

done nothing but with good-humour and cheerfulness. She talks a great deal, is easy, civil, and not disconcerted. At first when the bridesmaids and the Court were introduced to her, she said, 'Mon Dieu, il y en à tant!' She was pleased when she was to kiss the peeresses, but Lady Augusta was forced to take her hand and give it to those who were to kiss, which was prettily humble and good-natured. While they waited for supper, she sat down, sung and played. Her French is tolerable; she exchanged much both of that and German with the King, the Duke, and the Duke of York. They did not get to bed till two. To-day was a Drawing Room; everybody was presented to her, but she spoke to nobody, as she could not know a soul. The King looked very handsome, and talked to her continually with great good-humour. It does not promise as if they would be the two most *unhappy* persons in England."¹

A fortnight after the marriage, on the 22nd September, the Coronation took place. The populace made it an occasion for high festival. Many thousands passed the whole of the previous night in the open air. The ceremony in Westminster Abbey appears to have been undistinguished. But that in Westminster Hall, later in the day, was one of impressive splendour. Gray, the poet, who was present, says that it was the most magnificent spectacle he ever beheld. "The King bowing to the Lords as he passed, with his crown on his head, and the sceptre and orb in his hands, took his

¹ Walpole's *Letters*, iii. p. 432.

THE YOUNG PRETENDER

place with great majesty and grace. So did the Queen, with her crown, sceptre, and rod. Then supper was served on gold plate. The Earl Talbot, Duke of Bedford, and Earl of Effingham, in their robes, all three on horseback, prancing and curvetting like the hobby-horses in the 'Rehearsal,' ushered in the courses to the foot of the *haut-pas*. Between the courses, the Champion performed his part with applause. The Earl of Denbigh carved for the King, the Earl of Holderness for the Queen."

Upon this spectacle in one of the galleries gazed a solitary figure, his face half concealed. Him nobody seemed to know or regard. Perchance it would have given the feelings of George and his consort a shock had they learnt that this spectator was Charles Edward, great-grandson of James II., and his legitimate successor by right of descent. When the King's champion dashed down his gauntlet in proud defiance, seated on the same horse which George II had ridden at the battle of Dettingen, what were the Pretender's feelings? One Jacobite courtier at least penetrated his disguise, and approaching whispered in his ear: "Your Royal Highness is the last of all mortals whom I should expect to see here." Charles Edward answered quietly: "It is curiosity that led me. But," he added, "I assure you that the person who is the object of this pomp and magnificence is the person I envy the least." "What," comments Hume with daring picturesqueness—"what if the Pretender had taken up Dymock's gauntlet?"¹

¹ Letter to Sir John Pringle, 10th February 1773.

GEORGE THE THIRD

George's person and demeanour at the Coronation was a general theme of admiration. His manner of ascending and seating himself on his throne after his coronation was declared to be far superior to any acting on the stage. Not even Booth himself, celebrated for his majesty in the "Spectator," ever ascended the throne with such grace and dignity. One deeply impressive circumstance there was. When George approached the Communion Table to receive the Sacrament, he asked the Archbishop whether he should not lay aside his crown? The Archbishop was nonplussed. He asked the Bishop of Rochester, but neither of them knew or could say what had been the usual form. George decided for himself—"humility best became such a solemn act of devotion"—he took off his crown and laid it by his side.

"His countenance," writes Mrs. Montagu, who saw the King pass from the Abbey to the Hall, "expressed a benevolent joy in the vast concourse of people and their loud acclamations, but there was not the least air of pride or insolent exultation. In the religious offices his Majesty behaved with the greatest reverence and deepest attention. He pronounced with earnest solemnity his engagement to his people, and when he was to receive the Sacrament he pulled off his crown. How happy that in the day of the greatest worldly pomp he should remember his duty to the King of kings!" According to the same authority, the King's knowledge of precedents and his retentive memory enabled him more than once during the day to set not only the Peers, but the heralds, right in the

THE SKY AGAIN DARKENS

exercise of their respective duties, "which he did with great good-humour."¹

But public rejoicings were not destined long to endure. Brilliant ceremonies and private felicity could not disguise either from George or his most intimate advisers the alarming unrest and dissatisfaction of the inhabitants of the capital. Pitt's self-revelation stemmed only for the moment the tide of his popularity. That popularity had acquired too great an impetus now to be checked. The Princess Dowager-Bute legend having taken root, grew with incredible vigour. Insubordination followed fleet on the heels of animosity.

Pitt had said that he represented the people. If the people were to be deprived of Pitt, to whom were they to look for a leader? A demagogue was indeed just showing his head; one far different in character from the "Great Commoner," but as a demagogue not less successful—John Wilkes. A man of talents and wit and no morals, Wilkes, pressed hard by his creditors, soon found a profitable *métier* in attacking the King and all the Court party who wanted peace.

In the prosecution of the war was bound up the fortunes of the City of London. The merchants of London commemorated the rule of their revered statesman as one "which vitated commerce with and made it flourish by war." A free and unfettered commerce was as yet only a theory. The Navigation Laws were rigorously enforced, foreign conquests being considered only valuable as affording markets for home manufactures and employment for British

¹ Mary Wortley Montagu's *Letters*.

GEORGE THE THIRD

shipping. The rabble of the city received joyfully the denunciations of peace and Bute, and cries were again raised for Pitt and war.

Five weeks after Pitt's resignation the common council of London passed a vote of thanks to the ex-Minister. Other towns soon followed with addresses of confidence. Pitt, realising the narrowness of his escape, set himself intrepidly to recover what prestige he had lost. On Lord Mayor's Day George and his Queen went in state to dine at the Guildhall. Pitt resolved to join in the royal procession. With a keen eye for stage effect, and a knowledge of the weakness of human nature and of human passions and prejudices, he set forth, not in the coach and six with blue and silver liveries in which he had announced to George his accession, but in a humble equipage more suited to a respectable town councillor than to one of his rank and affluence. This hypocritical parade had its effect. The gorgeous liveries of the King and Queen were viewed with indifference, those of the Earl of Bute with positive insult. Before the day was over Pitt had the satisfaction of knowing that his bid for the huzzas of the populace had not been in vain. It is only fair to add that the "Great Commoner" was afterwards thoroughly ashamed of the part he had taken in that day's proceedings, and threw the blame upon Temple and the virulent Beckford.¹

¹ "My old friend," wrote Lord Lyttelton, "was once a skilful courtier; but since he himself has attained a kind of royalty, he seems more attentive to support his own majesty than to pay the necessary regards to that of his sovereign."

ANGER OF SPAIN

Meanwhile what of the peace negotiations? For several weeks after Pitt's resignation the British Ambassador at Madrid continued certain that the intentions of that Court were friendly. And there is no doubt that war was far from the Spanish mind. Nevertheless Egremont and his colleagues were not going to fall into a possible trap. They desired an explicit declaration that no hostility to Britain was meditated. Was the Family Compact wholly innocent so far as Britain was concerned? Before these instructions could reach Spain the Court of Madrid was filled with anger at the news that a declaration of war had been proposed by Pitt. They had always considered themselves the aggrieved party, and could not imagine upon what ground the English would commence hostilities. The Spanish Prime Minister affirmed that Great Britain was afflicted with successes, that she was bent on ruling France in order to seize all the transatlantic Spanish possessions. "If," he added warmly, "my King's dominions are to be overwhelmed, he shall not be a passive victim." He would advise the King at least to arm his subjects and defend their rights. Spanish historians inform us that Spain, at this critical juncture, was perfectly sincere; that Chatham's unbounded thirst for conquest drove Spain into war. Whatever Spain's premeditation, her King's anger was now leading her to hostilities. The Spanish Minister continued to complain of the haughtiness and discord which still, in spite of Pitt's supersession, continued to characterise the British attitude. France, egging on Spain, refused to accept any peace.

GEORGE THE THIRD

In a state of great agitation was the public mind when the new Parliament met. The King in his speech from the throne, after alluding to his happy marriage, adverted to the war. Neither George nor his Ministry were for peace at any price. But Egremont dared not set himself against the clamorous war-party. George spoke in animated terms of the successes which distinguished the year, and was persuaded that both Houses would agree with him in opinion that the steady exertion of the most vigorous efforts, in every part where the enemy might still be attacked with advantage, could alone be productive of such a peace as might with reason be expected. "It is therefore," he continued, "my fixed resolution, with your concurrence and support, to carry on the war in the most effectual manner for the advantage of my kingdoms, and to maintain to the utmost of my power the good faith and honour of my crown, by adhering firmly to the engagements entered into with my allies. In this I will persevere until my enemies, moved by their own losses and distresses, and touched with the miseries of so many nations, shall yield to the equitable conditions of an honourable peace, in which case, as well as in the prosecution of the war, no consideration whatever shall make me depart from the true interest of my kingdoms, and the honour and dignity of my crown."¹

On Christmas Eve the Spanish Ambassador in London was recalled. Before leaving he delivered a memorial to the British Ministry, declaring that

¹ *Parliamentary History.*

PEACE MADE IMPOSSIBLE

the horrors in which the two nations were going to plunge themselves were owing solely to the pride and immeasurable ambition of Pitt. "The King of Spain," the Spanish Ambassador went on, "had offered to waive the Family Compact for the present if it was found an impediment to peace; but when the French Minister continued his negotiation, without mentioning Spain, and proposed conditions greatly to the advantage and honour of England, Pitt, to the astonishment of the universe, rejected them with disdain, and showed his ill-will against Spain, to the great scandal of the British Council."

Pitt or no Pitt, then, it was to be war. But those, both within and without the realm, who supposed that because Pitt's hand was no longer on the helm British policy would be craven, were soon convinced of their error. Egremont, Newcastle, Grenville, Bute, and the King were agreed now that hostilities were inevitable, and on the 4th of January Britain declared war against Spain. Two days before, George himself, addressing his Council, said: "Gentlemen, I see that peace can no longer be maintained." A fortnight later Parliament again met. It was announced that Bute was to speak. The benches and galleries were thronged to see how "the Favourite," as he was called, would conduct himself on this occasion. Many expected and hoped for a failure. But the Earl, both in his presence and manner of oratory, gave the lie to their expectations. He showed himself to be precisely what he was, a man of sense and acuteness,

GEORGE THE THIRD

fully imbued with the gravity and responsibility of his own office, and able to deliver his sentiments with propriety.

It was inevitable that however ably the Ministry might conduct the war, the credit of any successes that followed were sure to be attributed to Pitt, and successes came. In February Martinique was captured from the French. The conquest of Granada, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent followed; Havana was taken from Spain after a siege of over two months. Pitt received congratulations from his friends on his victory at Martinique six months after he had left the Cabinet, and he received the congratulations with complacency.

The frequent Cabinet meetings rendered it but too clear that the redundant member was the old Duke of Newcastle. He was timid and a time-server, and, although First Lord of the Treasury, soon realised how powerless he was in the Government. How desperately he clung even to the dregs of power was known to all. It is certain that the King could not give his confidence to a man of his character. Newcastle was not quite the motley fool Macaulay has painted. He had certain abilities, although lacking any wide grasp of affairs. George had always treated him with studied courtesy, if his recommendations were not always followed. At length when the Ministry decided to withdraw the heavy subsidy which Britain paid to the King of Prussia, Newcastle resolved to make a stand. He said he could not consent to see the subsidy withdrawn. Unsupported by any of his colleagues, the

FALL OF NEWCASTLE

Duke declared unless his opinion was respected and the money raised, he would resign. "Believe me," answered Bute with sincerity, "if your Grace resigns, the peace will be retarded." Newcastle, who hoped that his threat would have produced a request for him to continue in office, went to St. James's and demanded an audience. He gravely announced his unalterable resolution to relinquish his station if the subsidy to Prussia was not continued. "I regret such a determination, my Lord Duke," replied the King, "because I am persuaded that your Grace wishes well to my service." Newcastle hung on for nearly two weeks longer, hoping that overtures would be made to him. But George was convinced that to conduct the war without the aid of the funds hitherto paid to Prussia would entail too great a sacrifice from the kingdom.¹ Newcastle resigned.

It was a bitter draught that the retiring statesman had to drink, he who for nearly half a century had dispensed patronage and showered favours on his dependants, to find so few followers in the hour of his adversity. The Bishops at least ought to have supported him. The control of the ecclesiastical patronage had always been in his hands. There was hardly one Bishop on the Bench who did not owe either his appointment or his preferment

¹ The debt was rapidly increasing, and the estimates had arisen to an alarming extent. The total sum granted by Parliament for 1761 was more than nineteen millions. The British forces in different parts of the world amounted to no less than 110,000 soldiers and 70,000 seamen, besides 60,000 German auxiliaries in British pay.—Lecky, vol. iii. p. 29.

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to Newcastle. Two Bishops came to his farewell levée.¹

“The Duke of Newcastle,” wrote a contemporary, “has spent half a million and made the fortunes of five hundred men, and yet is not allowed to have one real friend.” With all his faults, that of venality was not Newcastle’s. Jobbery and corruption was his hobby, but he did nothing to advance his own pecuniary interests. It is said that he permitted his estate, which had been worth £25,000 a year, to sink to the value of £6000 on his retirement from office. Well aware of this circumstance, and of the trait it denoted in the character of the fallen statesman, the King himself was not ungrateful. “I fear,” said George, in the course of their final interview, “that your Grace’s private fortune has been diminished for your zeal for the House of Hanover.” He proposed to confer on him a pension corresponding with his long service and high rank. “It would be doing no more,” delicately remarked the young King, “than discharging a debt due to your Grace from the Crown.” It is to Newcastle’s credit that the boon was declined. If his private fortune, he told the King, had suffered by his loyalty, it was his pleasure, his glory and his pride. If no longer able to serve his country, he would at least not be a

¹ “The Duke of Newcastle,” writes Mrs. Montagu’s sister, “had a very numerous levée, but somebody observed to him that there were but two Bishops present; but he is said to have replied that ‘Bishops, like other men, were apt to forget their maker.’ I think this has been said for him, or the resignation of power has much brightened his understanding, for whatever he is accused, the crime of wit will never be laid to his charge.”

BUTE PRIME MINISTER

burden to her. His Majesty's approbation, he added, was the only reward he asked.¹ Pitt, reading of this abnegation, may almost have been pardoned a sneer.

One reason alone now existed why Bute should not step forward and ostensibly assume the office vacated by Newcastle. The reason is an eternal and inseparable one connected with politics. It has nothing to do with the ability of the candidate, the purity of his intentions, or the real good of the commonwealth. It concerns wholly the caprice and prejudice of the mob. Fortunately their enmity like their favour is evanescent. A man of tough fibre can outlast their contumely. A man of great delicacy shrinks from their applause. Looking back now upon the politicians of that time, Bute seems to us almost if not quite the worthiest. He was well read, a clear, sane thinker, incorruptible; a real patriot. But he was no master of those demagogic arts in which Pitt and Wilkes excelled; neither his tongue nor his pen could scatter vitriol, and he suffered under a disadvantage which the statesmen of our own day have overcome with triumphant success, the disadvantage of being a Scotsman.

Bute and his royal master had many serious colloquies at this time and on this point. George saw the danger, Bute was not blind to it, but he trusted that his own acts would justify his ambition. That he could overcome the popular prejudice against him he believed. He therefore accepted the seals of First Lord of the Treasury, and George

¹ Ellis's *Original Letters*, vol. iv. p. 445.

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Grenville became Secretary of State. Sir Francis Dashwood was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer, although Dashwood's private character rendered him little acceptable to the virtuous young sovereign.

Bute threw himself ardently into the first part of the task nearest and dearest to the heart of King George and himself: peace with honour. "If," to use his own words, "I am ambitious, my ambition is only to establish a pure Government on an enduring basis." One of the leading members of the Whig party, the Duke of Bedford, not less zealous for peace, was sent as Ambassador to Paris, to arrange the preliminaries of a treaty with the French Government.

It has been no part of our intention to recount the history of the Seven Years' War. So far as Britain was concerned it had been effected with conspicuous success. It added Canada to the Empire. Unhappily the numerous conquests and victories themselves proved the greatest enemies to peace. That martial pride of the democracy, those exaggerated notions of the national prowess, those manifestations of the "jingo" spirit, which to-day we denominate "mafficking," were fully aroused. When every object which Britain had ever hoped to attain by the war had been achieved, yet the idea that Bute should enjoy the credit of making a peace was odious to the mob. Faction, secretly but vehemently egged on by Pitt, now bent all its strength to make peace impossible. A recent historian, while declaring that there could be no doubt that the terms were



SIR FRANCIS DASHWOOD
(From the Portrait by Nathaniel Dance)



GEORGE URGES PEACE

extremely advantageous to England, yet adds, "That if the peace had been made in a different spirit, and by other statesmen, it would probably have been favourably received."¹ The King wrote to the Duke of Bedford, 26th October: "The best despatch I can receive from you, and the most essential to my service, will be these preliminaries signed. May Providence, in compassion to human misery, give you the means of executing this great and noble work; and be assured I shall never forget the duty and loyalty you show to me in achieving this crisis."

Bute's accession to the post of first Minister was signalised by the daily increasing violence of the mob. More than once they broke the glasses of his hackney chair. They followed him with execrations; they burnt him in effigy; they constantly associated his name in a scandalous manner with the Princess Dowager. In the capital he was the object of universal abuse and hatred. Any allusion that could be twisted into a reference to him was hissed by the playgoers. A gallows supporting a *jack-boot* and a woman's petticoat was carried through the crowded streets.

Once the preliminaries were signed, Bute needed all the marks of confidence which his sovereign was able to bestow upon him to encourage him to face the rising storm. Perhaps those very marks of the King's friendship and confidence did more harm than good with the people. Benevolent convictions and incorruptibility do not always make friendships. Although apparently surrounded by a strong band

¹ Lecky, *Eighteenth Century*.

GEORGE THE THIRD

of political associates, Bute was really facing the storm alone. "I own," he wrote to Melcombe—"I own, and without blushing, I have been very unfortunate in the means I have for years taken of cementing friendship and procuring attachments; others, with much less trouble, perhaps without my sincerity, succeed better; but I repine not. Conscious of my own feelings, conscious of deserving better treatment, I shall go on, though single and alone, to serve my king and country in the best manner my poor talents will allow me, happy, too happy, when the heavy burthen that I bear shall be removed and placed on other shoulders."

To the City of London peace on any terms was unacceptable. The very mention of Bute's Peace Treaty sent Beckford and his aldermen into a frenzy. A successful maritime war had brought huge guerdons to the city—to the country only burdens. The vast expenditure upon the war had filled the coffers of the merchants, while the rest of the nation languished, and pressgangs roamed the countryside. The capital, then, presumed to dictate a continuance of the war to the King and his Ministry. "This is Pitt's war," was the cry; "by concluding a peace you undermine Pitt's plans and sacrifice national honour to the safety of the Favourite."

It seemed important for the new Lord Mayor to be a pronounced anti-peace man, and a nominee and friend of Pitt. William Beckford was a wealthy and choleric Jamaica merchant, of a character chiefly distinguished by an uncompromising turbulence, and

BRIBERY ADVISED BY FOX

an intellect which had sedulously avoided any scholastic contamination. He personally instigated innumerable attacks on the Ministry, which were issued from the Press. He advised the most seditious speeches indulged in by the aldermen and members of the common council of London.

John Wilkes, too, began to show his hand in the *North Briton*, and his scurrilous attacks on Bute and the Scotch were read by thousands. In the fifth number of this notorious production, published in 1762, Wilkes published his ironical dedication to a supposed re-issue of the "Tragedy of Mortimer." With great audacity he addressed this composition to Lord Bute, affecting to discover a striking contrast between the two Ministers in the reigns respectively of Edward III. and George III. All the current scandal, all the prejudice, all the falsehoods of the day were carefully garnered up by Wilkes, and set forth with cruel zest.

A weapon there was ready to the Minister's hand, although he shrank from using it. Anticipating the meeting of Parliament and the opposition which the treaty was bound to evoke, Bute had called Henry Fox to his councils. Fox was an old opponent of Pitt. He was able and courageous, and under no illusion as to the temper of the country. His was the wisdom of the serpent, and he spoke plainly to Bute. There was no way, he said, by which opposition could be so effectually disarmed as by bribery. He knew the times. The men who were decrying the peace were only insisting on a price before they voted for it. It was the means by

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which Walpole had given England many years of tranquillity. Bute, sick at heart, revolted, and told the King. Young as he was, George was already disillusioned; he felt that Fox was right. He too hated the expedient, but it was forced upon him, and he gave way. "We must call in bad men," the King said to George Grenville, "to govern bad men."¹ We must impugn the necessity, not the honest men it mastered.

Grenville was induced to yield up his place as Leader of the House of Commons to Fox. This he did with an ill grace, consenting to exchange his post of Secretary of State for that of First Lord of the Admiralty, on the understanding that when the peace had been carried he would be rewarded with the Premiership. The seals were not conferred upon Fox. He preferred to retain the lucrative Pay Office, and they were accordingly given to the Earl of Halifax. Fox's reward was to be a peerage. "His Majesty," wrote Fox to Bedford, "was in great concern lest a good peace in a good House of Commons should be lost, and his authority disgraced for want of a proper person to support his honest measures and keep his closet from that force with which it was so threatened. I was that person who could do it."

It never seems to have dawned upon Fox, or if it did he put it by with cynical levity, that there were few politicians, even in that day, who would have cared, even for so good an end, to engage in such an orgy of flagitious corruption. Money

¹ *Grenville Papers*, vol. i. p. 452.

SELF-INTEREST PREVAILS

bribes were freely distributed. Peerages were conferred on those who disdained money bribes.

It was natural that the King should resort to every expedient, and put forward every influence at his command, to minimise opposition and to procure the success of the measure which he had so dearly at heart, and by which he believed the whole realm would benefit. Those who opposed peace could hardly hope to enjoy his favour. The pens of several able writers were engaged to offset the influence of Wilkes and his friends. Hogarth, appointed serjeant-painter to the King, drew a powerful cartoon showing Europe in flames, while Pitt with a pair of bellows stimulated the conflagration. Around him in this print, which Hogarth called "The 'Times,'" the aldermen of London were shown humbly worshipping Pitt, who had said in one of his speeches "that he would rather live on Cheshire cheese than submit to the enemies of England." A huge Cheshire cheese therefore, with £3000 inscribed upon it, in allusion to Pitt's pension, was hung about his neck. While the ex-Ministers fed the flames, and the King of Prussia fiddled placidly, English soldiers and sailors led by Bute endeavoured to extinguish them.

Parliament no sooner met than the success of Fox's policy was manifest. In the House of Lords, although many objections were made to the preliminaries, and much animosity shown to Bute, the Government won without a division. The Prime Minister defended his own conduct in terms of great decorum, and considerably raised himself as an orator in the opinion of the House. Not only did he avow

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himself the warm promoter of the Peace of Paris, but said he, "I could wish that my having contributed to it may be engraven on my tomb!"

In the House of Commons Pitt replied to Fox's defence of the peace. He came into the House swathed in flannel, a conspicuous—perchance a too conspicuous—martyr to the gout. His speech lasted over three hours, and covered every possible objection to the treaty. He declared that though he was at that instant suffering under the most excruciating torture, yet he determined at the hazard of his life to attend that day, to raise up his voice, his hand, his arm, against the preliminary articles of a treaty which obscured all the glories of the war, surrendered the dearest interests of the nation, and sacrificed the public faith by abandoning our allies! He first challenged the Ministry to compare the present treaty with the terms he could have obtained. He proceeded to analyse every part of the stipulations, which he stigmatised, in general, with unqualified censure. The only particulars which met his approbation were the evacuation of Canada by the French, and the restitution of Minorca. He lauded the German connection. The desertion of the King of Prussia, the most magnanimous ally this country ever had, was insidious, tricking, base, and treacherous. In brief, the terms of the proposed treaty had in them the seeds of future war. The peace was insecure, because it restored the enemy to her former greatness; the peace was inadequate, because the places retained were no equivalent for those surrendered.¹

¹ Adolphus, vol. i. pp. 98, 99.

TREATY OF PARIS APPROVED

Pitt's hysterical scolding fell on deaf ears. Even if the treaty was odious to them, the most uncompromising legislators had already the best of reasons for voting as their sovereign wished. Fox had done his work well, and the Government majority was 319 to 65. Cessation of arms had already been proclaimed, and on the 10th of February 1763 the Treaty of Paris was ratified. That peace which the young King looked forward to with such eagerness was an accomplished fact.

But although the peace had been carried by such a huge majority in the House of Commons, the clamour outside was not silenced. The enmity of the great Whig connection had now reached a great height. Of the Duke of Devonshire's conduct the King expressed his opinion very plainly. He had good reason to suspect Devonshire of caballing with Newcastle against the Government, for George had himself one morning on his way from Kew seen the two Dukes together in the same chariot. With further testimony to the ill-disposition towards him and the Duke, the King at a meeting of the Privy Council, from which the Prince of the Whigs had absented himself for some time, called for the Council Book, and with his own hand struck Devonshire off the list of councillors.

During the eleven months of Bute's Ministry his life was in frequent peril. Much as he had endured to bring about the Peace of Paris, with the conclusion of hostilities even greater difficulties were to be faced. Peace brings almost as many evils in its train as war. The national expenditure

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was prodigious. New taxes were imperative. Dashwood, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, proposed to lay a tax upon cyder. Before the Act was passed many districts in the cyder counties were almost in a state of insurrection. In vain Grenville defended the measure. "It was the late war," he said, "and the profligate extravagance with which it had been carried out, that occasioned the additional taxation." The proletariat was insensate; they cared nothing for logic. They saw only the tyranny of the Scotch Earl, "the King's Favourite."

Bute resolved to bend before the storm. His health and spirits were sadly shaken. From the King he had received a gracious promise that he might retire as soon as peace was secure. "His Majesty," wrote the Earl to Bedford, "has now been reluctantly induced to fulfil that promise. Need I make use of many arguments," he added, "to prevail on the Duke of Bedford to assist his young sovereign with his weight and name—that sovereign, who has not a wish but what terminates in this country's happiness."¹

Such a step, which surely need have surprised no one, seems nevertheless to have occasioned the utmost astonishment. His enemies seemed to think that as Bute was now supreme, he would proceed to take advantage of power. His disinterestedness was to them, now and afterwards, utterly incomprehensible. The resignation took place on the 8th of April, and was immediately followed by that of Fox, who, in fulfilment of the promise made him, was

¹ *Bedford Correspondence*, iii. 223.

THE FALL OF BUTE

made a Peer under the title of Baron Holland. Dashwood was also raised to the peerage as Baron Le Despencer, which title his ancestors had formerly enjoyed.

"Lord Bute," writes Lord Barrington, "resigned last Friday. He will have no office, and declares he will not be a Minister behind the curtain, but give up business entirely. The reasons he gives for this step are that he finds the dislike taken to him has lessened the popularity which the King had and ought to have; that he hopes his retirement will make things quiet and his Majesty's Government easy. He says that he unwillingly undertook the business of a Minister, on the King's absolute promise that he might retire when the peace should be made."¹

Bute desired neither place nor pension. He was conscious that in spite of his honest intentions he had utterly failed, not only in gaining support for himself, but in gaining support for the King. Writing to one of his friends on the eve of his retirement, he lets us into the secret of his predicament. "Single," he said, "in a Cabinet of my own forming; no aid in the House of Lords to support me, except two Peers (Lords Denbigh and Pomfret); both the Secretaries of State silent, and the Lord Chief Justice, whom I myself brought into office, voting for me, yet speaking against me; the ground I tread upon is so hollow, that I am afraid not only of falling myself, but of involving my royal master in my ruin. It is time for me to retire!"

¹ Ellis's *Original Letters*, vol. iv. p. 461.

CHAPTER V

WILKES AND THE "NORTH BRITON"

GEORGE had been no passive spectator of the odium Bute had incurred or of the jeopardy in which it placed his own popularity. It grieved him that his friend had failed to win the esteem his talents and disinterestedness merited, that he should have achieved his chief political object at so great a price. But he was not blind to Bute's shortcomings. "I found him," he afterwards said, "unhappily deficient in political firmness." Forty years later he related that Bute had come in a panic, followed by the mob, to St. James's to dissuade his sovereign from going to the play. In that moment Bute lost sight of George's moral and physical courage; but the rebuke he then received brought the fact promptly to his recollection.

Gravely and in silence the King accepted the seals from the hand of the disappointed Earl. On this memorable occasion, we can see these two men closeted together in St. James's. A great weight of misgiving was on both their minds. Sedition, rioting, discontent, clamoured throughout the realm. The suburbs and thoroughfares of the metropolis were infested by cut-purses and footpads. In the political world men whose standard of morals was



The Royal Dupe.

THE ROYAL DUPE

(A Bute and Princess Dowager Caricature, 1762)



ENTER GEORGE GRENVILLE

hardly superior to cut-purses and footpads sought to wrest power and emolument from the impoverished nation. This was the moment decreed by Fate for the ship of state to be navigated by pilots the captain could not trust.

On the one hand the King was threatened by the factious Whig oligarchy, the leaders of which stood sullenly aside waiting his compliance with their terms. On the other the Tories claimed rights long withheld from them to participate in his councils, rights which their abilities did not warrant his extending to them. There were besides these two factions the Whig malcontents, and it was from this coterie George must perforce choose his advisers.

Ere Bute resigned he had suggested George Grenville for his successor. The King received the suggestion favourably; he had long regarded Grenville with peculiar approval. "I told his Majesty," wrote Grenville afterwards, "that I came into his service to preserve the Constitution of my country and to prevent any undue and unwarrantable force being put upon the Crown." Bute, who knew George's intentions pretty well, declared that the first principle in the King's policy was, never upon any account to suffer those Ministers of the late reign, who had attempted to fetter and enslave him, to come into his service while he lived to hold the sceptre. Rather than take these men into his service and conduct the business of the realm, as it had been conducted, George was resolved "to collect every other force, especially the followers of Mr. Bedford and Fox, to give him

GEORGE THE THIRD

counsel and support," and to encourage fully all those Whig country gentlemen who, without abandoning any political principles, would consent to support the Government. Grenville had seceded from the leading Whigs, and George had some reason to regard him as having Tory predilections.

Unlike Bute, Grenville had served a long apprenticeship in the public service. He was a man of spotless private character, a scholar, but no orator, fond of business, methodical, and industrious. A younger brother of Lord Temple, he was brother-in-law to Pitt and Lord Egremont. In the beginning of his career he had been closely associated with Pitt as one of the Patriots opposed to Walpole. Grenville had held office with his brother-in-law, Pitt, during the German war. The two had afterwards quarrelled, and since then the rupture had been increased by Grenville's denunciation of Pitt's reckless extravagance and ambition.

A business politician, a great statesman of the second class, Burke says of Grenville that "he took public business not as a duty he was to fulfil, but as a pleasure he was to enjoy." Than he there was none better calculated apparently to conduct the King's policy, and Grenville accordingly took office as First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, following the precedent set by Walpole and Pelham.

Not even his own brother and brother-in-law suspected Grenville's real character and his real aims. According to Walpole he had hitherto been known

THE "NORTH BRITON" ATTACK

"as a fatiguing orator and an indefatigable drudge, more likely to disgust than to offend." George was grievously mistaken in his new adviser. Grenville had, as we shall see, as little taken the measure of his sovereign.

The new Prime Minister had not been in office a month before events occurred which put his tact and statesmanship to the test. The King's Speech at the Prorogation of Parliament on 19th April 1763 announced that no change would be made in British foreign policy. The peace had been concluded "upon conditions honourable to my Crown and beneficial to my people." Britain had been the means of securing a satisfactory peace for the King of Prussia. The tone of the speech disgusted Pitt and his friends, particularly Temple. The passage relating to the King of Prussia evoked their special indignation. While the brothers-in-law were together discussing the King's Speech, John Wilkes happened to call on Temple. He took part in their discussions. Stimulated by their denunciations, he seized his pen on his return home, and busied himself, concocting the famous number forty-five of the *North Briton*. Wilkes pronounced the King's Speech to be "the most abandoned instance of Ministerial effrontery ever attempted to be imposed upon mankind." He wondered that the King could "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, honour, and unsullied virtue." Wilkes privately avowed his motive. It was "to

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try how far it was practicable to carry the licentiousness of writing, under the pretext of exercising the liberty of the Press."

Hitherto, although the King and Bute had not been ignorant of the grossness of the attacks launched against the Government, yet they had forbore to take action against Wilkes and the *North Briton*. Wilkes's audacity now passed the limits of forbearance. The King was represented as the dupe and slave of his advisers, a mere puppet in the hands of those who were forcing their opinions upon him. The King was scarcely a public measure which Wilkes had not arraigned and ridiculed with coarse invective and ribaldry. Grenville took the paper to the King, and George was at one with his Minister in opining Wilkes to be a public danger who ought to be punished for his intemperance. The article appeared on the 23rd April; two days later the law officers, Sir Fletcher Norton and Charles Yorke, were consulted. In their opinion the paper was "a most infamous and seditious libel, tending to inflame the minds and alienate the people from his Majesty, and to incite them to traitorous insurrection against the King."

On the strength of this opinion Grenville proceeded on a course of action which was to involve his Government and that of his successors in a most unfortunate contest between John Wilkes and the three estates of the realm, one to have the gravest constitutional consequences. From the Secretary of State's office a warrant was issued and given to four messengers-in-ordinary to execute. They were

THE SOVEREIGN LIBELLED

instructed to make strict search for the authors, printers, and publishers of the treasonable production, to seize them, and bring them before the Secretary of State.

It is unnecessary again to detail the story of the proceedings against Wilkes, who was finally apprehended and put in the Tower. His arrest brought up the question of the legality of general warrants, and this by degrees, the Opposition fanning the flame, lent Wilkes national importance. No one could honestly blame the Government for using their power to punish so outrageous a libel as had appeared in the *North Briton*, which accused the King of uttering a lie from the throne. During a Parliamentary debate it is a point of delicacy when the King's Speech is under discussion to consider the speech as the production of the Minister. But when to disgrace the Minister the sovereign is charged with being an accomplice in a charge of uttering a falsehood, the limitations of decency have been exceeded.

But whether the general warrant on which Wilkes had been seized were, as it was afterwards pronounced, illegal or not, no one could blame Grenville and his friends from resorting to it. It was the customary process, and had been frequently made use of both before and during Grenville's time by Pitt himself.

The unspeakable Temple boldly stood forward as Wilkes's patron, visiting him in the Tower, and sharing his popularity, to the huge delight of the London mob. When the question of Wilkes's arrest duly came up before the Court of Common Pleas, Chief

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Justice Pratt and his colleagues pronounced it to be illegal on the ground of Parliamentary privilege. Pratt pronounced that warrants to search for and carry away papers on the charge of libel were contrary to law. General warrants issued by the Secretary of State without specifying the name of the person to be arrested were illegal. Wilkes was therefore released, and amidst the applause of the multitude a special jury at Guildhall awarded him £1000 damages against Wood, the Under-Secretary of State.

Temple's behaviour could hardly escape notice by the King. It seemed to George gratuitously offensive. When Wilkes was deprived of his commission as Colonel in the Buckinghamshire Militia, Temple as Lord-Lieutenant of the county had to announce that resolution. This he did with many superfluous assurances of regret and complimentary testimonials. For this disrespectful conduct Temple was struck off the list of Privy Councillors, and dismissed from his Lord-Lieutenancy.

No sooner had Wilkes obtained his discharge than he wrote a scurrilous letter to the Secretaries of State, asserting that his house had been robbed, and that the stolen goods were in their possession. To render this insult mordant and more contemptuous, he printed several thousand copies of the letter and distributed them freely. The best course for Grenville would have been to treat this *jeu d'esprit* with contempt. But by his furious blundering he only gave Wilkes a further opportunity to practise his ingenious sword-play.

A FEEBLE ADMINISTRATION

The King soon became utterly disgusted with the conduct of his Ministers. To establish a strong, vigorous administration making for the peace and prosperity of the realm was his first aim. During the period of the Wilkes episode the capital was more than ever in a state of feverish excitement. Mobs numbering thousands paraded the streets and even surrounded the Palace and Westminster Hall, yelling and emitting execrations. At Exeter and Bristol the magistrates were cowed by the rioters, who elsewhere attempted to rescue criminals on their way to execution, carrying their violence to an unheard-of height.

Sending for Grenville, George told him plainly that a remedy must be found for such evils. The mob, he said, would try to govern him next. He frankly announced to him his intention to discover some other source of strength to the Government. The late Chancellor, Hardwicke, was approached. Hardwicke, however, refused to take any office without the co-operation of Newcastle. Newcastle, for his part, declined to act without the other "great Whig lords." George repudiated such a suggestion. "He felt," he said, "his honour was at stake, and he could never undertake to accept a party 'in gross.'" Grenville and his two colleagues, Halifax and Egremont, remonstrated with the King. Grenville was almost violent. He denied that he and his friends were a weak combination, that they had done the best they could under the circumstances; they did not require reinforcement. They charged George with secretly communicating with Lord Bute. Ill con-

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cealing his irritation and impatience, George said he would deliberate the matter during the next ten days. He repeated that he believed the administration needed strengthening, that matters were not going on as well as they should in the interests of the country. He had his subjects at large to think of before the interests of his Ministers; but should he decide on retaining all of them, they should be advised at the end of that period named.

Grenville spent the interval in the country. "I have heard Grenville is at Wotton," wrote Charles Townshend; "surely he should be prompt when public credit labours, and he either mistakes the subject or slights the difficulty. This man has crept into a situation he cannot fill. He has assumed a personage his limbs cannot carry. He has jumped into a wheel he cannot turn. The summer dream is passing away. Cold winter is coming on; and I will add to you that the storm must be stood, for there will be no shelter from coalition nor any escape by compromise. There has been too much insolence in the use of power; too much injustice to others; too much calumny spread at every turn."¹

Egremont, Pitt's successor, died suddenly in August, and when Grenville returned from his rural retreat he called at Buckingham House, only to find the King closeted with Pitt. Pitt had made no secret of this visit. He had gone through the Mall in his well-known sedan chair at high noon. He was received very graciously by the King, who listened to him for no less than three hours with

¹ *Townshend MS.*

INTERVIEW WITH CHATHAM

great patience and attention. Pitt descanted on the "odious peace," the articles which had been omitted, and the improvements he thought necessary. He harangued his sovereign on both the foreign and domestic state of the nation, and specified the great Whig families who had been driven from his Majesty's service whom it would be for his interest to restore. George bore it all patiently, making no objection to any of the statements, except to remark that his honour must be preserved. He finally commanded Pitt to wait upon him again two days later.

Meanwhile Grenville gained the King's ear. He complained afterwards that his reception was a cold one; he had made no allusion to Pitt's visit, but nevertheless improved the occasion by so lengthy an expatiation on his grievances, that the King was obliged to intimate to him that "the hour was very late."

On the following day George himself spoke of his interview with Pitt. He had no particular wish, he said, to rid himself of his chief Ministers, whose general conduct he approved, and who had "served him well," but the Government, he reiterated, was feeble, and he desired to recruit it from the ranks of Opposition. As an instance of its feebleness, he adverted warmly to the shameful manner in which the rabble had been permitted for many months past to set the laws at defiance.

At Pitt's second interview he bore himself in an even more high-handed fashion than at the first. He actually insisted upon the dismissal from

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the King's service of such officials as had voted in Parliament in favour of the peace with France, and even of those who there was reason to believe were favourable to the measure. "Should I consent to these demands of yours, Mr. Pitt," George declared, "there would be nothing left for me to do but to take the crown from my own head and place it upon yours, and then patiently submit my neck to the block." "The style of a dictator," we are told, "was assumed by Pitt; terms were no longer proposed but prescribed, and conditions exacted that nothing but the most abject meanness, or most absolute despondency, could assent to. A total *bouleversement* of the Government was demanded; an universal prescription of all who had served it boldly threatened, with a few invidious exceptions." "It is hardly conceivable," wrote the Duke of Bedford, "how they could have the insolence to propose to the King to turn out, by a general sweep, every one that had faithfully stood by him, and to take in all those who had acted the direct contrary part."¹

No wonder Charles Townshend could exclaim, "My heart bleeds for my sovereign, who is thus made the sport of wrestling factions." Certainly

¹ "You must have heard," writes Bedford, on the 5th September, "that Mr. Pitt has been sent for, and his friends, the discontented great lords, have followed him to Court; but their demands were so exorbitant—I may say insolent—that the King, after having found what ill use they would have made of his moderation, has determined to do without them, and I doubt not his conduct will be approved by the most considerable, and indeed all the considerate, part of the nation."

GEORGE MISUNDERSTOOD

the King's position was now unenviable. He had endeavoured to stand between the masses of his subjects and the Whig aristocracy, who had so long monopolised power. Debarred by the Constitution from directly governing and managing the departments by which the affairs of the nation are regulated, he was compelled to look on while those affairs went from bad to worse. He was right, and he knew he was right, but he was powerless as yet to put the State machinery in order. A time would come when his character and motives, now so completely misunderstood, would have their effect, both on the Ministry and the nation.

"As yet apparently," as a modern writer points out, "the leaders of the two great parties in the State were entirely mistaken in regard to their sovereign. Not one of them had formed an adequate conception of that strong will, that unflinching personal courage, that earnest anxiety to do what was right, and that resolute determination to resist injustice, which afterwards—in many a crisis of political or personal peril—so eminently characterised the conduct of George III."¹

There was no alternative; the King must take back Grenville and his colleagues. But Grenville had now his demands to make. He believed that Bute was the enemy; he mentioned his suspicions to the King. George promptly showed him a letter from Bute "speaking with the greatest regard imaginable of Mr. Grenville, and advising the King to give his whole confidence to him." Gren-

¹ Jesse, *Life and Reign of George III.*

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ville and his colleagues, Halifax and Sandwich, demanded that Bute should retire into the country. They insisted on his removal at least thirty miles distant, and being completely banished from his sovereign and former friend. The two must never again meet; there must be an utter estrangement, otherwise they would not consent to continue in office. George received this ultimatum with an outward dignity concealing his inward mortification. He assured them on his word of honour that he would have no further consultation on political matters with the Earl. Privately he could hardly help regarding it as a direct insult to his intelligence that they should consider his acts and opinions necessarily inspired and regulated by another. Nevertheless, seeing the temper of Grenville, he wrote to Bute that he hoped he would forsake his town house in South Audley Street, and so remove all opportunity for cavil on the part of his enemies. Bute replied that he was already in the act of breaking up his large establishment in order to reside henceforward at his splendid mansion at Luton,¹ but he must be granted a few weeks' longer sojourn in London. Lady Bute and her six daughters imperatively demanded it for domestic reasons.

It is impossible to look back upon this situation without amazement. Bute had not even seen his friend and sovereign for several months; he had given his word that the rupture of their friendly

¹ Lady Bute had inherited from Wortley Montagu, her father, in 1761, nearly half a million pounds, besides Cardiff Castle and Luton.

BUTE'S EXILE DEMANDED

relations should be permanent. Nevertheless we find the ex-Minister, his wife and six daughters, being hustled out of London in case some unconstitutional idea should clandestinely be conveyed by him to a King who was the best constitutionalist in the kingdom, that some notion inimical to Grenville, Sandwich, or Halifax should be lodged in the royal brain. What was to prevent Bute's writing? The King had not given his word to discountenance his letters—to refuse to open them. What dangerous, magnetic persuasiveness was there in Bute's speech and manner, he who is universally described as the incarnation of cold courtesy? There is excruciating humour in their utter ignorance of George's capacity. Although he was a young man, but five-and-twenty years of age, in strength of character and resolution, all hampered as he was by constitutional impedimenta, he was the equal of his advisers. In other qualities and other virtues he was incontestably their superior.

Still the Cabinet was not satisfied, and, over dinner at Lord Sandwich's, the Ministers gravely resolved that Bute's "retreat must immediately be carried into effect." The Earl's anger was fired at last. The suggestion that he should reside on the Continent while Luton was being got ready for his family he rejected with scorn. He positively refused to allow the Ministry to dictate his movements, and in London he remained for several weeks longer.

The post of Keeper of the King's Privy Purse, of which Bute had been deprived, George designed to bestow upon Sir William Breton, one of the Grooms

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of his Bedchamber. He had known him since his childhood, and held him in deep respect. But Sir William had the misfortune of knowing and esteeming Bute, and when the King mentioned his wishes, Grenville shook his head. "The world," he muttered, "would attribute the appointment to the backstairs influence of my Lord Bute." George's eye darted fire. He was goaded beyond endurance. "Good God, Mr. Grenville," he exclaimed, "am I to be suspected after all I have done?" Grenville was thrown into confusion. "Not by me, sir," he replied; "I cannot doubt your intentions, but such is the present language and suspicion of the world."¹ Breton was appointed.

It is extremely doubtful if the Ministry had the public with them to such an extent as they supposed. Erskine wrote to Sir Andrew Mitchell on the 27th September: "The exorbitant demands of the Great Man were generally condemned, the spirit of the King universally applauded."

When Bute finally left London for Luton a great weight of anxiety was taken off Grenville's breast. In his diary hereafter he frequently remarks on the "openness and confidence" and "great ease and confidence" of the King's conversation with him, also of his royal master's "extreme approbation of his conduct." It was uphill work, but George still cherished hopes that the Ministry might prove adequate to the needs of the nation. Grenville's self-gratulation at inducing the Duke of Bedford to join him in the Government did not last long; soon

¹ *Grenville Correspondence*, vol. ii. p. 210.

GRENVILLE REBUKED

he began to be jealous of Bedford, and his jealousy made him as miserable as his jealousy of Butc had done. Bedford was playing him false; Bedford desired to supplant him in the King's favour. George quickly discovered these obsessions, and gently disabused his Minister's mind. He told him to have no fear; he had given him his full confidence and support, and would uphold him to the utmost of his power, not only against his open opponents, but against his own colleagues. Not very happily inspired, Grenville murmured something about the King's late overtures to Pitt. George rebuked him as an elder would rebuke a peevish child. "Mr. Grenville," he said, "let us not look back; let us only look forward."¹

If any of the Ministers boasting the co-operation of the King and the Duke of Bedford's friends cherished hopes of sailing in smooth waters, those hopes were soon to be shattered. The triumph of the audacious Wilkes stirred Grenville's spleen. His first attempt to crush this pertinacious pamphleteer having ended in failure, he determined to bring other engines to bear. Wilkes's own conduct furnished a fair opportunity. On being liberated from the Tower, instead of following the advice of Temple and his discreeter friends, and acting with dignity the rôle of patriot, he at once plunged himself into a sea of obscenity, from which his friends could not decently rescue him. As the printers found it dangerous to publish his productions, he set up a press of his own in his house, and proceeded to put into press an obscene and blasphemous parody

¹ *Grenville Correspondence*, vol. ii. p. 205.

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on Pope's "Essay on Man." It was called "An Essay on Woman." Intended for private circulation, unluckily—or as it turned out luckily for Wilkes—one of his journeymen printers purloined a copy, and by this means it was laid before the Secretaries of State. Grenville gloated over the weapon thus put in his hands. Had he been wise and prudent he would have allowed Wilkes to go to the devil in his own way. But Grenville was not wise or prudent, and the moment Parliament met and the King's Speech had been read, Lord Sandwich, in the House of Lords, brought up the question of Wilkes. The amazing and cynical effrontery which induced Sandwich of all men to champion the cause of purity and decency excited general comment. Sandwich, formerly Wilkes's boon companion, was one of the most profligate men of the times. His licentiousness was almost a proverb. On this account he was never *persona grata* to the King. "Never before," said Dashwood, now Lord Le Despencer, "had he heard the devil preach."

Wilkes did not scruple to embellish his infamous Essay on Woman with copious notes attributed to Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester. Wherefore, the Peers pronounced the Essay on Woman "to be the most scandalous and obscene libel, and its author guilty of a breach of privilege towards the Bishop." In the Commons Grenville anticipated any other motion, and brought forward at once number forty-five of the *North Briton*, which the Lower House in turn pronounced to be a "false, scandalous, and seditious libel," and ordered it to be burnt by



EARL OF SANDWICH
(From the Portrait by Zoffany)



CHATHAM SACRIFICES WILKES

the common hangman. Wilkes having appealed to the judgment of the House on the question of his privilege, the matter was postponed for a week. In the meanwhile Wilkes fought a duel in Hyde Park with a member named Martin, and was dangerously wounded. He was still in bed when the question of privilege was introduced and debated with great warmth in the House. It was resolved that the privilege of Parliament did not extend to the right of writing and publishing seditious libels, and ought not to be allowed to obstruct the ordinary course of the law.

Albeit Pitt vehemently denounced the ease with which Parliament was surrendering its privileges, at the same time he took occasion to throw Wilkes overboard, and not only Wilkes, but all his lucubrations. The whole series of *North Britons* were "illiberal, unmanly, and detestable. He abhorred all national reflections. The King's subjects were one people. Whoever divided them was guilty of sedition. His Majesty's complaint was well founded: it was just; it was necessary. The author did not deserve to be ranked among the human species; he was the blasphemer of his God, and the libeller of his King. He had no connection, nor did he associate or communicate with any such writer."¹ Such was

¹ Wilkes never forgave this "treachery" of Pitt. "Although I declare," he wrote, "tha' the conscious pride of virtue makes me look down with contempt on a man who could be guilty of this baseness . . . yet I will on every occasion do justice to the Minister. He had served the public on all those points where the good of the nation coincided with his own private views—and in no other."

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Pitt's language. He forgot that it was in his presence and by his inspiration that No. 45 was first formulated.

The Lords concurred in the resolution of the Commons, and Wilkes was ordered to attend at the bar of the House within a week. An address to the King was voted, expressed in dutiful and affectionate terms, and blamed with proper asperity the wanton indignity his Majesty had sustained.

Wilkes, deserted by Pitt and now meditating flight, was not forgotten by the people. He was as much their idol as ever, and Bute was still a target for obloquy. The names of Bedford and Grenville were uttered only to be hissed. The shameless effrontery of Sandwich was universally reprobated. The "Beggar's Opera" was being performed at Covent-Garden Theatre. At one point Captain McLeath exclaims that "Jemmy Twitcher should peach me, I own surprised me. It is a proof that the world is all alike, and that even our gang can no more trust one another than other people." There was a slight pause, and instantaneously one idea fired the minds of the audience. All eyes were directed to a box. There sat Lord Sandwich. Two or three voices cried out "Jemmy Twitcher! Jemmy Twitcher!" The cry was taken up by the house, and it was as "Jemmy Twitcher" that Sandwich was known till his death, nearly thirty years later.

But the *North Briton* was to be burnt. Here again the Ministry foolishly exposed themselves. The sheriff and other officers assembled at the Royal Exchange to obey the orders of Parliament were

WILKES'S FLIGHT A RELIEF

set upon by a furious mob, pelted with stones and filth, and treated with great violence. The sheriff's chariot was broken, and the paper was snatched from him. In its stead that evening a jack-boot and petticoat were publicly burnt in a bonfire at Temple Bar. The contumacious common council of London formally awarded its thanks to the City members who had voted against the Ministry. Chief Justice Pratt, who had pronounced in Wilkes's favour, was presented with the freedom of the City.

Yet in spite of his continued popularity, Wilkes felt that his situation was most precarious, and after several times putting off his attendance at the bar of the House on the plea of illness, he fled to Paris. When Parliament met on 20th January 1764, Wilkes's expulsion was agreed to by an overwhelming vote.

Four days later the Lords voted Wilkes to be the author of the "Essay on Woman," and issued orders for the seizure of his person. As he did not appear to receive judgment, he was outlawed.

George was one of those who felt greatly relieved by Wilkes's flight. It is almost unnecessary to say he had taken the reflections of the libellous demagogue very much to heart, especially those referring to his mother, the Princess Dowager. What he could not understand was, that when the issue seemed to be between himself and Wilkes—he who had suffered the grievance, and he who had committed it—men could be found professing loyalty whose sympathies and suffrages were with Wilkes rather than their King. Such conduct evoked some-

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thing more than his anger. He saw that if this spirit, which was so rampant in the City of London, were allowed to permeate the entire nation, if a class of agitators was to be formed and the adherents to authority disputed, then the times were ripe indeed for revolution.

And as one surveys that critical period after a lapse of a century and a half, one sees what a close analogy it bears in its violence, alarms, and turbulence, and above all in its caprice—the violent, unreasonable caprice of a sick man or an ailing society—to the period immediately preceding the Revolution in France. It seems to us that all the combustible materials, all the tinder, was there, and it only needed agglomeration and the spark of some less intermittent blaze than John Wilkes to produce a dangerous conflagration.

George has been blamed, and we think very unjustly, for troubling his head about Wilkes. He has been blamed still more for desiring that Wilkes's upholders and partisans should be made to feel the weight of his displeasure. But surely it was asking too much to ask a monarch of flesh and blood to sink his feelings in the matter, and to continue to regard the persons who had evinced their hostility to him and their distrust of his mother and friends as of no danger to the throne or the kingdom. In February 1764 we find him writing to Grenville that "Firmness and resolution must now be shown, and no one's friends saved but as dare to fly off. This alone can restore order and save this country from anarchy. I hope," he adds, "that those who have deserted me

THE KING'S DISPLEASURE

feel that I am not to be neglected unpunished." Yet few punishments were meted out. Conway, brother of Lord Hertford, was dismissed from his office of Groom of the Bedchamber and his command of a dragoon regiment; Fitzherbert, who had made himself prominent in voting against the Government and with Wilkes, was removed from the Board of Trade. These were about all, but they sufficed to show that the King was not to be trifled with, and both these offenders lived to confess they had been in the wrong, and to do their resolute and high-spirited sovereign tardy justice.

CHAPTER VI

THE TYRANNY OF GRENVILLE

GEORGE had not passed his twenty-sixth birthday when he found himself consulted by his Ministers on a question of great constitutional moment, far to transcend in its immediate consequences any political event of his reign.

It is impossible to believe, considering the deep attention with which he considered all matters relating to his people, that the question of a more uniform taxation of his subjects should not before have been contemplated by the young King. We have seen how the burden of the Seven Years' War oppressed the people of Britain. The fierce disapproval with which any further taxes were greeted, as, for instance, the cyder tax, betrayed the difficulty with which the Ministry was confronted to endeavour to raise the needed supplies.

There was one source of taxation which had not yet been tapped. The Britain on the other side of the Atlantic had been founded, protected, and encouraged by the Mother Country. It claimed and enjoyed the benefit of freedom and constitutional government. We are so accustomed to denounce the idea, that very "fatal idea," of American taxation, that we forget that there is no need of confining

AMERICAN TAXATION

our denunciations to any specific proposition, or plan, or instance of taxation. "All taxation is bad," as Mr. Asquith has recently declared; all forms of levied imposts on the people equally merit the disapproval of the average man. But looking at the question broadly, and in the light of common-sense, was it unreasonable that the Colonies should contribute towards the discharge of a debt which had been incurred in support of the Government which ensured them liberty and prosperity? The Seven Years' War—Pitt's war—was undertaken principally on account of America. Adam Smith has demonstrated clearly that the great bulk of the debt contracted in the war originated in the defence of America.

By expelling the French from Canada, and the Spaniards from Florida, all danger to the thirteen Colonies had been removed. That danger had long kept the Colonies united in their loyalty to the Mother Country. Her protecting arm had stood between them and destruction.¹

But the Peace of Paris in 1763 altered the situation. That treaty gave birth to a new spirit in the Colonies. Not that this new spirit was entirely unforeseen. "England," said the French Ambassador at Constantinople, "will soon repent of having removed

¹ The Assembly at Massachusetts voted an elaborate monument in Westminster Abbey to Lord Howe, who had lost his life in the Canadian campaign. In a congratulatory address to the governor, they declared that without the assistance of the parent State they must have fallen a prey to the power of France, and that without the compensation granted to them by Parliament, the burdens of the war would have been insupportable, that without provisions of the treaty of peace all their successes would have been delusive.

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the only check that could keep her Colonies in awe. They stand no longer in need of her protection. She will call on them to help to support the burdens they have brought on her, and they will answer by striking off all dependence." As far back as 1730 Montesquieu had said that England would be the first nation abandoned by her Colonies. Argenson predicted that the English Colonies in America would one day rise against the Mother Country, forming themselves into a Republic, and astonish the world by their prosperity. A Swedish traveller, Kalm, and the French statesman, Turgot, also prophesied that they would fall away like ripe fruit from the parent tree. But although these things might be clear to the eye of the far-seeing statesman and philosopher, yet while the Empire continued united, while the Colonies looked to Britain for protection, and to the King as their sovereign lord, it was difficult to understand why Imperial contributions should be withheld.

We must not labour this point. We live again in a critical political juncture. Once more we are in a transitional period. A century and a half has elapsed; the face of the world has changed; great revolutions have been wrought, and yet amidst all the political as well as material progress which has marked the English-speaking world since 1764, we are face to face with the old, old problem. The Imperial burden is still inequitably adjusted; there are still voices indignantly demanding that the far flung, prosperous members of the British confederacy should assist to relieve that burden. But as Edmund Burke said later, "You cannot argue a man or a

IMPERIAL UNITY

nation into taxation." Any individual or community which has once enjoyed, and enjoyed for a long period, an immunity from taxes, will instantly revolt at the thought of the pocket, be it never so full, being bled. If foes threaten, if his immediate jeopardy demands it, if his honour is at stake, a man may make sacrifices willingly, even eagerly. But when there is no enemy, no question of honour involved, except the rather vague one of civic equity, he will shrink sullenly from the demand of the tax-collector.

Every argument used between 1764 and 1775 for the taxation of all parts of the Empire alike have been heard within the last fifty years, and are still being canvassed in all parts of the British Empire. The difficulty of forcing any uniform system of Imperial taxation lay then, as it lies to-day, in the loose structure of the Empire and the vague principles which govern the relations of the Mother Country and the Colonies.

One thing we see much more clearly now than did Grenville, Townshen', and their successors, and that is, that the bond which holds the Empire in unity, or such unity as exists, is the common sovereign, and not the British Parliament.

When in the month of March 1764 was discussed the plan for imposing the most moderate Stamp duties on his American subjects, George approved of the measure. It seemed an act of bare justice. Nor could he believe that the proposition would be received in a hostile spirit. He had the table an address to the King from the Col

GEORGE THE THIRD

ink of which was scarcely dry, in which they pledged themselves to demonstrate their gratitude by every possible testimony of duty and loyalty. In several Colonies, it must be remembered, proprietary government had been replaced by royal government. The direct rule of the sovereign had been found more equitable and liberal than government by private company or individual. The colonial theory early held by the Colonies was that "having been founded in most instances without any assistance from the Home Government, and having received their charters from the sovereign and not from the Parliament, they were in the position of Scotland before the Union, and bound in allegiance to the King, and altogether independent of the English Parliament." True, this theory had been vigorously combated by the British Parliament, and some of the colonists abandoned it. Certainly the leading Colony, Massachusetts, repeatedly, as late as 1768, acknowledged in explicit terms the right of the English Parliament to bind the Colonies by its acts.

It was natural that George should regard with sympathy the American view of the hegemony of the King. Later he learnt with anger that their petitions to him had been suppressed. "Dutiful petitions," the Americans complained, "have been preferred to our most gracious sovereign, which, to the great consternation of the people, we now learn have been cruelly and insidiously prevented from reaching the royal presence."

If America had not been taxed before, it was owing to the simple fact that England was rich and

THE KING'S ATTITUDE

the Colonies were poor. As Dr. Johnson put it, "We do not put a calf into the plough, we wait till it is an ox!" But the position of Britain, as well as of America, was now wholly changed. Her Empire had been raised to an unprecedented magnitude, but at the same time she staggered under a national debt of nearly 140 millions. Taxation was greatly increased. Poverty and distress were very general, and it had become necessary to introduce a spirit of economy into all parts of the administration, to foster every form of revenue, and if possible to diffuse over the gigantic Empire a military burden which was too great for one small island.¹

The King not only recognised the inequality of Imperial taxation, but he saw clearly that certain American abuses should be put down firmly. His Ministers' representations concerning American smuggling had his earnest support. So great had smuggling practices grown that the custom-houses in America, which cost nearly £8000 in wages, did not collect above £2000 a year. Of the million and a half pounds of tea annually consumed in America, only less than a tenth part paid duty. It was the same with rum, brandy, molasses, and sugar. This was manifestly unfair, and George cordially approved of the Parliamentary resolution which declared that "It is just and necessary that a revenue be raised in your Majesty's dominions in America for defraying the expenses of defending, protecting, and securing the same." But a great modern writer has gone over this ground carefully. He has shown that if

¹ Lecky, vol. iii, p. 306.

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the Stamp Act was a grievance to the Americans, the gross exaggerations which have been repeated on the subject should be dispelled, and that the nature of the alleged tyranny of England should be clearly defined. "Not a particle of evidence exists that any British statesman, or any class of the British people, desired to raise anything by direct taxation from the Colonies for purposes that were purely British. They were asked to contribute nothing to the support of the navy which protected their coast, nothing to the interest of the British debt. At the close of a war which had left Britain overwhelmed with additional burdens, in which the whole resources of the British Empire had been strained for the extension and security of the British territory in America, by which the American colonists had gained incomparably more than any other of the subjects of the Crown, the Colonies were asked to bear their share in the burden of the Empire by contributing a third part—they would no doubt ultimately have been asked to contribute the whole—of what was required for the maintenance of an army of 10,000 men, intended primarily for their own defence. £100,000 was the highest estimate of what the Stamp Act would annually produce, and it was rather less than a third part of the expense of the new army. This was what England asked from the most prosperous portion of her Empire. Every farthing which it was intended to raise in America it was intended also to spend there."¹

Now it was no new thing to tax the Colonies; it

¹ Lecky, vol. iii. pp. 313-14.

PROTESTS AGAINST TAXES

had been done before, and was indeed being indirectly done at the time the Stamp tax was proposed. But the King no more than Grenville was committed to any particular form of taxation. George impressed upon his Ministers that his subjects overseas were to be consulted. Grenville himself told the agent for Massachusetts, "I am not set upon this tax; if the Americans dislike it, and prefer any other method of raising the money themselves, I shall be content. Write, therefore, to your several Colonies, and if they choose any other mode, I shall be satisfied." He deferred the Stamp Act for an entire year in order that the Colonies might of themselves make Imperial taxation unnecessary. He went further; as the cry of "no taxation without representation" had been urged, if the Americans thought their liberties would become more secure by the introduction of American representatives into the British Parliament, he was prepared to support such a scheme.

Here, however, was where Grenville differed from the King, and indeed from the bulk of the British people and politicians. George saw no reason for enlarging the British Parliament, as long as the Colonial legislators were competent to fulfil their functions and acknowledged his authority. And at that time he fully believed they would acknowledge his authority. The storm of opposition that greeted the Stamp Act in America signified little. Englishmen, who had grown accustomed to protests against the impositions of taxes, who had just witnessed the revolt in the cyder counties, paid little attention to such outbursts. The Stamp Act passed in a thin

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House with but two or three dissidents, and received the royal assent in March 1765. With what surprise and grief the King beheld the subsequent behaviour of America, we shall shortly perceive.

Meanwhile George's active attention to business and his arduous relations with his Ministers was obviously undermining his health. His dislike to Sandwich was only natural to a man who contemned profligacy. "The King speaks daily with more and more averseness to Lord Sandwich, and seems to have a settled dislike to his character."¹

As to Grenville, he appeared in a hundred ways to take a special delight in opposing the King's wishes. George complained when he had anything proposed to him "it was no longer as counsel, but what he was to obey." "When Mr. Grenville has wearied me for two hours, he looks at his watch to see if he may not tire me for one hour more."

George having resolved to make a royal palace of Buckingham House,² was anxious to acquire for the extremely moderate sum of £20,000 a tract of neighbouring land, destined to have enormous pecuniary value, and thereby prevent the erection of buildings which would destroy his privacy; but Grenville absolutely refused his consent. The King might have borne this more calmly than he bore another exhibition of Grenville's economy which had an unfavourable effect upon his subjects in the capital. By the expenditure of a few hundred

¹ *Grenville Papers*, vol. ii. p. 496.

² Buckingham House was purchased by George III. from Sir Charles Sheffield for twenty thousand guineas.

SERIOUS INDISPOSITION

pounds it was proposed to clear the metropolis of the cut-purses and footpads, which then infested the streets. It was a public scandal, but Grenville refused to sign the Treasury Minute.

Early in January 1765 the King became ill. Grenville records in his diary that Sir William Duncan came to let him know that he had been with the King. "He had a violent cold, had passed a restless night, and complained of stitches in his breast. His Majesty was blooded 14 ozs." On the 14th the King was better, but saw none of his Ministers. The next record is January 15th: "Mr. Grenville went to the King, and found him perfectly cheerful and good-humoured and full of conversation."

This was not the King's first illness. Two years previously he had suffered from a feverish cold, which settled on his chest. The usual remedy then had been resorted to: he had been blooded seven times and had three blisters.

Thanks to the efforts of the relentless Court Sangrado, this bleeding of the King went merrily forward whenever he became physically and mentally exhausted. During the whole of January and February George was in low health and spirits, and yet he insisted on going through an amazing amount of business, reading all State papers and discussing matters of high moment with his advisers. Being of a serious, responsible disposition, and still full of the illusions and strenuosity of youth, he would not delegate any work which he felt he could undertake himself. The result was a relapse so serious that Bute at Luton was in agonies at

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not being permitted to see his beloved friend and sovereign.

On the 5th March the Earl came to town and insisted on Grenville letting the King know that he was at the palace. George chatted with him for a quarter of an hour, much to his pleasure and relief. It was the first ray of real affection that had shone on him, except from members of his own family, since his illness.

Bute joined with the Queen in urging the King to enjoy a respite from business. A little later we are told that Grenville was intercepted by Charlotte, who told him she was "afraid he would not agree with her in wishing that the King would not see his servants so often, or talk so much upon business." Grenville told the Queen that for his part he never wished to break in upon the King. Charlotte repeated that she thought the Minister had better not speak upon business.

Charlotte, it should here be mentioned, had on the 12th August 1762 borne George a son and heir, and the kingdom a future monarch. Other children came in quick succession, and brought great comfort and delight to the King, who rarely tasted happiness now save in the bosom of his family.

That the protraction of the King's illness was occasioned by the unskilfulness of his physicians there is little doubt. But the dangerous consequences were not by him overlooked, nor by the country at large. His eldest son, the heir to the throne, was only two years old, and the question of a Regency had not yet been settled. We therefore find George

FIRST QUESTION OF A REGENCY

sending for his uncle, the Duke of Cumberland, and telling him that his late illness was an additional reason for him to desire to consult him, "For that though he was now well, yet God alone knew how soon an accident might befall him." He meant to provide against any confusion which might result from his death or illness during his son's minority.

A Regency Bill was forthwith introduced, restricting the right of becoming Regent to the Queen and the royal family, then residing in London. George's especial wish being to prevent "faction in the royal family," he had desired that he might be allowed to nominate a Regent by will. He had particularly enjoined upon Grenville that every part relating to the Bill "ought to be made as clear as possible." But when the Regency Bill came to be discussed in the House of Lords, it appeared that the Ministry had not decided the question of who constituted the royal family. Did the term include the Princess Dowager? Bedford and Halifax, animated by animosity towards the King's mother, maintained that the term did not include the Princess Dowager. The Lord Chancellor held that the King's mother was undoubtedly a member of the family. Many heated arguments took place, when it was seen that a large party both in and out of Parliament clamoured for the exclusion of the Princess Dowager. They were afraid that the King would nominate her as Regent in case of his death or illness. The Duke of Richmond nevertheless proposed that the House should declare Augusta eligible for the office.

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By the King all these proceedings were viewed with the utmost abhorrence and misery. The dignity of the Crown was being compromised. At this juncture George received Halifax and Sandwich in his closet. They told him that not a moment was to be lost; the House of Commons would inevitably strike the name of the Princess Dowager out of the Bill. The best, nay, the only, means of saving his own honour and that of the Princess was to authorise his Ministers to announce openly in Parliament that he had withdrawn his name from the Bill. George's distress was pitiful; it ought to have wrung compassion from his Ministers. Yet he bowed to their counsel. "I consent," was the Stoic answer he made Halifax, "if it will satisfy my people!" The two Ministers, delighted at having thus overcome all opposition, hastened to St. Stephen's, where the discussions on the Regency Bill were still in progress, and announced that the King had cut the Gordian knot by expressing himself in favour of his mother's expulsion.

No wonder the opponents of the much-injured Augusta were elated. Intoxicated with presumption or blind with the thirst of revenge, as Walpole says, still it is hard to conceive they should dare to venture upon such a provoking and daring insult. The Lord Chancellor hastened to the palace to explain to the King how improperly he had been induced to act. The fate of the Bill was by no means certain. The temper of the House of Commons was not at all opposed to the Princess Dowager. George instantly saw the cruel manner

AUGUSTA MADE ELIGIBLE

in which he had been deceived, and when Grenville next came to him, changed colour, and spoke with great emotion of the disregard which had been shown to his mother. "How painful," said he, "will be the predicament in which I shall be placed should the eligibility of the Princess be maintained by the House of Commons, and yet be repudiated by my own Ministers. It would be an affront to my mother which I could not bear."

Grenville muttered that "the blame was on Halifax and Sandwich," but the King was too provoked and indignant to reply. On Grenville's departure George opened his whole heart to Lord Mansfield, and as he related to him the manner in which he had been treated, he could not forbear to shed tears.

"Halifax," he said, "had surprised him into giving his consent to expulsion." The predicament which the King anticipated actually happened when the Regency Bill was brought before the House of Commons. While Grenville was attacked for his suspected misconduct, Augusta's name was expressly inserted in the Bill. Grenville and his colleagues dared not, under these circumstances, vote against expulsion, and their position, considering the representations they had made to the sovereign, was truly contemptible. Grenville tried to put the blame on Halifax and Sandwich, who retorted by throwing all the attempted deception of the King on their colleague's shoulders.

The incapacity of such Ministers as these was too notorious to be tolerated. "The Regency Bill,"

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wrote young Edmund Burke, not yet a member of Parliament, "has shown such want of concert and want of capacity in the Ministers, such inattention to the honour of the Crown, if not such a design against it, such imposition and surprise upon the King, and such misrepresentation of the disposition of Parliament to the sovereign, that there is no doubt that there is a fixed resolution to get rid of them all (except perhaps Grenville), but particularly the Duke of Bedford."

George had endured much from Grenville; it seemed impossible to endure more. But who could replace him? The list of men who were eligible and who would be acceptable as his advisers was lamentably small, even supposing him to sink his honour, all his own feelings and convictions. But the necessity was too obvious to be disregarded, and in his extremity George turned to his uncle, the Duke of Cumberland.

Cumberland had by no means acted a frank and loyal part since the commencement of the new reign. So far from lending a hand to his nephew and sovereign, he had followed the course which princes of the blood royal are so often prone to follow from opposition and jealousy. Cumberland could not forget that it was he who had put down the Scottish rebellion of '45. He could not forget that he was ardently hated by the Scots and the Jacobites. However much he might be "butcher Cumberland" in Jacobite circles and to the north of the Tweed, the Whigs, the city, and the anti-Bute party looked to him as a popular hero.

APPEALS TO CHATHAM

George had already made overtures to his uncle; he now repeated these overtures. "The King," said the Duke in his own subsequent account of the negotiation, "the better to put me *au fait* of the true state of his affairs went through in a masterly and exact manner all that had passed since Lord Bute resigned the Treasury. He also went through Mr. Pitt's two audiences of August 1768, particularising with great justice the characters of several persons who are now upon the stage or who are but just dropped off."¹

The King and the Duke agreed that in the present temper of the people and paucity of men of eminent talents the support of Pitt was essential to a strong administration. Pitt was now confirmed in his gout, his inaccessibility, and his prejudices, and in retreat at Hayes. The King, therefore, gave the Duke full authority to come to terms if possible with Pitt. Some hours before the Regency Bill had been put to the vote in the House of Commons, Cumberland set out to see the illustrious invalid at his country seat, and then and there the Duke freely opened his mind.

"I represented to him the manner in which this administration used his Majesty, and that no time was to be lost, as Parliament must soon be up; that this country looked up to him as the man who had been the author of the great successes during the war; that they almost universally wished him at the head of public affairs."²

¹ *Rockingham Papers*, vol. i. p. 201.

² *Ibid.*

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“Haughty, pompous, and exorbitant” as the “Great Commoner” was, yet the result of the negotiations might have been different had it not been for the influence of Pitt’s brother-in-law, Temple, who had formerly been at loggerheads with his brother. Grenville was now reconciled to him, probably owing to Grenville’s indecent conduct towards the King. At all events his aspirations now tended towards a family Ministry. Intruding on the conference at Hayes, Temple succeeded in rendering it barren of results.¹

The upshot was that Cumberland was forced to return to town, bringing “nothing but compliments and doubts” from Pitt to the King. Still weak from his illness, George was greatly depressed at the failure of the Duke’s negotiations, and by the constant intrigues and indignities to which he was subject. To employ Cumberland’s language, “Instead of applying themselves to the good of the public in general or to restore to his Majesty the affections of his people,” his Ministers insulted his Majesty each day with “*déboires* and indignities.”

Meanwhile a numerous section of the populace had taken to rioting. The failure of the silk weavers to compete with imported silks had occasioned great distress, and thousands were out of employment. A Bill for their relief had been

¹ A few weeks before in one of his extravagant outbursts in Parliament Pitt had exclaimed of Temple, “He is my friend, his fidelity is as unshaken as his virtue. We went into office together, and we went out of office together, and we will die together.” He afterwards changed his mind about his brother-in-law—as he had done about Wilkes.

THE RIOTOUS SILK WEAVERS

defeated in Parliament, owing mainly to the opposition of the Duke of Bedford. Maddened by their distresses, the weavers now resolved to appeal personally to their sovereign. Accordingly they marched to Wimbledon, where the King had gone to review some troops. George received them with kindness, and listened to their petition. He induced them to return to London in a quiet and orderly manner, promising that his Ministers would look into their grievances. But the rioters apparently had little confidence in the Duke of Bedford's benevolence towards them. The relations of the Ministry towards their sovereign was an open secret.

The following day they followed the King to the House of Lords, treating him with marked deference and respect. As for Bedford, he was the object of their rage and violence. They broke his chariot, and wounded him in the hand and forehead. Nor did they rest here; two days later they attacked Bedford House, which required large forces of soldiery to preserve it from destruction. Bedford was furious, and ascribed all this popular violence to the secret machinations of the hapless Earl of Bute. There is something ludicrous in the way in which the King's Ministers on the one hand and the ignorant populace on the other poured the vials of their suspicion, resentment, and revenge on the devoted head of the exiled and innocent Earl.

The situation grew crucial. Suspecting that they would soon lose their places, the Ministers did little or nothing to quell the tumult. To many observers a rebellion seemed imminent, and doubtless

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the capital would have been given up to bloodshed and mob law but for the energy and decisiveness of the King. He ordered a regiment stationed at Chatham to march towards London. He wrote to the Duke of Cumberland to come and take command of the troops then in the capital. "I have sent this," he writes, "by one who has my orders not to deliver it to any one but yourself, and to bring an immediate answer, and also your opinion when and how soon we can meet; for if any disturbance should arise in the night, I should think the hour proposed for to-morrow too late." He told the supine Grenville that he was ready to "put himself at the head of his army or do anything to save his country."

The failure of the negotiations with Pitt became known to Bedford and his colleagues the day after the rioters were induced by a grant of money and promises on the part of their employers to return to their homes. The tyrannous Ministry was filled with a gleeful triumph. They felt now that they were secure in their offices, and met straightway at Bedford House to concoct terms and forge new fetters for their royal master.

George's mortification was extreme. He told Grenville that no doubt he "had acquitted himself to the best of his ability, but there had been slackness, inability, precipitation, and neglect in other parts of his Government." Grenville began a tedious narration of his own services and sacrifices, finally pronouncing his opinion that his Government had been a success. George listened with ill-concealed impatience. Good or bad, weak or strong, Govern-

GRENVILLE'S REQUISITIONS

ment must be carried on. Not himself alone, but the nation was far from content with the present management of affairs; but the failure of his recent overtures to the Opposition made it imperative that Grenville and his friends should continue their task. So the Minister saw his friends, and returned finally to the palace with his list of "requisitions." The King in the first place must solemnly promise that he would never again have a private interview with Bute. Bute, Bute, Bute—it was ever Bute! Stewart Mackenzie, Bute's brother, must be dismissed from the sinecure office of Privy Seal in Scotland, an office which the King had pledged his honour he should retain. Lord Holland should be removed from the Paymastership of the Forces, and the Marquis of Granby should be appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Army.

It is creditable to George that he did not burst out in anger at the Minister's temerity. He said he was ready to promise and declare that neither directly nor indirectly, publicly nor privately, should Bute influence or advise him in affairs of State. He also surrendered Lord Holland to the demands made upon him. Any difficulty he might have had about Granby's appointment was removed by Granby's own respectful action, he claiming only the succession after the Duke of Cumberland's demise or retirement. But as to Mackenzie's office, he was plunged in a most distressing difficulty. Not only was this an able and loyal gentleman, but he had the King's word that his office should be for life. "If I yielded to this demand," exclaimed

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George, "I should be disgraced." "I informed him," says Grenville, "that Mr. Mackenzie's absolute removal was considered too essential an object to be waived, a circumstance which evidently appeared to pain and distress him. He then asked me if 'I concurred with those gentlemen in thinking the whole indispensably necessary?' To which I answered, 'He should do me the justice to suppose I should never offer him any advice of which I did not approve.' Upon this he told me that it was 'with the greatest reluctance that he would give way to it.' Observing that he continued to show marks of distress, I most humbly asked him to let me kiss his hand and leave his service, as I could not bear to be the channel of anything which so evidently distressed him. He answered, 'I have said I will do it, can you expect more?' My entreaties to retire and these expressions in return were more than once repeated."¹

"I will not," added George, "throw my kingdom into confusion. You force me to break my word, and must be responsible for the consequences. I have desired you to stay in my service; I see I must yield; I do it for the good of my people." This interview took place between three and four o'clock in the morning of the 23rd of May.

That same evening, while Bedford and his colleagues were rejoicing at their victory, the King sent for Mackenzie, and broke to him the unpleasant news with a pathetic dignity. "I was a very considerable time with him," wrote the innocent victim of

¹ *Townshend MS.*

MACKENZIE'S ENFORCED DISMISSAL

Bedford's hatred of Bute, "and if it were possible to love my excellent Prince more than I ever did before, I should certainly do it, for I have every reason to feel his goodness to me. But such was his Majesty's situation at that time, that had he absolutely rejected my dismissal he would have put me in the most disagreeable situation in the world, and what was of much higher consequence, he would have greatly distressed his affairs."

It is a pity that certain other courtiers were not more respectful to and considerate of a sovereign who well merited all their respect and consideration.

CHAPTER VII

ROCKINGHAM AND THE STAMP ACT

THESE proceedings as may well be supposed exerted a most baneful effect on George's health and disposition. Could it be wondered at that he preferred to court seclusion sooner than expose himself further to the indignities which his Ministers wished to put upon him: rather than tempt the idle curiosity of the vulgar? But although his health showed signs of again breaking down, he continued even in seclusion to devote himself to business. "There is one man in the kingdom," he said, "who has nothing to expect in the way of bribes and rewards." Complaints were perpetually reaching him of the great neglect of public business. Albeit the Ministers had again been confirmed in office, yet strict attention to duty was the last thing that entered their minds. There was no unanimity; the King himself observed that the only point in which Bedford and Grenville were in agreement was that of laying down the law to him! They proceeded to quarrel about the spoils of office. "Neither Halifax nor Sandwich," complained George, "do any business, and are extremely dilatory in public affairs."

Three weeks after their triumph Bedford de-

BEDFORD'S AUDACITY

manded an audience of the King, and actually had the effrontery to read his sovereign a long lecture. He and his friends were not yet satisfied with the degree of favour which he accorded to them; they were going out of town to enjoy the diversions of the country, and would give him a month to consider his conduct. They hoped he would agree to smile on his Ministers and frown on their adversaries. Allusions to the King's mother and Lord Bute were audaciously introduced. George spoke not a word. Only when the Duke had gone he permitted himself an observation: "If," said he, "I had not broken out into a profuse perspiration, my indignation would have suffocated me!" The King's conduct certainly redounds very much to his self-control. Had the Duke's charges of perfidy and falsehood been made by one private gentleman to another, the scene would have had a somewhat violent interruption. George III. listened "coolly and temperately" to the Duke. Macaulay's significant comment is that George II. would have kicked him out of the room.

Clearly enough now did the King see that it was impossible to go on in such fashion. The capricious Pitt must be appealed to again, and if Pitt refused, the old Whigs must be asked to put their shoulders to the wheel of Government. The "Great Commoner" came to town, and two further interviews took place at Buckingham House. Pitt wrote that the King's manner to him was most gracious. "I am indeed touched with the manner and royal frankness which I had the happiness to find." But once

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again the interviews resulted in nothing. Temple, whom Pitt desired to be First Lord of the Treasury, absolutely refused to take office. Pitt pleaded that without the support of his two brothers-in-law his health and increasing years made the task of forming a vigorous administration quite hopeless.

An appeal to the Opposition Whigs now remained. Once all-powerful, this party had fallen through death and defection from its high estate. Nevertheless the old Duke of Newcastle remained, and he consented to serve as a go-between for the purpose of forming a Ministry. In the Marquis of Rockingham a leader was found who was chiefly distinguished by his wealth, manners, and untarnished character. The Duke of Grafton and General Conway were made Secretaries of State. Newcastle, although only given the office of Lord of the Privy Seal, yet obtained, much to his satisfaction, the Church patronage. The Whig nobles, such as the Cavendishes, gave their support to the Ministry, which, although not strong, yet promised to make up by zeal and energy what it lacked in ability and experience. Lord Chesterfield said that "The Ministry was an arch which wanted its keystone," meaning Pitt. There was absolutely no excuse for Pitt's obstinacy; but all that could be got from the "Great Commoner" was, that although the characters of the new Ministers were good, he could not give them his confidence. He was sorry, vastly sorry, but he could not support them.

These arrangements were a blow to Grenville and his friends. Still believing themselves all-powerful,



MARQUIS OF ROCKINGHAM



FIRST ROCKINGHAM MINISTRY

and that the King and country could not do without them, they were thrown into confusion by Grenville's receipt of the King's command, that he should repair to St. James's accompanied by the seal of office. Grenville obeyed, and face to face with his sovereign for the last time desired to be informed how he had incurred his Majesty's displeasure.

George did not waste words. He had been obliged to change his Ministers, he said, "owing to the great constraint they put upon him. Instead of asking his advice, they expected him to obey." With every wish in the world that the machinery of the State should work smoothly, that was not George's idea of monarchy. And so the Grenville Ministry went its way, unmourned by the people, and regretted by none who had the true interests of his country at heart.

There naturally arises the question, in what light did George himself view the Marquis of Rockingham? He was certainly surprised that the choice of the Old Whigs should have fallen upon a statesman of such slender parts. Rockingham had no intellectual weight; he was no debater, and his performances in that direction in the House frequently occasioned his friends great uneasiness. The real source and strength of the Ministry lay in the support of Cumberland, who had lately provoked the enmity of the Bedford faction. Had the Duke lived, the Rockingham administration might not only have enjoyed a greater degree of respect and popularity, but would have had a much longer tenure. Unhappily in four months the untimely death of the

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Duke took place. Robbed of his counsels, the Ministry were not slow in revealing to the public, as they had already revealed to the King, their real weakness and inefficiency. George himself, though convinced of Rockingham's honesty and good intentions, continually regretted many of his deficiencies, not least his inability to express himself in Parliament. He was always impressing on his Ministers the value of a bold and clear verbal statement of their policy. When Rockingham had so far conquered his natural timidity to address the House, the King wrote to him privately, "I am much pleased that the Opposition has forced you to hear your own voice, which I hope will encourage you to stand forth in other debates."¹ But he could not overlook Rockingham's moral cowardice. George himself hated and despised any truckling to the mob.

From first to last the great end of the Rockingham Ministry was popularity. They had, in the modern political phrase, an ear constantly to the ground. They would do nothing to offend or stir the reprobation of the vulgar. Not far from right was Grenville, when he characterised the real rule of the country as "mob rule." They were so absurdly squeamish of giving offence, that when the ignorant rabble still persisted in crying out "Down with Bute!" they insisted that the King should again be enjoined to have nothing further to do with Lord Bute. Again George assured them that he had had, and would have, nothing further to do with Lord Bute; again he had to listen to their insensate

¹. *Rockingham Papers*, vol. i. p. 271.

RECALCITRANT AMERICANS

jealousy and suspicion. They turned out the Earl of Northumberland, notwithstanding his services to the party, because he had fallen in love with and married one of Bute's daughters. The timidity of the administration, and its desire to placate everybody, was now to be put to a supreme trial.

On the 22nd March 1765 the American Stamp Act had received the royal assent. Not until the 1st of November following was it to come into operation. The interval was a fatal one; it granted all the time needed to accumulate opposition in America and to organise a revolt against the law. The leaven which had been introduced into America now began to work. The Americans had not been spectators of England's political follies and ineptitudes without enlightenment. Only a few years had passed since the Colonies were held to be of little consideration in England; now the debates in Parliament convinced that they had assumed overwhelming importance. The Colonists heard with surprise that the very existence of Great Britain as a commercial nation depended on American trade. They became seized with the consciousness of their strength and splendour. To any discipline they were little accustomed. They had known no burdens. Pettifogging lawyers harangued them; they were incited by many of their leading men whose worldly prosperity was derived from smuggling. The more recalcitrant spirits arose and urged that Massachusetts should be wholly exempt from taxation. The American trade was and should be the sole recompense of England for her vast expenditure in the Colonies.



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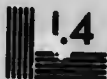
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This unfortunate dispute was artificial and hypocritical from beginning to end. The arguments preceding the American schism have been thoroughly thrashed out by a hundred historians. The Stamp Act, it seems to us, was a simple measure of justice to England, but in the anomalous relations in which America stood to the Mother Country it certainly gave rise to emphatic doubts of its wisdom and of its practical efficacy. There was no tyranny about it. Tyranny is the last word one would use, or ought to use, in connection with the Stamp Act. "It was the sort of tax," says a recent impartial American writer, "which we levied on ourselves during the Civil War, and again at the time of the war with Spain. It is unquestionably the fairest, most equally distributed, and easiest to collect of all forms of taxes."¹

The Act had a violent reception in America. Copies were hawked about the streets of New York with a death's head affixed in lieu of the King's arms. In Boston the flags of the shipping in the harbour were placed at half-mast. The church bells were muffled, and a funeral knell was tolled. At Philadelphia many of the guns in the town and parks were spiked by gangs of unapprehended malcontents. But the phenomenon, the most singular, and yet at the same time when we understand how little the Colonies had advanced in an apprehension of what constitutional monarchy had grown to be, in their ignorance of their King's real character, perhaps not

¹ S. G. Fisher, *The True Story of the American Revolution*, p. 55.

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so inexplicable, was their instant association of what they termed the "tyranny" of Britain with George III. Immediately an identity was established, not a constitutional but a personal identity, between British policy towards America and the temper and intentions of the sovereign. And this identity continued in men's minds, even men the most intelligent and the most informed, until after the Revolution, and, alas! that it should be said, amongst some down to the present day.

In Virginia, Patrick Henry, a fair type of the unruly, narrow-minded country attorney class, which for the next dozen years were to heap fuel upon the flames, a man who had been a jack-of-all trades, unsuccessfully hitherto, cried out in the Virginian House of Burgesses, "Cæsar had his Brutus, Charles I. his Cromwell, and George III.—" here the cry of "treason" which was raised prevented the orator from mentioning the name of the individual—or was it community?—who was to play the regicide's part. At all events a combination was formed in America to oppose the law and abstain from complying with its provisions as far as concerned the use of stamps. Representatives of nine of the Colonies met in Congress. They passed fourteen resolutions—a petition to the King, another to the House of Commons, and a memorial to the House of Lords. They would not be persuaded to a full recognition of the authority of Parliament in matters of taxation, but professed allegiance to the Crown, and "due subordination" to the two Houses. By their resolutions, they declared themselves en-

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titled to all the rights of subjects born within the realm of Great Britain. They pronounced it essential to the freedom of a people to be taxed only with their own consent ; but the Colonies neither were nor could, from local circumstances, be represented in the British House of Commons ; their only representatives were in their Colonial legislatures ; and except by them no taxes had been or could be constitutionally imposed. They defined supplies to be gifts, and therefore inferred that the Commons of Great Britain could not constitutionally grant away American property. They claimed trial by jury as the right of the subject ; the Stamp Act, and other acts of trade, tended to subvert that right. The duties lately imposed were grievous, and the payment impracticable ; the profits of their commerce centred in Great Britain, and therefore the inhabitants of America contributed largely to all supplies. . . . They claimed, as subjects, the right of petitioning King, Lords, and Commons, and declared it was their duty, by a loyal address to the King, and humble application to both Houses, to procure a repeal of the Stamp Act and others restricting trade and extending the Admiralty jurisdictions. The Congress concluded by recommending each Colony to advance its interests by a special agent in Britain.¹

Besides these resolutions, associations were set on foot in all the Colonies to prevent the importation of British manufactures until the Stamp Act should be repealed. The ships which arrived from England with the stamp papers might as well have never put

¹ Adolphus, vol. i. pp. 185-6.

GEORGE AND AMERICA

forth on their errand. The stamps were confiscated or withheld, and the whole country was aflame.

Tidings of all this violent misconduct could only greatly distress the timid Rockingham Ministry. Here again it was plain they had more mob rule to deal with. Assuming that America, as many of the Americans themselves claimed, was an integral part of the kingdom, to whom were the law-abiding, well-disposed, and loyal subjects of the sovereign overseas to look when peace and order were threatened? If Somersetshire, or Middlesex, or Cumberland arose in revolt and refused to obey the mandate of the King a regiment of soldiers would be sent to enforce the law. On the face of things the Colonists had rebelled, they had refused to obey the law. What course in this crisis was the Ministry to take? "I am more and more grieved," wrote the King to Secretary Conway on the 6th December, "with the accounts from America. Where this spirit will end is not to be said. It is undoubtedly the most serious matter that ever came before Parliament. It requires more deliberation, candour, and temper than I fear it will meet with." One hardly recognises here the accents of a tyrant. "One of the first persons in England," remarks Lecky, "who fully realised the magnitude of the question was the King."

In view of the open defiance and insult which had been meted out to the servants of the Crown in America, strong and immediate action had to be taken. The honour of England, of the King, of Parliament was at stake. But there was another consideration. Petitions poured in from the merchants

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of the kingdom—London, Bristol, Liverpool, and other towns—stating that unless this question were settled and America propitiated at once, their affairs would be bankrupt. The Colonists owed English merchants several millions sterling for English goods sent to them, which they could not, owing to the general boycott, receive or pay for. The Stamp Act threatened English commerce with ruin, and many thousands of artisans throughout the country were idle. Thus the Ministry were between two fires.

On the 17th December Parliament met, and little time was lost in ascertaining the temper of the different parties. Grenville would have treated the Colonists as rebels, and enforced obedience with the sword. Their conduct was without excuse or palliation. England governed her Colonies liberally, and had granted them real political liberty. "If Ministers," he said, "now repeal the Stamp Act, they will be guilty of treachery to England, they would humiliate the British Parliament before the Empire and before the world. The unity of the Empire would be but a name, and America would be a source of weakness rather than strength." Thereafter the surest way of inducing Parliament to repeal any obnoxious tax was to refuse to pay it, and to incite the mob to oppose the tax collectors.

Pitt's course was taken from the first. He declared on the floor of Parliament his settled conviction that supreme as was the legislative power of the Mother Country on every point, yet America being unrepresented in the British Parliament, Britain had no right to tax Americans without their

CHATHAM'S INCONSISTENCY

own consent. He took no note, however, of the fact that they refused to be represented in Parliament, to tax themselves, or to contribute even to their own protection. He called for the immediate repeal of the Stamp Act as an unwarrantable and unconstitutional measure. If the American malcontents needed any further incitement to their present conduct, Pitt in his speech on this occasion afforded all that their hearts could desire. "The gentleman," he said, alluding to Grenville, "tells us that America is obstinate, that America is almost in open rebellion. Sir, I rejoice that America has resisted. Three millions of people, so dead to all feelings of liberty as to voluntarily be slaves, would be fitting instruments to make slaves of the rest." The absolute inapplicability of such a figure to the status of Americans, who were far freer, both from taxation and restraint, than the Englishmen of that period, must strike forcibly the candid reader of to-day.

Pitt's utter inconsistency is shown in a further passage of that speech. He insisted that the Stamp Act should be repealed "absolutely, totally, and immediately." At the same time, "Let the sovereign authority of this country over the Colonies be asserted in as strong terms as can be devised, and be made to extend to every point of legislation whatsoever; that we may bind their trade, confine their manufactures, and exercise every power whatsoever, except that of taking their money out of their pockets without their consent."

On a later occasion he actually declared that if America should manufacture a stocking, or so much

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as forge a hobnail, he would let fall on her the whole of the British Empire." So much for Pitt's notions of liberty!

Pratt, Lord Camden, ventured in the House of Lords upon a legal dictum even rasher than any promulgated in the Lower House. "Taxation and representation," he said, "are inseparable. This position is founded on the laws of Nature; nay, more, it is itself an eternal law of Nature. For whatever is a man's own is absolutely his own. No man has a right to take it from him without his consent, either expressed by himself or representative. Whoever attempts to do it attempts an injury. Whoever does it commits a robbery!"

Rockingham and his friends soon made up their minds to repeal the Stamp Act. They were afraid of Pitt. Rockingham wrote to the King: "The events of yesterday in the House of Commons have shown the amazing power and influence which Mr. Pitt has whenever he takes part in debate." Pitt, he said, must be got to assume a cordial attitude. But George pointed out that the absolute repeal of the Stamp Act would be a mistake. In the first place, it would put the Mother Country in a false and humiliating position. There were many measures which stood on the statute book which nobody in his senses wished to carry out in their full rigour. At the same time George did not agree with Grenville; he did not share his late Minister's unbending temper towards the Colonies. As he wrote Rockingham, "I desire you would tell Lord Strange that I am now, and have been heretofore, for modification; but that

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when many were for enforcing it, I was then for the repealing of the Stamp Act." "Should there be no middle course," he said again, "between repealing the Act and enforcing it by the sword, I would in that case be in favour of repealing."

But the hasty repeal of the Act at the behest of the mob and clamour of interested politicians was unwise and unnecessary. George made no secret of his opinion that the Act should be modified until the Americans could not but accept its mild provisions rather than annul it. He had in his hands, what his Ministers too often ignored, the strongest representations from his American subjects; not only governors and officials, but the leading men in the Colonies urged the retention of the Stamp Act as a wise and just measure.

Not enough is made by historians of this period of the great influence on the King's mind which these representations exerted, and as time went on the whole of the King's attitude towards America may justly be ascribed to the professions of loyalty and allegiance emanating from the better class of Colonists themselves. When he saw that Rockingham was bent on repeal he gave way. The King stood by Rockingham in spite of the fact that Townshend, Barrington, and the Lord Chancellor Northington were all against his Prime Minister, and of Grenville's way of thinking. "I have your resolution of standing firmly by the American question," he wrote to Rockingham, "which will certainly direct my language to the Chancellor."¹

¹ *Rockingham Papers*, vol. i. p. 297.

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One of the Court officials, Lord Strange, happening to mention the subject of repeal to the King, learnt, while the fate of the Bill was still in the balance, that his Majesty would have favoured modification. "Lord Strange," says Grenville, "told everybody he met of the discourse his Majesty had held with him, which was in direct contradiction of what had been propagating for the last two days by the Ministers." It ran about the town before night-fall that the King was opposed to repeal, and Rockingham in alarm sought out Strange and carried him off to the palace. In Rockingham's presence Strange asked the King whether he had rightly understood him. To which George answered in the affirmative. Rockingham then drew forth a Council paper on which it was recorded that his Majesty had resolved in favour of repeal. "My lord," said the King, "this is but half," and taking out a pencil he instantly added these words to the bottom of the paper: "The question asked me by my Ministers was whether I was for enforcing the Act by the sword or for its repeal? Of two extremes I was for the repeal, but most certainly prefer modification to either."¹

Despite the opposition of Grenville, Bedford, and Temple, who had banded themselves together to

¹ The King's conduct was alike frank and dignified. He avowed what he had said to Lord Strange, rebuked Lord Rockingham for telling *but half* the story, and boldly, and we dare say somewhat indignantly, wrote, so as to admit of no misrepresentation, on Lord Rockingham's paper the important qualification of his opinion which Lord Rockingham had suppressed.—*Quarterly Review*, vol. lxxvii. p. 286.

BEDFORD DENIED AUDIENCE

defeat the Repeal Bill in Parliament, the Bill was carried by a large majority. Grenville really seems to have regarded repeal as a national calamity. He took the most extraordinary means of prevailing upon the King to grant a personal interview to Bedford or Temple, in order to represent to him the "distressed situation of his affairs." Apparently still obsessed by the idea that Bute had intimate relations with the King, they actually had recourse to Bute. Bute informed them coldly that he knew nothing of the King's opinions, and never saw him. He had not even seen the King for many months past. Bedford and Grenville were crestfallen, and before leaving hoped that Bute would keep their meeting a secret. "There is nothing, gentlemen, of which *I* am ashamed," was the Earl's frigid answer.

They finally prevailed on the King's brother, the Duke of York, to demand an audience for Bedford, to urge retention of the Stamp Act. Conquering his surprise, George remarked that it had ever been a rule with him to grant an interview to any nobleman who made the request to him. But the measure Bedford desired to discuss was under the consideration of Parliament, and they must abide its decision. So this attempt at influencing the King failed.

Opposition, however, frightened the Ministry into something. It was decided that the act of repeal be prefaced by a Declaratory Act affirming the right of Parliament to make laws binding the British Colonies "in all cases whatsoever," and condemning as unlawful the votes of the Colonial Assemblies which had denied to Parliament the

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right of taxing them. It is not unlikely that without this declaration Rockingham would have found it difficult to have carried the Bill. Shelburne wrote to say that "The prejudice against the Americans on the whole seems very great, and no very decided opinion in favour of the Ministry." The outrages committed by the Americans aroused widespread indignation. Very few, if any, supposed that the Declaratory Act would evoke any further disfavour by the Americans. Benjamin Franklin, at that time in London, stated to a Parliamentary Committee his opinion that "The resolutions of right would give his country very little concern if they are never attempted to be carried into practice."

The repeal of the Stamp Act produced instantaneous joy. But a comparison of the bell-ringing and jubilation with which the news of the repeal was greeted in America as well as in Britain, with the scenes and language which were shortly to prevail, fills us with a powerful distrust of the foresight of our ancestors. The American mob had triumphed, and for the present there seemed no reason why they should try to foment a quarrel between Britain and the Colonies. This to professional agitators was ample cause for regret. The regret was but momentary; the lawyer was abroad in the land, and other causes for agitation would quickly be found by his restless and too ingenious brain.

For a brief interval the American aristocracy and the professional classes apart from the law could breathe freely and testify to their loyalty.

A TEMPORARY LULL

Only a few cavillers ventured to murmur against the resolution of the Philadelphian Quakers that "To demonstrate our zeal to Great Britain and our gratitude for the repeal of the Stamp Act, each of us will on the 4th of June next, being the birthday of our gracious sovereign, dress ourselves in a new suit of the manufactures of England, and give what homespun clothes we have to the poor."

If, it followed, the Americans were to be placated and pandered to, nothing less could be done for the rebellious eyder counties. It is true that against the eyder tax, as Lord North afterwards said, there were never two syllables of common-sense urged. Nevertheless it was repealed, and the Act for restraining the importation of foreign silks, which Bedford had opposed, was also passed.

"The Colonists," says an American writer distinguished by unusual candour, "were certainly lucky in having chanced upon a Whig administration for their great appeal against taxation. It has often been said that both the Declaratory Act and the repeal of the Stamp Act were a combination of sound constitutional law and sound policy, and that if this same Whig line of conduct had been afterwards consistently followed, England would not have lost her American Colonies. No doubt if such a Whig policy had been continued the Colonies would have been retained in nominal dependence a few years longer. But such a policy would have left the Colonies in their semi-independent condition without further remodelling or reform, with

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British sovereignty unestablished in them, and with a powerful party of the Colonists elated by their victory over England. They would have gone on demanding more independence, until they snapped the last string."¹ The continuance, therefore, of the agitation in America as long as agitators were unsuppressed in England was inevitable.

¹ S. G. Fisher, *True Story of the American Revolution*, p. 78.

CHAPTER VIII

CHATHAM JOINS THE KING

WHILE the Bill for the repeal of the American Stamp Act was still before Parliament, Rockingham had been urging upon George the necessity of obtaining the cordial support of Pitt. In the debates the Ministers were constantly addressing the "Great Commoner" as if he were the missing keystone in the administrative arch. They were perpetually deferring to him, ever apologising for their own presumption. And indeed Pitt's refusal to join the Rockingham administration is deserving of nothing but opprobrium. Everything had been done to conciliate him; the First Lord of the Treasury had actually expressed, on behalf of himself and his colleagues, their readiness "to be disposed of as he pleased, if he would only place himself at their head." In Pitt's own words, "Faction was shaking and corruption sapping the country to its foundations." True, and he did nothing!

Under these circumstances the King could hardly compromise his conduct any further by making overtures to his capricious subject. "I have revolved," he wrote on the 9th January 1766 to Lord Rockingham, "most coolly and attentively, the business now before me, and am of opinion that so loose a conversa-

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tion as that of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Townshend is not sufficient to risk either my dignity or the continuance of my administration, by a fresh treaty with that gentleman. For if it should miscarry, all public opinion of this Ministry would be destroyed by such an attempt."

In spite of Pitt's petulance and intractability, Rockingham, Grafton, Townshend, and the rest persisted. Pitt still refused the proffered terms in disdain. "He would," he said, "never again act in concert with the Duke of Newcastle." He had a dozen reasons; he resented this, he disliked that with more than feminine mutability. Edmund Burke, Rockingham's brilliant private secretary, wrote of him as "on his back at Hayes, talking fustian."

During this period of his seclusion, however, courted and flattered as he was, Pitt's principles and attitude towards his former political associates had been undergoing a not unnatural change. Ego-mania had always led him into an impatience of all parties. He regarded himself as the special mouthpiece and champion of the people. He now began to perceive that such a rôle made him also the peculiar coadjutor of King George. By the King and Pitt the nation could be governed, for what was the King and Pitt but another name for the King and people? Certainly if Pitt could continue to command the homage of politicians and the suffrage of the mob, the King and Pitt might conduct public affairs excellently well, and crush out all faction and rivalry. Wherefore, "The

FAMILY COMPACT THREATENED

King's pleasure and gracious commands," wrote the "Great Man" at last, "shall be a call to me. I am deaf to every other end." The idea grew upon him. "If ever," he said, "he was again admitted, as he had been, to the royal presence, it should be independent of any personal connections whatsoever." Moreover, Pitt's independence had recently been fortified by the bequest of a large estate from Sir William Pynsent. He was now a rich man.

Such sentiments being imparted to George, who, more than any one else in the kingdom, had long desired to break up faction, caused him to look upon Pitt in a more favourable light. If Pitt persisted, this policy which he from the moment of coming to the throne had unsuccessfully endeavoured to achieve might be successful. The "Great Commoner's" character was too haughty and exiguous—his manner too artificial—ever to commend itself entirely to George, but never had Pitt offered him any personal slight. His conduct as a gentleman and a courtier had been irreproachable. Here, then, was an instrument at hand, and George prepared to seize it. Pitt, while loudly proclaiming the necessity of strengthening the popular element in Parliament, imagined it to be both possible and useful to break up absolutely the small bodies which had grown up around the great families. He regarded with some reason the selfishness, the incapacity, the intrigues, and the jealousies of the great nobles as the main cause of the weakness, anarchy, and corruption of recent English politics.¹ But long before Pitt the

¹ Lecky, vol. iii. p. 111.

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King had, as we have seen, reached the same conclusion.

Grafton, a particular friend of the King's, resigned, and a few weeks later Northington, the Lord Chancellor, precipitated the downfall of the Rockingham Ministry. Parliament had been prorogued. The affairs of Canada succeeded to those of America in occupying the attention of the Privy Council. By a proclamation issued in 1764, British law was introduced into the new Colonies, and occasioned much discontent and confusion. The French inhabitants complained that their laws were overturned and others introduced of which they understood nothing, not even the language in which the decision of the judges was announced. Murray, the Governor of the province, made several *ordonnances* in pursuance of the proclamation, but they were considered injudicious by the Board of Trade. According to custom, the papers relating to these disputes were sent from the Privy Council to the Attorney- and Solicitor-General, who collected other information and prepared a report for the consideration of the Cabinet. This report contained a plan for the civil government of Quebec. The chief feature of this plan was "to leave to the natives their ancient rights of property, or civil laws, and to temper the rigour of their criminal code by the more equitable and liberal system of English jurisprudence."

When the Rockingham Cabinet came to consider this business the Lord Chancellor, at whose house they met, declared his entire disapproval of

TROUBLE OVER CANADA

the report. He expressed his belief that no proposition should be sanctioned by the Cabinet until a complete code of the laws of Canada should be procured. This meant a delay of at least a full year, and Ministers broke up the meeting in some confusion. Before they could again meet, Northington intimated his intention of attending no further. Nevertheless the affairs of Canada were again discussed, Yorke proposing that the report should be sent to Quebec for the inspection of Governor Carleton and the Colonial Crown lawyers, with instructions to return it corrected according to their judgment, accompanied by a complete code of the *ordonnances* of Canada. This settlement appeared fair and just. All the Cabinet were agreed. Northington, however, saw in this an excellent opportunity for urging the King to lose no further time in summoning Pitt, who was now only waiting for his Majesty personally to command him. George agreed, and on the 7th July, having never been without a fair appreciation of the "Great Commoner's" vanity, he indited the following letter:—

"Mr. Pitt," it began, "your very dutiful and handsome conduct the last summer makes me desirous of having your thoughts how an able and dignified Ministry may be formed. I desire, therefore, you will come for this salutary purpose to town."

Pitt's answer was the usual combination of bombast, adulation, and affected humility. He "sighed for the gift to change his infirmity into wings of expedition, in order that he might lay his

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poor but sincere offering of his little service at the royal feet." He followed himself almost immediately, and, received by George with cordiality, was given *carte blanche* to form an administration.

Pitt, as everybody expected, at once offered the Treasury to Temple. As nobody expected, Temple refused it. He came to town, found he could not agree on a single point with his brother-in-law, and returned. Grafton accepted the post. In forming his Ministry Pitt's policy, as Walpole put it, was "to pick and cull from all quarters, and cut all parties as much as possible." Burke called it "a mosaic administration." Townshend, firm in his belief that America ought to be taxed, was made Chancellor of the Exchequer. Camden, who was equally firm in the iniquity of compelling America to share the Mother Country's burdens, was the new Lord Chancellor. Conway and Barrington retained their offices.

A political figure of interest, whose speeches on the question of Wilkes and American taxation had lately attracted attention, now appeared in office. This was Francis, Lord North, to whom was given the Paymastership of the Forces. It had been universally expected that Pitt would have taken the Treasury himself. But Pitt had other views. He felt himself unequal to any hard labour. He wanted to win battles as the Grand Monarque won them, by sitting gracefully on a white charger and issuing occasional haughty directions to his perspiring captains. Another great surprise was in store for the urban multitude. The *Gazette* announced that

Richmond Lodge
July 7th 1766.

M^r. Pitt Your very Dutiful & Handsome conduct
the last Summer makes Me desirous of having
Your thoughts how an Able & Dignify'd Ministry
may be form'd, I desire therefore You will come
for this salutary purpose to Town.

I cannot conclude without expressing how
entirely my ideas concerning the Basis on which

a new Administration should be ere led, are
consonant to the opinion You gave on that subject
in Parliament a few days before You set out for
Somersetshire.

I convey this through the Channel of the Earl
of Nottingham, as there is no Man in my service on
whom I so thoroughly rely & who I know agrees with
Me so perfectly in the contents of this letter.

George



CHATHAM'S EARLDOM

William Pitt was "no more," that the Earl of Chatham had replaced the "Great Commoner"!

Once again an instant revulsion took place in the feelings of Pitt's admirers when they heard that he had accepted a title. The City of London, which yesterday had idolised Pitt, now refused to present Lord Chatham an address. A banquet in his honour was countermanded. The illuminations to celebrate the return of Pitt to power were dismantled. He was denounced as a courtier and a renegade, and, above all, the dupe of Lord Bute. Everything was attributed to Bute.¹ The King had no personal will, no mental powers, no predilections; it was all Bute! Bute had planned Pitt's downfall, and the "Great Commoner" had been "caught in a Scotch trap." These circumstances were quite enough of themselves to make Chatham's labours difficult. But others conspired to add to his mortification. An uncommonly bad harvest followed; the price of wheat rose to an unexampled height, bringing bread riots in their train. The soldiers were called out, and bloodshed could not be prevented.

One of the Ministry's first acts was to issue a proclamation against "forestallers, regraters, and engrossers of corn." But this was insufficient. The total export of wheat in their opinion ought to be prohibited; only an Act of Parliament alone could achieve this, and Parliament was not in session.

¹ Bute himself had been perfectly wretched over what he considered the chaotic condition of affairs. He seems to have apprehended revolution, and his gratitude to Pitt for saving his "young and amiable" king knew no bounds.

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Chatham, however, loftily swept aside any Ministerial scruples, and an Order in Council was issued, laying an embargo on all wheat grown in the kingdom. "After all," as Camden afterwards stated, "the action of the administration was only a forty days' tyranny." As a matter of fact Chatham consulted with the King himself, and the two went carefully over the question. George agreed that the weal of the public was in danger, and instant action was imperatively demanded. In a letter to Conway he writes: "Great evils must require at times extraordinary measure to remove them. The present risings are only an additional proof to me of the great licentiousness that has infused itself into all orders of men. If a due obedience to law, and the submitting to that, as the only just method of having grievances removed, does not ouce more become the characteristic of this nation, we shall soon be no better than the savages of America. Then we shall be as much despised by all civilised nations, as we are as yet revered for our excellent Constitution."

And again on the 24th September the King wrote: "As there seems to be so real a distress from the present excessive dearness of the corn, and a great probability that, if a prohibition is not issued to prevent the further exportation of it, the evil may greatly increase before the Parliament can possibly put a stop to it, I am glad the Council have un-animously thought it expedient that such prohibition should be immediately ordered. I desire therefore the proclamation may be prepared for my signing

CABINET DISUNION

on Friday. I think it would be right you should acquaint the Lord President with the result of this day's Council."

When Parliament met, of course a great outcry was made. It was urged by Mansfield that prerogative had invaded the law, an act of gross usurpation had been committed, the law of the land had been broken, and that the Ministers richly deserved impeachment!

To illustrate the change that had come over Chatham and his friends, how their jealousy of the Crown had mysteriously evaporated, one may cite the excuse for the Ministerial conduct offered by Alderman Beckford in the House of Commons, "that in times of danger the Crown might dispense with law." Whereupon Grenville sprang to his feet with a passionate denial, and a desire that the Clerk of the House should take down the City member's words. Beckford retired abashed.

By the majority the necessity of the embargo was admitted, and though the debates were violent, and the amendment rejected, no protest appears on the journals. The Parliament, in fact, sanctioned the proceeding of Ministry by an address to the King, requesting him to continue the wheat embargo, and extend it to several other kinds of grain.

Chatham had come; Chatham was in power, and still the Ministry was unstable. Disunion began to appear on every hand. A number of his adherents resigned, and in the midst of the confusion and growing unpopularity of the sixth Ministry since the King's accession, Chatham, with an intellect obviously

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clouded, withdrew himself to Bath. More than ever was he alienated from his colleagues. Some began to suspect his mental sanity; of his bodily ill-health none could entertain a doubt. Nevertheless to the King, Chatham's presence in the Ministry being indispensable, so for the next two years, although Chatham took little or no part in administrative affairs yet his name and influence were the cement which made the units of the Ministry to cohere.

George saw clearly enough that were he to be deprived of Chatham the others would fall away, and in their impotence George Grenville might be the only alternative. As to receiving Grenville back again, he would almost rather, he said himself, "meet Mr. Grenville at the end of his sword, than let him into his closet." It was really wonderful how little all the intrigues, cabals, intimidation, and bullying George had been the victim of during the six years of his reign had power to quell his spirit. Chatham urged that the majority was weak. So, said George, is public spirit; the national resolution is weak. "As for losing questions in Parliament, it did not intimidate him; he would stand his ground and be the last to yield, although he stood single."¹

The King respected his Minister's illness; but as the weeks wore away stories reached him of Chatham's occasional vivacity. He came to London in a litter, and from thence set up at North End, Hampstead. The King despatched more than one letter breathing sympathy and concern, and ex-

¹ *Chatham Correspondence*, vol. iii. pp. 227.

"I CANNOT TRUCKLE"

pressions of earnest desire to consult with him. Could he manage to see him for a quarter of an hour? George himself proposed to visit him in his sick chamber. "We will not talk of business," added the King; "I only want to have the world know that I attended Lord Chatham." Chatham, secretly delighted at this condescension, yet preserved an irresponsive front. If Chatham would not see the King, would he receive the Duke of Grafton? "Your duty and affection for my person, your own honour, call on you to make an effort. Five minutes' conversation with you would raise his spirits, for his heart is good. Mine, I thank Heaven, wants no rousing. My love to my country, as well as what I owe to my own character and my family, prompt me not to yield to faction. . . . Though none of my Ministers stand by me, I cannot truckle."² This appeal brought a characteristic reply from the ailing Minister.

"Penetrated and overwhelmed by your Majesty's letter and the boundless extent of your royal goodness, totally incapable as illness renders me, I obey your Majesty's commands, and beg to see the Duke of Grafton to-morrow morning, though hopeless that I can add weight to your Majesty's gracious wishes. Illness and affliction deprive me of the power of adding more, than to implore your Majesty to look with indulgence on this imperfect tribute of duty and devotion."

Grafton went to see Chatham on the 1st June, and

¹ *Chatham Correspondence*, vol. iii. p. 226.

² *Ibid.*, p. 261.

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found him suffering from nervous prostration. His ailment bore a very strong likeness to hysterics; at intervals his frame shook, and he burst into tears on the smallest provocation. But he seems to have collected himself sufficiently, and told Grafton that he would remain in office if nothing were expected of him. From Hampstead, Grafton rode away virtually first Minister of the Crown.

On the following day the King considerably sent this message to Chatham: "My sole purpose in writing is the desire of knowing whether the excitement and hurry of the last week has not affected your health. I should have sent yesterday had I not thought a day of rest necessary previous to your being able to give an answer. If you have not suffered, which I flatter myself, I think with reason I may congratulate you on its being a good proof you are gaining ground."

A sorry task had Grafton. Shelburne and Charles Townshend were plotting against him. The Grenville, Bedford, and Rockingham factions were striving their utmost to break up the Ministry. Majorities in the House of Commons became very precarious. Townshend, a brilliant speaker and a born leader of men, openly evinced his aspirations to the Premiership. During the Army debate at the beginning of the year, on the reassembling of Parliament, it was seen that the American question was by no means disposed of. While Grenville moved that America like Ireland should support her own army, Townshend, much to the surprise of his colleagues, declared himself a firm believer in the

TOWNSHEND'S ANNOUNCEMENT

principle of the Stamp Act. It was unjust that taxes for the support of the Army and Navy should not be levied on the Americans. He knew of a mode, he said, by which a revenue might be drawn from the Americans, without giving them offence. This was good news to Grenville, who instantly sprang up in his place, and insisted on Townshend's pledging himself to fulfil his project.

Townshend, nothing loath, and heedless of the looks of dismay on the part of his fellow-Ministers, consented. The country gentlemen and the yeomanry of England were almost unanimously at his back. They had just defeated the passage of the Land Tax (by which it was proposed to raise a large revenue), on the ground that it was impossible for Britain to bear alone the entire burden of maintaining the Empire. It is probable that had Chatham known of the bold conduct of his Chancellor of the Exchequer he would have disapproved. But his intimate friend, Shelburne, strongly endorsed the policy of America supporting her own army. He believed, as the King believed, that part of the sum might be raised by strict enforcement of the quit-rents of the Crown and by benefiting from the Crown grants of land. Since his outburst on the Stamp Act even Chatham had begun to look upon the conduct of America as unamiable. He had written to Shelburne, "America affords a gloomy prospect. The spirit of infatuation has taken possession of New York." But the spirit of faction was to make him gloss over any insubordination and rebellion in that quarter.

GEORGE THE THIRD

On the 13th May Townshend introduced his measure for American taxation. The ingratitude of America and a recrudescence of the agitation there on account of the Declaratory Act made many regret still more the repeal of the Stamp Act. The real disposition of the Americans was soon publicly exhibited. In the last session an alteration was made in the American Mutiny Act, enjoining the Colonists to supply the soldiers with salt, vinegar, and beer or cyder. The first attempt to obtain this moderate indulgence was made in New York; the Governor applied to the Assembly to provide quarters for the troops who were expected, and specified the additional articles required. The Assembly was so reluctant in taking this message into consideration, that an address in answer was not voted till the luckless soldiers arrived. No notice was taken of the demand to supply the military with the necessaries required by the Act of Parliament. After several messages and replies had been exchanged, the contumacious Assembly finally resolved not to comply with the Amended Mutiny Act. They affected to consider the principle as not differing from the Stamp Act; it imposed a new burden, and at length, on their own authority, repealed a regulation made by the Imperial Parliament.

Elsewhere in the Colonies the Act met with a like fate. The zeal of the military, in support of Government, angered the local Assemblies. In one county soldiers were fired on by the mob, and compelled, in self-defence, to wound some of their assailants. In New York a tree of liberty was erected by the mal-

AMERICA AND THE NAVY

contents as a token of triumph on the repeal of the Stamp Act. The soldiers advanced to cut it down; the mob resisted, and blood would have been shed but for the tact and restraint of the commanding officer and the magistrates.

"Repeal," observed Burke afterwards, "began to be in as bad odour in the House of Commons as the Stamp Act had been the session before." By Townshend's Bill certain duties on glass, paper, pasteboard, white lead, painters' colours, and tea were to be imposed on these articles imported into the Colonies. It was a reasonable tax. It had the approval of such a difficult personage as Benjamin Franklin. In his evidence before the House of Commons Franklin said plainly, "You may have, therefore, a natural and equitable right to some toll or duty on merchandise carried through that part of your dominions towards defraying the expense you are at in ships to maintain the safety of that carriage." In other words, some leading Americans were not averse from contributing to the support of the Imperial navy.

It was expected to raise some £40,000, the basis of a Crown Civil List, out of which salaries were to be paid to the governors and judges in America. Townshend's very moderate Bill passed with little opposition through both Houses. But Franklin had utterly misconceived the unreasonable temper of his own people.¹ Many of their demagogues and news-

¹ "England was quite right in forming a very low estimate of the character and motives of a large proportion of those ambitious lawyers, newspaper writers, preachers, and pamphleteers, who, in

GEORGE THE THIRD

papers fairly lost themselves in terms of abuse and obliquy. The position of the royal governors became intolerable. Without the presence of British troops the Commissioners of the Revenue were impotent to enforce the Revenue Acts. No jury would convict rioters or offenders against the excise or revenue, or even against the governor's person. The first condition of maintaining authority in Massachusetts, as Governor Bernard wrote, was to quarter in Boston a force of British troops. But Townshend was not to live to see the results of his measure. While the mind of his leader was still obscured, and his own dreams of making himself Chatham's successor were most roseate, the Chancellor of the Exchequer died at the early age of forty-two. On receiving the news the King despatched a messenger to Lord North, who, with Grafton's approval, filled the suddenly vacated post. There were further changes later. Northington and Conway resigned, and the Duke of Bedford's followers, including Sandwich, joined the Ministry.

The entry of North marks a new era in the relations of the Crown and its advisers. North, whom we have already seen as a youth at Leicester House, was the son of the first Earl of Guildford, and had first entered the House of Commons in 1754. Although he had been one of the Lords of the Treasury under Pitt in 1759, he was attached to none of the

New England at least, were labouring with untiring assiduity to win popular applause by sowing dissension between England and her Colonies.—*England in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. iii, p. 354.



LORD NORTH

(From the Portrait by Dance in the Bodleian Library)



NORTH BECOMES LEADER

Whig factions. He was industrious, a witty speaker, tactful, and with a temperament the most amiable in the world. In every respect he was acceptable to the King. George and his sterling qualities had no greater admirer than North, who believed in authority and the peace of the kingdom, in equity of taxation, in sobriety of public speech and conduct. To such a man it fell to lead the House of Commons. Chatham still retained his place, but so incapable was he of transacting any business, that it was even found necessary for a time to put the Privy Seal in commission.

North had not long been in office under Grafton when, on the eve of a general election, John Wilkes reappeared to set the King, Parliament, and kingdom by the ears. Since his duel with Martin he had retired to Paris, and toured the Continent with an Italian courtesan. Ignominious battling with poverty and innumerable intrigues to raise money decided Wilkes to return to London. Forwarding a petition for pardon to the King, he announced himself as candidate for the representation of the City of London. Beaten here, though polling more than twelve hundred votes, he immediately, with the support of Portland, Temple, and John Horne, stood for Middlesex. The result on 28th March was that Wilkes headed the poll. The audacity of the exploit staggered Grafton and his colleagues. Again they saw Wilkes a popular hero, and in the storm of popular excitement, now daily rising, they were ready to take Wilkes to their bosom. But they reckoned without their sovereign;

GEORGE THE THIRD

nothing could induce George to bend before the threats of the mob. Wilkes was a disreputable outlaw, and if his excesses were to go unpunished, the best interests of the kingdom would suffer. However his Ministers might vacillate, George at least was steadfast. The fury and licentiousness of a crowd did not intimidate him. "Wilkes and Liberty" was everywhere the cry. The windows of Lord Bute's house and of several other noblemen were broken, and the cabalistic No. 45 stared at pedestrians from walls, pavements, and even the panels of carriages.

George was warned that he was exposed to personal danger. He rebuked his monitor as he had once rebuked Bute. He only wished, he said, the rioters would make the attempt; he would then have an opportunity of dispersing them at the head of his Guards.

We need not here go into the story of Wilkes's divagations. A few weeks after his election the demagogue surrendered himself to the Marshal of the King's Bench. Subsequently Mansfield, on a technical point of law, pronounced his outlawry to be illegal. But while the expelled member in the King's Bench Prison awaited sentence for seditious libel and blasphemy, London was virtually in the hands of the mob, which committed all sorts of violence. At this time we find George writing to the Secretary of State, Lord Weymouth, that "If due firmness is shown with regard to this audacious criminal, this affair will prove a fortunate one, by restoring a due obedience to the laws. But if this is

CLASS INSURRECTIONS

not the case, I fear anarchy will continue till what every temperate man must dread, I mean an effusion of blood, has vanquished."

Of a kindly, generous disposition as George undeniably was, he did not believe in that false humanity, which is but another name for weakness. Indeed, if the Wilkes mob had had their way, others would have been encouraged to storm and pillage. "We have," wrote Walpole, "independent mobs that have nothing to do with Wilkes, and who only take advantage of so favourable a season. The dearness of provisions incites—the hope of increase of wages allures—and drink puts them in motion." There were uprisings of the coal-heavers, the sawyers, and last, but not least, the sailors, the latter of whom, after many outrages, marched to Richmond Lodge, where George then was, with their petition. "The sailors," wrote the King to Weymouth, "have been here. The servants, according to my orders, acquainted them that I was out, at which they expressed much concern. On being asked their business, they said it was for an increase of wages. They were told that I had no power to act in this affair, which they readily owned; said they were fools for walking so far, and that they would go back to London; but begged the petition might be given me when I came home, as it was a proof that, though they were wrongly advised in addressing themselves to me, they looked upon me as having the welfare of the British sailors at heart."

It was impossible that such scenes could long continue without bloodshed. A vast multitude

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assembled in St. George's Fields shouting "Wilkes and Liberty," and threatening to storm the King's Bench Prison. The Riot Act was read, and six persons were killed and fifteen wounded. Whereupon the infuriated mob threatened to attack the House of Commons. "Bloodshed," wrote George, "is not what I delight in, but it seems to me the only way of restoring a due obedience to the laws. I have just seen the paper, that was distributed to-day, recommending the driving the Commons out of their House, which they, for their own sakes, are bound to take notice of. I shall with pleasure sign any proclamation that can tend to restore order to this country, formerly looked upon as the seat of Liberty, which has now degenerated into licentiousness." The monarch's decisive policy quickly worked wonders; a display of firmness had its consequences. Wilkes found himself sentenced to imprisonment for twenty-two months, fined a thousand pounds, and bound over to keep peace for seven years after his release.

Had the King's policy been adopted from the beginning Wilkes would have been arrested on his arrival in the kingdom, and the rioting incident upon the Middlesex election and the hero's incarceration would never have occurred. When, some months later, Wilkes was expelled from the House of Commons, the proceeding only evoked further testimony on the part of his admirers. He was again re-elected, and the scenes of violence were renewed. Nevertheless we still see George as calm as ever in the glimpses we have given us from

HIS SERENITY UNRUFFLED

time to time by his courtiers. "A lord who was with him," says Lord Holland, "told me that after the great riot at St. James's, or rather in the midst of it, when he came out to the levée, one could not find out, either in his countenance or his conversation, that everything was not as quiet as usual." Would that this mental tranquillity could ever have endured!

It seems almost incredible that Bute's name should still be connected in the minds of the populace with the King; that his name, like the demon of some nursery legend, was still shouted in execration. Not only had the King not beheld his former Minister for three years, but during the Wilkes's agitation Bute was sorely afflicted in body and mind, and contemplating permanent exile from his country. "I will apprise you," he writes to Home, the author of "Douglas," "how to direct to me, as I shall leave my name behind me for these vipers to spread their venom on. For, believe me, of whatever advantage to my health this odious journey may be, I know too well the turn of Faction to suppose my absence is to diminish the violence I have for so many years experienced; and perhaps the more, that I may think I merit a distinguished treatment of a very opposite nature from a people I have served at the risk of my head. I have tried philosophy in vain, my dear Home; I cannot acquire callosity; and were it not for something still nearer to me, still more deeply interesting, I would prefer common necessaries in Bute, France, Italy, nay, Holland, to fifty thousand

GEORGE THE THIRD

pounds a year within the atmosphere of this vile place."¹

Again he writes to Home from Venice: "Near three months of this envenomed sirocco has lain heavy on me, and I am grown such a stripling, or rather a withered old man, that I now appear thin in white clothes that I looked herculean in when I was twenty. I hope I may get better, if permitted to enjoy that peace, that liberty, which is the birthright of the meanest Briton, but which has been long denied me."²

If it was strange for the Bute legend to be current amongst the ignorant masses, how much stranger still was it that after all these years and events many of the Whig nobles still had faith in the same odd phantasy?

Overseas many things were happening to occasion the King the deepest concern. The news from America was depressing. Lord Hillsborough, the Colonial Secretary of State, brought him a long report from Bernard, the Governor of Massachusetts Bay, exhibiting the contumacy of the Assembly of that Province. "As one reads in this period of English history," remarks Mr. Fisher, "how weak, divided, and headless every Ministry was, how bankrupt and disturbed business had become, how violent the excitement and rioting over Wilkes, how incapable the Government was to keep ordinary civil order even in London, one cannot help smiling to think of the opportunities our ancestors had in

¹ Home's *Works*, vol. i, pp. 148-9.

² *Ibid.*, p. 150.

OUTBREAK AT BOSTON

this confusion. There has been no period since then when we could have broken away so easily. Luck was an important factor in the Revolution, and attended us from the beginning to the end." George could not perceive, as no true constitutionalist could perceive then or now, what difference there lay between insubordination or rebellion in his provinces overseas, or his counties in Britain. If they acknowledged, as they had acknowledged repeatedly even in the height and ardour of their protests, the authority of the King, why should not the better interests of the American people be striven for against the demagogues and rioters with as much force and decision as they were being striven for at home?

A sloop belonging to John Hancock, one of the principal merchants, arrived in Boston harbour laden with wine. A tide-waiter was put on board to prevent the cargo from being landed until entered at the custom-house and a permit obtained. The master of the vessel having in vain tampered with the officer, forcibly locked him up in the cabin, landed the wine, and shipped oil from the shore. Information of this violence being given at the custom-house, the collector seized the sloop, and placed it under protection of the *Romney* ship of war, then in harbour. For this the mob on shore then assailed the collector and comptroller of the customs, beat and pelted them with stones; threatened the Commissioners, whom they obliged to seek refuge on board the *Romney*; and, seizing the collector's boat, carried it in triumph, and burned it before

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Hancock's door. The Commissioners applied for protection to the Governor, who referred them to the Legislature. That body would give neither advice nor assistance, and the Commissioners, finding themselves threatened, were driven to seek refuge in a fortress called Castle William, situate on an island at the mouth of the harbour.

A town meeting was called forthwith. But the inhabitants of Boston, espousing Hancock's interest, remonstrated with Governor Bernard upon the seizure of the sloop, and requested him to order the *Romney* to quit the harbour. The Legislature eyeing these proceedings with indifference took no measures to assist the Governor or protect the King's officers.

As a result of all this the law-abiding inhabitants were filled with consternation and alarm. The Governor dissolved the Assembly, and refused to convene a new one without instructions from home.

There was only one way now for the Imperial Government to act, and that was to send troops in aid of the helpless civil powers in Boston.

CHAPTER IX

THE KING IN PRIVATE LIFE

OCCUPIED as George was in the Council Chamber and the royal closet with public affairs, his private life, whether at Buckingham House, Richmond Lodge, Kew, or Windsor, was marked by many episodes, some of them joyous, a few of deep melancholy. Almost alone of his family, Charlotte never gave him a moment's anxiety. His married life on the whole was of unusual felicity. The birth of an heir to the throne went far to atone for the Queen's social shortcomings, for it cannot be gainsaid that to London society Charlotte was a disappointment. The highest expectations had been current at Court of seeing the new reign lit by splendour and gaiety. The young and frivolous desired St. James's to emulate the vivacity and extravagance of Versailles. Dissoluteness was still in fashion; neither Lord Holland nor Lord Chesterfield thought it unbecoming in a father to inculcate immorality or condone gaming and inebriety in their children.

Both too deeply impressed with the evils which were eating out the heart of the nation, and the one too greatly immersed in State business to leave time for frivolity, George and Charlotte had on other

GEORGE THE THIRD

grounds no desire to emulate Versailles. The young King's principles as well as tastes were on the side of dignified quiet and decency. The young Queen, although partaking of the public diversions, and obviously gratified at the pleasure which her presence afforded, delighted more in the tranquil society of her own friends. The "blended dignity and sweetness" with which she went through the formal ceremonies of the Court days, her grace of manner and gentleness of conversation, made, as they truly deserved to make, a favourable impression.

Between their public and private life George and his Queen drew a line. The testimony of many intimates supplies a touching picture of the simplicity of the royal habits and occupations. Scarcely wedded, George was anxious for his Queen to become proficient in the English tongue. None, at first he playfully declared, should teach his Charlotte but himself; yet afterwards he called in a worthy gentleman and scholar, Dr. Majendie, to assist the Queen in her studies. While he was called away daily to read and sign despatches and to confer with Ministers, Charlotte read aloud passages from Shakespeare, Milton, and Addison. Such was the royal pupil's application, that she was soon able to speak fluently and write English not only correctly, but with elegance. Charlotte was that rare creature, a really domestic woman. She was fond of needlework, and took a deep interest in horticulture. She played on the harpsichord, and sang agreeably.

We are told by Miss Burney that the Queen had

A TYPICAL ENGLISH GENTLEMAN

no love for jewels, nor had dress any fascination for her. She admitted that when first she became a queen to adorn herself had not been displeasing to her, but then she was only seventeen, and it was her eyes and not her reason that was dazzled. "She told me with the sweetest grace imaginable," wrote Miss Burney, "how well she had liked at first her jewels and ornaments as Queen; 'but how soon' she cried, 'was that over! Believe me, Miss Burney, it is a pleasure of a week—a fortnight at most—and to return no more. I thought at first I should always choose to wear them; but from the fatigue and trouble of putting them on, and the care they required, and the fear of losing them, believe me, in a fortnight's time I longed again for my own earlier dress, and wished never to see them more!'"¹

George was the typical English gentleman of his time. Not, let us hasten to add, the finicking, frivolous, heartless, three-bottle townman of quality, but the pleasant, God-fearing, self-respecting, amiable country squire. He had a great fund of humour. If he took business seriously, it is because the business of the times demanded seriousness. He was fond of reading, and especially recitation. Music delighted him. He flung himself ardently into outdoor sports, especially riding, cricket, and baseball.² While delighting in a game of cards, George was too

¹ Madame D'Arbly, *Diary and Letters*, vol. i. pp. 202-3.

² It is, by the way, a whimsical fact that to the royal predilection for the game of "rounders" that America owes her national game. It was brought over by a royal governor, who had seen the Prince of Wales darting, flushed and eager, round the "diamond" at Cliveden.

GEORGE THE THIRD

much a witness of the criminal folly of gambling to indulge it. For several reigns it had been the custom to play hazard at Court on 'Twelfth Night. Large sums were staked by or in the presence of the sovereign, and openly changed hands. Dice had been originally used, but they were replaced by cards in the last reign. In 1765 the King issued an order prohibiting gaming in the royal palace under any circumstances whatsoever.

As the public demands on his time increased, that which was left for leisure was welcome indeed to both. Dinner was a simple affair. George's appetite was good. There were plenty of nourishing viands, but no French delicacies. At the beginning of his reign indeed, at St. James's, he not only had a French cook, but even intimated that his palate was capable of discerning a glass of good port. The King's extreme temperance dates from a conversation three or four years later with the Duke of Cumberland, whose unwieldy corpulence distressed both himself and his friends. "Unless your Majesty take care," ran Cumberland's warning, "you will be as fat as I; I would to God I had renounced high living in my youth." George stared at his uncle, but the hint was not lost upon him; from that day he commenced a system of restraint upon his palate. We are even told lest family conviviality should lead him beyond his strict rules of temperance, he long condemned himself to eat alone, of the plainest food and in the smallest quantities. He also increased his indulgence in exercise. Years afterwards somebody commended him for his heroic

THE KING AND ETON

regimen. "No, no," he said, "it is no virtue; I only prefer eating plain and little to growing diseased and infirm!" His daily hours for rising was between six and seven. After dressing he retired to his devotions in a private apartment, where he passed an hour before breakfast.

When the King became a family man, no sooner was breakfast over than the children were brought to him for half-an-hour's diversion, in which some instruction was mingled. It is melancholy to reflect how ill the royal couple were to be repaid for the care and loving attention they lavished upon their children. George took the greatest pains in their education, saying that he believed in bending the twig whilst young; that "it is chiefly owing to the parents, if the children are devoid of proper principles."

George not only took pleasure in his own children, but made himself, before he had been long on the throne, the special lover and patron of school-boys. Few things gave him greater pleasure than a visit to Eton school. Sometimes a tear stood in his eye as he recalled his childhood at Eton. He loved to pat the most diligent pupils on the head, and tell them to grow up good citizens. The lads of Eton repaid his partiality long after George was dead and his grave heaped with malice and disparagement. The King's birthday was, and is, kept religiously at Eton. His memory is turned to there at least with a smile and perchance a sigh.

Nor was this love confined to youngsters of the upper classes alone. He patronised every systematic

GEORGE THE THIRD

effort to feed, clothe, and educate the children of the poor, and this at a time when their education was by no means encouraged by the clergy and politicians of the kingdom. "I hope," said George, "to see the day when every poor child in my dominions will be able to read his Bible." An Edinburgh reviewer could afterwards write, "Thousands of ragged children will pray for him and remember him long after his Majesty is forgotten by every lord of the chamber and by every clerk of the closet."

If at Windsor, after this domestic interlude George commonly saddled his waiting horse, and, no matter what the weather, rode the entire distance between Windsor and Buckingham House. Horses he knew and loved. He spent no little time in the royal stables. "Do you see that horse?" he once remarked to Lord Winchelsea; "I have had him twenty years, and he is good now. Do you know the secret? I will tell it you. I know his worth, and I treat him accordingly." George was an excellent rider, and by all accounts made a handsome figure on horseback.

After his long ride to town he partook of a little refreshment, a cup of tea and bread and butter, which he took standing, glanced over his letters and papers, and perhaps chatted with some of his secretaries. He then entered a sedan chair and was borne to St. James's Palace, there to endure the lengthy tedium of a levée. He never spared himself, but made it a rule to converse with some and to exchange words of recognition with all, no matter how numerous the attendance. The levée being finally

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GEORGE III. AND HIS FAMILY (1770)



HOMELY ANECDOTES

over, the King repaired to the Privy Council or gave an audience to his Ministers in the royal closet. It was five and often six o'clock before he was able to enter his coach and return to a frugal supper at Windsor. "It may be remarked," afterwards wrote Sir Herbert Taylor, "that during many years his Majesty had not any one to assist him in his epistolary communications; nay, not even in what may be called the mechanical parts of it; that in fact he had not recourse to the aid of a private secretary until blindness rendered it indispensable." George was even in the habit of taking copies of his own letters whenever they appeared to him to be of importance.

At Windsor after dinner George went out on the terrace, accompanied generally by one or two of the princes. Here he walked for an hour, stopping and chatting with any one he happened to know. He was always unguarded at Windsor, thereby giving to his subjects liberal credit for that loyalty which a King so benevolent had a right to expect.

How simple were the King's manners was known to all his neighbours. Many are the homely stories told of him. He was wont to wander about the environs of Windsor, accompanied by one or more of his children. On one occasion it is related they met a farmer's cart with a load of hay. The roads were swollen, the cart got in a deep rut, and there it stuck fast. Instantly the King and Prince George went to the farmer's assistance, and after some straining of muscle extricated the vehicle.

GEORGE THE THIRD

Hodge, filled with gratitude, hoped his fellow-farmer would take a glass of ale with him at the next tavern. Laughingly declining the offer, George, on parting, slipped a guinea into the man's hand, which sum was doubled by the young Prince, even at fifteen vastly liberal. The man continued on his way, and related his good luck to the innkeeper, who told him who his benefactors were. But the fellow could not understand why the Prince should give him two guineas and the King only one. George heard of the narration, and was much amused. A week later he chanced to meet his fellow-farmer, and stopping him said: "Well, my friend, I find you were dissatisfied with the smallness of my present, and thought the son more munificent than the father. But remember that I must be just before I am generous. My son has only himself to think about, whilst I have not only to take care of my own family, but to have regard to the welfare of millions, who look to me for that protection which your own children at home expect and demand from you. Go home and be content."

There is still another credible anecdote. Whilst George was in good health it was his custom to go to the mews at Windsor early and pat his favourite horses. One morning his grooms were having a dispute, and they did not notice his presence. "I don't care what you say, Robert," said one, "but every one else agrees that the man at the Three Tuns makes the best purl in Windsor." "Purl, purl," said the King quickly; "Robert, what's purl?" This was explained to be warm beer, with

“ I HAVE NO MORE ”

some gin and spice added. The King listened with attention, and then turning said so that they could all hear, “ I dare say a very good drink ; but, grooms, too strong for the morning. Never drink in a morning.” Nearly eight years after this incident the King went to the stables much earlier than usual, and found only a young lad recently engaged on the premises. “ Boy, boy,” said he, “ where are the grooms ; where are the grooms ? ” “ I don’t know, sir ; but they will soon be back, because they expect the King.” “ Ah, ah,” said he, “ then run, boy, and say, the King expects them ; run, boy, to the ‘ Three Tuns ’ ; they are sure to be there, for the landlord makes the best purl in Windsor.”

It was a successor of this same lad who afterwards narrated another story. Early one morning he met a boy in the stables at Windsor and said : “ Well, boy ! what do you do ? What do they pay you ? ” “ I help in the stable,” said the boy, “ but they only give me victuals and clothes.” “ Be content,” said George, “ I have no more.”

George was occasionally fond of moving about incognito. Once on a tour the King went to look at Salisbury Cathedral, the tower of which was at that time under repair. He was without attendants, and his person, at first, was not recognised. Looking over the book of subscribers, he desired to be put down for £1000. “ What name shall I write, sir ? ” asked the verger. “ Oh ! a gentleman of Berkshire,” replied George, with a grave chuckle.

In town the King rarely missed an evening at the opera. He had not only a good ear for melody,

GEORGE THE THIRD

but a taste for the most classical compositions. "His Majesty's partiality for Handel's music was generally spoken of," says Michael Kelly in his *Reminiscences*, "but I believe it was not universally known what an excellent and correct judge he was of its merits." Almost equally fond was George of the drama. He was as great and discriminating a playgoer as his royal successor Edward VII., and, it may be added, as catholic in his tastes. No point of dialogue or action appeared to escape him, and the laughter and applause which proceeded from the royal box coincided with the responsiveness of the intelligent pit. Garrick and Mrs. Siddons were both in turn frequently at Buckingham House or Windsor, where they entertained the royal circle with the recital of plays or poetry.

Of the mode of life of the royal couple perhaps the best picture is to be found in a diary of Dr. Beattie, narrating his introduction at Kew. On an August day in 1773, Beattie set out for Dr. Majendie's at Kew Green. "The doctor told me," he writes, "that he had not seen the King yesterday, but had left a note in writing to intimate that I was to be at his house to-day; and that one of the King's pages had come to him this morning to say, 'That his Majesty would see me a little after twelve.' At twelve the doctor and I went to the King's house at Kew. We had only been a few minutes in the hall when the King and Queen came in from an airing; and as they passed through the hall, the King called me by name, and asked how long it was since I came from town. I answered

DR. BEATTIE'S NARRATIVE

him, 'About an hour.' 'I shall see you,' says he, 'in a little while.'

"The doctor and I waited a considerable time, for the King was busy, and then we were called into a large room, furnished as a library, where the King was walking about, and the Queen sitting in a chair. We were received in the most gracious manner possible by both their Majesties. I had the honour of a conversation with them, nobody else being present but Dr. Majendie, for upwards of an hour on a great variety of topics, in which both the King and Queen joined, with a degree of cheerfulness, affability, and ease that was to me surprising, and soon dissipated the embarrassment which I felt at the beginning of the conference. They both complimented me in the highest terms on my Essay, which they said was a book they always kept by them; and the King said he had one copy of it at Kew, and another in town, and immediately went and took it from a shelf. I found it was the second edition. 'I never stole a book but once,' said his Majesty, 'and that was yours' (speaking to me): 'I stole it from the Queen, to give it to Lord Hertford to read.' He had heard that the sale of Hume's Essays had failed since my book was published; and I told him what Mr. Strahan had told me in regard to that matter. He had even heard of my being at Edinburgh last summer, and how Mr. Hume was offended on the score of my book. He asked many questions about the second part of the Essay, and when it would be ready for the press. He asked how long I had

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been composing my Essay, praised the caution with which it was written, and said that he did not wonder that it had employed me five or six years. He asked about my Poems. We had much conversation on moral subjects. This brought on some discourse about Quakers, whose moderation and mild behaviour the King and Queen commended. I was asked many questions about the Scots universities, the revenues of the Scots clergy, their mode of praying and preaching, the medical college of Edinburgh, Dr. Gregory, and Dr. Cullen; the length of our vacation at Aberdeen, and the closeness of our attendance during the winter; the number of students that attend my lectures, my mode of lecturing, whether from notes or completely written lectures; about Mr. Hume, and Dr. Robertson, and Lord Kiinnoul, and the Archbishop of York, &c. His Majesty asked what I thought of my new acquaintance, Lord Dartmouth? I said there was something in his air and manner which I thought not only agreable, but enchanting, and that he seemed to me to be one of the best of men; a sentiment in which both their Majesties heartily joined. 'They say that Lord Dartmouth is an enthusiast,' said the King; 'but surely he says nothing on the subject of religion, but what every Christian may and ought to say.'

"He asked whether I did not think the English language on the decline at present? I answered in the affirmative; and the King agreed, and named the *Spectator* as one of the best standards of the language. When I told him that the Scots clergy

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sometimes prayed a quarter, or even half-an-hour at a time, he asked whether that did not lead them into repetitions? I said it often did. 'That,' said he, 'I don't like in prayers; and excellent as our Liturgy is, I think it somewhat faulty in that respect.' 'Your Majesty knows,' said I, 'that three services are joined in one in the ordinary Church Service, which is one cause of these repetitions.' 'True,' he replied; 'and that circumstance also makes the service too long.' From this he took occasion to speak of the composition of the Church Liturgy, on which he very justly bestowed the highest commendation. 'Observe,' his Majesty said, 'how flat these occasional prayers are, that are now composed, in comparison with the old ones.' When I mentioned the smallness of the Church livings in Scotland, he said, 'He wondered how men of liberal education would choose to become clergymen there'; and asked, 'Whether, in the remote parts of the country, the clergy in general were not very ignorant?' I answered, 'No; for that education was cheap in Scotland, and that the clergy in general were men of good sense and competent learning.' He asked whether we had any good preachers in Aberdeen? I said, 'Yes,' and named Campbell and Gerard; with whose names, however, I did not find that he was acquainted. Dr. Majendie mentioned Dr. Oswald's Appeal with commendation; I praised it too; and the Queen took down the name with a view to send for it. I was asked whether I knew Dr. Oswald? I answered, I did not; and said that my book was published before I read his; that Dr. Oswald was

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well known to Lord Kinnoul, who had often proposed to make us acquainted. We discussed a great many other topics, for the conversation lasted upwards of an hour. The Queen bore a large share in it. Both the King and her Majesty showed a great deal of good sense, acuteness, and knowledge, as well as of good-nature and affability. At last the King took out his watch (for it was now almost three o'clock, his hour of dinner), which Dr. Majendie and I took as a signal to withdraw. We accordingly bowed to their Majesties, and I addressed the King in these words: 'I hope, sir, your Majesty will pardon me if I take this opportunity to return you my humble and most grateful acknowledgments for the honour you have been pleased to confer upon me.' He immediately answered, 'I think I could do no less for a man who has done so much service for the cause of Christianity: I shall always be glad of an opportunity to show the good opinion I have of you.'

"The Queen sat all the while, and the King stood, sometimes walking about a little. Her Majesty speaks the English language with surprising elegance, and little or nothing of a foreign manner; so that if she were only of the rank of a private gentlewoman, one could not help taking notice of her as one of the most agreeable women in the world. Her face is much more pleasing than any of her pictures; and in the expression of her eyes, and in her smile, there is something peculiarly engaging."¹

That the King treated all his subjects, even upon

¹ Sir W. Forbes' *Life of Beattie*, i. 347-51.

“ WE LIKE POWER ”

Court occasions, with familiarity is further shown by an anecdote of Mr. Boulton, an engineer of Soho, near Birmingham. He was a man of the world, and went sometimes to Court, where he was always noticed by the King. At one of the levées the King said, “ Well, Mr. Boulton, I am glad to see you. What new project have you got now? I know you are always at something new.” “ I am,” said Mr. Boulton, “ manufacturing a new article that kings are very fond of.” “ Ay, ay, Mr. Boulton, what’s that?” “ It is power, may it please your Majesty.” “ Power! Mr. Boulton; we like power, that’s true: but what do you mean?” “ Why, sir, I mean the power of steam to move machines.” George did not disdain to laugh at the small jest, saying, “ Very good, very good; go on, go on!”

CHAPTER X

DOMESTIC TRIALS

GEORGE not only read omnivorously, but with great taste and judgment. The plays of Shakespeare were perhaps his favourite reading, and he frequently referred to the bard as the greatest ornament of British literature. True, as he hinted to one of his courtiers, in anticipation of one of our most advanced present-day critics, Shakespeare contains "much sorry stuff! Only," he added humorously, "one must not say so."

He was intent on amassing a large library. One of the early incidents of his reign which gave him no little pain was the discovery that his mother had, as the only mark of gratitude to Lord Bute within her power, presented him with the Prince of Wales's collection of books, for which she had no use. The Princess Dowager did not possess any testamentary right to make the gift. When the Earl was informed of the displeasure which George had expressed on the loss of the library, he requested immediate permission to restore it. "No, no," exclaimed the King, "that would be committing my mother. The act is done, and I will not be the first to proclaim to the world that she has done anything wrong."

INTERVIEW WITH DR. JOHNSON

When he granted a pension to Samuel Johnson, George had read only "Rasselas." "We must now, my dear," he said to his wife, "read all the doctor's works." His granting a pension to Rousseau, who had taken shelter in England from his enemies at home, was a tribute to the author of the excellent "Émile." Some anxiety lest the award of this pension should appear like giving countenance to the tenets of an infidel possessed him, for he insisted that the circumstance should not be made public.

As to Dr. Johnson, when George was informed that the author of "Rasselas" occasionally visited the royal library for the purpose of research, he instructed the librarian to tell him when the doctor came again, as he should like to have the pleasure of some talk with him. The doctor duly came, and the King being informed, royalty at once repaired to pay its respects to genius. Johnson, we are told by Boswell, on being told that the King was in the room, started up and stood still. Boswell relates faithfully the interview. George, after the usual compliments, asked some questions about the libraries of Oxford, where the doctor had lately been, and inquired if he was then engaged in any literary undertaking. Johnson replied in the negative; adding, that he had pretty well told the world what he knew, and must now read to acquire more knowledge. "I do not think," remarked the King, "you borrow much from anybody." Johnson said he thought he had already done his part as a writer. "I should have thought so too," said his

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Majesty, "if you had not written so well." The King having observed that he supposed he must have read a great deal, Johnson answered that he had not read much compared with Dr. Warburton. On this the King said, that "He had heard Dr. Warburton was a man of such general knowledge, that you could scarce talk with him on any subject on which he was not qualified to speak; and that his learning resembled Garrick's acting in its universality." The King mentioned the controversy between the rival scholars, Warburton and Lowth, and asked Johnson what he thought of it. Johnson answered, "Warburton has most general — most scholastic learning; Lowth is the more correct scholar: I do not know which of them calls names best." The King was pleased to say he was of the same opinion; adding, "You do not think then, Dr. Johnson, there was much argument in the case?" Johnson said, he did not think there was. "Why truly," said George, "when once it comes to calling names, argument is pretty well at an end."

His Majesty next asked him what he thought of Lord Lyttelton's History, which was then just published. Johnson said, he thought his style pretty good, but that he had blamed King Henry too much. "Why," said the King, "they seldom do these things by halves." "No, sir," answered Johnson, "not to kings." But fearing to be misunderstood, he added, "That for those who spoke worse of kings than they deserved, he could find no excuse; but that he could more easily conceive

THE SAGE'S OPINIONS

how some might speak better of them than they deserved, without any ill intention; for as kings had much in their power to give, those who were favoured by them would frequently, from gratitude, exaggerate their praises; and as this proceeded from a good motive, it was certainly excusable, as far as error could be excusable." We suspect the King must have smiled gravely at this. He asked the great scholar what he thought of Dr. Hill. Johnson answered, that he was an ingenious man, but had no veracity; and immediately mentioned as an instance of it an assertion of that writer, that he had seen objects magnified to a much greater degree by using three or four microscopes at a time, than by using one. "Now," added Johnson, "every one acquainted with microscopes knows that the more of them he looks through, the less the object will appear." "Why," replied the King, "this is not telling an untruth, but telling it clumsily; for if that be the case, every one who can look through a microscope will be able to detect him." But that he might not leave an unfavourable impression against an absent man, the doctor added, that "Dr. Hill was, notwithstanding, a very curious observer; and if he would have been contented to tell the world no more than he knew, he might have been a very considerable man, and needed not to have recourse to such mean expedients to raise his reputation." The King then talked of literary journals, mentioned particularly the *Journal des Sçavans*, and asked Johnson if it was well done. Johnson said it was formerly well done, and gave some account

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of the persons who began and carried it on for some years; enlarging at the same time on the nature and use of such works. The King asked him if it was well done now. Johnson answered, he had no reason to think it was. After discussing the British literary journals, such as the Monthly and Critical Reviews, Johnson said that the Monthly Review was done with the most care, the Critical upon the best principles; adding, that the authors of the former were hostile to the Church. This the King said he was sorry to hear.

The conversation next turned on the *Philosophical Transactions*, when Johnson observed that the Royal Society had now a better method of arranging their materials than formerly. "Ay," said the King, "they are obliged to Dr. Johnson for that," for his Majesty remembered a circumstance which Johnson himself had forgotten. He expressed a desire to have the literary biography of this country ably executed, and proposed to Johnson to undertake it; and with this wish, so graciously expressed, Johnson readily complied, and soon afterwards took his leave. Johnson was a man of rugged wit and strong judgment. The titles and the trappings of royalty were not likely to dazzle him.

"Sir," he said afterwards—"sir, they may talk of the King as they will, but he is the finest gentleman I have ever seen!" George's manners and understanding appear to have greatly impressed him. As to George's opinion of the doctor, once when the works of Hume, and other writers of the same stamp, occasioned considerable noise, the King, always

LITERARY ORDER PROPOSED

impatient of atheists, remarked felicitously, "Now I wish Johnson would mount his drayhorse and ride over those fellows."

The noble library at Buckingham House appears to have been open, not exclusively to Dr. Johnson, but to every recognised man of literature of the day. Even the Socinian Priestley was, with singular liberality, not refused admission. "If Dr. Priestley," wrote George to Lord North in February 1779, "applies to my librarian, he will have permission to see the library, as other men of science have had; but I cannot think his character as a politician or divine deserves my appearing at all in it."

Such was George's zeal for literature and literary merit that in 1773 he proposed to institute a new order of knighthood, called the Order of Minerva. It was to consist of twenty-four knights and the sovereign, and to rank next to the military order of the Bath. The knights were to wear a silver star of nine points, and a straw-coloured ribbon from the right shoulder to the left. A figure of Minerva was to have been embroidered in the centre of the star, with the motto, "Omnia posthabita Scientiæ." It is said that the literati were so certain that this new order would be adopted, that there was even some disagreement between the self-elected candidates for the honour. George did not, however, carry his proposition into execution, perhaps because he feared the jealousy which would arise, and which would render the institution an evil rather than a benefit, particularly just at that time when party politics ran so high.

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To the King it was owing that the professorship of history at Oxford, which had hitherto been a sinecure, was made a resident appointment. "His Majesty was also aware," says Huish, "that in the various departments of literature, history was at this time the least studied. The taste of the age, as far as books were concerned, was frivolous in the extreme; and, although there were some stars of the first magnitude shining in the hemisphere of literature, yet their splendour could not penetrate the gloom which hung over the nation, the genius of which appeared to be diverted into a track by no means natural to it." It was his expressed opinion that "without a correct knowledge of that science, the character of neither the statesman nor the politician can be considered as perfect." He therefore ordered that a course of lectures should be regularly transmitted to him for his perusal and approbation.

Upon being a patron of the fine arts, and especially painting, George also prided himself, and certainly he had not been long on the throne before painting and sculpture began to flourish. In 1769 was established the Royal Academy, of which the King always gloried in being the founder. He gave the Academy magnificent apartments at Somerset House, and was much concerned when Barry (who painted the great room of the Society of Arts) incurred the displeasure of the academicians by his public criticism of the main design of the buildings of Somerset House, taking sides with Sir William Chambers, who was his first architect, against Barry. He used to devote several hours to

AS ART PATRON

his annual view of the exhibition. "Though he asked the opinions of the attendant artists," says Huish, "yet in his accustomed rapid manner was generally pretty free in his own remarks. He always manifested his patriotic feeling at the proofs of rising native talents, exclaiming 'Clever artist!' 'Promising young man, this!' &c. Sir Joshua Reynolds was an immense favourite with him. Afterwards there succeeded Benjamin West, whom he employed oftener. With this eminent artist he allowed his kingly dignity to lose itself in long and familiar chit-chat; but, as in all such cases, he could resume it at once if occasion seemed to require it. He had a strong fancy for portraits. 'Though he bought a good many pictures, he was ever far enough from expending improvident sums for them.'" Besides Allan Ramsay, George patronised Northcote, Zoffany, Gainsborough, and Romney. 'There is a whole-length of the King in one of the state rooms, habited in his parliament robes, which he thought a good likeness, and generally asked his visitors to look at. Altogether there was a fine royal collection at Windsor, Buckingham House, and Hampton Court; some good portraits at Kensington; but there were fewer works of the highest merit, and those in the Court Chamber at St. James's. 'The King patronised the valuable improvements of Jarvis and others in the beautiful art of painting glass windows.

Mention has been made of the pension to Rousseau, but it was not the only instance of George's toleration which he extended to religious

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matters whenever toleration did not appear to him to be inconsistent with his coronation oath. Once his carriage was stopped by a crowd, whom he was told were objecting to the Methodists. "The Methodists," he said aloud, "are a quiet and good kind of people, and will disturb nobody. If I can learn that any persons in my employment disturb them, they shall be instantly dismissed." He gave a thousand pounds to the Dissenting Ministers in Nova Scotia, and also subscribed a large sum for building a German Lutheran Church in the Savoy. Once a Bishop complained to George of the Dissenters and the great disturbance they were making in his diocese. The King immediately interrupted him with the remark, "Make Bishops of them, my Lord, make Bishops of them!" "But," was the reply, "we cannot make a Bishop of Lady Huntingdon." "Well, well," quoth George, "but see if you cannot imitate the zeal of these people. I wish there was a Lady Huntingdon in every diocese of my kingdom."¹ The day came when that zealous and excellent female sectarian became known personally to her sovereign. "I have been told," said George, "so many odd things of your ladyship, that I am free to confess I felt a great degree of curiosity to see if you were at all like other women." He added, however, "I am happy in having an opportunity of assuring your ladyship of the very good opinion I have of you, your zeal, and abilities, which cannot be consecrated to a more noble purpose." If the King was pleased

¹ *Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon*, vol. ii. p. 282.

REBUKING AN ARCHBISHOP

with the Countess of Huntingdon, she seems to have been no less satisfied with her reception by the Head of the Church. "We discussed," she writes, "a great many topics, for the conversation lasted upwards of an hour without intermission. The Queen spoke a good deal, asked many questions, and before I retired insisted on my taking some refreshment. On parting I was permitted to kiss their Majesties' hands, and when I returned my humble and most grateful acknowledgments for their very great condescension, their Majesties immediately assured me they felt both gratified and pleased with the interview, which they were so obliging as to wish might be renewed." Two years afterwards, when a lady of high rank, adopting the fashionable jargon of the day, sneered at this admirable woman as a mere wild enthusiast, the King at once undertook her defence. "Are you acquainted with Lady Huntingdon?" he good-humouredly asked. "No," was the reply. "Have you ever been in company with her?" "Never." "Then," said the King, "never form your opinion of any one from the ill-natured remarks and censures of others. Judge for yourself; and you have my leave to tell anybody how highly I think of Lady Huntingdon."¹

The prime motive of the interview which the aristocratic zealot sought was to induce her sovereign to reprove no less a personage than the Primate. It appears that Dr. Cornwallis was so infected with the spirit of levity which characterised the times that he

¹ *Ibid.*

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became unduly indulgent in his official conduct, as may be seen by the following letter which George addressed to him:—

“MY GOOD LORD PRELATE,—I could not delay giving you the notification of the grief and concern with which my breast was affected at receiving an authentic information that routs have made their way into your palace. At the same time I must signify to you my sentiments on this subject, which hold these levities and vain dissipations as utterly inexpedient, if not unlawful, to pass in a residence for many centuries devoted to divine studies, religious retirements, and the extensive exercise of charity and benevolence—I add, in a place where so many of your predecessors have led their lives in such sanctity, as has thrown lustre upon the pure religion they professed and adorned.

“From the dissatisfaction with which you must perceive I behold these improprieties, not to speak in harsher terms, and still more pious principles, I trust you will suppress them immediately; so that I may not have occasion to show any further marks of my displeasure, or to interpose in a different manner. May God take your Grace into His almighty protection!”

If the pranks and vagaries of his children¹ did

¹ Besides the Prince of Wales, the King was parent of Frederick, Bishop of Osnaburg, afterwards Duke of York, born 16th August 1763; William Henry, Duke of Clarence, born 22nd August 1765; Charlotte Augusta Matilda, Duchess of Würtemberg, born 29th September 1766; Prince Edward, Duke of Kent, born 2nd November 1767; the Princess Augusta Sophia, born 8th November 1768. But his quiver was scarce yet half full.

DOMESTIC AFFLICTIONS

not at present cause him anxiety, yet George had not been long on the throne before he began to taste domestic affliction. The death of his uncle, the Duke of Cumberland, deeply affected him.

In December 1765 George's youngest brother, Prince Frederick William, a most promising youth, died at the age of fifteen, and in September 1767 Prince Edward Augustus, Duke of York, who had shown excellent parts as a sailor, passed away at the age of twenty-eight. George had recently become estranged from his brother, owing to the latter's dissolute behaviour. "The papers," writes Mary Townshend, "are full of pathetic accounts of the Duke of York's death. He wrote a letter to the King, expressing great uneasiness at their having parted on such terms, which I hear the King was very much moved at reading."

Of George's numerous brothers and sisters, the eldest was the Princess Augusta, who united to a comely person a somewhat *difficile* character. She even ventured to rally her royal brother on his political prejudices and partialities. Her sallies had more than once embarrassed the King, and he was intensely relieved when a husband was found for her in Prince Charles of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, an elder brother of the lady formerly destined for himself. All seemed to have regarded the match as eminently suitable. George's only complaint was that the Prince had far exceeded his bride in the imprudence of his comments on England, English politics and politicians. He did his best to overlook the Prince's amazing indiscretions when he came in

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person to claim the Princess's hand. Prince Charles actually visited Pitt at Hayes, which established him in great popularity with the Opposition. Two days after their marriage in July 1764, when the royal family attended Covent Garden Theatre, the King and Queen were received almost in silence, while the appearance of the Prince and Princess was the signal for tumultuous applause. Charles and his bride smiled approbation. Too many instances of this sort took place, showing the inclination of Brunswick to play to the gallery. George was naturally much relieved when his churlish brother-in-law departed.

But the love he bore his sister made him receive with pain the news, which soon came to hand, of her wedded life. The Prince was dissolute and unfaithful. Their place at Brunswick, wrote Rigby to the Duke of Bedford, "is a miserable, wooden house, poorly furnished, and Brunswick one of the worst towns even in Germany." After eighteen months of unhappiness the Duchess seized an opportunity of returning for a few months' holiday in England. George had often to listen to bitter regrets from his sister at the match which the Princess Dowager had made for her.

Unhappy as was the fate of the eldest it was mild indeed compared with that of another sister, Caroline Matilda, a really graceful and amiable girl. She was only sixteen in 1766 when she was married by proxy in the royal chapel of St. James's to Christian VII. of Denmark. Only too plain was it that the match was against her own wishes, that she left her

A DANISH BROTHER-IN-LAW

native country with obvious reluctance. It was soon an open secret that her marriage was unfortunate. A couple of years later Christian paid his royal brother-in-law a visit. Christian's character, although he was but one-and-twenty years of age, was coarse and profligate, and George did not expect any more pleasure from his sojourn in England than he had from his other brother-in-law. He well knew, however, that if he failed in any attentions to Denmark's youthful sovereign, the Opposition would be sure to make capital of it. He wrote therefore to the Secretary, Lord Weymouth, that he was desirous of making his royal guest's stay as agreeable as possible. "I therefore wish to be thoroughly apprised of the mode in which he chooses to be treated, that I may exactly conform to it. This will throw whatever may displease the King of Denmark, during his stay here, on his shoulders, and consequently free me from that *désagrément*; but you know very well that the whole of it is very disagreeable to me."

What George apprehended really happened. The patent fact that there was, and could be, no real love between the monarchs, was quite sufficient for Opposition to make the Danish King, as they had done the Brunswick Duke, a popular hero. George heard with anger and contempt that his brother-in-law spent his time frolicking in the stews and pot-houses of St. Giles's, and that his entourage was compounded of knaves and sycophants. Christian quietly took his departure, with the worst yet to come. A royal tragedy was already shaping, a

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tragedy one of the most famous, as it is one of the most heartrending, in the history of the century.

On his return to Denmark Christian's irregularities continued. To such a mental and physical state did he finally reduce himself that Caroline threw off all prudence and entered into a plot, almost openly throwing herself into the arms of an adventurer named Struensee. This individual, young and handsome, had been formerly a court physician, whose talents had raised him into the position of Danish Prime Minister. A public scandal was the result, followed by a plan on the part of the Queen Dowager to seize both the Queen and Struensee. A masquerade had been held at Copenhagen; the dancers had retired to their apartments when the plot was put into instant execution by soldiers acting under the Queen Dowager's commands. Struensee was flung into a dungeon, and the wretched Queen, bearing her infant daughter in her arms, was hurried to the castle of Cronenburg, where for the next four months she was immured. Her husband, a helpless tool in the hands of the revolutionary faction, wrote to George merely to say that his sister Caroline Matilda had behaved in a manner which obliged him to imprison her, but that out of regard to his Majesty her life should be safe.

The charges brought against his sister bowed George down with mingled shame and grief. He was advised that in all probability, unless his Government interfered, the erring Queen's life was in danger. Her paramour, Struensee, together with

TRAGEDY OF CAROLINE MATILDA

his companion and friend Brandt, had been beheaded with accompaniments of odious barbarity. Not unlikely the Queen would have shared the same fate had not a strong British squadron been despatched to the Baltic, which, together with the representations of Sir Robert Keith, the British Minister, induced the Danish revolutionaries to consent to her surrender.

The parting with her infant caused the unhappy Caroline the most dreadful pangs. "After bestowing repeated caresses upon this darling object of affection," wrote Archdeacon Coxe, "she retired to the vessel in an agony of despair. She remained on deck, her eyes immovably directed towards the palace of Cronenburg, which contained the child which had been her only comfort so long, until darkness intercepted the view."¹ Under British escort the miserable Queen was conveyed to Hanover, where the castle of Zell was got ready for her occupancy by her brother's orders. Here, surrounded by a small and devoted court, she spent three years of captivity, and died in May 1775, but twenty-three years of age. On her deathbed she sent for the pastor of the French Protestant Church at Zell, and said to him solemnly: "I am about to appear before God; I now protest that I am innocent of the crimes imputed against me, and that I was never faithless to my husband." It is said that she also in her dying hours wrote to her brother King George protesting her innocence, and such a letter has been published by one of her biographers, but Jesse's

¹ Coxe's *Travels*, vol. v. p. 113.

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investigations seem to render it extremely improbable that such a letter was ever written.

The whole episode shocked and afflicted George deeply. At the same time, he loved his sister too dearly to accept fully the story of her follies and infidelities. Not daring to trust himself to write to her, he planned a journey to Hanover for the purpose of hearing her defence from her own lips, with the public excuse that he went to take formal possession of his Electoral dominions. The state of the political world in Britain, however, forced him to relinquish this design, and he was destined never to execute it.

In May 1768 the career of the King's third sister, the Princess Louisa Anne, was terminated by death. Although nineteen years of age, she was of so delicate a constitution that she seemed many years younger. Her sweet disposition and chronic ill-health had endeared her to George. When he heard that death had put an end to her sufferings, he shut himself up for a whole day in his own room at Kew and gave way to silent sorrow.

A still further source of wretchedness to the King later was the conduct of Ernest Augustus, afterwards Duke of Cumberland. This brother became involved in a scandalous connection with Lady Grosvenor, and being dragged into court by the lady's husband on the charge of adultery, had to pay £10,000 damages. The King was much upset. "My brothers," he wrote to Lord North, "have this day applied about paying the Duke of Cumberland's damages and costs, which if not paid this day se'night

DEATH OF HIS MOTHER

the proctors will certainly force the house, which in these licentious times will cast reflection on the rest of the family. Whatever can be done, ought to be done." The affair cost him £13,000 out of the Privy Purse. It had scarce subsided when the Duke of Cumberland, who was nothing if not fickle, proceeded clandestinely to lead to the altar the pretty widow of a Derbyshire gentleman named Horton. This was another blow to the King, but, as we shall see, still others were in store.

In 1772 the Princess Dowager, the King's mother, died at the age of fifty-three. In the midst of her illness Augusta had been sorely afflicted by the sorrows and scandals which had overtaken her family. She had borne with pride and dignity all the base insinuations launched for many years by her cavillers and libellers; but the libertinism of her son Prince Henry, and his subsequent imprudent marriage, the disgrace and deposition of her youngest daughter, the Danish Queen, preyed on her mind and hastened her death. Even in her long and agonising illness the Princess Dowager's fortitude was remarkable. Although subject to frequent fainting spells, which were momentary respites from great agony, and she was frequently thought to have expired, yet she would not confess her illness even to her children.

George was unremitting in his devotion to his mother from the moment he learnt of her condition. Every day saw him by her side. Augusta, even in the midst of her agony, played the heroic but imprudent part. Regularly she rose and dressed

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herself, and on the very evening before her death detained her son and her daughter-in-law for no less than four hours. When they left her she remarked gaily she was sure she would pass a tranquil night. By daybreak next morning the physician was summoned hastily to her side. Augusta saw in his face that her end was now drawing near. "How long may I live?" she murmured, and then added, "it is no matter, for I have nothing to say, nothing to do, and nothing to leave." The last turned out to be true, for out of her income she had not only paid all her husband's large debts, but spent £10,000 a year on charities. Many mourned the loss of a benefactress. To-day the city of Augusta, in Georgia, is almost the sole memorial of this virtuous, brave, and pious woman's career.

Further distress was the Princess Dowager spared by dying ignorant of a second clandestine marriage in the royal family. William Henry, Duke of Gloucester, wedded Maria, the natural daughter of Sir Edward Walpole and widow of Lord Waldegrave. William Henry was George's favourite brother, and there were some points of resemblance in character between them. The lady who captured his affections had not only a handsome person, but had many endearing and engaging traits, and she was very ambitious. When Waldegrave, who was old enough to be her father, left her a widow, she received an offer from the Duke of Portland, regarded as, apart from the princes of the blood royal, the best match in Britain. Yet the mother of Lady Waldegrave had begun her career as a milliner!

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AUGUSTA, PRINCESS OF WALES

(From the Portrait by Zincke)



HIS BROTHER'S MÉSALLIANCE

For a long time the connection between the Duke of Gloucester and Horace Walpole's niece was regarded merely as a youthful infatuation, which would lead to nothing serious. Not until June 1772 was it proclaimed to the world that their actual marriage had taken place nearly six years before. The King on receiving the letter from his brother recognised at once that the issue of this union must necessarily come within the line of royal succession, and consequently deputed the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chancellor, and the Bishop of London to inquire into the validity of the ceremony, and to cause all the corroborative evidence they could collect to be entered on the books of the Privy Council. It appeared that there had been no witnesses at the marriage, but, according to the custom of that time, the solemn affirmation of the wedded parties made before trustworthy witnesses was considered as sufficient evidence that a marriage had taken place. Such testimony was forthcoming, and although there were many who doubted the fact, yet George was convinced of the legality of the union. But he was too angry to consent to any immediate reconciliation. "I cannot deny," he wrote to Lord North, "that on the subject of this Duke my heart is wounded: I have ever loved him with the fondness one bears to a child." He alluded to his brother's marriage as a "highly disgraceful step," and as to the Duchess, "I never can think of placing her in a situation to answer her extreme pride and vanity."

In his opinion his weak, good-natured brother

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had been entrapped into the marriage by an ambitious widow several years older than himself and the mother of three children. He thought that by receiving her at Court and so countenancing a *mésalliance* he would "be affronting all the sovereigns of Europe." Nevertheless a reconciliation ultimately took place; George relented, and many years afterwards we find him regarding his brother and his wife, as well as their two children, Prince William and Princess Sophia, with much generosity and even affection.

George was not vindictive: his displeasure and his dislikes were vehement while they lasted, but they could never, in a warm nature such as his, be inveterate.

CHAPTER XI

NORTH BECOMES PRIME MINISTER

THOUGH one of the very ablest politicians of his time, Shelburne, afterwards Prime Minister and the first Lord Lansdowne, was a difficult and perverse colleague. So objectionable had he made himself to the Cabinet, that his resignation in October 1768 was received with approval. On the heels of this Chatham wrote to Grafton, that his weak and broken state of health continued to make him so entirely useless to the King's service that he begged George would permit him to resign.

"May I be allowed, at the same time," he added, "to offer to his Majesty my deepest sense of his Majesty's long, most humane, and most gracious indulgence towards me, and to express my ardent prayers for his Majesty." George felt the time most unpropitious for Chatham's nominal retirement. Chatham was ill, but the public did not know how ill, and his name was still potent. "As you entered," he wrote to Chatham, "upon the employment in August 1766 at my own requisition, I think I have a right to *insist* on your remaining in my service; for I with pleasure look forward to the time of your recovery, when I may have your assistance in resisting the torrent of factions this country so much labours

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under." But Chatham was obdurate. He felt, he said, all chances of recovery would be entirely precluded by his holding any longer the Privy Seal. At present he was totally disabled. Under these circumstances the Privy Seal was given to Lord Bristol.

For the next fifteen years American affairs were to engage the attention of the King and his Ministers. Hillsborough, the Colonial Secretary, despatched two regiments, which reached Boston in January 1769, where for a time their presence had a salutary effect in maintaining order. The customs officers resumed their duties, and business followed its usual channels. But although both in Massachusetts and New York the flame of treason was stifled, yet the Committees of Correspondence, which had been established, continued to fan the smouldering embers.

In the animated discussions which took place in Parliament at the beginning of 1769, Governor Pownall, who had filled offices in America, and posed as an authority on American affairs, undertook to defend the proceedings of the Colonists. He admitted that a Convention of States would have been treasonable, but that a Convention of Committees was permissible, and indeed highly commendable. Great were the resources of the Americans and the facilities with which they could obtain all supplies without applying to Britain. "Do nothing," said Pownall, "which may bring into discussion questions of right, which must become mere articles of faith. Go into no innovations in practice, and suffer no encroachments on govern-

POWNALL'S ADVICE

ment. Extend not the power which you have of imposing taxes to the laying internal taxes on the Colonies. Continue to exercise the power, which you have already exercised, of controlling their subsidies, imposts and duties, but do so with prudence and moderation, and directed by the spirit of commercial wisdom. This spirit and mode of government will cement again that union which is shattered, if not quite broken; restore that spirit of obedience which the loss of authority on the one hand, and of affection on the other, hath interrupted; and re-establish the authority as well as force of civil government, which has almost lost its force by losing its authority. Exert the spirit of policy that you may not ruin the Colonies and yourselves by exertions of force."¹

This was all very well theoretically, but civil authority had to be maintained. The civil authority in the Colonies was wholly unequal to the task of bringing offenders to punishment, and some effectual plan must be resorted to. Juries would not convict, no verdict against a rioter could be secured. Bedford suggested applying to Massachusetts an old statute of Henry VIII.'s reign, by which offenders outside the kingdom were liable to be brought to England for trial. But the shilly-shallying of the Government became revealed. They did not really propose to revive the statute; no intention was entertained to put the Act into execution. The proposal had merely been made to frighten the Americans, merely to show them what Government

¹ *Parliamentary History*, xvi. 506-7.

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could do on an emergency. Such empty threats very naturally angered the insurgents. To George, this sort of behaviour was obnoxious and incomprehensible; threats and vamping he despised. Was this the "candour and temper" which he had recommended? As Grenville said during a debate, "There was no medium; we must either resolve strictly to execute the Revenue Laws in America, or with a good grace abandon our right and repeal the Declaratory and Revenue Laws." The Colonists denied all right of taxation and all authority of Parliament. Both right and authority King George and the people of Britain were resolved to maintain.

Yet the Ministry went on bringing in Bills further to conciliate the recalcitrant Americans. Were the King's transatlantic subjects still dissatisfied? All the new duties, except that on tea, would be abolished. Grafton and Conway would have surrendered even tea, but knowing George's objection to the whole principle of repeal, North, Weymouth, and others thought to propitiate their sovereign by maintaining the tea duty as a proof of Britain's right to tax the Colonies.¹ As Governor Bernard was not *persona grata* to Massachusetts, he was recalled, and Hutchinson, a native American, appointed in his place. As Boston had resented troops being quartered upon them, one of the

¹ In its amount, namely, threepence a pound, the tea duty was not a grievance, for the duty of one shilling paid in England was returned on re-exportation, so that the Americans could buy their tea ninepence per pound cheaper than in England.—Hunt, *Political History of England*, p. 90.

THE KING'S DEBTS

regiments was forthwith removed. Thus did the Ministry strengthen the spirit of resistance and bring the Empire into contempt. Its refusal to make its concessions complete was due to the King. A complete surrender would have humiliated his realm and himself in the eyes of the world. "Whether," it has been wisely said, "such humiliation, surely not tamely to be accepted by a great nation, would in the end have prevented the Americans from finding cause for quarrel and separation may possibly be matter for discussion. It is certainly not so with the policy of the Ministers, that, if it can be called a policy at all, was clearly the worst they could have adopted."¹

While George's constitutional advisers paltered, the first of a long series of Crown debts was submitted to Parliament. These debts had been discussed as if the King were personally responsible for them. As a matter of fact no monarch was ever more frugal or more careful of expenditure. He objected to the payment of even the smallest sum if a satisfactory official explanation were not forth-

¹ *Political History of England*, p. 91. An American correspondent, writing as far back as January 1766, makes this significant observation: "A certain sect of people, if I may judge from their late conduct, seem to look on this as a favourable opportunity of establishing their Republican principles, and of throwing off all connection with their mother-country. Many of their publications justify the thought. Besides, I have other reasons to think that they are not only forming a private union among themselves from one end of the continent to the other, but endeavouring also to bring into their union the Quakers and all other Dissenters if possible."—Sparks, *Franklin*, vol. vii. p. 303.

GEORGE THE THIRD

coming. The deficiency of £513,000 in the revenue of the Civil List arose from the insufficiency of the sum voted to the growing expenses of Government. The fixed annual sum of £800,000 which had been voted on George III.'s accession would scarce have sufficed for the Court expenses of George II. That a large part of it went in pensions and presents is indisputable. But bribes, rewards, and sinecures, which were liberally showered on the friends of the Ministers in power, had the sanction of ancient political custom; nobody deplored the practice more than George himself. It is well to remember that if he had had no tangible as well as titular rewards to bestow, it is difficult to understand in that day of corruption where he would have looked to for help to govern his country. It is not an exaggeration to say that the hands of all were either in the royal coffers, or struggling frantically to plunge them in. When, therefore, some daring Opposition members demanded that Parliament should receive a detailed account of how the Civil List was spent, the impertinent demand was quickly suppressed by scandalised legislators on both sides, and the deficit was paid.

In proroguing Parliament, George, with a view to both Britain and America, added these words: "It gives me great concern to be obliged to recommend to you, with more than ordinary earnestness, that you would all, in your several counties, exert your utmost efforts for the maintenance of public peace and good order. You must be sensible that whatever obstructs the regular execution of

IRISH "UNDERTAKERS"

the laws, or weakens the authority of the magistrate, must lessen the only security my people can have for the undisturbed enjoyment of their rights and liberties. From your endeavours in this common cause I promise myself the most salutary effect; on my part no countenance or support shall be wanting; for as I have ever made, and ever shall make, our excellent Constitution the rule of my own conduct, so shall I always consider it equally my duty to exert every power with which that constitution has entrusted me for preserving it safe from violations of every kind, fully convinced that in so doing I shall most effectually provide for the true interest and happiness of my people."

It was not only in Britain and America that George had to contend with warring factions, insubordination, and violence. Ireland was disgracefully governed; corruption abounded. In the hands of what were termed "Undertakers" were Irish interests, men who undertook to carry out the decrees of the English Privy Council in the Irish Parliament. These Undertakers bore considerable resemblance to the Whig oligarchy which had managed English affairs at the time of George's accession. Quite as much as he had deprecated the power of the Whig oligarchy, the King condemned the narrow rule of the Irish faction which was responsible for the misgovernment of the sister kingdom. He had approved the sending of the Marquis Townshend, Charles Townshend's brother, as Viceroy in 1767. Hitherto the Lord-Lieutenant had resided in Ireland for six months every other year, *i.e.* during the session of

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the Irish Parliament. Townshend was ordered to remain there during his entire term of office. An Octennial Act limited the duration of the Irish Parliament to eight years, a measure which was well received by the Irish patriotic party. Townshend laboured to overthrow the power of the Undertakers. It was a hard, ungrateful task, but in the end he succeeded, at the price of his own happiness and political prospects.

About the same time also George was brought face to face with another problem of magnitude. He had come to regard the position of the East India Company as anomalous, and the accounts from independent sources which had reached him from India made him desire its reform. There was no doubt that a great evil and a great injustice did exist. A commercial society had been raised into a territorial power, and instead of depending on the native princes for protection, or permission to exercise commerce, the Company became "regulators of their politics, and arbiters of their destiny."

Maladministration in Bengal had induced the Company to return Lord Clive to the seat of his earlier triumphs. Clive had reorganised the army, suppressed illicit trade, and put down a military mutiny. On his return to England early in 1767 he found the Government looking greedily on the profits and acquisitions of the Company. George, Chatham, and Clive himself were agreed that the Company had no right to its new position of a sovereign power. The King was firm in his opinion that the sovereignty of the Crown over every territory

MIDDLESEX ELECTION

which had been won by British soldiers under the British flag should be asserted. In return for the privileges which the Company enjoyed, it should contribute a portion of its revenues to the national exchequer.

The justice of this being admitted, a Bill was passed (1767) by which, in return for the confirmation of its territorial revenues, the Company bound itself to pay the Government £400,000 a year for two years. When the agreement was renewed the Company's territories were being overrun by the redoubtable Hyder Ali. Crops had failed in Bengal, the Company's stock had fallen sixty per cent., and it was £6,000,000 in debt. Government was applied to for a naval force. George himself went into the matter. He pointed out some legal objections to the commission of the supervisors, and insisted that the naval officers sent out by Government should have unlimited power to regulate all maritime affairs. A compromise was effected, and Sir John Lindsay was chosen by the King to command the naval force destined for India. George's instructions show the determination he harboured to lose no opportunity of making the Indian native rulers realise that he, and not the Company, was the sovereign power in the Company's territories.

The commonest observer could not deny that in Britain the social and political condition of the people was growing steadily worse. The Middlesex election served as an excuse to formulate petitions to the throne. Much was made at the time, and has been made since, of these popular manifestoes accusing the

GEORGE THE THIRD

Ministers of treason. Westminster petitioned that Parliament should be dissolved, and this was also urged by other counties and boroughs on the grounds that Luttrell, the candidate who had replaced the expelled Wilkes, had not been properly elected, and that his presence invalidated the whole legislature. But an examination of the petitions shows that the larger freeholders and better classes withheld their signatures; the intelligent and law-abiding had no wish to aggravate the current evil. Seditious language became matter of fact. To counteract this misconduct, a number of influential city merchants carried an address of loyalty and confidence to St. James's. It was only a further incitement to the mob, and a scene of riotous commotion ensued. By volleys of filth—verbal and material—was the procession assailed. "Everybody," wrote the Duke of Chandos to Grenville, "was covered with dirt, and several gentlemen were pulled out of their coaches by neck and heels at the palace gate. The Dukes of Kingston and Northumberland had their chariots broke to pieces, and their own servants' clothes spoiled, and some had the impudence to sing, *God save great Wilkes, our King*. The troops beat to arms, and the guards were trebled. Many were greatly insulted, the mob coming up to the muzzles of their firelocks, but it was thought proper for them not to fire."¹

On the same day the ingenious ringleaders of the mob devised a still further most audacious insult to their sovereign. A hearse, drawn by four horses,

¹ *Grenville Papers*, vol. iv. p. 416.

ENTER "JUNIUS"

appeared before the principal entrance of St. James's Palace. One of the panels bore a picture of soldiers shooting a youth named Allen in St. George's Fields. On the other side was depicted the death of another rioter, killed during the Middlesex election. Overhead stood a man in the guise of an executioner, with a crape mask, supporting an axe in his hand. This disgraceful contrivance the mob endeavoured to force into the courtyard of the palace. Here they were foiled by a large force of peace officers, hastily summoned. The Riot Act was read, and after some violent scuffling, in which the Lord Steward, Earl Talbot, himself laid hold of a couple of the ring-leaders, the yelling crowd prudently retreated. During the whole of these scenes George, on Lord Holland's testimony, remained perfectly calm and composed. "One could not find out, either in his countenance or his conversation, that everything was not as quiet as usual."¹

Of all the violent attacks which were made on the Grafton Ministry by the Press, the most celebrated are those which appeared under the signature of "Junius" in the *Public Advertiser*. There is little doubt that "Junius" was Philip Francis, a clerk in the War Office, and afterwards a member of the East India Council. In their composition he probably received the co-operation of Temple. The object of "Junius" was simply vituperation—to wound, in the most sensitive parts, all those public persons whom he dared not openly assail. Grafton, Bedford, North, Weymouth, Sandwich, Mansfield, and the King

¹ Russell's *Memorials of Fox*, vol. i. p. 55.

GEORGE THE THIRD

himself were the targets towards which he aimed his envenomed shafts.

Simultaneously with the début of "Junius," Chatham dramatically reappeared. Since his resignation his health had undergone a miraculous recovery. In July 1769 the "great Earl" put in a sudden appearance at the King's levée. George received Chatham graciously. He warmly congratulated him on his recovery; and on the breaking up of the levée, whispered to him to follow him into his closet. "There," records Chatham, "his Majesty again condescended to express in words of infinite goodness the satisfaction it gave him to see me recovered, as well as the regret his Majesty felt at my retiring from his service."

In the judgment of the late Minister, here was a propitious occasion to awaken the King into a "just sense of his peril." That George needed any awakening does not to us, we confess, seem clear. Chatham told him that he disapproved of Grafton's policy; in fact, he disapproved of all that had been done since his resignation. Everything was wrong. George asked his dissatisfied subject what measures he himself would propose. Chatham retorted in vague euphemistic platitudes, and finally remarked that he would consult his brothers-in-law, Temple and Grenville. If the Earl had drawn out his sword and flourished it he could hardly have excited greater surprise and alarm. Temple and Grenville again! Were not the relations between the three brothers-in-law openly hostile? Did not their political views widely diverge? Yet here was another "family

FINAL RUPTURE WITH CHATHAM

connexion" thrown at George's head once more. He could hardly contain himself; it taxed all his powers of self-control. After an embarrassing pause the subject of conversation was diverted. Chatham was bowed out, and personal interviews between the King and Earl Facing-both-ways were things of the past!

Chatham flew straightway to his brother-in-law at Stowe. "Lord Chatham," writes Burke to his friend and patron Rockingham, "passed by my door on Friday morning in a jimwhiskee drawn by two horses, one before the other. He drove himself. His train was two coaches and six, with twenty servants, male and female. He was proceeding with his whole family—Lady Chatham, two sons and two daughters—to Stowe. He lay at Beaconsfield; was well and cheerful, and walked up and down stairs at the inn without help."

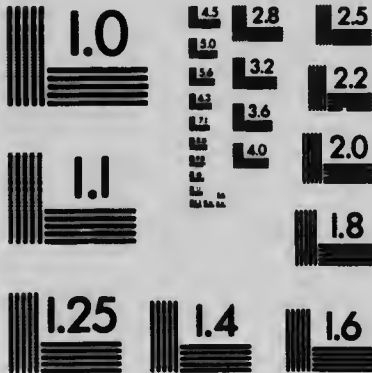
The news of the coalition was received by Opposition with much glee. The King was once more in their power. With Chatham, Temple, and Grenville was allied the Rockinghams. Parliament were again to meet at the beginning of 1770, the same Parliament which Chatham swore "must, it shall be dissolved"! He was (in his own words) "high in spirits" and "high in fury."

Two days before the meeting George wrote to North, "I am so desirous that every man in my service should take part in the debate on Tuesday, that I desire you will very strongly press Sir G. Elliot and any others that have not taken part last session. I have no objection to your adding that I have particularly directed you to speak to them."



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GEORGE THE THIRD

No strict constitutionalist can blink the fact that only a very grave crisis in the national affairs could justify such a direct interposition. The crisis was grave. The kingdom had to be saved not only from itself, but from those charlatans who were labouring night and day to plunge it into revolution. In his speech George observed that the great burthens already imposed on his subjects by the necessity of bringing the late war to a prosperous conclusion, made him vigilant to prevent the present disturbances in Europe from extending to those places where the security, honour, and interest of his kingdom might make it necessary for him to become a party. He had great hopes of maintaining the country in peace. The dissatisfactions still prevailing in America were to be regretted, and the combinations tending to destroy the commercial connection between the Colonies and the Mother Country. Avoid heats and animosities, he said: cultivate a spirit of harmony; which will, above all things contribute to maintain, in their proper lustre, the strength, reputation, and prosperity of the country and strengthen the attachment of the subject to that excellent constitution of government from which they derived such distinguished advantages."¹

Chatham's charlatany—there is no other word—was never more palpably shown than on his appearance at the opening of Parliament. The mob followed him with vociferation, for was not the great Earl going to pull the King down from his throne? While utmost excitement prevailed, Chatham,

¹ *Parliamentary History*, xvi. pp. 643-4.

A DISAFFECTED HARANGUE

swathed in flannel and supported on crutches, although the testimony is that he had not looked better for years, rose theatrically in his place. Advanced, he said, as he was in age and bowed down with the weight of infirmities—it may here be interpolated that he was just sixty-one, and that he was fresh from a round of country-house visits—he might have been excused had he clung to retirement and never again taken a part in public affairs. But, he went on, the alarming state of the nation forced him once more to come forward and execute that duty which he owed to his God, his sovereign, and his country, and which he was determined to perform at the hazard of his life. Of course he anathematised the peace of 1763, because his sovereign had gone far to make it. Britain was now without the support of a single ally. But however important might be the consideration of foreign affairs, the domestic situation of the country demanded still greater attention. He lamented the unhappy measures which had divided the Colonies from Great Britain, and which he feared had drawn them into unjustifiable excesses. But he could not concur in calling their proceedings unwarrantable; to use such an expression was passing sentence without hearing the cause, or being acquainted with the facts. The discontent of two millions of people deserved consideration. The foundation of it should be removed; but we should be cautious how we invaded the liberties of any part of our fellow-subjects, however remote in situation, or unable to make resistance. The Americans had

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purchased their liberty at a dear rate, since they had quitted their native land and gone to seek it in a desert. There never was a time when the unanimity recommended by the King was more necessary; and it was the duty of the House to inquire into the causes of the notorious dissatisfaction expressed by the whole English nation, to state them to their sovereign, and to give him their best advice in what manner he ought to act. The privileges of the House of Lords, however transcendant, however appropriate to them, stood, in fact, on the broad bottom of the people. The rights of the greatest and meanest subjects had the same foundation—the security of the law, common to all. It was therefore their highest interest, as well as their duty, to watch over and guard the people; for when the people had lost their rights, those of the peerage would soon become insignificant. “Be assured, my Lords,” he continued, “that in whatever part of the Empire you suffer slavery to be established, whether it be in America, in Ireland, or at home, you will find it a disease which spreads by contact, and soon reaches from the extremities to the heart. The man who had lost his own freedom becomes from that moment as instrument, in the hands of an ambitious prince, to destroy the freedom of others.” The liberty of the subject was invaded, not only in the provinces but at home. The people were loud in their complaints, and would never return to a state of tranquillity till they obtained redress: nor ought they; for it were better to perish in a

THE WHIG STANDPOINT

glorious contention for their rights, than to purchase a slavish tranquillity at the expense of a single iota of the constitution. He had no doubt the universal discontent of the nation arose from the proceedings against Wilkes, and therefore moved an amendment to the address, to the effect that "the House would with all convenient speed take into consideration the causes of the prevailing discontent, and particularly the proceedings of the House of Commons touching the incapacity of John Wilkes, thereby refusing (by a resolution of one branch of the legislature only) to the subject his common right, and depriving the electors of Middlesex of their free choice of a representative."

Chatham's speech lets a flood of light on the arguments of that day. "The constitution of the country," he continued, "has been openly invaded in fact; and I have heard with horror and astonishment that invasion defended upon principle. What is this mysterious power, undefined by law, unknown to the subject, which we must not approach without leave, nor speak of without reverence, which no man may question, and to which all men must submit? I thought the slavish doctrine of passive obedience had long since been exploded; and, when our kings were obliged to confess their title to the crown, and the rule of their government had no other foundation than the known laws of the land, I never expected to hear a divine right, or a divine infallibility, attributed to any other branch of the legislature. Power without right is the most odious and detestable object that can be

GEORGE THE THIRD

offered to the human imagination; it is not only pernicious to those who are subject to it, but tends to its own destruction."¹

Chatham's rhodomontade was well answered by Mansfield. But Chatham was again on his feet with a declamation against the "slavish" House of Commons. He exhorted his brother Peers to imitate the glorious example of "their ancestors, the iron Barons of Magna Charta," and defend the rights of the people. One may be permitted to wonder how many of the Peers he addressed could trace their ancestry back more than two hundred years. This perfervid exhortation had one striking, though disgraceful, effect. The Lord Chancellor was so moved that he decided to throw in his fortunes with Chatham. Camden's colleagues had already suspected him of lukewarm loyalty to the policy they were trying to carry out, but they were certainly not prepared at this crisis for a traitor in their camp. "I accepted," cried Camden, "the Great Seal without conditions; I meant not therefore to be trammelled by his Majesty—*I beg pardon, by his Ministers*; but I have suffered myself to be so too long. For some time I have beheld with silent indignation the arbitrary measures of the Ministers. I have often drooped and hung down my head in Council, and disapproved, by my looks, those steps which I knew my avowed opposition could not prevent. I will do so no longer, but openly and boldly speak my sentiments." The Ministry, by their violence and tyrannical conduct,

¹ *Parliamentary History.*

GREAT SEAL GOES A-BEGGING

had alienated the minds of the people from his Majesty's Government—he had almost said, from his Majesty's person; and in consequence, a spirit of discontent had spread itself into every corner of the kingdom, and was every day increasing; and if some methods were not devised to appease the clamours so universally prevalent, he did not know but the people, in despair, might become their own avengers, and take the redress of grievances into their own hands. In fine, Camden did not scruple to accuse the Ministry, though not in express terms, yet by direct implication, of having formed a conspiracy against the liberties of their country.

Chatham's amendment was defeated in the Lords by 203 to 36, and in the Commons, after a twelve hours' debate, by 254 to 138. After Camden's indecent avowal one would have expected his resignation. As it appeared he had no intention of resigning, the King dismissed him from office a week later. The Marquis of Granby resigned the command of the Army, and Dunning the Solicitor-Generalship. Such resignations, of course, sadly embarrassed the Government. A successor to Camden was not easily found. To many it seemed that, in Temple's words, "the Ministry was shattered in a most miserable manner, and in all likelihood would soon fall to pieces." According to Shelburne, after the worthy Camden's dismissal the Great Seal would go a-begging. He amiably added that "he hoped there would not be found in the kingdom a wretch sufficiently base and mean-spirited to accept it under such conditions as would satisfy the Ministry."

GEORGE THE THIRD

To one of the most painful episodes in the King's career did this situation give rise. The Great Seal was offered to Charles Yorke, son of the late Lord Chancellor Hardwicke. Twice had he filled the office of Attorney-General, and although not a strong man; enjoyed a reputation for talents and integrity. Like Mansfield and Eardley Wilmot, Yorke felt the moment unpropitious for accepting office. He was restless and morbid; his health was precarious. Having told his friend Rockingham that he would not accept the post, he promptly declined Grafton's offer. George now intervened from a sense of duty. Recognising the predicament in which his Ministers stood, he sent personally for Yorke. At first Yorke proved intractable. He would not "desert his party." At a second interview in the royal closet he admitted that the Great Seal was the highest object of his ambition, and it was plain that he only rejected it because he believed the Ministry was tottering to its fall. George's arguments being exhausted, he plainly told Yorke that if he then refused the seals they should not again be offered to him, whatever changes might ultimately take place in the Government. At that moment the utmost danger and degradation threatened the throne, and it was the duty of every man who hoped to serve his King to rally round him now in his distress. Yorke could no longer hold out. He accepted the Great Seal, and kissed hands as Lord Chancellor of Britain. Straightway to his brother's house he went; weak and irresolute, the sight of the Opposition leaders gathered there smote him with remorse. Not improbably, the new honour and

YORKE'S TRAGIC DEATH

the peculiar manner in which it was conferred had turned his brain. A sudden fever seized him: he emptied a decanter of spirits, and in three days was dead. The current belief was, and it is only too probable, that he died by his own hand. At the moment of his death there lay on a table near by the patent which was to have created him Baron Morden. "When my poor brother," writes Lord Hardwicke, "was asked if the seal should be put to it, he waived it and said that he hoped it was no longer in his custody."

After the tragic death of Yorke there was nothing for it but to put the Great Seal in commission. Mansfield was appointed Speaker of the House of Lords till another Chancellor could be found. The times were indeed unpropitious.

Amidst all the resignations, the plotting and unrest, Rockingham, following in Chatham's footsteps, moved in the House of Lords to consider the state of the nation. The present unhappy condition of affairs and universal discontent of the people, he said, did not arise from any immediate temporary cause, but had grown by degrees from the moment of his Majesty's accession. The persons in whom the King then confided had introduced a total change in the old system of government, and adopted a maxim which must prove fatal to the liberties of the country, namely, that the royal prerogative alone was sufficient to support Government, to whatever hands it might be committed. All the acts of Government from the beginning of the reign were ascribed to the prevalence of that principle. In Rockingham's

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opinion the peace was a blunder. Britain should have gone on fighting.

Grafton began well. Even if the terms of peace were not so good as the nation had a right to expect, he would never advise the King to engage in another war as long as the dignity of the Crown, and the real interests of the nation, could be preserved without it. Britain had already suffered sufficiently by foreign connections to warn her against engaging lightly in quarrels in which she had no immediate concern, and to which she might probably sacrifice her own most essential interests.

The tone of this speech was, however, far from satisfactory. A further embarrassment was preparing for the King. Grafton had all along been but a slender reed, but before the invectives of Chatham and "Junius" he became invertebrate. He bent before the storm; he abandoned what he believed to be a sinking ship. On the 28th January, only a week after the tragedy of Charles Yorke, Grafton resigned office, and left his sovereign to flounder out of his difficulties as best he could.

To see his policy of the last ten years thus brought to the brink of ruin would have completely discouraged a weaker man than King George. One after another his Ministers had failed. They had failed either to conciliate their King on the one hand, or the people on the other. It must not be considered merely a contest for power between George and the professional politicians of the day; it should rather be deemed a contest between the King as representative of law and order and good

THE KING'S THREAT

government, as against ambition, insubordination, and sedition. A change of Ministry would mean a dissolution of Parliament; a new Parliament might precipitate a revolution. It would mean the triumph of faction and disorder. Chatham denounced peace; he applauded the conduct of rebels, whether in Britain or America, and he swore he would have a dissolution. Sooner than consent to a dissolution at this juncture, George told Conway he would abdicate his throne. "Yes," he exclaimed, laying his hand upon his sword, "I will have recourse to this sooner than yield to a dissolution!"

No man can look back to that period without a perception that George in his estimate of its menacing character, menacing not only to the throne, but to the peace and prosperity of Britain, was amazingly just. Mirabeau and Chatham, Robespierre and Temple, Danton and Wilkes, do we not see them each in their epochs, with their fiery philippics and their extravagant gestures, deriding peace, laughing loyalty out of court, drunk with the applause of the mob, encouraging vituperation, and egging on the frenzied democrats and incendiaries in all parts of the realm? *They* could bear it light-heartedly enough. Faction was the rarest port to them. Chatham's feelings in particular were exuberant. In the midst of rage and tumult he could write to an utter stranger who had sent him a pipe of port: "A pipe of true port is a matter of no consequence to a gouty *sexagénaire*; welcome indeed," he added, "was wine of the best growth."

Temple sneered and Greyville pettifogged; Shel-

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burne hatched plots and Grafton coquetted with his mistresses. One man alone was deeply serious. On his shoulders at this moment lay the real burden of government, the real cares of state. Still gloating was the phalanx of the Opposition when George sent for Lord North. This sending for North marks the turning point in the tide. 'The ten years' struggle was over, and the King had won. "Great as was the difficulty, the danger even," says Walpole, "North did not hesitate, but plunged into the danger at once." On the 5th February 1770 he was gazetted First Lord of the Treasury, while retaining his post of Chancellor of the Exchequer. And as such he continued for more than twelve eventful years.

CHAPTER XII

FACTION AT HOME AND ABROAD

THE new Prime Minister shared the King's dislike and distrust of Demos and his satellites. "I am not an ambitious man," said he in one of his Parliamentary speeches; "a man may be popular without being ambitious, but there is rarely an ambitious man who does not try to be popular."

"North," wrote a shrewd observer, "afterwards succeeded in what I believe he himself and every man in the kingdom at that time thought a forlorn hope."

Opposition at first could not believe they were beaten. The Grenville and Rockingham factions heaped derision upon the new Minister. So ingenious was their ungermining, so fierce their oratorical artillery, that they were convinced the King and North would be obliged to succumb. "If our friends stand firm," wrote Calcraft to Chatham, "all is over with them." "Now is the crisis," remarked "Junius"; "I have no doubt we shall conquer them at last."

Unluckily for their hopes already the tide had turned in the King's favour, and it was soon flowing with a vengeance. The people of England, not for ever to be duped, were rallying round their sovereign

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The attacks he had suffered from the more violent section, the letter of "Junius" to the King, the rude behaviour of the city, the insulting innuendoes, excited general displeasure. The "secret and malign influence" to which the Opposition were making perpetual reference was seen to be baseless. The members of Parliament who were charged with being the "King's friends"—"backstairs influence and clandestine Government"—openly avowed that they voted in accordance with the King's known personal wishes, first and foremost because they placed the utmost reliance in the King's integrity and judgment, and because they placed no reliance at all on the integrity and judgment of the Whig oligarchy. A further impetus to the tide was furnished by the City of London. As far back as the previous July they had drawn up a petition based on that of the Middlesex petition, couched in insolent language. It began:—

"We, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Livery of the City of London, with *all the humility which is due from free subjects to their lawful sovereign*: but with all the anxiety which the sense of this present oppression and the just dread of future mischief . . . and *from the secret unremitting influence of the worst of counsellors.*" It then went on to speak of "the desperate attempts which have been, and are too successfully, made to destroy that constitution, to the spirit of which we owe the relation which subsists between your Majesty and the subjects of these realms, and to subvert those sacred laws which our ancestors have

AN OFFENSIVE PAPER

sealed with their blood." A long list of grievances was enumerated: the general warrants; invasion of the right of trial by jury; the evading of the Habeas Corpus; imprisonment without trial; employment of military force; the "screening more than one murderer from justice"; Colonial taxation, &c. Finally, after "having insulted and defeated the law on different occasions and by different contrivances, both at home and abroad, they (the Ministers) have at length completed their design, by violently wresting from the people the last sacred right we had left, the right of election, by the unprecedented seating of a candidate notoriously set up and chosen by themselves. All this they have effected by corruption; by a scandalous misapplication and embezzlement of the public treasure, and a shameful prostitution of public honours."

This unprecedented appeal contained in every line something offensive. It harangued the King on what the Liverymen considered were his duties, and George properly resolved to take no notice of it. After many months it appeared to be forgotten, but in March 1770, on the eve of Wilkes's release, it was suddenly discovered that the King's silence was a gross indignity offered to the city. The King must be pressed for an answer; so three very formidable instruments were drawn up, called "The Address, Remonstrance, and Petition of the City of London." The Remonstrance purported to be a serious expostulation with George for his neglect of the wishes of his subjects. The two sheriffs undertaking the office of carrying it

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to Court, they attended on the 6th of March, but were unsuccessful in seeing the King. George caused them to be informed that "It was an improper time, and that the Court days were the time they ought to deliver any message. I wish," he added, writing to the Secretary of State, "you would obtain the opinion of Lord Mansfield whether they can be with propriety received." To decline "would be the *most likely way of putting an end to this stuff.*" George estimated the efforts of the city demagogues at their true worth.

But the next day the irrepressible sheriffs again presented themselves to know what day the King would appoint to hear them. At the close of the levée they were admitted to the closet, when one of the sheriffs, a dangerous firebrand, addressed the King, explaining that they had taken the earliest opportunity to wait on him, "but being prevented by one of the Household, who informed them that his Majesty could not receive them. They now desired to know when it would be convenient." To this George replied, "As the case is entirely new, I will take time to consider it, and transmit you my answer."

A week passed; the city drew up yet another precious "remonstrance." An enormous party, comprising two hundred persons, with Beckford at their head, invaded the palace. This time they had been adroitly coached by Wilkes and Horne. They said they again addressed themselves to "the father of his people," and repeated their application with greater propriety, because "we see the instruments

HIS DIGNIFIED REBUKE

of our wrongs particularly distinguished by your Majesty's bounty and favour. Under the same secret and malign influence, the House of Commons has deprived them of their rights." They then reminded the King of what he owed to them, with many references to the glorious Revolution, and veiled menaces as to what would happen if the King forgot that lesson. So confused and faltering did the Common Serjeant become over these passages, that the Town Clerk snatched the paper from him and continued the reading.

Calmly did George listen to all this; his reply was dignified and severe. He was much concerned, he said, to have to listen to language that was disrespectful to him, injurious to his Parliament, and irreconcilable to the constitution. "I have always made the law of the land my guide, and have never invaded any of the powers of the constitution." It was impossible to overlook such insolence. A few days later Sir Thomas Clavering moved in the House of Commons, "That to deny the legality of the present Parliament, and to assert that the proceedings thereof are not valid, is highly unwarrantable, and has a manifest tendency to disturb the peace of the kingdom by withdrawing his Majesty's subjects from their obedience to the laws of the realm." Whereupon Beckford and the other city members rose in their places, and gloried in what they had done, offering to take all the consequences. The motion was carried, but nothing was done. A fresh attack was planned on the King, and Chatham came forward in the House

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of Lords to aid and abet his wealthy and overzealous city friend, Beckford. He moved an address in the Lords praying for a dissolution. The city voted a similar address, and Beckford himself offered to present it to the King.

On May 23rd a long procession set out from the city. George, seated on his throne, received the deputation. Having previously seen the paper, he privately admitted it was "less offensive" than he had anticipated. He determined that the whole "performance" should receive "a short, dry answer"—referring the deputation to the answer they had received already. Beckford duly came forward and read his address, referring to "the awful censure" passed on them in the King's reply, and the secret machinations which prompted it. "But," said he, "they were determined to abide by the rights and liberties" their fathers gained at the Revolution, and demanded once more the dissolution of Parliament, and the removal of "evil Ministers."

George gazed at his unruly subject steadily for a moment and then made reply: "I should have been wanting to the public, as well as to myself, if I had not expressed my dissatisfaction at the late address. My sentiments on that subject continue the same; and I should ill deserve to be considered as the father of my people if I should suffer myself to be prevailed upon to make such an use of my prerogative as I cannot but think inconsistent with the interest and dangerous to the constitution of the kingdom."

It was expected that the deputation would now

BECKFORD'S AUDACIOUS HARANGUE

kiss hands and withdraw. But this was not part of the conspirators' plan. A reply was to be made to the King's reply. The sovereign was still on the throne, when Beckford, instead of "backing out," abruptly stepped forward and ejaculated, according to one account, "with great presence of mind and fluency of language":

"Most gracious sovereign!"

The King started. He saw before him a stout, apoplectic man struggling in vain with speech. Most of it was inaudible, but the King listened patiently to the end. Beckford's conclusion was in some such language as this:

"Permit me, sire, to observe, that whoever has already dared, or shall hereafter endeavour, by false insinuations and suggestions, to alienate your Majesty's affections from your loyal subjects in general, and from the City of London in particular, is an enemy to your Majesty's person and family, a violator of the public peace, and a betrayer of our happy constitution, as it was established at the glorious and necessary Revolution."

The King is said to have changed colour at the allusion to the Revolution, but that was all. The deputation were allowed to kiss hands, and they withdrew quietly.¹

"I have just come from Court," wrote Rigby to the Duke of Bedford, "where the insolence of Beckford has exceeded all his, or the City's, past exploits."

"This is the first attempt," he says further, "ever made to hold a colloquy with the King by any

¹ Fitzgerald's *Life of John Wilkes*, vol. xi, pp. 93-109.

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subject, and is indecent in the highest degree. There were very few aldermen attended, and not great numbers of the common council. The rabble was of the very lowest sort.”¹

Of course this conduct of Beckford's, whose speech had been written out by Horne, was lauded by Chatham and the Opposition; but it utterly disgusted the country. The exploit turned Beckford's brain, for a fever seized him, and in a month he was dead. Death indeed, at this time, sadly thinned the ranks of Opposition. Granby, who had seceded from the Ministry, died in October 1770. In the following month George Grenville passed away, and a little later his disciple and successor, Lord Suffolk, gave the deathblow to the Grenville faction by joining the Ministry. At the beginning of 1771 the Duke of Bedford, who had already seen his followers going over to Lord North, was no more. Grafton felt no shame in returning to office; the Great Seal, after being a year in commission, was given to Bathurst, who held it seven years. Thurlow, a learned and able debater, was made Attorney-General; and Wedderburn, a clever lawyer and partisan of Chatham's, went over to the Government and became Solicitor-General. Notwithstanding the attempts of Burke and the pamphleteers to keep up the tumult it slowly subsided, and once more in Britain peace began to smile upon the land.

The disgust and resentment of the Whigs was really ludicrous. “England at this day,” complained Chatham in January 1771, “is no more like old

¹ *Bedford Correspondence*, vol. iii. p. 414.

THE STRAIN LESSENS

England or England forty years ago, than the Mon-signori of modern Rome are like the Decii, the Gracchi, or the Catos." Afterwards he wrote that "the smallest good can result to the public from my coming up to the meeting of Parliament. A head-long, self-willed spirit has sunk the City into nothing. . . . The narrow genius of old-corps connection has weakened the Whigs, and rendered national union on Revolution principles impossible. 'The public has slept quietly upon the violation of electors' rights and the tyranny of the House of Commons. *Fruit Ilium!* the whole constitution is a shadow." "After a violent ferment in the nation," wrote Burke, "as remarkable a deadness and vapidness has succeeded. 'The people have fallen into a total indifference to any matters of public concern. I do not suppose that there was ever anything like this stupor in any period of our history." "In the present state of things," observed "Pitt" in his last letter he addressed to Woodfall, "if I were to write again, I must be as silly as any of the horned cattle that run mad through the city, or as any of your wise aldermen. I mean the cause and the public. Both are given up. I feel for the honour of this country when I see that there are not ten men in it who will unite and stand together upon any one question. But it is all alike vile and contemptible."

Great indeed had been the strain on the King, although he was careful at all times to conceal it. Once at a garden party on his birthday tears escaped him and he gave vent to some strange expressions. But the new confidence which the people reposed

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in him imparted fresh courage. The object of the rabble's distrust and anger was changed from the sovereign to the House of Commons. Trouble arose over the illegal reporting of debates. The practice of printing the speeches of members was then contrary to law, and the newspaper or printer that undertook to give a synopsis of the spoken opinions by the Ministry or Opposition leaders was exposed to serious penalty. But the Radicals pressed for both freedom of speech and writing, and so far as the reporting of Parliamentary debates was concerned they had for once the King on their side. A printer, named Miller, was arrested on a Speaker's warrant. Miller, being a Liveryman, was warmly upheld by the City of London. The House of Commons insisted on Miller's committal to prison; the City Magistrates effected his release, and committed the Commons messenger for assault. The upshot was that the Lord Mayor, Brass Crosby, and one of the Aldermen, named Oliver, were summoned to the bar of the House, and in spite of the threats of a violent mob were committed to the Tower. "If," wrote the King to Lord North on the 17th March 1771, "the Lord Mayor and Oliver are not committed, the authority of the House is annihilated. Send Jenkinson to Lord Mansfield for his opinion of the best way of enforcing the commitment if those people continue to disobey. You know well I was averse to meddling with the printers, but now there is no retreating. The honour of the Commons must be supported."

George advised strongly that the Lord Mayor

ILLEGAL REPORTING OF DEBATES

should be conveyed to the Tower "by water privately to avoid rescue," and had this advice been followed the tumultuous scenes which marked his progress to the city would not have occurred. The horses were removed from his carriage, and he was dragged in triumph to Temple Bar. Crosby was prudent enough, however, to discountenance a popular rescue and to save the Serjeant-at-Arms from being hanged to the nearest lamp-post. Once in the Tower, he and his companion received ostentatious marks of sympathy and regard from the Opposition Whigs. Rockingham headed a party of lords and commoners, filling sixteen carriages, who went to pay their respects to the distinguished civic prisoners. But the prosecution was allowed to drop, and on the 8th May, when Parliament was prorogued, they were set at liberty.

Wilkes, who had taken a great part in the aforementioned proceedings, and although repeatedly elected member for Middlesex still suffered expulsion, was at this time summoned to attend at the Bar. The popular firebrand wrote that he must decline setting foot within the precincts of St. Stephen's unless he could take his place as a member. An expedient was found for letting Wilkes alone. He was summoned to appear on a certain day, on which day the House prudently decided not to sit, and the triumph of Wilkes was complete. Three years later, after a general election, he took his seat without opposition. In 1782 he actually succeeded by a large majority in having the former resolutions against him erased from

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the journals of the House! But long ere this Wilkes's opinions had undergone a change. He learnt to despise and distrust the mob as much as King George himself. "In his real politics," wrote one of his friends, "he was an aristocrat. His distresses threw him into politics."¹ After being elected Lord Mayor he filled for many years the post of City Chamberlain, and frequently attended the King's levées. He had indeed reason to be grateful to George. "If," he remarked cynically on one occasion, "the King had sent me a free pardon and £1000 to Paris I should have accepted them; but I am obliged to him for not having ruined me."

Later we find this "patriot," who had caused his King so much uneasiness, moralising over the violence of mobs. "Such," he observes, speaking of the revolutionary outbreaks in France, "in most ages has been the savage madness of the mere multitude when uncontrolled, ignorant, and fanatic in any cause. History necessarily records such events, but at the same time becomes quite disgusting." In 1791 Wilkes was "shocked to read of the savage, cruel, and persecuting spirit of the mechanics at Birmingham; and I trust that Government will exert itself in the punishment of so vile and wicked a crew." Truly if George ever doubted the real character of the so-called "patriots," his doubts were thus set at rest by one of the very ablest amongst them. Wilkes came to be regarded good-humouredly by the King. At a levée George

¹ Butler's *Reminiscences*, p. 73.

WILKES TURNS COURTIER

once asked him about his "old friend" Sergeant Glynn, his chief legal supporter. "My friend, sir?" retorted the new courtier, bowing low; "he is no friend of mine; he was a Wilkite, which I never was!" One of Wilkes's witticisms in his old age must have caused George some amusement as a man, if pain as a father. The City official was dining with the Prince of Wales, between whom and the King was much bitterness of feeling. Wilkes proposed the King's health. "Why, Wilkes," said his Royal Highness, "how long is it since you became so loyal?" To which the other gave answer, "Ever since I had the honour of knowing your Royal Highness!" In 1772, one of the King's sons, then a mere boy, had been chided for some boyish fault. Wishing to take his revenge he stole to the King's apartment, shouting at the door, "Wilkes and No. 45 for ever!" and ran speedily away. George's anger evaporated, and he laughed at the prank with his accustomed good-humour.

The agitation for the liberty of the Press was only connected with the general agitation of the time. From 1769 has been dated the rise of the Radical party. But while Radicalism had, as we have seen, long been existent in the body politic, yet it had been without intelligible articulation, its expressions of dissatisfaction being generally expressed by broken bones, broken windows, and insensate shrieks for liberty, and a still more insensate hostility to the King. Formerly Parliament had been supposed to represent the voice of the

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nation, now extra Parliamentary public meetings and associations demanded reform in the constitutional machinery. The Whigs were not prepared for this, but Chatham's influence led them on in spite of themselves. The Bill of Rights Society, formulated by demagogues like Horne Tooke, Wilkes, and Glynn, pressed the business on vehemently. It was certainly a change in tactics. "Beaten by the King and his friends," says a modern commentator, "at the game of corruption, the Whigs had become advocates of purity." A long series of tests were prepared to be offered to candidates at elections. Every candidate was required to aim at a full and equal representation of the people in Parliament, annual Parliaments, the exclusion from the House of Commons of every member who accepted any place, pension, contract, lottery ticket, or other form of emolument from the Crown; the exaction of an oath against bribery. Besides this, the impeachment of Ministers was to be supported, as was the redress of the grievances of Ireland, and the return to the principles of self-taxation by America.

Burke and the Rockingham party were, however, not to be driven, and their rejection of these proposals for organic constitutional changes caused a split between the new Radicals and themselves. "Moderation, moderation!" exclaimed Chatham angrily, "is the burden of their song!" As for him, he must "swim in agitated waters"; he would be "a scarecrow of violence to the gentle warblers of the grove, the moderate Whigs and temperate statesmen."

A LAST ATTACK

While the disappointed Whigs now quarrelled amongst themselves, the King and North went boldly on with the task of governing. "A little spirit," wrote George to his Minister, "will soon restore order in my service."

There was another scream on the part of Demos, a further exhibition of violence towards the King, a last appearance of the Princess Dowager-Bute bogey now tottering towards its grave. On 25th March 1771 a City member, Townshend, delivered a scurrilous and audacious speech in Parliament against the King's mother. There was an aspiring woman, he said, who, to the dishonour of the British name, was allowed to direct the operations of the despicable Ministers of the Crown. "Does any gentleman," he asked, "wish to hear what woman I allude to? If he does, I will tell him. It is the Princess Dowager of Wales. I aver we have been governed ten years by a woman. It is not the sex I object to, but the government. Were we well ruled, the ruler would be an object of little signification. It is not the greatness of the criminal's rank which should prevent you punishing the criminality."¹ Cries of "Shame!" drowned the rest.

Three days later, when George was on his way to the House of Lords some democrats hissed him, and one threw a missile at his head. Effigies of Augusta and the unhappy Bute were borne in carts to Tower Hill, where they were beheaded by chimney-sweeps in the presence of the mob and cast on the flames. A few months more and the Princess Dowager had

¹ *Parliamentary History*, vol. xvii.

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passed away, and as her character and the relations between herself and her son became better known, something like remorse seems to have filled the minds of many of her traducers.

“Already,” Lord Barrington could write, “the King, though most shamefully attacked in newspapers with a licentiousness which his servants are very blamable to suffer, gains ground in the opinion and esteem of his people, and the Ministry, though not highly rated, is not disliked.”¹

The prophecy that North’s administration would be short-lived was a false prophecy. Even Chatham, until the American rebellion brought him once more on the stage, became reconciled to the Tory régime. Writing to Lord Shelburne on the 6th March 1774 he says: “I have long held one opinion as to the stability of Lord North’s situation. He serves the Crown more successfully and more efficiently upon the whole than any other man to be found could do.”²

While in the British Parliament it was being pointed out that the troubles in America were owing to the vacillation and lack of consistency in the British Government, an event was happening in America which promoted fresh insubordination and encouraged the enemies of the King. The single regiment left in Boston to keep law and order became exposed to the cowardly insults of the populace. The unfortunate soldiers were called “rascals, lobsters, and bloody backs” whenever they appeared in the streets. Their lives were rendered

¹ Ellis’s *Original Letters*, vol. iv. p. 530.

² *Chatham Correspondence*, vol. iv. pp. 332-3.

THE BOSTON "MASSACRE"

almost unendurable by the persecution of the baser populace. But their Colonel, acting under instructions from home, deprecated any attempt at retaliation. On the night of 5th March 1770 a false alarm of fire assembled a mob of men and boys. A solitary sentinel guarding one of the public buildings became their butt. His call for rescue brought a picket guard of eight men, who were immediately surrounded and huddled. One of the soldiers was struck by a club. Still they restrained themselves, until in self-defence from the stones, balls of ice, and clubs with which they were threatened a shot was fired. This was immediately followed by the discharge of seven muskets, each loaded with two balls. Three of the mob were killed and eight wounded.

Such was the famous Boston massacre.¹ The town was filled with excitement, the captain of the guard and the eight men were arrested and turned over to the civil authorities of the Colony to stand their trial, and the result that only two were found guilty of manslaughter by the jury showed that the

¹ There were many dreadful massacres, ironically observes the historian of the Eighteenth Century—the massacre of the Danes by the Saxons, the massacre of the Sicilian Vespers, the massacre of St. Bartholomew—but it may be questioned whether any of them had produced such torrents of indignant eloquence as the affray which I have described. The "Boston massacre," or as the Americans, desiring to distinguish it from the minor tragedies of history, loved to call it, "the bloody massacre," at once kindled the Colonies into a flame. The terrible tale of how the bloody and brutal myrmidons of England had shot down the inoffensive citizens in the streets of Boston raised an indignation which was never suffered to flag.—Lecky, vol. iii. p. 367.

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soldiers had not been the blameworthy parties. Yet the evidence of the trial might well have been taken to heart by the British statesmen of that day. As an American writer of our own time avers, "It is worth reading as an astonishing revelation of the times, the anger and resentment of a large part of the people, the torrents of abuse and slang that were exchanged, the hatred of England and English control, and the readiness to destroy any symbol of that control. After reading the description by the witnesses of that night in Boston, one sees that the American communities could never be turned into modern colonies by the conciliatory policy, or any policy except some sort of extermination."¹

Samuel Adams and his friends, who corresponded to Wilkes, Glynn, and Horne Tooke in England, used this incident to the greatest advantage in awakening the angry passions of the mob. Who, it may be asked, was this Samuel Adams? "Sam" Adams, says one of his compatriots, "was always poor. He failed in his malting business, was unthrifty and careless with money, and had, in fact, no liking for, or ability in, any business except politics. He lived with his family in a dilapidated house in Purchase Street, and when in 1774 he was elected a delegate to the Continental Congress at Philadelphia, his admirers had to furnish the money to make him look respectable. All this assistance Adams was not too proud to accept. He had long been engaged in small local politics, and when tax-collector had been short in his ac-

¹ Fisher, *True Story of the American Revolution*, p. 100.

"SAM" ADAMS

counts and threatened with ruin. The patriots, of course, forgave him this lapse, which was not repeated; but Englishmen and loyalists never forgot it. When coupled with his shiftlessness and shabbiness, and the gifts of money and clothes to make him presentable in the Congress, it is easy to understand the indignation, contempt, and disgust which were entertained for him by those who were opposed to the rebellion. Such a disloyal and dishonest movement, they would say, naturally had a shabby rascal for its leader.¹ Far and wide Adams spread the report of a "ferocious and unprovoked assault of brutal soldiers upon a defenceless people." On the other hand, the news of North's repeal of all the duties save that on tea, imposed by Townshend's Act, Hillsborough's circular pledging that the British Government would raise no further revenue from America, and the expiry of the Military Quartering Act, gave the spirit of rebellion no present excuse for open violence. In vain Adams scattered his treasonable, inflammatory rhetoric broadcast; in vain he urged that the time was now ripe for casting off allegiance. "The weak, debt-ridden state of England has been ordained by the providence of God to give us a chance for independence."² But the bulk of the people, even in Massachusetts, were as yet wholly averse from his policy. Even his fellow "patriots," such as John Adams and Cushing of Massachusetts, and Reed and Dickinson of Pennsylvania, were for

¹ *True Story of the American Revolution*, pp. 114-15.

² Hosmer, *Life of Samuel Adams*, p. 134.

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moderation. They had just won a moral victory over the British Government, and for two or three years they relapsed into a quiescent state. The non-importation associations became virtually disbanded, and the Colonies began reimporting all English commodities save tea. Tea was smuggled on a gigantic scale from Holland, and American smugglers grew rich thereby.

The situation, then, that we have to consider resolves itself into this: British authority had been virtually disestablished, and unless further measures were taken the Colonies, as Wedderburn said in Parliament, were already lost to the Crown. Yet at this time the American loyalists probably numbered two-thirds of the inhabitants of the Colonies. The bourne to which they were drifting was as odious and alarming to them as it could possibly be to their fellow-subjects in England; so that we find the richer, more intelligent, quieter classes of the community fervidly protesting their loyalty to King George and the British connection. Albeit even amongst the loyalists some delicacy, some uncertainty, was felt as to the position of the British Parliament. The British Parliament did not represent them; it did not understand them or their relations to the Crown; it was torn by faction, and deafened by domestic partisanship. To the King they must look for rescue from the noisy, illiterate demagogues who were intent on breaking up the common Empire. That was the situation in the first three years and more of North's Ministry. Treason had received a check,

ROYAL MARRIAGE ACT

but the check was only momentary. It could not, while Adams, Jefferson, Otis, and their faction lived, be permanent.

Meanwhile in Britain a war with Spain over the Falkland Islands threatened to disturb the political horizon. Spain had counted on the assistance of France, which was still smarting from her defeats in the Seven Years' War. But although Choiseul had now a strong new fleet at his back, the French king declined to fight. "My Minister," he wrote to the Spanish king, "would have war, but I will not." Choiseul was dismissed, and Spain was obliged to yield to British demands. One permanent result of this Spanish scare was to put the navy on a new footing, and in this the King by his letters at this time showed great zeal and earnestness.

There was another and more intimate matter to engage the sovereign's attention. We have seen that in the summer of 1771 the King's brother, the Duke of Cumberland, had privately married Mrs. Horton, Lord Irnham's daughter. A few months later the avowal of the Duke of Gloucester's marriage with Lady Waldegrave was announced. Distressed and provoked by these irregular alliances, the King ordered a Royal Marriage Bill to be prepared. In a message to Parliament on the 20th February 1772 he stated, that the right of approving all marriages in the royal family had ever belonged to the kings of the realm as a matter of public concern. He recommended to both Houses of Parliament to take into serious consideration whether it might not be wise and expedient to supply the defect of the laws, and by

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some new provision more effectually to guard the descendants of George II. from marrying without the consent of the King, his heirs and successors. A bill was forthwith brought into the House of Lords, declaring that none of the royal family, being under the age of twenty-five years, should marry without the King's consent. Upon attaining that age they were at liberty, in case of the King's refusal, to apply to the Privy Council, announcing the name of the person they were desirous to espouse, and if, within a year, neither House of Parliament should address the King against it, the marriage might be legally solemnised. Otherwise, all persons assisting in or knowing of an intention in any of the royal family to marry without fulfilling these ceremonies and not disclosing it, would incur the penalties of a *præmunire*.

Veheimently was this bill opposed in all its stages. On the third reading, Rockingham attacked it on the ground that the royal family might in time become so extensive as to include thousands of individuals. It was declared to be German, not English in its character. Camden objected to it for the reasons assigned by Rockingham, and deprecated the annulling of a marriage between persons of mature age. Nevertheless the bill passed without amendment, although two strong protests were entered on the journals, the first signed by fourteen Peers. In the Commons it encountered an opposition equally strenuous, and every clause in the bill was debated with acrimony and pertinacity, but here also it passed unamended. There is little doubt that the Act has been of advantage to the royal family

OPINION OF CHARLES FOX

and of great benefit to the nation. Amongst its opponents was young Charles James Fox, son of the first Lord Holland, and descended from a royal bastard. Fox had been appointed a Lord of the Admiralty in 1770, and had hitherto been a supporter of the Government measures. In private life he was the spoilt darling of his age. He drank, gambled, lived in extravagant and dissolute fashion, and at twenty-five years of age was £140,000 in debt, a debt which his father complacently discharged. Fox had no more principle than Wilkes or his own father, but he had the gift of making warm friends. This was the man who was destined by fortune to become the chief political antagonist to the King, and to head a set of men who were bent on every occasion in ascertaining what the King's wishes and prepossessions were in order to disappoint the one and undermine the other.

Before many months had passed George is found writing to Lord North: "I am greatly incensed at the presumption of Charles Fox in forcing you to vote with him last night, but approve much of your making your friends vote in the majority. Indeed that young man has so thoroughly cast off every principle of common honour and honesty, that he must become as contemptible as he is odious. I hope you will let him know you are not insensible of his conduct towards you." Again in 1774 he writes: "I think Mr. Charles Fox would have acted more becomingly to you and to himself if he had absented himself from the House; for his conduct is not to be attributed to conscience, but to his aversion to

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all restraint." It was not many hours after this that Fox was dismissed from his seat at the Treasury.

While a calm marked the relations between Britain and America, the East India Company rapidly drew near bankruptcy. Its application to Government for a million pounds loan gave North the opportunity of carrying out the King's policy by asserting the right of the Crown to the territorial revenue, and placing the government of India under Ministerial control. George had long been searching for a method by which the affairs of India could be placed on a more satisfactory footing. He had sent out Admiral Sir Robert Harland with the same plenipotentiary powers to the princes of India which he had formerly given to Sir John Lindsay. Harland was instructed to inquire how far the article relating to India of the definite treaty of peace and friendship between Britain, France, and Spain in 1763 had been complied with; "as also to treat with any of the princes or powers in India, to whom the eleventh article might relate, with regard to the most effectual means of having the stipulations therein contained punctually observed and carried into execution." George at the same time promised "That he would approve, ratify, and confirm what should be agreed and concluded in relation to the premises between the princes and the European Powers." He wrote a personal letter to the Nawab, expressing his "confidence in the Company, and his desire to remove every suspicion of the Company's lying under the King's displeasure." The support of the Company's importance and honour in the



CHARLES JAMES FOX
(From the Portrait by Reynolds)



THE CROWN IN INDIA

eyes of all powers of India formed a principal point of Harland's mission. Nevertheless, Harland's arrival in September 1771 occasioned great jealousy and alarm amongst the Company's Indian officials. They said that King George's interference had made the Nawab of Arcot very careless about the favour of mere trading subjects.

"To give you," observed the Madras Council, writing to the Company, "a clear representation of the dangerous embarrassments through which we have been struggling to carry on your affairs since the arrival of his Majesty's powers in this country is a task far beyond our abilities. They are daily more and more oppressive to us. It has always been our opinion that, with your authority, we had that of our sovereign and nation delegated to us through you for managing the important concerns of our country under this Presidency. It is upon the prevalence of this opinion in India that our influence and your interests are vitally founded. It was in the confidence of this opinion that your servants, exerting all their vigour, acquired such power and wealth for their country."

Full of zeal for the Royal interests, Harland induced the Nawab to write directly to the King.

"We received with pleasure your letter," wrote George in reply, "in which you express to us your gratitude for the additional naval force which we have sent for your security as well as that of our East India Company, and your confidence that we shall tread in the steps of our royal grandfather, by granting protection to you and your family.

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We have given our commander-in-chief and plenipotentiary, Sir Robert Harland, our instructions for that purpose, and we flatter ourselves that we shall reconcile the differences which have arisen between you and the Company's servants against your mutual interest. It gave us satisfaction to hear that the Governor and Council of Madras had sent the Company's troops with yours to reduce your tributary, the Rajah of Tanjore, to obedience, in which we hope, by the blessing of God, they will be successful; and so we bid you farewell, wishing health and prosperity to you and your family." The foregoing was signed, "Your affectionate friend, GEORGE R."

The Company continuing to protest strongly, the King's ambassador was recalled, and the unhappy Nawab, deprived of the British sovereign's support, could only expect punishment for his defection from the authority of the traders. A member of the Company in a letter to the proprietors declared that Parliament "stands upon a precipice from which if they resign into the hands of the Crown the sovereignty and territorial revenues of Bengal they plunge themselves into the gulph of corruption and infamy, and us into the abyss of perdition and wretchedness. Let us unite as one man against making our King the despot of Bengal!"

To Hastings Clive wrote, "the last Parliamentary inquiry has thrown the whole state of India before the public, and every man sees clearly that, as matters are now conducted abroad, the Company will not long be able to pay the £400,000 to Government." In April 1772 Select Committees were appointed by the

OPINION OF CLIVE

House of Commons to inquire into the condition of the Company and all British affairs in India. Burke supported the Company, urging that a violation of the royal charter held by the Company was a dangerous precedent, that the claim to the territorial revenue was arbitrary, and that the extortion from it of £400,000 a year had only increased the Company's distress. In the following year committees of investigation were appointed. Clive was bitterly attacked, and eventually accused of illegally receiving moneys and abusing his powers. In the Parliamentary debates of this session Clive was virtually on his trial. George's own opinion of the great soldier was, that he had been "guilty of rapine," but he rendered full justice to his genius as a soldier and administrator. He was repeatedly consulted by the King and North, and had frankly advised that the constitution of the Company ought to be "undemocratised." The King learnt of his tragic death with deep concern.

After the Indian Regulating Bill was carried in 1773, and the government transferred virtually from the trading Company to the Crown, some 17,000,000 lbs. of tea lay unsold in the Company's warehouses. Funds being urgently needed to rescue the Company from bankruptcy, an ingenious expedient was hit upon of securing a licence from the Treasury to export the superabundant tea to America on the Company's own account, instead of disposing of the stock to middlemen. Consignees in the different Colonies were duly appointed, invariably persons whose loyalty to the British connection was above suspicion.

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On this tea, of course, a small tax was to be paid. The tea was not to arrive until November, consequently there was plenty of time for Samuel Adams and his friends to stir up a fresh agitation. The Committees of Correspondence sent out letters denouncing this further device for assisting the East India Company as another "outrage" on America. There was no apology for the outrages on Britain. In 1772 the British warship *Gaspée*, of eight guns, was employed in suppressing the barefaced smuggling on the southern New England coast. Smuggling, as we have seen, was one of the most profitable and popular of Colonial occupations. In June the *Gaspée* ran aground while in pursuit of a smuggler, and the news of the mishap was carried to the town of Providence, Rhode Island. The *Gaspée* was boarded by a band of armed men, the commander shot, the crew overpowered, and the King's vessel fired. Although large rewards were offered by the Governor, none of the perpetrators were ever discovered or punished.

Bernard's successor in the Governorship of Massachusetts, Jonathan Hutchinson, was meanwhile in sore difficulties on his own account. Hutchinson was a patriotic American and a loyal subject of the King. In England he had correspondents to whom he faithfully related the critical situation of affairs in his province. Amongst these correspondents was Whately, a former private secretary to the late Prime Minister, George Grenville. When Whately died Hutchinson's private and confidential letters to him were stolen and carried to Benjamin Franklin,

BOSTON TEA RIOT

resident agent in London for four of the American Colonies. The stolen correspondence also contained letters from Oliver, the deputy governor of Massachusetts. Here was an opportunity not to be lost of adding more fuel to the flame ; so Franklin at once sent the letters, although all were marked " private," across the Atlantic, where the Committee of Correspondence at Boston caused their publication and broadcast dissemination. What did the letters contain ? Reflections upon the " factious character of the local agitators, the weakness of the executive, the necessity of a military force to support the Governor, and the excessive predominance of the democratic element of the constitution of Massachusetts." Hutchinson saw clearly that liberty in the Colonies had degenerated into licence. " I never think," he wrote, " of the measures necessary for the good order of the Colonies without pain. There must be an abridgment of what are called English liberties. . . . I wish the good of the Colony when I wish to see some further restraint of liberty, rather than the connection with the parent State should be broken ; for I am sure such a breach must prove the ruin of the Colony."

Such sentiments maddened the agitators. King George was petitioned to remove Hutchinson and Oliver from the government. While Adams and Otis were capering about in their anger, the ships laden with the East India Company's tea reached America. A party of Boston rioters, encouraged by Adams and the Radicals, disguised themselves as Indians, boarded the ships, and flung 340 chests of tea, valued at £18,000, into the harbour. The

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respectable citizens were shocked, but what could they do? In London the news of this riotous conduct synchronised with the painful revelations concerning Hutchinson's stolen correspondence. Who had committed the theft? Whately's brother charged a Bostonian named Temple. A duel followed, and Whately was wounded. Then, and not till then, did Franklin come forward and avow that he alone had procured the stolen letters and sent them to Boston.

Franklin's conduct in this matter has never been found capable of satisfactory defence, even from his most ingenious apologists. When he appeared as Agent for Massachusetts before a Committee of the Privy Council in January 1774 to support the Colonial petition against Hutchinson and Oliver, he was violently arraigned by Solicitor-General Wedderburn. "Franklin," said Wedderburn, "not only took away these papers from one brother, but he kept himself concealed until he nearly occasioned the murder of another. It is impossible to read his account, expressive of the coolness and most deliberate malice, without horror. Amid these tragical events, of one person nearly murdered, of another answerable for the issue, of a worthy Governor hurt in his dearest interests, the fate of America in suspense—here is a man who, with the utmost insensibility of remorse, stands up and avows himself the author of all. I ask, my Lords, whether the revengeful temper attributed by poetic fiction only to the bloody African is not surpassed by the coolness and apathy of the wily American?"

It is not our intention to defend such asperities

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

directed against a man of Franklin's position and attainments. When we compare this verbal intemperance with the verbal licence indulged in by Franklin's countrymen on the other side of the Atlantic, we can hardly blame the long-suffering Briton from venting his indignation. When we add to their scandalous vituperation their open breaches of order and contempt for the law, Wedderburn's language and the applause it evoked are easy enough to understand.

The Parliamentary Committee voted the petition of the Massachusetts Assembly to be "false, groundless, and scandalous, and calculated only for the seditious purpose of keeping up a spirit of clamour and discontent in the province." This report was confirmed by the King in Council, and the sinecure post which Franklin had held as Deputy Postmaster of America was taken from him. We have heard it said that this marks the beginning of Franklin's enmity to the British connection. We hold this absurd. Franklin's enmity was ingrained. He was a republican, a freethinker, a utilitarian, without a spark of sentiment or loyalty in his bosom. His temperament and his whole career prove him to be closely akin to the Priestleys, Beckfords, Francis, Glyns, and Horne Tookes of English politics. "Wily" was the epithet chosen by Wedderburn, and wily properly and emphatically describes Franklin's character. With an able mind and an inquiring disposition, a sturdy self-reliance, and a certain dignity of demeanour, Franklin yet betrayed the faults of his origin. His son, Governor Franklin, a man of

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warmer nature and a more rigid virtue, early severed himself, though with pain, from his father's political counsels no sooner did he discern whither they were tending.

The King felt that an American crisis fast approached. In Massachusetts the Assembly declared all judges who received salaries from the Crown instead of the people unworthy of public confidence, and it threatened to impeach them before the Council and the Governor. In February 1774 proceedings were actually instituted against Oliver, the Chief Justice of the Crown. Out of 100 members who voted, no fewer than 92 supported the impeachment. Hutchinson of course refused to concur in the measure, and on March 30th he prorogued the House, and at the same time accused it of having been "guilty of proceedings which strike directly at the honour and authority of the King and Parliament."

Events were, in this part of the Empire, indeed moving rapidly to an issue.

CHAPTER XIII

GEORGE AND THE LOYALISTS

WIDELY did the ways diverge. Were the thirteen Colonies, planted by Britain, endowed with her laws, supported by her right arm for a century and a half, to be abandoned as an appanage of the Crown, or was a strong and stern effort to be made to restore to its full and pristine strength the fast smothering bond? It was no easy choice for contemporary politicians, hardest of all was it for the King. To a monarch the integrity of his dominions is a matter of vital concern. The unity of an empire may offer to state men, through force of varying circumstances, a problem in expediency, but unless the ulterior compensation be very real, unless the political danger be imminent, the head of the State and lord sovereign of the territory should be the last to consent to its abridgment. The Crown was then, as to-day, the symbol of imperial unity. For its wearer to agree to a schism would be to abdicate sovereignty over a section of his subjects.

We have said thus much on the regal aspect of the case, because so many writers have, with lamentable perversity, either taken it upon themselves, or relied wholly upon their forerunners, to

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denounce George for the uncompromising rigidity of his attitude towards America. Their error is, we are constrained to say, that they have never regarded the matter from any standpoint but that of the Treaty of Versailles of 1783. George has been condemned as an anti-American. One might as well condemn him for being anti-British. The King was as fervently "true American" up to the period of the Treaty of Versailles as he was truly British. If he had seen that his American subjects wished to be free of their allegiance, were his own personal feelings solely in question, he would have resigned his sovereignty without a blow, and perhaps without a sigh. George was inflexible in his attitude because the loyalists were inflexible. Loyal America comprised over half that nation. They had called upon the King, as we have seen, to save them from the lawless demagogues and restless mischief-makers who were provoking a schism between them and their English brethren, and the King, as we shall see, fought their cause stubbornly and valiantly, inch by inch, until Fate and the miserable incapacity of his generals forced him to abandon them.

Bear in mind that behind George in his advocacy of stringent measures towards his rebellious subjects was Chatham and the body of the nation. "Although," wrote Chatham, "I love the Americans as man prizing and setting a just value upon the inestimable blessing liberty, yet if I could once persuade myself that they entertain the most distant intention of throwing off the legislative supremacy

IMPERIAL DISMEMBERMENT

and great constitutional superintending power and control of the British legislature, I should myself be the very first person . . . to enforce that power by every exertion this country is capable of making."¹

Did they entertain such an intention? Chatham said again, "I am no courtier of America; I stand up for this kingdom. I maintain, that the Parliament has a right to bind, to restrain America. Our legislative power over the Colonies is sovereign and supreme. When it ceases to be sovereign and supreme, I would advise every gentleman to sell his lands, if he can, and embark for that country. When two countries are connected together, like England and her Colonies, without being incorporated, the one must necessarily govern; the greater must rule the less; but so rule as not to contradict the fundamental principles that are common to both. There is a plain distinction between taxes levied for the purposes of raising a revenue, and duties imposed for the regulation of trade, for the accommodation of the subject; although, in the consequences, some revenue might incidentally arise from the latter."²

On the other hand, there were wise politicians and economists who would have suffered the peaceable dismemberment of the Empire, and for very sound reasons. "Let England," wrote Tucker, Dean of Gloucester, "be wise in time, and before she draws the sword let her calculate what possible advantage she could derive commensurate with

¹ Thackeray, *Life of Chatham*, vol. ii. p. 279.

² *Parliamentary History*.

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the permanent evils which would inevitably follow. The Americans have refused to submit to the authority and legislation of the supreme legislature, or to bear their part in supporting the burden of the Empire. Let them, then, cease to be fellow-members of that Empire. Let them go their way to form their own destinies. Let England free herself from the cost, the responsibility, and the danger of defending them, retaining, like other nations, the right of connecting herself with them by treaties of commerce or of alliance.”¹

Such views, though sound enough in theory, and proved right by time (they have been heard often enough since), could not be adopted by King George without a gross dereliction both of his official trust and of the confidence reposed in him as sovereign of the American people. George may privately have sympathised with the opinions of the Dean; it was out of his power as King to act upon them. As early as 1774 George knew that the American loyalists would never surrender their allegiance to him without a struggle. As to the rest, he wrote to Lord North, “We must either master them, or totally leave them to themselves and treat them as aliens.”²

Galloway, one of the ablest of the Pennsylvania loyalists, afterwards expressed his belief before a Committee of the House of Commons that at the time when the Americans took up arms less than a fifth part of them had independence in view.

¹ Tucker's *Political Tracts*.

² *Correspondence of George III.*, vol. i. p. 216.

NOT ROYAL MEASURES

In April 1769 Franklin had written to Dr. Cooper: "I hope nothing that has happened, or may happen, will diminish our loyalty to our sovereign, or affection for this nation in general. I can scarcely conceive a King of a better disposition, of more exemplary virtues, or more truly desirous of promoting the welfare of all his subjects. The people are of a noble and generous nature, and we have many friends among them; but the Parliament is neither wise nor just; I hope it will be wiser and juster another year."

Franklin in his *Memoirs* says: "I industriously, on all occasions, in my letters to America, represented the measures that were grievous to them as being neither *royal* nor *national* measures, but the schemes of an administration which wished to recommend itself for its ingenuity in finance, or to avail itself of new revenues, in creating, by places and pensions, new dependencies; for that the King was a good and gracious prince, and the people of Britain their real friends. And on this side the water, I represented the people of America as fond of Britain, concerned for its interests and its glory, and without the least desire of a separation from it."

One of the towns in the province of Massachusetts, Hatfield, not only declined to send representatives to a Convention, but protested against it as illegal. They denied any real grievance, declaring at the same time their loyalty to the King and fidelity to their country. They were firmly resolved, they said, to maintain and defend their rights in every prudent and reasonable way as far as was consistent

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with their duty to God and to their King. This letter to the select men at Boston was shown to King George, and gave him much satisfaction.

Many of the Americans maintained with much reason that Parliament since the Revolution of 1689 had acquired a wholly new place in the British Empire, and that the arguments of English lawyers about the necessary subordination of all the parts of the British Empire to the supreme legislature, and about the impossibility of the sovereign withdrawing British subjects by charter from Parliamentary control, were based upon a state of things which at the time when the Colonies were founded existed neither in law nor in fact. "At present," one wrote, "the Colonies consent and submit to the supremacy of the legislature for the regulation of general commerce; but a submission to Acts of Parliament was no part of their original constitution. Our former kings governed their colonies as they had governed their dominions in France, without the participation of British Parliaments."

"Much of the language and some of the arguments of the Americans," observes Lecky, "were undoubtedly drawn from the Tory arsenal." It was, Lord North said, the Colonists who appealed to the King's prerogative.

George from first to last stood not only by the loyalists, but by the Imperial Parliament. "It was not," as was afterwards observed, "a war of prerogative, but a contest undertaken for maintaining the right of Parliament to impose taxes on British America. If George III. would have

COLONIAL REPRESENTATION

separated the interests of his Crown from those of the legislature, he might have made advantageous terms with his transatlantic subjects; but he disdained any compromise by which he must have severed himself from his Parliament."¹

Moderation, persuasion, expostulation had failed. It was now time for other measures. The Americans, as North said, have "tarred and feathered your subjects, have plundered your merchants, burned your ships, denied all obedience to your laws and authority; yet so clement and so long forbearing has our conduct been, that it is incumbent on us now to take a different course; whatever may be the consequences, we must risk something. If we do not, all is over."

Lord George Germain maintained that America at that time was nothing but anarchy and confusion. "Have they any one measure," he said, "but what depends upon the will of a lawless multitude? Where are the courts of justice? Shut up. Where are your judges? One of them taking refuge in this country? Where is your governor? Where is your council? All intimidated by a lawless rabble." The trial of the military would be but a protection of innocence.

The same policy, the same firmness, must govern the King and his Ministers with regard to riotous disobedience in Massachusetts as in Somersetshire or Kent. It is preposterous to talk about the case being dissimilar owing to the fact that the Colonists had no representation in Parliament. As Mr. Fisher

¹ Wrayall, vol. i, p. 353.

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points out: " 'No taxation without representation' was never a part of the British Constitution, and is not a part of it even now. It could not be adopted without at the same time accepting the doctrine of government by consent, and that doctrine no nation with colonies could adopt, because it is a flat denial of the lawfulness of the colonial relation."¹

In the contemporary scheme of government the Colonists were as much represented in Parliament as the majority of Englishmen were represented. Seven millions of people had no direct representation; those who elected legislators were an almost insignificant proportion of the population. It was the system of the time, and a system that was to remain unchanged for many decades. "The House of Lords," our commentator remarks, "represented all the nobility, the House of Commons represented all the commoners, and as commoners the Colonists were, therefore, fully represented."

The Boston Port Act closed the harbour of the rebellious Bostonians and removed the custom-house officers to Salem. All landing, lading, and shipping of merchandise was to cease until the town had made compensation to the East India Company for the tea the rebels had destroyed, and had satisfied the Crown that trade would for the future be safely

¹ *The American Revolution*, p. 64. "The sum of the matter in regard to no taxation without representation," adds this author, "is that America, having been settled by the Liberal, Radical, and, in most instances, minority element of English politics accepted, and England, being usually under the influence of the Tory element, rejected this much discussed doctrine. We went our separate ways."

FALSE HOPES

carried on in Boston, that property would be protected, laws obeyed, and wholesale smuggling put down. This was not all. When North introduced the Massachusetts Government Bill, he declared, what was perfectly true, that the government of the province had no power to uphold the authority with which it was invested. "There must be something radically wrong," he said, "in that constitution in which no magistrate for a series of years had done his duty in such a manner as to enforce obedience to the laws. The General Assembly was not to be touched; it was the legitimate representative of the democracy, but a Council was to be appointed, as it was in the other Colonies, by the Crown. Jurymen who were chosen by popular election would be summoned by the Sheriffs, and town meetings, which had been the cause of so much sedition, brought under control." Boston, said Mansfield, had committed "the last overt act of treason." The British Government had crossed the Rubicon; the Americans would see that no more temporising would be attempted, and Boston would submit without bloodshed. That is what many both in Britain and America hoped and believed. Alas for such hopes!

A further Act was passed for the impartial administration of justice, providing that if any person in the province of Massachusetts were indicted for murder or any other capital offence, and it should appear to the Governor that the incriminated act was committed in aiding the magistrates to suppress tumult and riot, and there was no prospect of a fair

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trial, the prisoner should be sent for trial to any other Colony, such as Nova Scotia, or to Britain.

Chatham, condemning the turbulence of the Americans, had the folly to plead that the British should still "act towards them as a fond and forgiving parent." He would have had nobody punished, and would have left the loyalist majority at the mercy of the terrorists. This was hardly good Imperial policy. Hutchinson was dismissed, and Gage became Governor of Massachusetts and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony.

During this period of agitation the great conquered territory of Canada had been governed under the terms of the royal proclamation of 1763. The administration of Quebec was controlled by a military governor-general and the Council. What was called the province of Quebec was bounded on the east by the St. John's River and the territories of Nova Scotia. To the west and south lay a vast region claimed by several of the American Colonies. In this province of Quebec there dwelt more than 80,000 French Roman Catholics and less than 400 English-speaking Protestants. By the terms of the Treaty of Paris English had been made the official language, all offices were held by the British, and French laws and customs, except those relating to religion, were superseded. Naturally this system was unworkable. It was the parent of constant dissensions, and its injustice was manifest. The wretched posture of American affairs induced the British Ministry to take the advice of Sir Guy Carleton, the able Governor of Quebec, and conciliate the French Canadians.

CANADIAN "OUTRAGES"

The existing system was admittedly a temporary one. The Imperial Government had no desire to subvert the ancient laws of Canada, or to compel the people to live under fundamentally opposite religious, social, and political conditions from those of their race. By the Quebec Act of 1774 the limits were first ascertained of the new province of Canada. It was restricted to the east, and its boundaries advanced to the Ohio and the Mississippi on the west. Criminal cases only were to be tried by juries according to English law; civil cases were governed by French law. A legislative council was nominated by the Crown, a body of men of both religious persuasions, to conduct all legislative business save taxation, which latter was reserved to the British Parliament. As to religion, freedom of worship was confirmed, and the Roman Catholic priests were continued in their former tithes and dues, but no Protestant was rendered liable to such payment.

Such was this famous measure—one of simple justice and toleration. Yet it aroused almost as much indignant opposition and wrath in New England as the Boston Port Bill. The narrow American Puritanism denounced the Quebec Act as establishing Popery while merely permitting Protestantism. The British population of Canada, they declared, was being depressed to please the French *noblesse*. The denial of juries in civil cases and the absence of the Habeas Corpus Act, both of which were unknown to and undesired by the French population, were described as "outrages" on British citizenship. Such opposition was not, however, confined to New

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England. Every argument, every denunciation which the bigoted Americans employed was re-echoed when the Bill came before Parliament. The old cry of "No Popery" was raised, and by raising this issue the Whigs forced George to join their side; for, according to Chatham, the Bill was a breach of the Reformation, of the Revolution, and of the King's Coronation oath.

One member, a brother of Edmund Burke, described the Bill as the worst that ever engaged the attention of a British Council, for was not to establish the Popish religion to establish despotism? In some instances Britain had, as far as she was able, established freedom; but to establish Popery, to establish despotism in a conquered province, was what Britain had never done before. Colonel Barré roundly asserted that the Bill was Popish from beginning to end. The lords who originated it were the Romish priests, who were to give the King absolution for breaking the promise made in the proclamation of 1763. Another heated legislator denounced it as a most abominable and detestable measure, tending to introduce tyranny and arbitrary power in all the Colonies; to give a further establishment to Popery; to annul the Bill of Toleration, and to destroy the Act of Habeas Corpus! "No treatment too contemptuous could be applied to it. The Speaker ought to throw it over the table, and somebody else should kick it out at the door." The Whigs did their best to stir up popular prejudice. The Corporation of London, in a petition against the Bill, reminded the King that the Romish religion

HIS POWER IN CANADA

was "idolatrous and bloody, and that his illustrious family was called to the throne in consequence of the exclusion of the Roman Catholic ancient branch of the Stuart line under an express stipulation to profess and maintain the Protestant faith." In reply, the Ministry denied that the Romish religion had been established; it was merely tolerated, and tolerated for the strongest and best of reasons.

The continuance of the French law, dispensing justice without a jury in civil while the English code was granted in criminal cases, excited numerous and violent debates. The Opposition insisted that by this distinction a complete despotism was established: the King, by mixing his English with French subjects, and involving both in the same law, was equal in power to a French king. George might even, if he pleased, imprison, as Louis did, by *lettres de cachet*. The privation of trial by jury in civil cases and of the Habeas Corpus was attacked as an intolerable hardship.

Several London merchants trading to Canada petitioning against this part of the Bill as tending to render their property less secure were heard by counsel. Two merchants produced as witnesses stated that the people of Canada were highly pleased with the trial by jury in civil causes, and that a discontinuance of it would be of great prejudice. On the other hand, five witnesses were examined, some of whom had been long resident and filled important stations in the Colony, and they were equally certain that the Canadians, though highly pleased with the British form of criminal juris-

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prudence, had an insurmountable disgust to the decision of civil causes by a jury.¹

When the Quebec Bill, after its passage through the Commons, came back to the Lords, Chatham resumed his invective. It was the child of inordinate power. It would involve this country in a thousand difficulties, shake the affection of all his Majesty's subjects in England and Ireland, and finally lose him the hearts of all the Americans. He invoked the bench of Bishops to resist a law by which the Roman Catholic religion would become the establishment of a vast continent, and insisted that Parliament had no more right to alter the oath of Supremacy than to repeal the Great Charter, or the Bill of Rights.

It now appeared that George, though the firmest of Protestants, strongly favoured the Quebec Act. He regarded it as wise, prudent, and equitable. It was founded on the clearest principles of humanity and justice, and calculated to produce the best effects in quieting the minds and promoting the happiness of his Canadian subjects. Had George at this juncture felt otherwise in the slightest degree, the Bill would never have passed. Although an enemy of Popery, the sovereign was no enemy to Roman Catholics, and still less to justice. The Quebec Act saved Canada to his Empire.

With regard to the repressive measures decreed by the British Parliament against the colonists of Massachusetts, any illusions of their effectiveness were to be rudely dispelled. Those who supposed that

¹ Adolphus, vol. ii. p. 96.

BOSTON HARBOUR CLOSED

the passions and predilections of the entire community were to be subdued by simple Imperial legislative ordinances and instant obedience to laws, which they had long discredited, were to have the veil drawn from their eyes. On 1st June Gage closed Boston harbour. Between that date and the meeting of the Continental Congress of Philadelphia on the 5th September many of the other Colonies, as well as the towns and villages of New England, showed their practical sympathy with the cause of the Bostonians, which they had already been taught to regard as their own. Ignorance easily takes alarm ; tumultuous passions resent discipline ; punishment that is but lightly felt only serves to inflame and exasperate, rather than to subdue. Copies of a bill from the Boston revolutionaries were transmitted to all the thirteen Colonies. The Act of Parliament was printed with black borders and hawked about the streets as a "barbarous, cruel, bloody, and inhuman murder." In Virginia a small band of influential malcontents agreed that the opportunity for arousing the Colonies was not one to be lost. They met in the Council Chamber of their legislative house, and appointed the 1st of June as a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer to "implore Heaven to avert from them the evils of civil war, to inspire them with firmness in support of their rights, and to turn the hearts of the King and Parliament to moderation and justice." Such an encroachment on the Governor's prerogative as the appointment of a fast without his concurrence, together with the motives of the proceeding, left

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him no other course but to dissolve the Assembly. The example was followed in other Colonies, and the American rebellion was begun in earnest.

Yet there was even now a chance that the traitors and demagogues would not have their way. Lies and libels might be crushed by truth and temperance. When the Continental Congress, as the body was unaptly termed, seeing that it then represented less than a tenth part of the continent, met at Philadelphia, Georgia alone had sent no delegate. According to John Adams, but one-third of the delegates were Whigs or revolutionaries, half were Tories or loyalists, and the rest mongrel. The whole number attending Congress was fifty-six. Each Colony had one suffrage only in the decision of every question, its vote being decided by the majority of its representatives. This regulation lent an appearance of unanimity to the proceedings which in reality they did not enjoy. The debates being conducted in strict privacy behind locked doors, little knowledge of the arguments used transpired, and the results were received by the people as the essence of wisdom and unity. One of their measures was to formulate a declaration of Rights, and another to issue addresses to the people of Britain, America, and Canada separately. These productions were very artful in their appeals to prejudice. The people of Britain were reminded of the struggles maintained by their ancestors in the cause of liberty, and told that the project of Ministers in endeavouring to enslave the Americans, derived from the same stock, tended only to the more easy

A REASON FOR TAXATION

introduction of slavery at home. They claimed a participation of British rights; the freedom of Englishmen would be the model and scope of their wishes. After recapitulating their services in the former war and the proceedings of Parliament since that time, they described the plunder of the tea ships as a mere personal not a public affair, the remedy of which ought to have been sought by the sufferers in the courts of law, without an appeal to Parliament. As for the Quebec Act, it was intended to overthrow the liberties of the British Colonies by a vast influx of Catholics, swelled by emigrations from Europe. "We cannot suppress our astonishment," runs the address, "that a British Parliament should ever consent to establish a religion which had deluged your island in blood, and dispersed impiety, bigotry, persecution, murder, and rebellion through every part of the world." The American malcontents had discovered the real reason of the Ministry in endeavouring to tax America at pleasure. It was merely to draw such immense sums into the royal coffers as would render the King independent of Parliament! If Britain really wished to restore harmony, the Colonies must be placed in the same situation as they were at the close of the last war.

In the address to the Colonists all the acts of the British Government were recapitulated. The conduct of the American governors was reviewed, the proceedings at New York and Boston vindicated. The Quebec Act was violently denounced. From its passage, the Congress argued, as beyond the perad-

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venture of doubt, that a resolution was formed, and about to be executed, to extinguish the freedom of all the Colonies by subjecting them to rank despotism.

After the abuse and insult lavished on the French Canadians, one might hardly have expected the Congress to have invoked them as friends and fellow-citizens in a common cause, that they would be invited to send deputies to the next Congress. Here the sharp pettifogging democrats overreached themselves. They told the Canadians, indeed, that the constitution bestowed on them by Parliament was a violation of King George's promise at the peace. British rights in mere justice ought to have been substituted for Gallic jurisprudence. Liberty of conscience in religion was a right of Nature, for which the Canadians were not obliged to any Act of Parliament. If laws divine and human could secure such liberty against the despotic attacks of wicked men, it was already secure. This logic was backed up (here Jefferson's artful aid appeared) by quotations from foreign writers, particularly Montesquieu and Beccaria, as well as by insidious appeals to the Frenchman's known love of glory. If Canadians would only throw in their lot with the other Colonies, they would be governed and protected by just and equitable laws. If they refused, terrible would be their fate. They would be subjected to all the evils of the English constitution and French government combined. The inquisition and the excise; partial judges, and arbitrary governors; privileges

PETITION TO THE KING

and immunities dependent on the smiles or frowns of a Minister, *lettres de cachet*, gaols, dungeons, and oppressive service; and all the apparatus of bloody tyrants and despots awaited the wretched people of Quebec.

Lastly came the American petition to their sovereign. After enumerating all their grievances, Jefferson, Adams, and the rest presumed that to a king who "gloried in the name of Briton" the bare recital of the outrages they had suffered would justify the loyal subjects who fled to the foot of his throne and implored his clemency for protection. All the distresses, dangers, fears, and jealousies which overwhelmed the Colonies with affliction were ascribed to the destructive system of Colonial administration adopted since 1763. "Had our Creator," they said, "been pleased to give us existence in a land of slavery, the sense of our condition might have been mitigated by ignorance and habit. But, thanks be to His adorable goodness, we were born the heirs of freedom, and ever enjoyed our right under the auspices of your royal ancestors, whose family was seated on the British throne to rescue and secure a pious and gallant nation from the popery and despotism of a superstitious and inexorable tyrant." Feeling as men, and thinking as they did, silence would be disloyalty; and as the King enjoyed the signal distinction of reigning over freemen, the language of freemen could not be displeasing. But their sovereign's indignation would rather fall on those designing and dangerous persons who daringly interposed between him and his faithful subjects, and

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who for several years past had been incessantly employed in dissolving the bonds of society, abusing his Majesty's authority, prosecuting the most dangerous and irritating projects of oppression, and accumulating on the petitioner injuries too severe to be any longer tolerable.

Much of this was worthy of Beckford, Horne Tooke, and Wilkes, but it doubtless all emanated from Jefferson. Only the pen that could achieve the Declaration of Independence could manufacture such hypocritical trash as this. The address wound up by appealing to "the Being who searches thoroughly the hearts of His creatures," solemnly professing that their councils had been influenced by no other motive than "a dread of impending destruction"! It was transmitted to the Colonial agents, with instructions, after delivering it into the King's hands, to make it public through the press, together with their list of grievances, and to circulate, as early as possible, their address to the people through all the trading cities and manufacturing towns of Britain.

After these proceedings the Congress dissolved, having first passed a resolution for convening a new Congress on the 10th of May. It need hardly be said that these measures of the Congress were by no means approved of even by a majority of themselves. Roughly, the Congress was divided into two parties. The loyal moderate and respectable men, whose only intention was to define candidly and clearly American rights and charters, and respectfully petition for redress of grievances, formed one group, the other consisted of nominal Presby-

AMERICAN LOYALISTS

terians, Puritans, and Methodists, allied to men of bankrupt fortunes, and overwhelmed in debt to British merchants, who were desirous to throw off all subordination to, and connection with, the British Empire. They endeavoured by fiction, falsehood, and fraud to delude the people from their allegiance, to reduce government to a state of anarchy, and incite the ignorant and vulgar to arms.¹

Whatsoever was to happen, Samuel Adams, Jefferson, Otis, Henry, and the rest had now shot their bolt. By the moderate section the proceedings of the Congress of 1774 were received with disapproval. The loyalists, or Tories, comprised, in addition to the royal officers, many of the best and most cultivated people in the Colonies, most of the chief landowners, the Episcopal clergy and other religious teachers, the most talented physicians, some of the most eminent lawyers, and most of the prosperous merchants. A large proportion, perhaps half, of the farmers, mechanics, and labourers were loyalists. But this class was weakest in New England, though numerous in Connecticut. New York was the loyalist stronghold, while of the other middle Colonies, Pennsylvania was against revolution, and New Jersey contained a strong loyalist minority. The loyalists in the southern Colonies were about as numerous as the rebels, and in South Carolina and Georgia outnumbered them. The number of loyalists and rebels fluctuated; the loyalists claimed to be in a majority. It is stated that at least half of the most re-

¹ Adolphus, vol. ii. p. 127.

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spected part of the population were throughout the Revolution either avowedly or secretly averse from revolution.¹ We find that at least 20,000 loyalists joined the British army, some thirty regiments or battalions of these being regularly organised and paid. Most of them were peaceable men, not more inclined for fighting than the mass of their opponents, who were forced into war by an active minority. Through the skilful management of this minority the loyalists were disarmed everywhere at the beginning of the struggle.²

In the carrying out of his orders Gage met everywhere with violence. He called for more troops, and fortified Boston Neck against the insurgents. Loyalists were persecuted ruthlessly by the mob. The new councillors appointed by the Crown were forced by mob violence to resign. Some were tarred and feathered, or borne on rails through the streets. Their houses were defiled with filth. A reign of terror began. The courts of justice were forcibly closed; jurors dared not serve, and judges and sheriffs were treated with ignominy. One judge who had the courage to commit to gaol a revolutionary who was employed in disarming the loyalists was seized and tarred and feathered, while the prisoner was rescued. As the months wore on in all New England a loyalist could find no safety, until his very misery often compelled him to adopt the cause of the rebels. "Are not the bands of society," wrote one of them, "cast asunder, and the

¹ Sabine, *The American Loyalists*, pp. 51, 55, 65.

² Hunt, *Political History of England*, pp. 134-5.

“THE DIE IS NOW CAST”

sanctities that hold man to man trampled upon? Can any of us recover debts, or obtain compensation for an injury, by law? Are not many persons whom we once respected and revered driven from their homes and families, and forced to fly to the army for protection, for no other reason but their having accepted commissions under our King? Is not civil government dissolved? . . . What kind of offence is it for a number of men to assemble armed, and forcibly to obstruct the course of justice, even to prevent the King's courts from being held at their stated terms; to seize upon the King's provincial revenue—I mean the moneys collected by virtue of grants made to his Majesty for the support of his government within this province; to assemble without being called by authority, and to pass Governmental Acts; to take the militia out of the hands of the King's representative, or to form a new militia; to raise men and appoint officers for a public purpose without the order or permission of the King or his representative, or to take arms and march with a professed design of opposing the King's troops?"¹

All of the petitions and representations of the loyalists forwarded by the royal governors of the various Colonies were read attentively by George. "The die is now cast," he wrote. "The Empire must put forth all its strength to save it from the fate of dismemberment.

A large portion of the most ardent patriots, it has been said, actually fancied that their claim would be peaceably admitted, and that the legisla-

¹ L. . . . iii. p. 406

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ture of the greatest country in the world would repeal no less than eleven Acts of Parliament in obedience to a mere threat of resistance. What encouraged them in this opinion was the attitude of the Whig party, and such political leaders as Chatham, Camden, Shelburne, Burke, Barré, and Conway, besides the encouragement of the English merchants, particularly those of London. The revolutionary party really thought they had Britain on her knees. She was, as Chase observed in Congress, "already taxed as much as she could bear. She is compelled to raise ten millions in time of peace. Her whole foreign trade is but four and a half millions, while the value of the importations to the Colonies is probably little if at all less than three millions." Consequently it was argued that a total non-importation and non-exportation policy towards the Mother Country must produce her national bankruptcy in a short space of time.

Hutchinson, late Governor of Massachusetts, was now in England. He was a native of Massachusetts, the historian of that Colony, an able and cultured man, and a fitting representative of the better-class American of that day. If any man knew the character and opinions of his countrymen, Hutchinson should have been that man. But while Hutchinson told the King that the majority of the province were loyal and longed ardently for peace and order, he underrated the numbers, or at least the power and the pluck, of the factious minority. He urged the King to

TRIBUTE TO IMPERIALISTS

take vigorous repressive measures. The people of America, he said, would never attempt to resist a British army, and that if they did resist, a few regiments would be sufficient to subdue them.

Such men as Hutchinson may have been absurdly prone to exaggeration, because it went to their hearts to contemplate Britain's surrender of America without a struggle. "There were," says Lecky in one of his most powerful passages, "brave and honest men in America who were proud of the great and free empire to which they belonged, who had no desire to shrink from the burden of maintaining it, who remembered with gratitude all the English blood that had been shed around Quebec and Montreal, and who, with nothing to hope for from the Crown, were prepared to face the most brutal mob violence and the invectives of a scurrilous Press, to risk their fortunes, their reputations, and sometimes even their lives, in order to avert civil war and ultimate separation. Most of them ended their days in poverty and exile, and as the supporters of a beaten cause history has paid but a scanty tribute to their memory, but they comprised some of the best and ablest men America has ever produced, and they were contending for an ideal which was at least as worthy as that for which Washington fought. The maintenance of one free, industrial, and pacific empire, comprising the whole English race, holding the richest plains of Asia in subjection, blending all that was most venerable in an ancient civilisation with the redundant energies of a youthful society,

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and destined in a few generations to outstrip every competitor and acquire an indisputable ascendancy on the globe, may have been a dream, but it was at least a noble one, and there were Americans who were prepared to make any personal sacrifices rather than assist in destroying it."¹

Letters, reports, and petitions at this time poured into the King's closet from America to assure him of the fealty of Americans to the Crown. The New York Assembly in June 1775 refused to approve the proceedings of the Congress. The Convention of Pennsylvania, dominated by the Quakers, denounced the very idea of war. It recommended that the East India Company should be paid for the tea destroyed, advocated obedience to the Act of Navigation, and repudiated emphatically all idea of independence, and expressed their willingness of their own accord to settle an annual grant on the King with the approbation of Parliament. Largely attended loyalist meetings were held in all the Colonies.

But the efforts of such able loyalists as Galloway, Dickinson, and William Franklin were unequal to cope with the violent views of the Radicals. In the second Congress Galloway nearly triumphed, and we may believe that had his proposition been carried, it would have been approved of by the King and the way paved for a peaceable solution of the American problem. He asked that a President-General should be appointed by the Crown to be placed over the whole group of Colonies, while a

¹ *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. iii. p. 418.

HOSTILITIES COMMENCE

Grand Council with powers of taxation and legislation on all matters concerning more Colonies than one should be elected by the Provincial Assemblies. Of the acts of this Grand Council the Imperial Parliament should have the right of revision. At the same time the Council might negative any Parliamentary measure relating to the Colonies. This scheme, which anticipated in its essence the new colonial system which Britain was thereafter to pursue, was lost by a single vote in the Congress!

Meanwhile the proceedings of Samuel Adams and the New Englanders became characterised by greater boldness and ingenuity. An army of 12,000 volunteers was enrolled in New England. Forty of the King's cannon were seized, and a small New Hampshire fort was surprised and captured.

Parliament met in January 1775. It was apparent that the violent conduct of the revolutionaries had aroused deep indignation. Yet Chatham and the Whig opposition did not scruple to defend the cause of the rebels. With singular inconsistency Chatham urged that Britain had the supreme right of demanding obedience to British laws, and that the Americans had an equal right to disobey them. "I shall ever contend," he declared, "that the Americans justly owe obedience to us and our ordinances of trade and navigation. As to the metaphysical refinement of attempting to show that the Americans are equally free from obedience and commercial restraint as from taxation for revenue, as being unrepresented here, I pronounce them futile, frivolous, and groundless." Yet he extolled

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the Congress, lauded the efforts of the agitators, and demanded the instant repeal of all the Acts by which it was proposed that America should contribute something to the defence of her part of the Empire. "If the Ministers persevere in misadvising and misleading the King, I will not say they could alienate the affections of his subjects from the Crown, but I will affirm that they will make the crown not worth his wearing. I will not say the King is betrayed, but I will pronounce the kingdom is undone."¹

In reply it was pointed out that the British Parliament possessed indubitable legislative supremacy: inactive right was absurd: if the right existed it must be exerted, or for ever relinquished. As for the Boston Port Act, it would, but for the obstinacy of the people, have executed itself, and by causing the indemnification of the East India Company have re-established the port and effected a reconciliation. The Mother Country could never in honour relax till her supremacy was acknowledged. To give way now would be impolitic, pusillanimous, dishonourable. Rebellious Americans were the same as rebellious Englishmen or rebellious Scotsmen.

¹ Debrett's *Debates*.

It will, however, scarcely be denied that between the proceedings of Congress and a formal declaration of independence the distance was not great. The strength of the King's position lay in his recognition of this fact, and on the course which alone might have quelled the growing spirit of rebellion without humiliation to Great Britain. The Opposition did not see facts as they really were, and called for remedies which were either vague, of various import, insufficient, or such as would have placed the Crown in a humiliating position.—Hunt p. 159.

REBELS UNDER ARMS

It was a duty, therefore, incumbent on the Government to subdue rebellion against British laws.

A few weeks later Chatham came forward with a Bill for settling the American troubles. "Britain and America," he said, "were drawn up in martial array, waiting for the signal to engage in a contest in which it was little matter for whom victory declared, as ruin and destruction must be the inevitable consequence to both. He wished to act the part of mediator; but had no desire for popularity, no predilection for his own country. Not his high esteem for America on one hand, nor his unalterable, steady regard for Great Britain on the other, should influence his conduct."

The Bill he produced surrendered everything to the Americans with the exception of the Act of Navigation. He even proposed to make the Philadelphian Congress an official and permanent body, supported by a free grant out of the Imperial exchequer. The Earl was so angry at the instant rejection of his measure, that he delivered a speech even more intemperate than usual. Regarding his allegations that three millions of Americans were in arms, Lord Gower merely remarked that the whole population did not exceed that number, one-third of whom were ardent loyalists, rendering obedience to British laws. Had he said that there would never be more than thirty thousand revolutionaries under arms, he would have been far nearer the truth.

Lord North moved an address to the King, affirming that the province of Massachusetts Bay was in rebellion, and declaring the resolution of the House

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not to relinquish any part of the sovereign authority, vested by law in the King and the two Houses, over every branch of the Empire. The address expressed the constant readiness of Parliament to pay attention to the grievances of the subject when presented in a dutiful and constitutional manner. The King was requested to take effectual measures for enforcing obedience to the laws and authority of the supreme legislature, and in the most solemn manner assured of their fixed resolution, at the hazard of their lives and property, to support him against all rebellious attempts in the maintenance of his just rights and those of the two Houses.¹

At the same time George was not without a just view of the terrible sea of difficulties upon which he, together with his Ministers, was now embarking. North, who had already shown some doubt and irresolution concerning measures of coercion, by expressing a willingness to repeal the tea tax if such concession would satisfy the Americans, now disclaimed the taxation of America as an act of his administration, tracing it to the Duke of Grafton. "If," said he, "the Americans would concede the constitutional right of supremacy to Great Britain, the quarrel would be terminated." After tumultuous debates, Parliament decreed Massachusetts to be in a state of rebellion, voted six thousand men for land and sea service, and by way of replying to the Colonial boycott passed an Act restraining the inhabitants of most of the Colonies, save the loyalists, from all trade with Britain, Ireland, and

¹ *Parliamentary History.*

HIS CONCILIATORY POLICY

the West Indies, and all participation in Newfoundland fisheries.

Parliament was now, as was the nation, strongly in favour of enforcing American obedience. North's irresolute and conciliatory tone was not understood. When he introduced a further resolution, opening the door to any single Colony which would promise to tax itself for the common defence of the Empire, and be thereby exempt from Imperial taxation, a revolt amongst his followers seemed imminent. North's conduct was, we say, misunderstood. It was not, however, the Minister, but the King who was extending the olive branch to his refractory subjects. Unaware of this, many Ministerialists denounced North's conciliatory measure as a betrayal of the cause. In the midst of a scene of great confusion Sir Gilbert Elliott made it clear that it emanated from the King, and that which was threatened with defeat became acceptable to the House. Colonel Barré spoke of the new policy as being founded on the maxim *Divide et impera*, and as being "a low, foolish, mean policy."

North rose to defend himself against the charge. "Is it foolish, is it mean," he said, "when a people, heated and misled by evil counsels, are running into unlawful combinations, to hold out those terms which will sift the reasonable from the unreasonable, distinguish those who act upon principle from those who wish only to profit by the general confusion and ruin? If propositions that the conscientious and the prudent will accept will, at the same time, recover them from the influence

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and fascination of the wicked, I avow the use of that principle, which will thus divide the good from the bad, and give aid and support to the friends of peace and good government." Had it only been possible to make these distinctions in America, to sift the well-affected from the disloyal and the opportunists, not by Colonies, but throughout the community at large, the result might have been different.

To North George wrote: "Where violence is with resolution repelled it commonly yields. And I own, though a thorough friend to holding out the olive branch, I have not the smallest doubt that if it does not succeed, that when once vigorous measures appear to be the only means left of bringing the Americans to a due submission to the Mother Country, that the Colonies will submit. I return also," he adds, "the foolish anonymous letter [one threatening his life]; any of that nature I equally despise whilst I have nothing to lay to my charge. I entirely place my security in the protection of the Divine Disposer of all things, and shall never look to the right or left, but steadily pursue the track which my conscience dictates to be the right one."

As for the King's conciliatory policy, it deserved a better fate. It was a sincere, manly attempt to save the unity of the Empire. Dartmouth forwarded the resolution of Parliament to the Governors of the American Colonies in March. He argued that the Colonies owed much of their greatness to English protection, that it was but justice that

ATTACK AT LEXINGTON

they should in their turn contribute according to their respective abilities to the common defence, and that their own welfare and interests demanded that their civil establishments should be supported with a becoming dignity. Parliament, he says, leaves each Colony "to judge of the ways and means of making due provision for these purposes, reserving to itself a discretionary power of approving or disapproving what shall be offered." It would determine nothing about the specific sum to be raised, the King trusting that adequate provision would be made by the Colonies, and that it would be proposed in such a way as to increase or diminish according as the public burthens of Britain were from time to time augmented or reduced, in so far as those burthens consist of taxes and duties which are not a security for the National Debt. By such a mode of contribution, he adds, "the Colonies will have full security that they can never be required to tax themselves without Parliament taxing the subjects of this kingdom in a far greater proportion." He assured them that any proposal of this nature from any Colony would be received with every possible indulgence, provided it was unaccompanied by declarations inconsistent with Parliamentary authority.¹

Dartmouth's letter had hardly time to arrive in America ere bloodshed began. Between the two villages of Lexington and Concord a small British force sent out by General Gage to capture

¹ *Documents relating to the Colonial History of New York*, viii. 545-7.

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a rebel magazine was fired on by the American militia. When on the 19th April 1775 night fell 65 British soldiers had been killed, 180 wounded, and 28 made prisoners. The war had begun. Thousands of the population either flew to arms or were compelled to bear them. The loyalists were robbed of their weapons, and Gage found himself blockaded in Boston. Then followed the small but bloody battle of Bunker's Hill, where the British only carried the day after a determined resistance. This engagement was a revelation to many of the martial qualities and indomitability of the rebel Americans, and showed the difficulties which lay in the path of the loyalists.

After these events, it was inevitable that the King's conciliatory offer would be scornfully rejected. Congress met and drew up another petition, in which loyalty to King George, it may be noted, was still expressed, and further addresses to the people. It proceeded to organise an army, appointing Colonel George Washington to the post of commander-in-chief. An invasion of Canada was also planned and entrusted to an Irish colonel named Montgomery, assisted by Benedict Arnold. The invasion failed largely owing to Governor Carleton's efforts. Montgomery was killed, and the American troops were forced to evacuate Canada. By this time Gage had been recalled from Boston, and Sir William Howe appointed his successor.

CHAPTER XIV

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

ALTHOUGH the Imperial Government had the support of the British nation at large, yet an active and turbulent minority was still much in evidence. The Livery of London forced on the King an address denouncing the whole policy of the Ministry towards America. George's answer testified his astonishment that any of his subjects should encourage the rebellious disposition existing in America. Relying, however, on the wisdom of Parliament, the great Council of the nation, he said, would steadily pursue the measures it recommended for support of the constitutional rights and protection of the commerce of Great Britain.

The municipal malecontents next prayed the King that he would make the hostilities cease between Great Britain and America, and restore peace to the British Empire. With great dignity George read his reply. The country was placed in a dilemma, and must either continue the hostile measures, or relinquish all claim over the Colonies, in which case they would instantly lose the West Indies and all footing on the North American continent.

"I am always ready to listen to the dutiful petitions of my subjects, and ever happy to comply

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with their reasonable requests; but while the constitutional authority of this kingdom is openly resisted by a part of my American subjects, I owe it to the rest of my people, of whose zeal and fidelity I have had such constant proofs, to continue and enforce those measures by which alone their rights and interests can be asserted and maintained."

A few days after this interview the Lord Chamberlain signified to the Lord Mayor the King's determination not to receive, on the throne, any address, remonstrance, or petition from the body corporate. Wilkes saw in this an opportunity of raising a new contest. In a long letter he insisted on the right of the City, "a right which even the accursed race of Stuarts had respected, to present petitions to the King on the throne; and hoped that a privilege left uninvaded by every tyrant of the Tarquin race would be sacredly preserved under a Prince of the House of Brunswick, whose family was chosen to protect the liberties of a free people whom the Stuarts had endeavoured to enslave."

A correspondence took place between the Lord Mayor and the Lord Chamberlain, and the sheriffs instructed to inquire when the King would receive *on the throne* an address, presented by the Lord Mayor, the city members, the court of aldermen, sheriffs, and livery. George named the next levée, whereupon Plomer, one of the sheriffs, said the livery were resolved not to present it unless the King would receive it sitting on the throne. "I am ever ready," was George's rejoinder, "to receive

LOYAL ADDRESSES

addresses and petitions, but I am the judge where." The city malcontents were silenced.

All the speeches and petitions of the British factions were carefully reported and forwarded to America, and naturally gave great comfort to the enemies of the Empire. They heard little or nothing of the loyal addresses, unsolicited and unexpected, which were sent from all parts of the Empire.

The historian Gibbon, in a letter dated 14th October 1775, says: "Another thing that will please and surprise, is the assurance which I received from a man, who might tell me a lie, but who could not be mistaken, that no arts or management whatsoever have been used to procure the addresses which fill the *Gazette*, and that Lord North was as much surprised at the first that came up as we could be at Sheffield."

The American rebellion, or revolution as it should now be called, awakened great interest throughout Europe. All intercourse between the Americans and the States of the Empire was strictly prohibited. In an audience given to the British Ambassador, the Emperor Joseph II. strongly expressed his opinion of the justice of the English proceedings, his high sense of the personal worth of the King, and a conviction that success in reducing the American rebels was of the utmost importance to all the regular Governments in Europe. "The cause in which the King is engaged," he said, "is in fact the cause of all sovereigns; they have a joint interest in maintaining a just subordination and obedience

GEORGE THE THIRD

to law in all the monarchies which surround them. He saw with pleasure the vigorous exertions of national strength which the King was employing to reduce his rebellious subjects, and sincerely wished success to those measures." The empress queen expressed, with no less warmth, her determination to maintain the good understanding between the two Crowns, and to prohibit all transactions by which her subjects should seem to afford assistance to the Colonies, or give umbrage to England. She had a high esteem, she said, for the King's principles of government, a sincere veneration for his political character, and a hearty desire to see obedience and tranquillity restored to every quarter of his dominions. Her friendship for him, and hereditary affection for the royal family, had never abated, although a difference in political opinions, the source of which she could not help attributing to the King of Prussia, had for a considerable time diminished the opportunities of an interchange of good offices.¹

Frederick the Great was highly delighted at the turn affairs had taken. The loss of his subsidy from England, which had largely enabled him to retain his place in Europe at a critical time, destroyed every sentiment of gratitude in his bosom. He courted France and Russia, intrigued with Vienna, and sympathised with America, although he did not openly avow his feelings towards that country.

In this fateful autumn the King's Speech was chiefly devoted to American affairs. He told

¹ Adolphus, vol. iii. pp. 317-18.

HIS WAR POLICY

Parliament that those who had too successfully laboured to inflame the people, by gross misrepresentations, now openly avowed their revolt, hostility, and rebellion. They had raised troops, and were collecting a naval force; they had seized the public revenue, and assumed to themselves legislative, executive, and judicial powers, which they exercised in the most arbitrary manner over the persons and properties of their fellow-subjects. Although many might still retain their loyalty, and be too wise not to see the fatal consequence of this usurpation and wish to resist it, yet the torrent of violence had been strong enough to compel their acquiescence till a sufficient force should appear for their support. The authors and promoters of this desperate conspiracy had derived great advantage from the difference of the King's intentions and their own. They meant only to amuse by vague expressions of attachment to the parent State and protestations of loyalty, while preparing for a general revolt. On his part, though it was declared in the last session that a rebellion existed in Massachusetts, yet even that province he wished rather to reclaim than subdue. The war was become more general, and was manifestly carried on for the establishment of an independent empire. It was now the part of wisdom and real clemency to put a speedy end to such disorders. He had received the most friendly offers of foreign assistance; and had sent to the garrisons of Gibraltar and Port Mahon part of his Electoral troops, that a larger portion of the British forces might

GEORGE THE THIRD

be applied in maintaining its authority; and the national militia might give a further extent and activity to military operations.¹

The incapacity of Gage, who, as we have seen, had been recalled, was matched by that of the naval commander Graves. He actually allowed the whaleboats of the rebels to intercept supplies and destroy lighthouses, scarce making an attempt against them. This placid inertia at a time when vigorous action was imperative greatly displeased the King. "I do think," he wrote North, "the admiral's removal as necessary as the mild general's."²

The greatest difficulty the King had to encounter next to obtaining competent leaders was a sufficient supply of soldiers. Vast as were the British dominions, the entire army on a peace establishment was but little more than 38,000 men, including the army of 15,000 in Ireland, 3500 in Gibraltar, and 2500 in Minorca. He had persistently urged that the Empire could not adequately be guarded by so small a force, but public opinion and the traditional jealousy of a standing army made North and his colleagues loath to increase the estimates. George himself suggested drafting 2355 of his Hanoverian troops to garrison Gibraltar and Minorca, and so render the garrisons there available for service in America. But this was not enough; troops were needed at

¹ *Parliamentary History.*

² *Letters to Lord North*, vol. 1. 256.

Every matter connected with the war was directed by the King. His industry and his knowledge of details, military and naval, were extraordinary.—Hunt, *Political History of England*, p. 153.

GERMAN MILITARY HELP

once, and if they could not be obtained in Britain, it was necessary to engage them elsewhere. He tendered an offer for the Brigade of Scots, then in the service of Holland, but the offer was refused. A similar proposal was made to Catherine of Russia, but without more success. To raise the required troops at short notice was a difficult task. In January 1776 Lord Barrington warned the King that Scotland had never yet been so bare of troops, and that those in England were too few for the security of the country. The new land tax was raised to fourpence in the pound. But higher bounties failed to tempt the men. Recruiting agents traversed the Highlands of Scotland and the remote districts of Ireland. The poor Catholics of Munster and Connaught, who had been so long excluded from the English army, were gladly welcomed.¹ But enlistments were tardy. There seemed little enthusiasm to fight their own kin. The pressgangs were fiercely resisted. Conscription alone could raise the much-needed army in England; no Minister would dare then to propose conscription.

Such being the situation, George was greatly relieved when three German rulers, the Duke of Brunswick, the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, and the Prince of Waldeck, agreed to furnish him with nearly 18,000 men. The plan of committing the custody of British garrisons to foreign troops was hotly denounced by the Opposition when Parliament met as illegal. It was a precedent of most alarming and dangerous tendency, recognising a power in

¹ Lecky, vol. iii. pp. 456-7.

GEORGE THE THIRD

the King to introduce foreigners into the British dominions, and raise armies without the consent of Parliament. Thurlow's reply to this was that the clause in the Bill of Rights embraced no part of the King's dominions beyond the limits of Great Britain. The necessity of the case and danger of delay were pointed to, and the introduction of six thousand Dutch troops in 1745, without previous consent, furnished a precedent.

At the end of October North brought in a Bill enabling the King to assemble the militia in cases of rebellion, which passed. In the course of the debates, Lord Montagu expressed a wish to see a militia in North Britain. This was too much for Dunning. "A noble lord," he cried, "has touched upon another militia;—a militia to be composed of a different set of people, a northern militia! From the manner in which the intimation is given, I take for granted the plan is determined, and that it is one of the measures which are, at present, so rapidly combined. It is curious to observe what are the auxiliaries called to the assistance of the British constitution—Catholics from Canada; Irish Papists; a new militia in England, very differently composed from the old one; a Scotch militia, of a description that I will not name. Hanoverian mercenaries are to garrison the two principal fortresses in the Mediterranean; and, to crown the whole, twenty thousand Russians. They are not to be sent to America; therefore we may presume they are to be brought here, to protect the legislative authority of this country."

An answer to this diatribe was made by Rigby,

MILITARY HALF-HEARTEDNESS

who denied that the Government had any intention of bringing Russians into Britain. Whenever, he said, war demanded foreign auxiliaries, they had been obtained from various countries. The last war saw Wolfenbüttlers, Hessians, Hanoverians, and many other people in the British service. "There was a Britanic legion, which consisted of all the thieves in Europe. The learned member," proceeded Rigby, "enters very logically into the distinctions of rebellion. He detests that of 1745, but likes the present passing well. For my part, although I think there is but one kind of rebellion, I cannot carry my resentments so far back; for whenever the Americans shall return to their duty, I shall not consider them as deserving of my hatred." Eventually the land forces were fixed at 55,000, of whom 25,000 were for American service, those of the navy at 28,000.

It was perhaps natural that the disaffected Americans should seize upon the employment of German auxiliaries as a terrible grievance. To listen to the impassioned shrieks of their orators, one would have thought that King George was "delivering a loyal people to be massacred by foreign mercenaries." As a matter of fact they were making war on the King, and he had as good a right to buy troops to fight his quarrel as he had to buy cannon."¹

One cannot but note regretfully the half-heartedness with which throughout the whole struggle the British officers and men engaged in the American war. This half-heartedness was partly shared by the British people, and we need seek no further

¹ Hunt, *Political History of England*, p. 154.

GEORGE THE THIRD

reason than the fact that it was a civil war. In Parliament we find the nature of civil wars, and the propriety of professional activity by military commanders when their opinions were repugnant to the service, frankly canvassed. Lord Howe, Sir William's brother, declared he did not conceive any struggle so painful as that between his duty as an officer and as a man. If left to his choice, he certainly should decline to serve; but if commanded, it was his duty, and he should not refuse to obey. Conway foolishly urged a difference between a foreign war, where the whole community was involved, and a domestic war on points of civil contention, wherein the community was divided. "In the first case, no officer ought to call in question the justice of his country; in the latter, a military man, before he drew his sword against his fellow-subjects, ought to examine his conscience whether the cause was just."

Thurlow, with righteous indignation, denounced such sentiments. "Let the honourable gentleman," he said, "justify his conscience to himself, but not hold it out as a point of doctrine to be taken up in a quarter and line of service where his opinions might be supposed to have great influence, for if once established as doctrine, they must tend to a dissolution of government."

Sir William Howe was a Whig, privately sympathising with the American rebels. It was impossible that this private sympathy should not interfere with his vigour in campaigning against them. The King wished Howe to abandon Boston and repair

“COMMON SENSE”

to Long Island, where he could receive the expected reinforcements and capture New York. Howe replied that he had not sufficient transports, and preferred to winter in Boston. Yet even during his sojourn in Boston at any time he could have fallen upon Washington and wiped out the Colonial army. He preferred instead to allow himself to be gradually enclosed by the enemy. No wonder Washington was astonished! The latter seized and fortified Dorchester Heights, which effectually commanded Boston, and still Howe made no shadow of resistance. When the cannonading grew too severe, on 17th March 1776 the unspeakable British commander with his whole army and 2000 miserable loyalists evacuated Boston and sailed for Halifax. Usually on evacuation no ammunition or supplies are left behind for the enemy. Howe thoughtfully left to the rebels two hundred cannon, vast quantities of powder and lead, thousands of muskets, and various military stores. “General Howe,” declared one of the “patriots,” “is a good friend to America.” Britain had left the New England loyalists to their fate.

The notion of independence, which had already gained much ground, received a great impetus from a widely circulated anonymous pamphlet called “Common Sense.” This production of the notorious Thomas Paine, an Englishman by birth, a stay-maker by training, and a revolutionary by trade, hostile to Britain and monarchy, first appeared in January 1776, a few months after Paine had arrived in America. No fewer than 100,000 copies were

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circulated. Washington described it as working a powerful change in the minds of many men. According to Paine, England is "that barbarous and hellish power which hath stirred up the Indians and negroes to destroy us." The lingering attachment to her he ridiculed as mere local prejudice. Not one-third part of the inhabitants, even of Pennsylvania, he said, were of English descent; and the Americans were recommended to put to death as traitors all their countrymen who were taken in arms for the King. No more suitable moment, in Paine's opinion, could be found for complete separation from the Empire. And he was right.

Schism was rapidly forwarded from other causes. The Governor of Virginia, Lord Dunmore, had been obliged in June 1775 to take refuge on board a man-of-war. Afterwards Dunmore manned a small flotilla, and with the ardent co-operation of the loyalists endeavoured to bring the rebels back to their allegiance, besides offering freedom to the slaves and inviting help from the Indians. In his war upon the rebels he made several descents upon the coast, which vigorous measures roused the Virginian patriots to fury, and made those who had formerly hesitated about independence now fall into line.

George had received assurances that separation would be strongly combated by the Southern loyalists. The Governors of North and South Carolina were convinced that if a sufficient force were despatched to their provinces the loyalists would be encouraged to rise and the whole south reclaimed

LORD GEORGE GERMAIN

for the King. But delay and ineptitude brought ruin to the project. Clinton and Parker failed ignominiously in their attempt to take Charleston. Their failure and their folly dismayed the loyalists. The rebels were proportionately elated, and only a few days after the Carolinian fiasco, on July 4th the thirteen Colonies as represented in the Philadelphian Congress issued their celebrated Declaration of Independence.

Before we consider the actual schism and the character of the amazing production which publicly announced it to the world, we have to note certain changes amongst the King's advisers. Grafton having resigned the Privy Seal was succeeded by Dartmouth. Conway also abandoned his colleagues. Lord Rochford retired, and was succeeded by Viscount Weymouth. Dartmouth's former post of Secretary of State for America was given to Lord George Germain, who now appears on the busy scene.

Germain was an unpopular man. As Lord George Sackville he had in the preceding reign been charged with cowardice at the battle of Minden. He had demanded a court-martial to enquire into his conduct, and this body, unfairly, it may be, declared him incapable of any further military employment. The sentence was enforced with asperity by George II., and Lord George's name struck off the list of Privy Councillors. Many believed that this verdict of the court-martial was an act of gross injustice. At this time Germain had completed his sixty-fifth year. He was six feet tall, and vigorous in mind and body ;

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an air of high birth and dignity illuminated by strong sense pervaded every lineament of his face. His countenance indicated intellect, particularly his eye, the motions of which were "quick and piercing." On first acquaintance his manner and air impressed those who approached him with an idea of proud reserve; no man in private society unbent himself more or manifested less self-importance.¹

The resemblance of this portrait in many respects to that of Lord Bute will strike the reader. At all events the King was impressed at first by Germain's ability. The plaudits of the unthinking multitude weighed with him not at all in making choice of his counsellors.

The speech terminating the session at the close of May 1776 represented Britain as engaged in a great national cause, the prosecution of which must inevitably be attended with many difficulties and much expense. Considering that the essential rights and interests of the whole Empire were deeply concerned, and no safety or security could be found but in the constitutional subordination contended for, no price could be too high for the preservation of such objects. The King said he still entertained hopes that his rebellious subjects might be awakened to a sense of their errors, and by a voluntary return to duty justify him in bringing about the favourite wish of his heart, the restoration of harmony, and re-establishment of order and happiness in every part of his dominions.

George also informed Parliament that no altera-

¹ Wraxall, *Memoirs*.

THE TWO HOWES

tion had happened in the state of foreign affairs since he last spoke from the throne, and dwelt with pleasure on the assurances of the European Powers, which promised a continuance of tranquillity. To rely implicitly on such promises or appearances just then, when Great Britain was engaging in a formidable and extensive civil war, would have been extremely imprudent. Tokens of amity from rival Powers, taught by traditional hostility to consider each other as enemies, would at any time be regarded with suspicion; on the present occasion there was the positive boast of the Americans that they could obtain foreign assistance. The conclusion of the last war, so mortifying to the French pride, rendered it not unlikely that the Courts of France and Spain would do their utmost secretly to widen the breach between Britain and her Colonies. If hostilities continued they might take an active part. Meanwhile France or Spain would secretly assist the Americans, awaiting the time when the resources and strength of each party were clearly manifested.¹

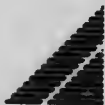
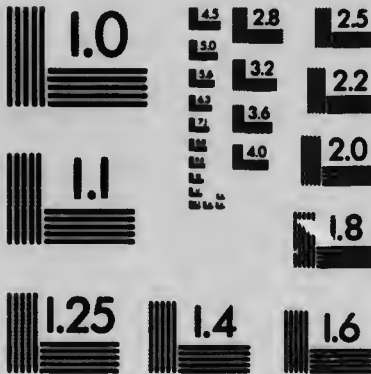
To prove George's real desire for peace he put no obstacle in the way of the appointment of General Howe's brother, Admiral Howe, as naval commander in America, although his strong Whig opinions were also no secret. More than this, he consented that the two brothers should be nominated as Commissioners under the Prohibitory Bill. George indeed feared, as he wrote North, that Lord Howe was not the proper man for such a post. But he did not, alas, press his objections!

¹ Adolphus, vol. ii. pp. 313-14.



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GEORGE THE THIR

Howe set sail for America with large reinforcements and offers of pardon in his pocket. When he joined his brother, the general, at Staten Island, near New York, couriers were flying all over the thirteen Colonies, and copies of the Declaration of Independence were being scattered broadcast.

Of this document we may say with Adolphus, that "at no preceding period of history was so important a transaction vindicated by so shallow and feeble a composition." It came from the pen of Thomas Jefferson, the arch-demagogue in American history. George III. was singled out for a display of malevolence unexampled in any political revolution in the history of the world. Although Franklin, who had better reason than most to know him, called him "the best of kings," although his personal and public benevolence and honesty of purpose should have been patent to all his subjects, he was denounced in terms which would have been unjust and exaggerated if used of Tarquin, of Nero, or of Borgia.

The crudity and violence of the language of the Declaration should have alienated every right-thinking man, and the number of loyalists were certainly increased. Nevertheless, as Mr. Fisher observes, "The Declaration gave the patriots a rallying point; it showed their purpose, interested the French king, and was a basis for his action when a victory convinced him of the advisability of an alliance." "It was probably well," he adds, "to declare independence as soon as possible after what seemed to be our distinct success, because it was a long time before we had another, and we never had

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

one which at once put all the British troops out of the country.”¹

The Declaration was accompanied by insults to the King, his name and features were effaced in all public places, and in New York an equestrian statue erected in 1770 was thrown down and melted. The word “royal” and the sign of the crown were generally suppressed. Lord Howe had delivered his message too late. It is the opinion of some that if the King’s offer could have been tendered a few days before the Declaration of Independence the majority of Congress might have felt themselves bound to accede to them as a secure and honourable basis of pacification. But now the American commissioners would not treat except on the basis of independence.

After the failure of the commissioners Howe enjoyed several successes over the rebels, which, had he followed up, might have led to decisive results. But after gaining a victory he allowed Washington to escape, and the chance never recurred. On September 15th the British took possession of New York, and the Americans fled in confusion, leaving their guns behind.

The news of Howe’s victories greatly encouraged the loyalists and delighted the King. George followed every detail of the campaign, every movement of the commanders, with the strongest interest. He had large maps of the Colonies specially prepared, showing the disposition of the troops according to the latest despatches. It is no more than true to say that the King himself planned the campaign.

¹ *The American Revolution*, p. 298.

GEORGE THE THIRD

Had his generals followed his instructions there would have been more victories and fewer defeats to chronicle. We know now that it was his idea that Sir Guy Carleton should invade the province of New York from Canada and join Howe to the south.¹ But Carleton found his way blocked by Fort Ticonderoga, and as winter approached he returned to Quebec. Carleton's whole mind and energies were directed to defending Canada. He had succeeded in driving out the Americans, and he desired to run no risk with his army that would endanger the hold he had so manfully secured on his province. Besides, he had reason to distrust Germain's intentions towards himself. The Colonial Secretary showed a personal animosity to Carleton, and rarely lost an opportunity of disparaging his conduct to the King. Indeed he had already despatched an order informing Carleton that beyond the Canadian border the command of the Canadian troops was to be entrusted to Burgoyne. This order, however, miscarried. On hearing of Carleton's decision to suspend operations the King wrote that he had every confidence in Sir Guy, although later, when the Canadian Governor had re-crossed the border, George wrote:—

“That there is great prejudice, perhaps not unaccompanied with rancour, in a certain breast against Governor Carleton is so manifest to whoever has heard the subject mentioned, that it would be idle to say more than that it is a fact. Perhaps Carleton may be too cold and not so active as might be wished, which may make it advisable to have the part of the

¹ See Letter in Appendix.

WASHINGTON'S GENIUS

Canadian army (which must not attempt to join General Howe) led by a more enterprising commander. But should the proposal be to recall Carleton from his government or censure his conduct, that would be cruel, and the exigency cannot authorise it."

Howe followed up his successes by the battle of White Plains, where after another victory he again failed to derive any strategic benefit. Some three weeks later Fort Washington was forced to surrender, and nearly 3000 prisoners, 43 cannon, and a valuable magazine of stores were captured. Cornwallis overran New Jersey, driving Washington before him. Clinton made the rebels abandon Rhode Island, and the Congress in a panic abandoned Philadelphia.

December saw the American cause at a low ebb. "The game," wrote Washington, "is pretty well played out." But the continued folly of the British generals soon retrieved the American position. Howe remained inert all winter long in New York, and Washington, satisfied with taking Trenton and compelling the British to evacuate some of the points they had held, was well content to devote his attention to enlisting more troops in the spring. The enormous difficulties he experienced in raising a sufficient force is an eloquent testimony to the loyalist feeling in America at that time. Two or three British victories vigorously followed up would have utterly routed the hopes of the insurgents. As it was, the chief triumphs of Washington's genius were over his own army, "that destructive, expensive, and disorderly mob," as he called it. The American commander had taken Howe's measure. For the

GEORGE THE THIRD

rest of Howe's year and a half in America, Washington, no matter how low his force dwindled, always remained encamped within a few miles of the vast host of his Whig antagonist undisturbed and unpursued. He had no need to retreat amongst the redskins and the buffalo of the Mississippi.

When one reflects on the "relentless severity and slaughter" of Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan in the Civil War, "the persistent and steady hunting down of men," Howe's mild, dilatory methods are hard to explain except on the hypothesis which his loyalist critics adopted.

In Britain every single step the King and his Ministers took for the subjugation of the rebellion was criticised and obstructed by the Whigs and democrats. Every British defeat they rejoiced at, every British victory they deplored. Besides Chatham, Fox, Burke, Barré, and Wilkes, a Dissenting Minister named Price came forward with a laudatory pamphlet on America, which created great stir at the time. It was repeatedly quoted in Parliament. The King's own brother, the Duke of Cumberland, complimented the author in person, and the common council of London voted Price its thanks, and presented the freedom of the city to him in a gold box. The news of Howe's victory at Brooklyn Fox openly called "the terrible news." In the House of Commons Wilkes said: "If we are saved, it will be almost solely by the courage and noble spirit of our American brethren, whom neither the luxuries of a Court nor the sordid lust of avarice in a rapacious and venal metropolis have hitherto corrupted."

THE WHIG MINORITY

Although the war to preserve the unity of the Empire enormously enhanced the burdens which Britain was called upon to bear, yet the nation bore it manfully, for the King's cause was now the cause of the majority. Yet the Whig minority never desisted. At a time when it behoved every Briton to stand shoulder to shoulder throughout the Empire the halls of Parliament resounded with vituperative declamations, traitorous invectives, and cowardly insinuations. Chatham in particular could never be brought to understand what Washington well knew, that more than half of America was still, openly or secretly, loyal to the King, and had no more grievance against the Government than had Kent or Cumberland. "My lords," declared Chatham, "I say again this country has been the aggressor; you have made descents upon their coasts, you have burnt their towns, plundered their country, made war upon the inhabitants, confiscated their property, proscribed and imprisoned their persons. Let, then, the reparation come from the hands who have inflicted the injuries." In other words, the British Government had achieved, but with great mildness, what the exigencies of a war and rebellion demanded. It had acted precisely as it had (with Chatham's approval) acted towards the Scotch in 1745; as it would act again on the occasion of a later rebellion, as America acted towards the rebellious States of her Empire in 1861, as all Governments worthy of the name ought to act.

It was in the midst of these discussions that North, just recovering from severe illness, was obliged to submit to the House a demand which he

GEORGE THE THIRD

foresaw must introduce most unpleasant discussions. The increasing load of debt on the Civil List, greatly augmented by numerous American refugees, had long embarrassed the Court, but the circumstances of the times had prevented an application to Parliament. The poverty of the Crown was now become so disgraceful, that the Minister could no longer decline presenting a message informing the House that the arrears amounted to upwards of six hundred thousand pounds, and appealing to their loyalty and affection to discharge this debt, and at the same time make further provision for supporting the dignity of the Crown. To this the Opposition declared that the "honour and dignity of the Crown" formed a common pretext for such applications; but if the Minister really consulted the honour and dignity of the Crown, he would have applied to Parliament earlier, or even annually, as the debt was incurred. Dangerous consequences might arise from the augmentation of the Civil List, and the consequent influence of the Crown, already become much too powerful. To quote the still irrepressible Wilkes, the nation cheerfully gave eight hundred thousand pounds for the trappings of royalty, and the proposed augmentation was a violation of public faith. It was cruel to fleece the people when involved in a most expensive as well as unnatural and ruinous civil war, and burthened with an enormous national debt. Having reviewed the expenses of all the sovereigns since the Revolution, he extolled their magnificence compared with the want of splendour in the Court of George III.

POVERTY OF THE CROWN

North explained that during the past four years the Crown expenditure so far from having advanced had undergone a considerable decrease, to the amount of nearly £100,000 a year. In the last year it had increased on account of numerous American refugees, driven from their country or property for their loyalty and attachment to the Crown and Parliament of Great Britain, and left destitute of resource, or even of sustenance. These alone had augmented the Civil List expenses to nearly £30,000. The influence of the Crown had not been enlarged since the King's accession; but Government had been strengthened by the wisdom and rectitude of the King's counsels, and the esteem and confidence of his subjects. The obligations were mutual and justly merited; and if such an influence really existed, it would not be employed in abridging the liberties of the subjects or in acts of oppression, but in securing and augmenting the prosperity, virtues, and happiness of the people.¹

One intemperate and ignorant member, Alderman Sawbridge, flatly asserted that in his opinion the Civil List had been employed in corrupting both Houses. It had been spent in private as well as public pensions, in single bribes and temporary gratuities. "The Civil List had been drained by as many different means as want suggested, or corruption was capable of devising." A scene of excitement occurred, but Sawbridge refused to retract or qualify his expressions, but went even further: "Some of the very debt which the Minister applied

¹ *Parliamentary History.*

GEORGE THE THIRD

to Parliament to discharge was squandered in hiring spies and informers to ruin and distress innocent men, men in every light as loyal to the King and as faithful to their country as their persecutors would persuade the world they themselves were."¹ Burke's happy irony fortunately threw a veil over Sawbridge's ridiculous mare's-nest.

In the Upper House Lord Talbot narrated what pains he had been at to reduce the expense of the domestic department of the royal household. He illustrated the difficulty of reforming the King's menial servants when profits were enjoyed by persons of rank and the services performed by others. One of the turnspits in the King's kitchen was a member of the House of Commons, whose duties were performed by a poor man for five pounds a year. One reform Talbot alone had effected: board wages were suppressed, and the servants obliged to attend to their duties. There were no fewer than seventy-three tables kept, of which eleven were for nurses. The Lord Steward described the unhappiness of the King at his poor tradesmen being kept so long waiting for their accounts to be settled. As to influence, he thought that "Whatever tended to make the sovereign easy in his domestic situation, and independent of his Ministers, constituted so much power to be used for the benefit of the people, and not against them." Lord Melbourne struck a true note when he said that "The influence of the Crown was not the only influence which tended to bring the nation to slavery, destruction, and ruin. The whole mass of the people

¹ Adolphus, vol. ii. p. 422.

BURGOYNE'S SURRENDER

were corrupted or corruptible. The nation was composed of buyers and sellers. Every man wished to purchase or dispose; and when he purchased, it was always with the intention to dispose."¹

It is superfluous and quite outside the scope of this work to relate the story of the American revolutionary war, except in so far as its leading events touch the policy and person of the King. In February North presented to the astonishment of the House of Commons another measure of conciliation towards the Americans. Five commissioners were to be appointed to proceed to America and treat directly with Congress. Short of an acknowledgment of their independence, almost any terms were to be agreed to. It was with great reluctance that the King agreed to any further overtures, since he could not help regarding them as a confession of weakness, which the Americans themselves would contemn.

On the 17th October 1777 General Burgoyne, who had allowed himself to become entirely surrounded by the Americans, surrendered at Saratoga. On Howe's shoulders rests the disgrace of this campaign. Through Germain the King had ordered him to co-operate with the northern army; but Howe harboured his own schemes. He wished to take Philadelphia; he took it, but it proved an empty conquest, and really damaging to the loyalist cause. The chief importance of Saratoga is the impetus the American victory gave to the secret plans of France and other European countries.

¹ *Parliamentary History.*

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The American cause, patronised by the political philosophers, had already been made popular in France. America was hailed as the land of ideal virtue and sweet simplicity, where all men lived in gentle fellowship and equality.

The foolish courtiers, who had made the Utopian doctrines of Voltaire and Rousseau the fashionable reading of the hour, hailed the arrival in Paris of Benjamin Franklin with ludicrous enthusiasm. Franklin lost no time in achieving his mission, which was to stir up sufficient animosity to Britain to induce the French Government to acknowledge American independence and take the side of America in the quarrel. Vergennes, on hearing of Burgoyne's surrender, early in December 1777, thought the time ripe for dealing Britain the long-meditated blow. The treaty which was signed two months later rendered war between Britain and France inevitable.

By the intervention of France was victory brought about eventually for the cause of the American separatists. "Unless," wrote a French officer serving in the American army, "France declared war against Britain the Americans would fail to obtain independence, so little enthusiasm for the cause was there among them, and so keenly had they felt the privations of the war."

On the eve of the negotiation of this Franco-American treaty George told Parliament that while foreign Powers had given strong assurances of pacific disposition, yet the armaments of France and Spain still continued. He had considerably

NORTH SEEKS REPOSE

augmented his naval forces, firmly determined never to disturb the peace of Europe, though he would faithfully guard the honour of the British Crown. He would steadily pursue the measures in which he was engaged for the re-establishment of that constitutional subordination which, by the blessings of God, he would ever maintain through the several parts of his dominions. But he still hoped the deluded and unhappy multitude of America would return to their allegiance. "Remembrance of what they once enjoyed, regret for what they had lost, and feelings of what they suffered under the arbitrary tyranny of their leaders, would rekindle in their hearts a spirit of loyalty to their sovereign, and of attachment to their Mother Country. If so, they would enable him, with the concurrence and support of Parliament, to accomplish what he should consider the greatest happiness of his life and the greatest glory of his reign, the restoration of peace, order, and confidence to the American Colonies."

In Britain, so far from the Saratoga surrender depressing public spirit, it enormously increased it. Vastly disconcerted, the patriotic Whigs were to see Liverpool, Glasgow, Edinburgh each raising a regiment of troops, while 15,000 soldiers were raised by private bounty alone and presented to the State.

With the Franco-American alliance looming up North shrank from the mighty task now before his country. We find him urging the King to accept his resignation. He actually suggested that Chatham should be invited to take office, and

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he himself sounded Shelburne as to the Earl's terms. George, who had watched Chatham's intemperate language in the House of Lords, could hardly look upon such a proposal with anything but disapproval. Was it likely that with Parliament and the body of the nation behind him that George would commission Chatham or any other man to turn out all his servants and stultify all his measures? The Earl insisted, it was understood, on an entire change of Ministry. The King revolted at the idea. Such a change would be no advantage to the country. "No personal danger to himself," as he wrote North, "would induce him to consent"; he would "rather lose his crown!"

CHAPTER XV

CONTINUATION OF THE STRUGGLE

THIS inflexible attitude of the King has been made the occasion of much absurd and ill-considered Whig denunciation. They, who criticise the monarch for his "stubbornness," altogether lose sight of the fact that George was speaking not for himself, but for his people. Even if the Parliamentary majority had been smaller than it was, still a large majority of the nation approved of the measures he was carrying out. As an eminently fair authority says: "The King's policy was still popular with the larger part of his subjects. If he is to be blamed because, rather than submit to the loss of the Colonies, which nearly all men believe would be the end of England's prosperity, he must carry on the struggle, the blame must be shared by others."¹ But whatever ideas regarding Chatham's further participation in the Government had been formed, they were soon set at rest by the hand of death in May 1778.

It is difficult to see how George could regard Chatham as anything but a public enemy. He had thwarted every true patriot's hopes; he had comforted the enemy; he had used language which could only be regarded as seditious and indecent in the mouth

¹ Hunt, *Political History of England*.

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of an Englishman. His character was well described by one of his friends: "Upon every important subject," he said, "he appealed to some common and inspiring sentiment—the feelings of national honour, disgust at political corruption, the care of popular liberty, contempt of artifice, or hatred of oppression. But provided the topic were animating and effective, he cared little whether it were one on which a wise patriot could honestly dilate; a vulgar prejudice served his turn as well as an ancient and useful privilege. He countenanced every prevailing delusion, and hurried the nation to war, not as a necessary evil, but as an honourable choice. Above all, he loved to nourish the popular jealousy of France, and it was upon his means of gratifying this feeling that he seemed to build his hopes of future power. Ever ready to be the mouthpiece of the cry or clamour of the House, he could be as inconsistent as the multitude itself; in his earlier days, when reproached with his change of opinion, he pleaded honest conviction of his error; after he had acquired authority, he faced down his accusers with a glare of his eye and the hardihood of his denial. Nor, although he assumed a tone of virtue superior to his age, was he more scrupulous than others in political intrigue, but his object was higher. Instead of bartering his conscience for a large salary or a share of patronage, he aimed at undivided power, the fame of a great orator, to be the fear of every cabal, and the admiration of a whole people."¹

The whole political conduct of Chatham on his

¹ Barrington, *Memoirs of the Affairs of Europe*, vol. ii. p. 195.

“THAT PERFIDIOUS MAN”

death was reviewed by the ablest of his contemporaries, and by many was vehemently censured as the source of much of the disquiet and many of the disasters which overtook the country.

George had written to Lord North about the middle of March: “I declare in the strongest and most solemn manner that I do not object to your addressing yourself to Lord Chatham, yet you must acquaint him that I shall never address myself to him but through you, and on a clear explanation that he is to step forth to support an administration wherein you are First Lord of the Treasury; and that I cannot consent to have any conversation with him till the Ministry is formed; that if he comes into this I will, as he supports you, receive him with open arms.” In the same letter he adds: “No advantage to this country, nor personal danger to myself, can make me address myself to Lord Chatham, or to any other branch of Opposition. Honestly, I would rather lose the crown I now wear, than bear the ignominy of possessing it under their shackles. I might write volumes if I would state the feelings of my mind, but I have honestly, fairly, and affectionately told you the whole of my mind, and what I will never depart from. Should Lord Chatham wish to see me before he gives an answer, I shall most certainly refuse it. I have had enough of personal negotiation, and neither my dignity nor my feelings will ever let me again submit to it.”

Speaking of Lord Chatham as “that perfidious man,” on the 17th March the sovereign again ad-

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dresses himself to North: "No consideration in life shall make me stoop to Opposition. I am still ready to accept any part of them that will come to the assistance of my present efficient Ministers; but whilst any ten men in the kingdom will stand by me, I will not give myself up into bondage. I will rather risk my crown than do what I think personally disgraceful. It is impossible that the nation should not stand by me. If they will not they shall have another king, for I never will put my hand to what will make me miserable to the last hour of my life." If a king be not entirely a puppet and to have sensibilities like other men, it is difficult to see how he can be blamed. Again he writes: "The making Lord Chatham's family suffer for the conduct of their father is not in the least agreeable to my sentiments. But I should choose to know him to be totally unable to appear on the public stage before I agree to any offer of that kind, lest it should be wrongly construed to fear of him; and indeed his political conduct the last winter was so abandoned, that he must, in the eyes of the dispassionate, have totally undone all the merit of his former conduct. As to any gratitude to be expected from him or his family, the whole tenor of their lives has shown them void of that most honourable sentiment. But when decrepitude or death puts an end to him as a trumpet of sedition, I shall make no difficulty in placing the second son's name instead of the father's and making up the pension to three thousand pounds."¹

¹ *Letters to Lord North.*

CHATHAM'S INGRATITUDE

Let it be remembered, remarks Jesse, that to George III. Chatham was indebted for his earldom and his pension; that the King in former days had repeatedly paid the most flattering tributes to his genius; that during the Earl's last administration his sovereign had exacted no conditions from him, had allowed him to select his own colleagues, and had supported him with the whole weight of the royal authority. During the mysterious malady which for twenty months in the years 1767 and 1768 had prostrated the great mind of Chatham, the King had uncomplainingly put up with his infirmities; he had anxiously and patiently waited for his restoration to health; he had allowed him to draw the splendid salary attached to his office without discharging any one of its duties; and, in fact, during two years had treated him with a kindness and a consideration for which no amount of gratitude could have been too ample. And yet all this goodness had been repaid by the Earl not only with persistent and often factious opposition, but by seizing every opportunity of maligning his sovereign; by accusing him in the House of Lords, and to the British nation, of making a farce of the liberties of his subjects; by charging him with deliberate treachery towards himself, and with being a slave to a base unconstitutional influence behind his throne. Even the fair fame of the King's mother had not escaped the cruel innuendoes of the embittered statesman. So unjustifiable indeed had been his attacks in the House of Lords, that not only had more than one Peer occasionally called him to order, but the Duke of Grafton on one occasion

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went so far as to tell him to his face that his words were the effect of "a distempered mind brooding over its own discontents."¹

A public funeral and a statue was duly voted, the sum of £20,000 was granted for the discharge of his debts, and an annuity of £4000 a year was annexed to his earldom.

"I am rather surprised," wrote the King to North, "at the vote of a public funeral and a monument in Westminster Abbey for Lord Chatham; but I trust it is worded as a testimony of gratitude for his rousing the nation at the beginning of the last war, and his conduct whilst at that period he held the seals of Secretary of State, or this compliment, if paid to his general conduct, is rather an offensive measure to me personally. As to the adding a life to the pension I granted unto him for three lives I very readily consent to that, and authorise Lord North without delay to take the necessary steps for effecting my intentions."

The bulk of the nation seems to have been of the same way of thinking, for the funeral was but meanly attended. Few even of the Opposition came forward to follow the remains of Chatham to the grave.

Needless to say the Commissioners appointed to treat with the American Congress—Lord Carlisle, Eden, afterwards Lord Auckland, and Johnstone—met with no success in their negotiations. Yet they were empowered to guarantee to America "perfect freedom of legislation and internal government," the withdrawal forever of British troops from the Colonies,

¹ Jesse, vol. ii, pp. 204-5.

LOUIS AS A HERO

and to proffer seats in the British House of Commons to American representatives, concessions which were greater than any of the patriots had ever contended for, only stopping short at the actual disruption of the Empire. When the Empire was in extreme peril the Opposition, and Fox above all, magnified Britain's losses, "encouraged her enemies by exposing her weakness, and not content with insisting on the maladministration of the Government, cavilled at every measure proposed for the defence of her Empire. Their conduct irritated their fellow-countrymen, for the spirit of the nation was roused by the intervention of France in the war with the Colonies."¹

On the other side of the Atlantic the French alliance occasioned great jubilation; the nobility and generosity of poor Louis XVI. were lauded to the skies. The Republicans forgot their hatred of kings, and Congress announced he would "rank among the greatest heroes of history, whose example would decide the rest of Europe to champion the cause of freemen and patriots." The young French Marquis de Lafayette obtained a command in the American army, and tried hard, but with a success not always proportionate to his zeal, to distinguish himself as a military commander. The arrival of a strong French naval force under Admiral d'Estaing was eagerly awaited by the American insurgent leaders. If this fleet should succeed in winning a victory from the British fleet under Howe, they believed the result would be regarded by Great Britain as decisive. But it soon appeared that D'Estaing was by no

¹ Hunt, p. 191.

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means anxious to come to fighting terms even with Lord Howe. After a good deal of reconnoitring D'Estaing withdrew his fleet from American waters.

Meanwhile Britain prepared to defend her own shores from French invasion. Keppel, who was selected by the King for the command of the Grand, or as it was afterwards called, the Channel, Fleet was, like the Howes, a Whig member of Parliament and a regular opponent of Government. With thirty ships of the line on 27th July 1778 he engaged the Brest fleet under D'Orvilliers near Ushant, and an indecisive action was the result. For this result Keppel blamed Palliser, the third in command, and one of the Lords of the Admiralty. Palliser retorted, and a bitter quarrel ensued. Out of this quarrel party capital was made by both sides. The Government supported Palliser, the Opposition upheld Keppel, the latter being connected by blood and marriage with many of the great Whig lords. The utmost violence was shown, not only in Parliament but by the London mob. Early in 1779 a court-martial was held, Keppel was acquitted, the mob gutted Palliser's house, and attacked the houses of several members of the Government. Even the leading Whigs took parts in this violence. In the mob which attacked the Admiralty were Charles Fox, who had recently been a member of its Board, and Thomas Grenville, afterwards First Lord of the Admiralty. "It happened at three in the morning," writes Walpole, "that Charles Fox, Lord Derby, and his brother, Major Stanley, and two or three more young men of quality, having been drinking at Almack's, suddenly

ILL-USAGE OF PALLISER

thought of making a tour of the streets, and were joined by the Duke of Ancaster, who was very drunk, and, what showed it was no premeditated scheme, the latter was a courtier, and had actually been breaking windows. Finding the mob before Palliser's house, some of the young lords said, "Why don't you break Lord George Germain's windows?" The populace had been so little tutored that they asked who he was, and being encouraged, broke his windows. The mischief pleasing the juvenile leaders, they marched to the Admiralty, forced the gates, and demolished Palliser's and Lord Lisburne's windows. Lord Sandwich, exceedingly terrified, escaped through the garden with his mistress, Miss Ray, to the Horse Guards, and there betrayed a most manifest panic."¹

It may be added that not only did a First Lord of the Admiralty publicly keep a mistress at his official residence at Whitehall, but it is stated as a fact that even Bishops with their wives sat unblushingly through the musical and dramatic performances with which the Earl was accustomed to entertain his neighbours at Hinchin broke, knowing full well that the songstress to whom they listened was the paramour of their host, and the mother of his children.²

Palliser, though a Tory, was a brave and able man, and at that time suffering from wounds which he had received in the service of his country. "Perhaps," wrote Lord Sheffield, "no man was ever more cruelly used by the public through a violent

¹ Walpole's *Last Journals*, vol. ii. p. 343.

² Jesse, vol. ii. pp. 239-40.

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party spirit." The King also wrote to North in almost the same way: "Perhaps there never was a more general run than against poor Sir Hugh Palliser." Party politics were fast ruining the naval service; the spirit of insubordination was spreading from the commanders to the humblest seaman; Keppel struck his flag, and declared his intention of not serving again under the present Ministry.

Following this disgraceful controversy, the Opposition bent all its endeavours to effect the ruin of Sandwich. Fox led the charge, accusing him of gross incompetency, and advising the King to remove him from his Councils and presence for ever. George would have been prepared to appoint Lord Howe to the First Lordship, but his added conditions it would be disgraceful to grant. He hated Sandwich's morals, but "I am clear," he wrote, "Lord Sandwich fills the Admiralty much better than any other man in the kingdom."

By the middle of July Spain had joined France against Britain, but to give the allied fleets time for preparation war was not declared until two months later. One would have thought that the existence of this powerful coalition would have silenced the base clamours of Opposition. It might be expected that men who professed to love their country would in such an hour of national peril have stood forth in support of their sovereign. The Whig opposition were no such patriots; faction was over their policy, and their love was for every country but their own. "The times are certainly hazardous," wrote the King to North, "but that ought to rouse

HIS DESIRE FOR PEACE

the spirit of every Englishman to support me, who have no wish but for the prosperity of my people, and no view but to do my duty, and to show by firmness in difficulties that I am not unworthy of the station into which it has pleased Providence to place me."

The Opposition vigorously and unreasonably combated the loyal address to the throne, and the King was shocked at their disaffection in this "the most serious crisis this nation ever knew."

Worse still, North, never a man of very profound convictions, and already bored by his arduous duties, kept dinning into the King's ears his desire to resign. Some allowance must be made for North's state of mind, and the fact that he had just suffered a family bereavement. But it redounded little to the credit of the Minister that he was so ready to emulate Chatham, and to repay his sovereign's confidence and liberality towards him by abandonment at a grave crisis. He was only restrained by the strength of the King's entreaties. However the Whig aristocracy sulked and the London mob stormed, the bulk of the nation rose with zeal and ranged themselves on the side of the King.

"I should think," wrote the King, "it is the greatest instance among the many I have met with of ingratitude and injustice, if it could be supposed that any man in my dominions more ardently desired the restoration of peace and solid happiness in every part of this Empire than I do; there is no personal sacrifice I could not readily yield for so desirable an object; but at the same time no inclination to

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get out of the present difficulties, which certainly keep my mind very far from a state of ease, can incline me to enter into what I look upon as the destruction of the Empire. I have heard Lord North frequently drop that the advantages to be gained by this contest could never repay the expense. I own that, let any war be ever so successful, if persons will sit down and weigh the expenses they will find, as in the last, that it has impoverished the State, enriched individuals, and perhaps raised the name only of the conquerors. But this is only weighing such events in the scale of a tradesman behind his counter. It is necessary for those in the station it has pleased Divine Providence to place me to weigh whether expenses, though very great, are not sometimes necessary to prevent what might be more ruinous to a country than the loss of money. The present contest with America I cannot help seeing as the most serious in which any country was ever engaged. It contains such a train of consequences, that they must be examined to feel its real weight. Whether the laying a tax was deserving all the evils that have arisen from it, I should suppose no man could allege that without being thought more fit for Bedlam than a seat in the Senate; but step by step the demands of America have risen: independence is their object. That certainly is one which every man not willing to sacrifice every object to a momentary inglorious peace must concur with me in thinking that this country can never submit to. Should America succeed in that, the West Indies must follow them. . . . Ireland would soon

HIS INVINCIBLE SPIRIT

follow the same plan and be a separate State; then this island would be reduced to itself, and soon would be a poor island indeed. For, reduced in her trade, merchants would retire with their wealth to climates more to their advantage, and shoals of manufacturers would leave this country for the new empire. 'These self-evident consequences are not worse than what can arise should the Almighty permit every event to turn out to our d' advantage; consequently this country has but one sensible, one great line to follow, the being ever ready to make peace when to be obtained without submitting to terms that in their consequence must annihilate this Empire, and with firmness to make every effort to deserve success.'¹

The gauntlet was flung back in the face of France and Spain. Further, vast sums were raised, privateers were fitted out, the militia was doubled, fortifications on the sea-coast were erected, and "King and country" again became the zealous rallying cry throughout the realm. "In short," wrote the King, "I begin to see that I SHALL SOON HAVE INFUSED SOME OF THAT SPIRIT WHICH I THANK HEAVEN EVER ATTENDS ME WHEN UNDER DIFFICULTIES. I know very well the various hazards we are open to; but I trust in the protection of the Almighty, in the justice of the cause, the uprightness of my own intentions, and my determination to show my people that my life is always ready to be risked for their safety or prosperity."

France and Spain seemed resolved to crush the

¹ *Letters to Lord North*, vol. ii. pp. 253-4.

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naval supremacy of Britain. Hardy, now in command of the Channel Fleet, had to face with his thirty-eight sail of the line more than fifty of the enemy. The Admiralty under these circumstances advocated great caution, but the King had not the smallest anxiety that his fleet would fail to hold its own. "I have the fullest trust in Divine Providence, and that the officers and men of my fleet will act with the ardour the times require. If the French should land troops, they will have thorough reason to repent of their temerity." Two days later he wrote again, "I trust in Divine Providence, the justice of our cause, and the bravery and activity of my Navy. I wish Lord North could view it in the same light for the ease of his own mind."

On the 19th June he wrote Weymouth: "I cannot help wishing the instructions to Sir Charles Hardy left him a little more latitude. I own if I were in his situation and received such orders I should instantly return to Torbay. I know the zeal and excellence of the fleet under his command. If its spirit is damped, it may prevent its acting with that vigour occasions may require. Over-caution is the greatest evil we ever fall into. I do not mean by this that Sir Charles should not have the power of returning, but a few words trusting that he will not execute his instruction further than his own judgment makes him think it absolutely necessary. I desire you will show this at your meeting."

The fifty ships of the enemy were soon increased to sixty-five, and Hardy was compelled to retire,



GEORGE III., ÆTAT. 44

(From the Portrait by Zoffany at Buckingham Palace)



HIS MAGNANIMITY

adroitly leading the foe past Plymouth, which was then little fitted to sustain a siege.

The King's personal example inspired his subjects; his ardour was unquenchable; he visited military camps, reviewed troops, and spoke personally words of encouragement to officers and men. Had an invasion actually occurred, George would never have been satisfied with any other post than that at the head of the troops. "The King's magnanimity," said Germain to Clinton, "is not to be shaken by the nearness of danger."

On 27th June he wrote to North: "The enclosed papers which I return confirm me in an opinion long entertained, that America, unless this summer supported by a Bourbon fleet, must sue for peace, and that it would ever have been unwise to have done more than what is now adopted: the enabling the commander-in-chief to put provinces at peace. . . . Propositions must come from them to us, no further ones be sent from hence; they ever tend only to increase the demands. I can never agree to healing over an uncured wound—it must be probed to the bottom; if it then proves sound, no one will be more ready to forget offences. But no one sees more forcibly the necessity of preventing the like mischief by America's feeling she has not been a gainer by the contest; yet after that I would show that the parent's heart is still affectionate to the penitent child."

On 11th October the King wrote: "The intelligence from America is far from unpleasant; it shows that with the force, small as it was, that

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was sent this summer, had it arrived early much might have been done this year. The reinforcement the next must at all events be sent by the first week in March. Clinton must be kept there at all events."

North's reiterated appeals to be relieved of office at length induced the King to consent to his once more casting about for some capable successor. "I can set my sentiments in three words. I order Lord North to continue, but if he is resolved to retire, he must understand the step thought necessary by him is very unpleasant to me." By this time North seems to have become convinced that the continuance of the American war was futile. Futile it certainly was if one looked to the means by which it was intended to compass the loyalists' ends. Never was Britain so badly served as she was in the American contest. But the loyal spirit in America was not yet crushed; events might yet happen to retrieve disaster. If many of the counties of England were already beginning to sicken of the conflict and to hold meetings of protest, so also were many of the American Whigs. One British victory after another diminished the hopes and courage of the American revolutionaries. Washington grew despondent, and pinned all his faith to French intervention. George, throughout, continued firm as a rock. He would not retreat, he would not waver, he would be true to the trust the Empire reposed in him. "I do believe," he wrote, "that America is nearer coming into temper to treat than perhaps at any other period, and if we arrive in time at Gibraltar, Spain will not

OVERTURES TO SHELBURNE

succeed in that attack, which will very probably allay the fury of the Spanish monarch, and make him more willing to end the war."

It is undeniable that the British Ministry had shown much weakness. Gower, who had supported the American war, altered his views, and resigned in November 1779. Previously Jenkinson, afterwards Lord Liverpool, succeeded Barrington as Secretary of War. Jenkinson was one of George's personal friends, and he had great confidence in him. Weymouth gave way to Hillsborough; Germain's shortcomings were at this stage so apparent that the King reluctantly admitted that he was "of no use in his department."

In deference to North's wishes George empowered Thurlow, the Lord Chancellor, to treat with Shelburne. "I will own," he wrote, "that from the conduct which has hitherto been held by those with whom you have conversed I augur very little good from the further prosecution of this business, and nothing but the earnest desire I have to unite my subjects in the present moment of danger, and to form a strong Government out of the most able and respectable of all parties, would induce me to make any further attempt. Influenced, however, by this last motive, and in order to make the person with whom you last conversed (if possible) more open and explicit, I consent that you should acquaint him that Lord North's situation will not stand in the way of any arrangement, and that he does not desire to be a part of any new administration that is to be formed. This declaration ought to convince that

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person that I really mean a coalition of parties, and not merely to draw him in to support the present Ministry. If he is satisfied with the opening (as I think he ought), he is through you to state his sentiments on the future conduct of public measures, and to what degree the demands of his friends may be restrained, always understanding that I do not mean the quitting the one set of men for another, but the healing, as far as depends on me, the unhappy divisions that distract my kingdom."

But Grafton, who had left the Government, persuaded Shelburne not to act apart from the Rockingham faction. If a coalition were formed, a total reversal of policy would be demanded. To this George would not agree. "From the cold disdain with which I am treated, it is evident to me what treatment I am to expect from Opposition if I was to call them now to my service. Nothing less will satisfy them than a total change of measures and men: to obtain their support I must deliver up my person, my principles, and my dominions into their hands. I must also abandon every old meritorious and faithful servant I have to be treated as their resentment or their mercy may incline them. These would be hard terms indeed to a sovereign in any situation. I trust to God that mine is not yet so bad as this. I will never make my inclinations alone, nor even my own opinions, the sole rule of my conduct in public measures; my first object shall be the good of my people. I will at all times consult my Ministers, and place in them as entire a confidence as the nature of this Government can be supposed to

BURKE'S REFORM BILL

require of me. You, my lord, and all who have ever served me, can do me the justice to testify that I have not been deficient in this respect. But none of my Ministers can after this trial advise me to change my Government totally and to admit Opposition without any terms. My Parliament have already shown since their meeting that they are in opinion against such a desperate measure, and I am confident, from all I can learn, that it is not the wish of my people at large. They wish that I would strengthen my Government by bringing into it all that is eminent and respectable, but they do not wish that I should turn out one set of men merely for the purpose of bringing in another.

“Nothing, therefore, remains for me to do but to exert myself, and to call upon all those who serve me to exert themselves in support of my legal authority, and to resist this formidable and desperate Opposition. I shall do it with more confidence and spirit from a consciousness that I have done all which it becomes a sovereign to do to reclaim the factious, to form a coalition of the great and virtuous, and to unite all my subjects.”¹

To this appeal North again yielded; once more he consented to continue in office. In February 1780 Burke introduced his Reform Bill relating to the King's civil establishment. He proposed the abolition of various Court officers, limitation of pensions, and the sale of Crown lands in Lancaster, Cornwall, and Wales. He also proposed the abolition of the

¹ *Letters to Lord North*, vol. ii. pp. 298-9.

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Board of Trade.¹ This latter was agreed to, but the rest of his Bill suffered death in Committee. Sir George Savile's motion for submitting a list of pensions was lost by only two votes, which drew the following comment from the King: "Lord North cannot be surprised at my having read with some astonishment that the majority was so small this morning in a question which, if it tended to anything, was to circumscribe the power of the Crown to show its benevolence to persons in narrow circumstances; it shows what little dependence can be placed on the momentary whims that strike popular assemblies."

On the 6th April the ever-disaffected Dunning proposed a resolution in the Commons, that the influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished, a resolution which was carried with a slight addition by 233 to 215. Another resolution that the House was competent to correct abuses in the Civil List was passed without a division.

But the Tory majority acting under pressure of the country had no intention of pulling the Opposition's chestnuts out of the fire. An address to

¹ George wrote: I am sorry men should so far lose their reason, and let the violence of the times or fears actuate them, as to forget the utility of the Board of Trade; but I trust on the subsequent questions of Mr. Burke's Bill the numbers will again preponderate on the side of the Government, and consequently, though last night's vote was unpleasant, it will be of no real disservice; since your opinion on Sunday rather made me expect that, as has happened, Opposition would carry the question.—*Letters to Lord North*, vol. ii. p. 311.

LORD GEORGE GORDON

the King praying that he would not dissolve nor prorogue Parliament until measures had been taken to diminish the influence of the Crown was lost by a majority of fifty-one.

During the whole of this tumultuous session the attitude of the King's brother, the Duke of Cumberland, was of a character to encourage violence both inside and outside the Houses of Parliament. "The whole political sentiments and conduct of the Duke of Cumberland," complained George, "are so averse to what I think right, that any intercourse between us could only be of a cold and distant kind, and consequently very unpleasant. I shall therefore if such a letter comes [from the Duke] return no kind of answer."¹

Fox's disappointment and spleen found expression in mob oratory, and more than once it seemed as if his supporters would carry the precincts of St. Stephen's by storm. But Fox suddenly gave way as a mob leader to a demagogue of a different character.

Never were the Whigs loth to use any decent pretext for attacking the Ministry, and often many indecent ones were employed. But the mob, ignorant as it was, was hardly ignorant enough to be deluded into regarding Fox, Shelburne, and Richmond as fit champions of religion. In 1779 a Bill had passed relieving the Dissenting ministers from subscription to the articles of the Established Church, and in the same year the Irish Dissenters became immune from the Test Act. Religious toleration had so far advanced

¹ *Letters to Lord North*, vol. ii. p. 320.

GEORGE THE THIRD

that a Bill freeing the English Catholics from some of the terrible disabilities under which they laboured was passed, and it was announced that the Ministry contemplated bringing in a similar measure of relief for the Catholics in Scotland. But on the northern side of the Tweed so vigorously was the cry of "No Popery" raised, that the Bill was abandoned. The success of the agitation encouraged the Protestant fanatics to call for the repeal of the English measure. If the Scottish Protestant riots could enjoy such success, why should not the same plan of agitation succeed in the south? Whereupon a "Protestant association" sprang up, headed by a fanatical member of the House of Commons, Lord George Gordon. A monster petition was arranged, and on the 2nd June 1780 nearly 60,000 persons marched with the document to St. Stephen's. A scene of great disorder ensued; many members were assaulted, and the lobbies were invaded by the mob, who forced both peers and commoners to cry "No Popery," and affix blue cockades to their hats. That day began the famous Gordon riots. Their leader, addressing the mob, declared that the time was at hand when he would dictate both to the Crown and Parliament. The King of England was a Papist, but let his Majesty dare to depart from his coronation oath, and his head should fall on the scaffold! A detachment of Life Guards frightened the rioters out of the precincts of Westminster, from whence they proceeded to other outrages in various parts of London. Roman Catholic chapels and several houses were sacked

ANTI-CATHOLIC RIOTS

and partially destroyed, and many shops were plundered. In a few hours the city was at the mercy of the mob. Newgate was set in flames, the gates forced, and the prisoners set free. Mansfield's town house in Bloomsbury was invaded, and its contents, including the Chief Justice's magnificent library, sacrificed to the flames. The Bank of England and the Pay Office were also attacked, and on the sixth day of the riots thirty-six separate conflagrations unchecked lit up the town. Yet the Ministry when this disgraceful riot was at its height dared do nothing. Military authorities knew to their cost the dire penalties of firing on a London mob unless strongly backed by the civil power.

All save the sovereign seemed possessed by fear. "I trust," wrote George, "Parliament will take such measures as the necessities of the time require. This tumult must be got the better of, or it will encourage designing men to use it as a precedent for assembling the people on other occasions. If possible we must get to the bottom of it, and examples must be made. If anything occurs to Lord North wherein I can give any further assistance I shall be ready to forward it, for my attachment is to the laws and security of my country, and to the protection of the lives and properties of all my subjects."

By this time most of the terrified magistrates had run away. John Wilkes, however ("never a Wilkite"), distinguished himself by his courage and firmness in handling the rioters. The King urged that Gordon, the avowed head of the tumult, should be seized at all odds, rebuked the supineness of the civil

GEORGE THE THIRD

magistrates, and called for more vigour from the Ministry. But for the courageous personal intervention of the King a general panic might have ensued. On the 7th, seeing how averse the Ministry was to incur responsibility, George summoned a special meeting of the Council, and was himself one of the first to arrive. There were two important constitutional questions discussed. First, the amount of provocation which in the eye of the law would justify a magistrate in ordering the military to fire upon the rioters; secondly, whether, before giving such an order, the law demanded that the Riot Act should have been read. The timid Council hesitated: the Ministers could not make up their minds. One would have thought that the violence of the mob, which even at that moment could be heard shouting in the streets, had thoroughly quelled their spirit. If, said George, they would not give him advice, he would act without it. He said he would order his horse to the door, head his Guards in person, and forcibly disperse the rioters. "I lament," he added, "the conduct of my magistrates, but I can answer for one who will do his duty." He commanded Wedderburn, the Attorney-General, to give his opinion. Wedderburn answered and without hesitation that if the assemblage of people were engaged in an act of outrage of such a nature as to amount to felony—such, for instance, as the burning of dwelling-houses—and the civil power was ineffective to restrain them, it would then become the duty of all persons, not excepting the soldiers, to employ every means at their disposal to stay the mischief. In such excep-

HIS STRIKING INTERVENTION

tional cases, he added, the reading of the Riot Act was rendered nugatory and unnecessary, and consequently, in the absence of other opportunities of restoring order, it was not only justifiable in, but the actual duty of, the military to attack the rioters.¹ "That has always been my own opinion," remarked George quietly, "but I have not hitherto ventured to give it expression." He immediately issued an order to the commander-in-chief, Lord Amherst, authorising him to employ the military promptly and vigorously in dispersing the rioters, irrespective of any warrant from the civil powers. By the following day the riots were over.

"Our danger is at an end," wrote Gibbon, then a member of Parliament, "but our disgrace will be lasting. The month of June 1780 will ever be marked by a dark and diabolical fanaticism which I had supposed to be extinct." Several hundred persons had lost their lives, over seventy houses and four gaols had been destroyed. "If," wrote Bishop Newton, "the King of his own motion had not ordered forth the soldiery, the cities of London and Westminster might have been in ashes."

"It is incontestable," says another contemporary,

¹ Altogether by the King's commands three different Councils were summoned to deliberate respecting the riots, one on the 5th June, and two on the 7th. To the last of the three the Duke of Portland, Lord Rockingham, Lord John Cavendish, and others of the leading Whigs were expressly invited.—*MS. Entries in the Privy Council Office*. Doubtless the main object of the King was the natural and laudable one that the stringent steps which were about to be taken for the restoration of peace and order should have the sanction of men of both parties in politics.—Jesse, vol. ii. p. 280.

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“that to the decision manifested by King George on that occasion the safety of the metropolis and its extrication from all the calamities that impended over it was principally, if not solely, to be ascribed. Elizabeth or William III. could not have displayed more calm and systematic courage than George III. exhibited in so trying a moment. Far from throwing himself for support or guidance on his Cabinet as a prince of feeble character would have done, he came forward and exhibited an example of self-devotion to his Ministers.”¹

The verdict of the prelate and the courtier has not been reversed by history. No fewer than 285 of the rioters were slain, and of the 139 who stood trial, 59 were condemned to death and 21 executed. Wedderburn got his reward by being made Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, and as Lord Loughborough it fell to him to preside at the trial of many of the Gordon rioters. Acquittal was the good-fortune of the arch-fanatic himself, but a few years later, following a term of comparative obscurity, he was imprisoned for libel. During his incarceration he showed the fantastical stuff he was made of by embracing the Jewish faith. He died in Newgate in 1793.

Meanwhile the war with France, Spain, and America continued to wage, and England's enemies were joined by Holland. In America Clinton had captured Charleston, and 5000 Americans had laid down their arms; 400 pieces of cannon, three American frigates, and a French frigate fell into British hands.

¹ Wraxall, vol. i. p. 245.

ANDRÉ'S SAD FATE

On August 1780 Cornwallis defeated the American General Gates in the signal victory of Camden. Tarleton, the loyalist American commander, also utterly routed the revolutionary army under Sumpter. Colonel Scott, an American prisoner, told Lord Lincoln that the Americans were "sick of the war; they had only been buoyed up by Spanish gold and by the belief that England was in the hands of the insurrectionists."

The news of these victories greatly encouraged the King. Further encouragement was given to him in the memorable episode of Benedict Arnold. Arnold was a brave and able man, who had grown disgusted with his treatment at the hands of the American Congress. Desirous of returning to his allegiance, he resolved to commit an act of treason against Congress by surrendering the American stronghold of West Point on the Hudson. A young major, André, was entrusted with the task of perfecting the negotiations on the British side. André was captured, incriminating papers were found upon him, and while Arnold fled to the British lines, André was hanged as a spy. George was greatly concerned at the death of the unfortunate man, and by his orders, and at his expense, was erected the monument in Westminster Abbey to his memory: "To him who fell a sacrifice to his zeal for his King and Country." He further expressed himself to Clinton as follows:—

"His Majesty has read with much concern the very affecting narrative of Major André's capture and the fatal consequences of that misfortune re-

GEORGE THE THIRD

lated in your letter, and his Majesty was graciously pleased to express his entire approbation of your having complied with his request of disposing of his commission for the advantage of his family. And I have the satisfaction to add that his Majesty has further extended his royal bounty to Major André's mother by the grant of a pension, and has offered to confer the honour of knighthood on his brother in order to wipe away all stain from the family that the ignominy of the death he was so unjustly put to might be thought to have occasioned."¹

On the 4th March 1781 the King conferred not knighthood only but a baronetcy on Major André's brother, William Lewis André, at whose death, on the 11th November 1802, the title became extinct.

Soon after escaping to the *Vulture* Arnold published an explanation of his conduct to the Americans, describing his leaning towards loyalism and his disapproval of the Declaration of Independence, except as a mere means of obtaining redress of grievances. He denounced the persistence in war and the attempt to dismember the British Empire after the peace terms of 1778, which offered all the redress of grievances which the patriots had originally demanded. The American alliance with France was with "a monarchy too feeble to establish your independence so perilous to her distant dominions; the enemy of the Protestant faith, and fraudulently avowing an affection for the liberties

¹ Sparks's *Life of Benedict Arnold*, p. 308.

A NEW PARLIAMENT

of mankind, while she holds her native sons in vassalage and chains."

Arnold's action only confirmed the King that a large and influential body of the Americans were anxious to effect a reconciliation with the Mother Country on almost any terms, and he was little likely, such being the case, to consent to any abridgment of hostilities, or any slackening of the efforts to achieve the result for which the war had so long been waged. On the 1st September George had suddenly, on Loughborough's advice, dissolved the Parliament, which had then been six years in existence. "The Court," said he, "was losing ground daily, and a trial of the country was the best step." The elections showed that the King's popularity was unshaken.

When the session was opened by the King on the last day of October, among the new members was William Pitt, the late Earl Chatham's second son, who was returned for Appleby. Pitt was then in his twenty-second year, and was already a stirring orator, and a man to whose judgment on affairs great weight was properly attached. He ranged himself on the side of the Opposition under Shelburne. Another new member was Sheridan, the dramatist, who came in as a friend of Fox. The selection of a Speaker occasioned a quarrel. The ill-tempered Sir Fletcher Norton, who had deeply offended the King by his speech on the Civil List in 1777, was once more proposed for the office. He was beaten by 302 votes to 134 in favour of the Ministerial candidate, Cornwall. George

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in his speech from the throne complained of the unprovoked conduct of France and Spain; he congratulated himself and his people on the recent successes of the British army in Georgia and Carolina. Amendments to the address moved in both Houses were rejected by large majorities. The same fate overtook motions deprecating the American war, and Fox's indecent expressions concerning the conflict were generally condemned. His sneers at the victories, and hopes that they would soon be converted into defeats, stamped the desperate and irreconcilable character of the man.

If good news from America continued to arrive, Lord North's Ministry would not be supplanted. Vergennes's patience was almost exhausted at the persistent and shameless American demands for money, and France was well-nigh bankrupt. He even went the length of suggesting to the Americans a long truce, by which both King George and the Congress would divide the country between them. Had the British fleet been master of the North Atlantic and the West Indian waters the impending disaster of Yorktown would probably never have occurred.

In conversation with Lord Hertford, shortly before the news of the surrender at Yorktown had reached him, the King said, "I know my enemies are superior everywhere. I am as desirous of peace as any man; but how can I make it, when France and Spain are so unreasonable?" He remarked that they demanded Gibraltar and Port Mahon. It was said that the Emperor had offered to make peace; to

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WILLIAM PITT
(From the Portrait by Hoppner)



COWPER'S OPINION

this George made reply, "I want nobody to make peace for me; when France and Spain, who make unjust war upon me, will make me amends, I shall be ready to make peace."

"It cannot be denied," says Mr. Donne, who is generally disparaging of George, "that the King was encouraged in his aversion to admit the independence of America, even at the eleventh hour of the struggle, by the general feeling of this country. It was not only by Fast-sermons and by Parliamentary speeches that his delusion was confirmed. One of the most pious and humane men then in Britain, and whose opinion is not less valuable because he who held it was a recluse, endorses the sentiments of Markham, Sandwich, and Germain."

It is to the poet William Cowper that the foregoing reference is made. He wrote to the Rev. John Newton, 13th January 1782, words that well deserve to be deeply conned by every student of the American schism: "What course can Government take? I have heard (for I never made the experiment) that if a man grasp a red-hot iron with his naked hand it will stick to him, so that he cannot presently disengage himself from it. Such are the Colonies in the hands of Administration. While they hold them they burn their fingers, and yet they must not quit them. It appears to me that the King is bound, both by the duty he owes to himself and his people, to consider himself with respect to every inch of his territory as a trustee, deriving his interest in them from God, and invested with them by Divine authority for the benefit of his subjects. As he may not sell them or

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waste them, so he may not resign them to an enemy, or transfer his right to govern them to any, not even to themselves, so long as it is possible for him to keep it. If he does, he betrays at once his own interest and that of his other dominions. Viewing the thing in this light, if I sat on the King's throne I should be as obstinate as he, because if I quitted the contest while I had means left of carrying it on, I should never know that I had not relinquished what I might have retained, or be able to render a satisfactory account to the doubts and inquiries of my own conscience."¹

Cornwallis's surrender took place on the 19th October 1781. On Sunday the 25th November, two days before Parliament reassembled, the despatch containing the news of this great British reverse reached Lord George Germain. He instantly sent the despatch to the King at Kew, and walked over to Downing Street from Pall Mall to break the news to the Prime Minister. "I asked Lord George afterwards," says Wraxall, "how he (Lord North) took the communication when made to him?—'As he would have taken a bullet through his breast,' replied Lord George; 'for he opened his arms, exclaiming wildly as he paced up and down the apartment a few minutes, 'Oh God! it is all over!'—words which he repeated many times under emotions of the greatest consternation and distress."²

¹ *Letters of William Corper.*

² Wraxall's *Historical Memoirs*, vol. ii. pp. 434-5.

CHAPTER XVI

THE EMPIRE DISMEMBERED

CORNWALLIS'S defeat virtually secured independence to the American revolutionaries. The strength of the loyalists had gradually been sapped. The reign of terror had done its worst, and those who had not already found refuge within the British lines were fain to accept the domination of the "patriots."

They had this comfort, and this alone: in the face of this terrible disaster their King was with them. George's fortitude and equanimity were unshaken.

Entertaining some political friends to dinner, Germain received a note from the King. All eyes were upon him as he tore open the seal. They wondered how their sovereign would take the news. A moment later the host remarked to Lord Walsingham, "The King writes just as he always does, except that I observe he has omitted to mark the hour and minute of his writing with his usual precision."

"I have received," wrote George, "with sentiments of the deepest concern the communication which Lord George Germain has made me of the unfortunate result of the operations in Virginia. I particularly lament it on account of the consequences connected with it, and the difficulties which

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it may produce in carrying on the public business, or in repairing such a misfortune. But I trust that neither Lord George Germain nor any member of the Cabinet will suppose that it makes the smallest alteration in those principles of my conduct which have directed me in past time, and which will always continue to animate me under every event in the prosecution of the present contest."¹

In two days Parliament was to meet. It had become necessary to alter and almost to reconstruct the King's Speech, which had been prepared. On the 27th of November the King opened the session. Retaining a firm confidence, he said, in the wisdom and protection of Divine Providence, and firmly convinced of the justice of his cause, he had no doubt but that by the concurrence and support of Parliament, by the valour of his fleets and armies, and by a vigorous, animated, and united exertion of the faculties and resources of his people, he should be able to restore the blessings of peace to his dominions.²

Shelburne, Fox, and Burke reopened their heavy artillery, yet the King could still command respectable majorities in both Houses. "Those persons," declared Fox, "who might chance to be ignorant that the speech from the throne was the composition not of the sovereign himself, but of a Cabinet Council, would set it down as containing the sentiments of some arbitrary, despotic, hard-hearted, and unfeeling monarch, who, having involved his subjects in a

¹ Huish, p. 417.

² *Parliamentary History*, vol. xxii. col. 637.

FOX'S DIATRIBE

ruinous and unnatural war to glut his feelings of revenge, was determined to persevere in it in spite of calamity and even of fate. Divest the speech," said Fox, "of its official forms, and what was its purport? 'Our losses in America have been most calamitous. The blood of my subjects has flowed in copious streams. The treasures of Great Britain have been wantonly lavished. The load of taxes imposed on an over-burthened country is become intolerable. My rage for conquest is unquenched, my revenge unsated, nor can anything except the total subjugation of my revolted American subjects allay my animosity.' As for Ministers," he added, "they were a curse to their country; they had made Great Britain an object of scorn and derision to the nations of the earth. But," said Fox, "the time will surely come when an oppressed and irritated people will firmly call for signal punishment on those whose counsels have brought the nation so near to the brink of destruction. An indignant nation would surely in the end compel them to make some faint atonement for the magnitude of their offences on a public scaffold."

North's reply to this diatribe was forcible and dignified, and should have been as convincing in 1781 as it is to-day. He observed that Ministers had been accused of having instituted and persevered in the American war for the purpose of adding to the influence of the Crown. The charge was both injurious and unjust. "*Did not men know,*" he asked, "*that the Americans wished to be governed by the King and their own Assemblies, and that they went*

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to war because they would not be governed by the legislature of Great Britain?" It was not to increase the influence of the Crown, but for the sake of the Constitution—for the sake of preserving the supremacy and just rights and privileges of the Parliament of Great Britain—that the war with the Colonies had been carried on. A melancholy disaster had befallen British arms in Virginia, "but were we on that account to lie down and die? No! it ought rather to rouse, to urge, to impel, to animate us into action. By bold and united exertions everything might yet be saved. By dejection and despair everything must inevitably be lost." He had been threatened during the debate, he said, with impeachment and the scaffold, but that threat should not deter him from doing his utmost to preserve the rights and legislative authority of Parliament. The war with America had been unfortunate, but it was not on that account necessarily an unjust one.¹

The address was carried by a large majority, although as was inevitable there were already some Tories ready to retreat.

George wrote to North the following morning that he was not at all surprised that some principal members had wavered in their sentiments as to the measures to be pursued. "Many men chose rather to despond on difficulties than see how to get out of them. I have already directed Lord George Germain to put on paper the mode that seems most feasible for conducting the war that every member of the Cabinet may have his pro-

¹ *Parliamentary History*, vol. xxii, cols. 715-17.

A WEAKENED MINISTRY

positions to weigh by themselves, when I shall expect to hear their sentiments separately, that we may adopt a plan and abide by it. Fluctuating counsels, and taking up measures without connecting them with the whole of this complicated war, must make us weak in every part. With the assistance of Parliament I do not doubt, if measures are well connected, a good end may yet be made to the war. If we despond, certain ruin ensues."

"The warmth of the House," wrote Walpole to Mann, "is prodigiously rekindled, but Lord Cornwallis's fate has caused no ground to be lost by the Ministry. Eloquence is the only one of our qualities which does not seem to have degenerated rapidly." On the same evening George wrote to his Minister: "I cannot say I expected the debate of to-day would have been so short, considering the great love modern orators have of hearing themselves speak; the division was certainly a very good one; and I have no doubt, when men are a little recovered of the shock felt by the bad news, and feel that if we recede no one can tell to what a degree the consequence of this country will be diminished, that they will then find the necessity of carrying on the war, though the mode of it may require alterations."

Victories at this stage could only arrest the progress of decay. The weakening of the Ministry had begun, and one or two British maritime reverses accelerated the process. Sandwich was bitterly attacked. The unpopularity of Lord George

GEORGE THE THIRD

Germain was general. To end the American war was now North's policy, and he suggested Germain's retirement. Another commander-in-chief in America must succeed Sir Henry Clinton, and the King thought Carleton was the best man. "Undoubtedly," wrote George on December 26th, "if Sir Guy Carleton can be persuaded to go to America, he is in every way the best suited for the service. He and Lord G. Germain are incompatible. Lord George is certainly not unwilling to retire if he gets his object, which is a peerage; no one can then say he is disgraced; and when his retreat is accompanied with the appointment of Sir Guy Carleton, the cause of it will naturally appear without its being possible to be laid with any reason to a change in my sentiments on the great essential point, namely, the getting a peace at the expense of a separation from America, which is a step to which no difficulties shall ever get me to be in the smallest degree an instrument.

"If Lord North agrees with me that on the whole it is best to gratify the wishes of Lord George Germain and let him retire, that no time may be lost I desire he will immediately sound Mr. Jenkinson as to his succeeding him, for I must be ready with a successor before I move a single step."

On his retirement Germain was created Viscount Sackville. Such a distinction exposed the new-made Peer to the old charges concerning his conduct as an officer at Minden. Carmarthen moved in the Lords "That to recommend to the Crown

SAVING THE EMPIRE

for such a dignity any person labouring under a sentence of court-martial was derogatory to the honour of the House." But the motion, which was met by Germain with quiet dignity, was thrown out by a large majority.

Fox and the Opposition gathered strength daily. On the 22nd February 1782 Conway's motion for ending the American war was defeated by only a single vote. The end was indeed at hand, and North strove to persuade the King to an immediate change of advisers, yet George was still firm against a separation from America. "I shall," he wrote, "never lose an opportunity of declaring that no consideration shall ever make me in the smallest degree an instrument in a measure that I am confident would annihilate the rank in which this British Empire stands among the European States, and would render my situation in this country below continuing an object to me."

"Undoubtedly," he wrote again on the 6th February, "the House of Commons seems to be so wild at present, and so running on to ruin, that no man can answer for the event of any question. 'Till driven to the wall I certainly will do what I can to save the Empire; and if I do not succeed, I will at least have the self-approbation of having done my duty, and of not letting myself be a tool in the destruction of the honour of the country."

'To the Commons on the 5th March North announced his resolution not to quit his post until he should receive his royal master's command to leave it, or till the will of the House, expressed in the most

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unequivocal terms, should point out the propriety of his resignation. "As to the emoluments of my situation," he exclaimed, "God knows, were they forty times greater than they are, they would form no adequate compensation for my anxiety and vexations, aggravated by the uncandid treatment that I frequently experience within these walls. It is not love of power or of greatness that retains me in my place. I speak in the presence of individuals who know how little I am attached to either."

George severely criticised these tactics. He regarded North's "throwing himself into the hands of the Opposition" as nothing short of disaster, but would wait until the 20th, when the issue of Lord Surrey's second vote of want of confidence in the Ministry. The Lord Chancellor, Thurlow, was sent to negotiate with Rockingham; but Rockingham's terms proved too exorbitant.¹ North pleaded that the Opposition should be sent for before, but he pleaded in vain. "After having yesterday in the most solemn manner," wrote his sovereign, "assured you that my sentiments of honour will not permit me to send for any of the leaders of Opposition and personally treat with them, I could not but be hurt at your letter of last night. Every man must be the sole judge of his feelings, therefore whatever you or any man can say on that subject has no avail with me. 'Till I have heard what the Chancellor has done from his own mouth, I shall not take any step; and

¹ "Lord Rockingham," said Thurlow, "was bringing things to a pass where either his head or the King's must go in order to settle which of them was to govern."

NORTH'S RESIGNATION

if you resign before I have decided what I will do, you will certainly for ever forfeit my regard."

His honest, valiant spirit suffered anguish for twenty-four hours. Then he yielded and became calm. At the very moment when the Houses of Parliament were packed with members in anticipation of a stormy debate North was closeted with the King. George had slept little the previous night. He had, he said, briefly considered well the temper of the Commons, and thought the administration better at an end. "Well, sir," said North, "had I not better state the fact at once?" The King nodded. "You may do so," he said. North went straightway to St. Stephen's and announced the resignation of the Ministry. The one crumb of comfort left to the King in his distress was the dissension already apparent in the ranks of Opposition. Nor was dissension extraordinary. The Rockingham and Shelburne factions had entirely different political aims. Rockingham represented the Whig aristocrats, who strongly opposed the royal prerogative, and who had long advocated American independence. Shelburne, as the successor of Chatham, opposed "government by connection," believed in giving the King a share in government, and opposed the independence of America.

Acting in the King's interest Thurlow approached Shelburne, but Shelburne, much as he differed, thought he could not afford to quarrel with the Rockingham party, whose leader had a prior claim. George then sent for Earl Gower, but he was "too indolent or too timid to accept the post." Shelburne

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had a second interview with the King, and on his representations was empowered to negotiate with Rockingham, whom, however, George refused to receive into his closet until the Cabinet had been formed. Shelburne became Secretary for Home, Irish, and Colonial affairs; Fox became Foreign Minister; Grafton, Privy Seal; Lord John Cavendish, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Keppel, First Lord of the Admiralty; Camden, President of the Council; and Conway, Commander-in-Chief. Thurlow was retained as Chancellor in the Cabinet of which Rockingham was First Lord of the Treasury. To young Pitt the lucrative post of Vice-Treasurer of Ireland had been offered. But young as he was, Pitt, with admirable self-confidence and prescience, had loftily declared that he would accept no subordinate post under any Government. On the 27th March Rockingham was granted his first official interview with the King. It was then that Rockingham proposed his terms, which in brief consisted of the acknowledgment of American independence, the curtailment of the influence of the Crown, the disqualification of contractors from becoming members of Parliament, the exclusion of revenue officers from the Parliamentary suffrage, the abolition of sinecure offices, and the introduction of a system of economy into the Government service.

"At last," wrote George to North, 27th March 1782, "the fatal day is come which the misfortunes of the times and the sudden change of sentiments of the House of Commons have drove me to—of changing the Ministry, and a more general removal of other

AN ODD MEDLEY

persons than I believe ever was known before. I have to the last fought for individuals, but the number I have saved, except my Bedchamber, is incredibly few. You would hardly believe that even the Duke of Montagu was strongly run at; but I declared that I would sooner let confusion follow than part with the governor of my sons and so unexceptional a man. At last I have succeeded, so that he and Lord Ashburnham remain. The effusion of my sorrows has made me say more than I had intended, but I ever did, and ever shall, look on you as a friend as well as a faithful servant. Pray acquaint the Cabinet that they must this day attend at St. James's to resign. I shall hope to be there if possible by one, and will receive them before the levée, as I think it would be awkward to have the new people presented at the levée prior to the resignations."

On the same day the King wrote to Lord Dartmouth: "Though I have directed Lord North this morning to acquaint all the Cabinet that they must come and resign their respective offices before the levée this day, as I think it would make an odd medley, therefore I shall, if possible, be at St. James's before one for that melancholy purpose. I own I could not let Lord Dartmouth hear this without writing him a few lines to aver how very near he will always be to my heart, and that I have ever esteemed him since I have thoroughly known him in another light than any of his companions in Ministry. What days it has pleased the Almighty to place me in, when Lord Dartmouth can be a

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man to be removed but at his own request! But I cannot complain. I adore the will of Providence, and will ever resign myself obediently to His will. My heart is too full to say more."

North retired with a pension of £4000 a year. He had, says Walpole, "besides the office of Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer, received the Garter, the place of Warden of the Cinque Ports, a Patent place for his son, Bushey Park for his wife, a pension of £4000 on his late resignation, and, some said, a grant of part of the Savoy, though that has not been verified. His father was Treasurer to the Queen, and his brother has the Bishopric of Winchester." For a man who did not care for emoluments or honours this was doing pretty well.

A few weeks after North's resignation the King addressed him a letter, pointing out the shameful neglect with which the accounts had latterly been managed, especially those of the secret service, the account books of which were two years in arrear. "No business," said George, "can ever be admitted for not doing that." North seems to have taken the reprimand much to heart. He had endeavoured, he wrote, through the course of his life to promote the King's service to the best of his judgment; "no one can better know his unfitness for the office he held than he did himself, and the King will do him the justice to own that from the very first he frequently and repeatedly represented his incapacity and solicited for his dismissal. The uneasiness of his mind, arising from the consciousness of his being inade-



LORD SHELBURNE
(MARQUIS OF LANSDOWNE)
(From the Portrait by Reynolds)



THURLOW RETAINED

quate to his situation, greatly impaired his faculties, and is now, he fears, undermining his constitution. He hopes the King will not embitter the remainder of his days by withdrawing from him that good opinion which he has long, and often by the sacrifice of his inclinations and private comfort, endeavoured to deserve."

All this was very well, and a frank avowal of his being "inadequate to his situation" softened the King's asperity. But North, with a far stronger physique, never worked as hard as the second Pitt, his successor, and he had been well rewarded for his labours. The truth is, North's character had undergone a change far greater than his body.

For the moment the Whigs were victorious. After nearly fifteen years' exclusion they returned to taste the sweets of power. The new administration was dubbed the "Regency," and the new Ministers the "Regents." A caricature of the day, entitled "The Captive Prince, or Liberty run Mad," represents Shelburne, Richmond, Keppel, and Fox fixing fetters on the King's feet and ankles, while the last three are severally made to exclaim, "I command the Ordnance"—"I command the Fleet"—"I command the mob." In the meantime the world, according to Walpole, looked on and smiled at the phenomenon of half-a-dozen great lords claiming "an hereditary and exclusive right" to retain the Government in their families, "like the Hebrew priesthood in one tribe."

Albeit George was not without a triumph of his own. He had succeeded in retaining Thurlow, upon

GEORGE THE THIRD

whose support he could count. If the new Government proved itself a good Government, strong in purpose, vigorous in action, he was far from refusing it the royal countenance. He would be the first man to rejoice. It went much against his heart even to contemplate the abandonment of the American loyalists, but if a decent treaty could be made, he himself was, as he said, on the side of peace.

While there was no single member, save Thurlow, of the Ministry who could properly be called *persona grata* to the King, and many for whom he felt the utmost repugnance, yet he lent them all the co-operation in his power. Inveterate as the Whigs were in their prejudices, they soon began to realise that their conception of George's character and abilities had been grossly unjust. Every interview that Fox and Shelburne had with the King served further to open their eyes. We find Shelburne actually expressing to Thurlow his amazement at the amount of genius he had discovered in his royal master. "The King," wrote Fox on the 15th April, "seems in perfect good-humour, and does not seem to make any of those difficulties which others make for him."¹ Burke, lately venting his vocabulary of vituperation on the monarch, is found lauding the royal message as "the best of messages from the best of Kings." A couple of months later Richmond felt it incumbent upon him to "declare that his Majesty had performed with religious scrupulosity all that he had promised." Shelburne's testimony went even further: "His Majesty," he said, "had

¹ Russell's *Memorials of Fox*, vol. i. pp. 314-15.

SHELBURNE'S TRIBUTE

not only performed all that he had promised, but he had done a great deal more than he had promised, when it was in his power to have evaded the performance of that which he had promised. And this he would say with truth, that a Prince more disposed to comply with the wishes of his people he believed never sat on the British throne."¹

The Rockingham Ministry, although passing several useful measures and establishing the legislative independence of Ireland, soon began to quarrel. Fox wished American independence to be immediately recognised. If this were done he believed the Americans would be detached from the French alliance, and he as Foreign Secretary could arrange better terms with France and Spain. The King's policy was that the recognition of independence should be conditional to a joint treaty with France and America; Britain thereby might alone hope to profit by the concession. Shelburne favoured the royal policy, and an agent named Oswald was despatched to Paris to negotiate with Franklin. This agent was criminally ignorant and incompetent, and as such he was no match for the "wily American."

Wholly out of touch with his own countrymen, and inclined to exaggerate the extent of the triumphs they had won, Frank! coolly proposed that Britain should cede Canada to the Americans. The negotiations in Paris resulted in an open quarrel between Fox and Shelburne, and on the last day of June Fox, out-voted in the Cabinet on the proposition that the independence of America should be acknow-

¹ *Parliamentary History*, vol. xxiii. col. 194.

GEORGE THE THIRD

ledged without a treaty, announced that he would resign.

On the very next day the Whigs were thrown into confusion by the news of Rockingham's death. His Premiership had lasted but little over three months.

Many supposed that the King would send for either Richmond or Fox. George requested Shelburne to form a Ministry. Fox was furious. He alleged that from the hour of Shelburne's coming into power "he had been guilty of gross and systematic duplicity. He had intrigued against his own colleagues. He had endeavoured to prejudice the King against them. Under these circumstances," added Fox, "he had made up his mind that in the event of Lord Shelburne closing with the King's offers, no consideration should induce him to serve under the leadership of such a man." In vain Fox's personal friends, alarmed at his threats of resignation, endeavoured to dissuade him. It was to no purpose that they pointed out the "grievous injury which he was about to inflict, not only on his party, but upon his country." Upon deaf ears fell the Duke of Richmond's and General Conway's reminder that the disruption of the pending treaty of peace, and consequently the renewal of hostilities with America, might follow upon his retirement at that juncture. Fox's character stood revealed in his confession to Walpole, that "his resignation might occasion a great deal of mischief."

Two days after Rockingham's death, Fox in a private audience urged upon the King the necessity

CHARACTER OF FOX

of sending for the Duke of Portland, whose principal claim to high office lay in his position as a great Whig Peer. Portland was neither able, eloquent, nor dowered with business faculties. Under these circumstances George was not to be blamed for choosing a Minister whose qualifications for the post appeared to him to have a greater weight, even if Fox refused to serve under him. Shelburne took the Treasury, Pitt became Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Fox took once more to his congenial pursuits of gambling, drinking, and licentiousness.

Even Fox's nephew and biographer has some difficulty in explaining this conduct of his hero. "The resignation of Mr. Fox," observes Lord Holland, "is unquestionably one of the two passages of his public life most open to animadversion and most requiring explanation."¹ "From all whom I have seen," wrote Lord Temple to his brother, Thomas Grenville, "my opinion is that Fox has undone himself with the public, and his most intimate friends seem of the same opinion."² "The people," Temple told Fox privately, "would not stand by him in his attempt to quit upon private grounds, which from their nature would appear to be a quarrel for offices, and not a public measure."

As we have been at some pains to be candid with the character of Lord Chatham, we feel ourselves impelled to be equally so with Charles James Fox. At this time Fox was not yet thirty-four years of age. His figure was broad and fat, his

¹ *Memorials of Fox*, vol. i. p. 172.

² *Buckingham Papers*, i. 52.

GEORGE THE THIRD

features swarthy and repellent, dominated by black and shaggy brows, and at most times semi-obsured by an unshorn stubble. If we are somewhat puzzled at the high opinion which was entertained of Chatham by his contemporaries in spite of his "fustian," his seditious philippics, and his insane caprices, the high reputation of Fox occasions us a deeper wonder. In private life he was a libertine who had plunged into every kind of debauchery. In politics he was altogether without principles, and a needy and ambitious place-hunter. Although brilliant and vigorous in debate, the shafts of his oratory were always directed towards the Crown, and began and ended in what George truly called "noisy declamation."

"Charles Fox," said one of his intimates, Boothby, "has three passions—women, play, and politics. Yet he never formed a creditable connection with a woman in his life; he has squandered all his means at the gaming table; and, with the exception of eleven months, he has invariably been in Opposition."

But the days of the Coalition were yet to come. Meanwhile to the new Shelburne Ministry fell the task of settling matters with America. Parliament was prorogued on 9th July. Before the prorogation there had been some animadversion between Shelburne and Fox. On Fox's attempt to dictate a Minister to the King Shelburne had something to say. "It was the principle of his master in politics, the great Lord Chatham, that the country ought on no account to be governed by an oligarchical party or by family connection. It was the custom."

INDEPENDENCE ACKNOWLEDGED

he went on, "among the Mahrattas for a certain number of powerful lords to elect a Peishwa, whom they vested with the apparent plenitude of power, while he was in fact but the creature of an aristocracy, and nothing more than a royal pageant. For himself," Shelburne merely remarked, "he would never consent that the King of England should be a King of the Mahrattas."

To postpone Britain's acknowledgment of independence until a general peace, so that France and Spain, particularly the latter, could have a profitable share in the arrangement, was part of Vergennes's scheme. But the American commissioners did not choose to make any sacrifice of territory or privileges for the sake of France, even though France had indubitably won her battles. Without any consultation with Vergennes, they signed preliminaries for peace on the 30th November. On that date Britain acknowledged the thirteen Colonies to be free and independent States. Years were to pass before the States were to make a coherent nation. On the 5th December, in a speech from the throne. George announced the formal dismemberment of the Empire. The defeat of his hopes caused him much pain, but he had long been prepared for such a defeat.

"In thus," he declared, "admitting their separation from the Crown of Great Britain, I have sacrificed every consideration of my own to the wishes and opinion of my people. I make it my humble and earnest prayer to Almighty God that Great Britain may not feel the evils which might

GEORGE THE THIRD

result from so great a dismemberment of the Empire, and that America may be free from those calamities which have formerly proved in the Mother Country how essential monarchy is to the enjoyment of constitutional liberty. Religion, language, interest, affections may, and I hope will, yet prove a bond of permanent union between the two countries. To this end, neither attention nor disposition on my part shall be wanting."

"Did I lower my voice when I came to that part of my speech?" he asked Lord Oxford at the close of the ceremony.

"The American war," said Lord North, screwing up his courage for a final effort in the House of Commons, "has been suggested to have been the war of the Crown, contrary to the wishes of the people. I deny it. It was the war of Parliament. There was not a step taken in it that had not the sanction of Parliament. It was the war of the people; for it was undertaken for the express purpose of maintaining the just rights of Parliament, or, in other words, of the people of Great Britain over the dependencies of the Empire. For this reason it was popular at its commencement, and eagerly embraced by the people and Parliament. Could the influence of the Crown," inquired Lord North, "have procured such great majorities within the doors of the House of Commons as went almost to produce equanimity? Or, if the influence of the Crown could have produced those majorities within doors, could it have produced the almost unanimous approbation bestowed

OLD COLONIAL POLICY

without doors which rendered the war the most popular of any that had been carried on for many years. Nor did it ever cease to be popular until a series of the most unparalleled disasters and calamities caused the people, wearied out with almost uninterrupted ill-success and misfortune, to call out as loudly for peace as they had formerly done for war."¹

All the foregoing explains and defends the Colonial policy of the period, a policy which regarded the British Parliament as supreme, and renders the charge that the King was the prime mover in the war unjust and absurd.

Had not Shelburne said more than once that "he who should sign the independence of America would consummate the ruin of his country, and must be a traitor." "Rather," declared Catherine of Russia, "than have granted America her independence, as her brother monarch King George had done, she would have fired a pistol at her head!"²

"It cannot be denied," says Earl Russell, "that in his resistance to American claims George III. had the full concurrence of his people. The national pride revolted from any submission to demands loudly put forth, and accompanied with menaces of rebellion."³

"George," says Jesse, referring to this trying moment, "had at least the satisfaction of reflecting that the motives which had influenced his conduct

¹ *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. xxiii. col. 849.

² *Edinburgh Review*, xiv. 113.

³ *Russell's Memorials of Fox*, i. 301.

GEORGE THE THIRD

had been neither those of ambition nor of a thirst for empire, but a firm conviction that he was doing no more than his duty in endeavouring to avert by all lawful means in his power a catastrophe which he believed to be alike pregnant with humiliation to his Crown and fatal to the interests of his country. How many persons probably there are by whom George the Third has been denounced as a tyrant, a simpleton, or a bigot, who, if they had been his contemporaries, instead of having had the advantage of judging of past events by the light of known results and modern experiences, would have been found sharers of the King's views, and supporters of his policy!¹

In Parliament the peace preliminaries were exposed to a hot fire of criticism by both the Fox and North factions. The treatment meted out to the loyalists was deplorable, but perchance inevitable. Shelburne spoke and wrote strongly in their favour; but Franklin, whose son was a loyalist, was fierce in his resentment, and so were the victorious party in America. All that was practicable was to induce the American commissioners to agree that there should be no further confiscations and prosecutions, and that Congress should recommend them to the mercy of the several States. "Nothing short of a renewal of the war could have induced the Americans to forego their revenge, and if the war had gone on longer, the loyalists' fate would have been no better." Everywhere, save in South Carolina, they met with disgraceful barbarity. Sixty thousand of

¹ Jesse, ii. 404.

FOX-NORTH COALITION

them had left the country before the British evacuation of New York. Thirty thousand settled in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, the latter Colony receiving representative institutions in 1784. Ten thousand more found homes in the valley of the St. Lawrence. What under the circumstances she could do for her unfortunate friends, Britain did. Generous grants of land were allotted, some were given half-pay as military officers. Between 1783 and 1790 £3,112,455 was distributed among them, besides £25,785 granted in pensions.¹

Such a man as Shelburne, able as he was, could not enjoy the full confidence of his colleagues. Richmond and Keppel retired; to no purpose Pitt tried to induce Fox to re-enter the Ministry. His refusal to serve with Shelburne provoked Pitt into expressing frankly his opinion of him, and from that moment Pitt and Fox became enemies. Grafton's resignation of the Privy Seal followed. According to the Whigs, says a modern commentator, the Cabinet was to dictate to the King whom he was to direct to form a Cabinet, and was then to control its own composition. Their constitutional ideas were warped by their desire to perpetuate their own power.

Thus was Fox tempted to an indecent intrigue with North, who could command 120 followers in the Commons. Joined by 90 supporters of Fox, these votes would give the latter a working majority over Shelburne's 140 members. On 14th February the country was shocked to learn that Fox had

¹ Hunt, p. 242.

GEORGE THE THIRD

formed an alliance with his former enemy on the basis of "mutual good-will and confidence." Remember that Fox had denounced Lord North as "void of honesty and honour." He had threatened him with an ignominious death on the public scaffold. When it was suggested, not so long since, that he might make terms with any member of the late Ministry, he declared that if he did so he would "rest satisfied to be called the most infamous of mankind."

In commenting upon this Coalition, the most infamous in the history of British politics, it is difficult to decide which conduct deserves the most censure, that of Fox's or North's. On the address the Shelburne Ministry found its defeat by a majority of sixteen. On the 21st February the Ministers found themselves again in a minority on a vote of censure on the terms of peace, and three days later Shelburne resigned. From that day until 2nd April Britain lacked a regular constitutional Government.

Although the King in 1782 had parted with Lord North more in sorrow than in anger, the warm friendship of a lifetime now ceased. "If I were asked," wrote long afterwards one of George's sons, afterwards King of Hanover, to Wilson Croker, "which Minister the King during my life gave the preference to, I should say Lord North. But the Coalition broke up that connection, and he never forgave him."

George was indeed stabbed to the heart by North's behaviour. He put forth every exertion to foil the ambitions of Fox. The two conspirators had already agreed that the Duke of Portland should be the

WITHOUT A MINISTRY

nominal head of the administration. George postponed the evil moment as long as possible. He offered the Treasury to Pitt on Shelburne's recommendation. But Pitt's foresight told him that the moment was premature. In reply to his refusal the King wrote: "I am much hurt to find you are determined to decline at an hour when those who have any regard for the constitution, as established by law, ought to stand forth against the most daring and unprincipled faction that the annals of this kingdom ever produced."¹

Five weeks was the country without a constitutional Government, and the state of public affairs was most critical. The Mutiny Bill had not been passed, the treaty of peace had not been signed. France, never averse from profiting by her neighbour's domestic troubles, might recommence hostilities without notice. When the disbanded militia insisted upon retaining their clothes, so helpless was the War Department that they gave in to the demand. At Portsmouth the mutinous sailors refused to sail to the West Indies till paid their arrears of wages, and the Treasury had no money to pay them.

"The Government," wrote William Grenville to Lord Temple, "is broke up just when a Government was most wanted. Our internal regulations—our loan, our commerce, our army—everything is at a stand, while the candidates for office are arranging their pretensions. In the meantime we have no money, and our troops and seamen are in mutiny."²

¹ Earl Stanhope's *Life of Pitt*, i., Appendix, p. iii.

² *Buckingham Papers*, i. 170.

GEORGE THE THIRD

It is open to conjecture that if the coalition had enjoyed any popularity outside Parliament, the King would have been compelled to surrender far sooner than he did. The public, however, were with their monarch. The treaty of peace was approved of by the country, as hundreds of addresses showed.

George made proposals to Lord Gower, and again failed. He sent for his former Minister, North, and entreated him to break off his connection with Fox. George told North "that he had resolved not to put the Treasury into the hands of a faction," but the "*grateful* Lord North," as the King called him, only replied by pressing his sovereign to send for the Duke of Portland.

During this distressing interval George confided many of his sentiments to the son of his former Prime Minister, George Grenville. Little as he had esteemed the father in that rôle, he did not carry his resentment to the son. This was William Wyndham Grenville, afterwards Lord Grenville, then only in his twenty-fourth year. On the 16th March Grenville, whose brother, Lord Temple, was Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, had a long interview with the King, who bitterly complained to him of the calamitous state into which any country had ever been brought. "The kingdom," he said to Grenville, "was split into parties, not as had been formerly the case—two great bodies of men acting under different denominations of Whigs and Tories, and upon different principles of conduct—but into factions, which had avowedly no other view than that of forcing themselves at all hazards into office. Before



WILLIAM WYNDHAM GRENVILLE
(LORD GRENVILLE)

(From the Portrait by Hoppner)



ON THE COALITION

you took any step, he wished you to be fully apprised of the circumstances, which he would for that purpose detail to me, as he hoped that your letter had been written in the idea of the Government falling into the hands of persons of the description stated above.”¹

It was the conviction of the King that Fox and Lord North had found much difficulty in agreeing between themselves, and it was owing to this difficulty that the country had been left so long without a Government. Yet, he added, it was upon him that they were now attempting to thrust the odium of the mischievous delay. His personal aversion to both of them, he repeated, was great, but were he compelled to choose one or the other of them for his Minister, he should prefer Lord North.²

When Grenville, a few days afterwards, was admitted to a second interview in the royal closet, he found the King's manner much less agitated, and his language much more temperate. At some length he expatiated on the characters of Fox and North, “whom,” says Grenville, “I think he described very justly, though certainly not in the most flattering colours.” Lord North, he said, was a man “composed entirely of negative qualities”; one who, for the sake of securing present ease, would risk any difficulty which might threaten the future. Of Fox, so far as his great abilities were concerned, the King spoke in very flattering terms. Yet while he freely awarded him the merit of genius, of eloquence, and

¹ *Buckingham Papers*, i. 189.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 189, 192.

GEORGE THE THIRD

quickness of parts, he insisted that those qualities were neutralised by his want of application, by his scanty knowledge of public business, and more especially by his utter want of discretion and judgment.¹

Another interview with North and George announced his surrender. "You may tell the Duke of Portland," he said, "that he may kiss my hand to-morrow." On this day the King with his own hand wrote to Temple: "Judge of the uneasiness of my mind at having been thwarted in every attempt to keep the administration of public affairs out of the hands of the most unprincipled coalition the annals of this or any other nation can equal. I have withstood it till not a single man is willing to come to my assistance, and till the House of Commons has taken every step but insisting on this faction being by name elected Ministers.

"To end a conflict which stops every wheel of Government, and which would affect public credit if it continued much longer, I intend this night to acquaint that *grateful* Lord North that the seven Cabinet Councillors the coalition has named shall kiss hands to-morrow, and then form their arrangements, as the former negotiations they did not condescend to open to many of their intentions.

"A Ministry which I have avowedly attempted to avoid, by calling on every other description of men, cannot be supposed to have either my favour or confidence; and as such, I shall most certainly

¹ *Buckingham Papers*, i. 212-13.

HIS CORRECT CONDUCT

refuse any honours they may ask for. I trust the eyes of the nation will soon be opened, as my sorrow may prove fatal to my health if I remain long in this thralldom. I trust you will be steady in your attachment to me, and ready to join other honest men in watching the conduct of this unnatural combination, and I hope many months will not elapse before the Grenvilles, the Pitts, and other men of abilities and character will relieve me from a situation that nothing could have compelled me to submit to but the supposition that no other means remained of preventing the public finances from being materially affected."¹

A Ministry forced in such a manner upon the King was even then doomed to be of brief duration. George's demeanour towards Fox and Portland was most gracious; to North, one of cold disdain. The Coalition was not more acceptable to the public than to the sovereign. "The King," wrote Fox on the 10th April, "continues to behave with every sign of civility, and sometimes even with cordiality."

Many years afterwards the King admitted that Fox had at last behaved to him like a gentleman. "The King's conduct towards the Coalition Ministry," writes Sir Walter Scott, "was equally candid, open, and manly. He used no arts to circumvent or deceive the Councillors whom he unwillingly received into his Cabinet; nor did he, on the other hand, impede their measures by petty opposition. While they were Ministers he gave them the full power

¹ *Buckingham Papers*, vol. i. p. 219.

GEORGE THE THIRD

of their situation; not affecting, at the same time, to conceal that they were not those whose assistance he would voluntarily have chosen."

The Treaty of Versailles was concluded on the 3rd September. A week before the King wrote to Fox, "I cannot say that I am so surprised at France not putting the last strokes to the definitive treaty so soon as we may wish; as our having totally disarmed, in addition to the extreme anxiety shown for peace during the whole period that has ensued since the end of February 1782, certainly makes her feel that she can have no reason to apprehend any evil from so slighting a proceeding."²

¹ *Prose Works*, iv. 338.

² *Memorials of Fox*, ii. 141.

CHAPTER XVII

YOUNG PITT IN POWER

To George's cares as a sovereign were now added the anxieties of a parent. From his earliest years his eldest son, the Prince of Wales, had given promise of being as intelligent and amiable as he was undeniably handsome in person. No son had ever been loved more affectionately, or nurtured with a greater solicitude. But as the young Prince waxed in years, ere indeed he had crossed the border which separates youth from manhood, the constant adulation of which he was the object, the temptation by which he was surrounded, completely subverted his early moral training, and from this onward he became, and so continued to the end of his life, a spoiled and vulgar voluptuary, and an ungrateful and undutiful son. By nature the Prince was a man of parts. Throughout his career there escaped from him many evidences of tact, judgment, and acumen, which make us regret the sickening wastefulness and indecent profligacy of his life.

At the age of eighteen the Prince of Wales, who had been born in 1762, attained his royal majority. "I have therefore, in this view," wrote the King to his Minister, "formed an honourable establishment, and given my son for Robes and Privy Purse the exact sum I had. His stables will be more expensive

GEORGE THE THIRD

in point of saddle horses, I keeping at that time but four—he will have sixteen; but by appointing a Groom of the Stole instead of a Master of the Horse, a set of horses and two footmen are diminished, which alone attended that officer in the first establishment of my late father. As my son will live in my house, he cannot have any occasion for those servants, necessary only if he kept house. I have also wished to keep his number of attendants as moderate as the different natures will admit of to the first establishment of my late father. The difficulty I find of having persons whose private conduct I think may with safety be placed about a young person is not surprising, as, I thank Heaven, my morals and course of life have but little resembled those too prevalent in the present age; and certainly, of all objects in this life, the one I have most at heart is to form my children that they may be useful examples and worthy of imitation.”

The Prince's undutifulness to his royal father had long before this manifested itself in a hundred ways. There is only too much reason to believe that his conduct was advised and abetted by his shallow and unprincipled uncle, the Duke of Cumberland. In vain the King sought to maintain his influence. The Prince was fond of hunting, and his father was assiduous in his attendance in the hunting field. “When we hunt together,” the King said to the Duke of Gloucester, “neither my son nor my brother speak to me; and lately, when the chase ended at a little village where there was but a single postchaise to be hired, my son and brother got into

THE PRINCE'S MISCONDUCT

it and drove to London, leaving me to go home in a cart if I could find one."¹

The royal dinner hour at Windsor was three o'clock—the Prince never appeared till four. In London the dinner hour was four o'clock—the Prince studiously exposed his father to the derisive comments of the equeries and servants of the household by turning up at five. He had only to know his father's wishes in order to disobey them. The Prince's apartments at Buckingham House were visited by money-lenders, pimps and jockeys, and loose women. At a time when George was filled with distress at the threatened dismemberment of the Empire and the defection of Lord North, this behaviour of his eldest son smote him sorely. "What would you have me do in my present distress?" he asked his brother, the Duke of Gloucester, who had marvelled at his patient submission to these unfilial affronts. "If I did not bear it, it would only drive my son into Opposition, which would increase my distress."

To crown all, the Prince went into Opposition, becoming one of Fox's personal friends. At Brooks's Club, where the Prince was enrolled a member, both joined in scenes of debauchery. "The Prince of Wales," wrote Walpole, "has thrown himself into the arms of Charles, and this in the most indecent and undisguised manner. Fox lodged in St. James's Street, and as soon as he rose, which was very late, had a levée of his followers and of the members of the Gaming Club at Brooks's, all his

¹ Walpole's *Last Journals*, vol. ii. pp. 480-1.

GEORGE THE THIRD

disciples. His bristly black person, and shagged breast quite open, and rarely purified by any ablutions, was wrapped in a foul linen nightgown, and his bushy hair dishevelled. In these cynic weeds, and with epicurean good-humour, did he dictate his politics, and in this school did the heir of the Crown attend his lessons and imbibe them."¹

It was an amiable custom among the habitués of Brooks's to ridicule the King, to mention his name with irreverence, to crack ribald jests on his person and opinions, and to make bets on how soon the Prince would come into his inheritance and the Prince's friends receive their reward. The heir-apparent at eighteen entered into a liaison with the famous "Peredita" Robinson.²

In 1783 "dear Charles," to use the expression with which the Prince in his letters addressed Fox, was in power. In a few weeks the heir-apparent would attain the age of twenty-one, and it was necessary that he should have a regular establishment. Eager to enlist the Prince's favour, the Shelburne Ministry had already suggested the handsome revenue of £100,000 a year. This was double the allowance enjoyed by the King's father

¹ Walpole's *Last Journals*, vol. ii. pp. 598-9.

² "My eldest son," wrote the King to North on the 20th August 1781, "got last year in an improper connection with an actress, a woman of indifferent character, through the friendly assistance of Lord Malden. He sent her letters and very foolish promises, which undoubtedly by her conduct she has cancelled." What the King justly calls "the enormous sum" of £5000 was paid by him to recover the Prince's letters. Mrs. Robinson afterwards became the mistress of Fox.

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GEORGE, PRINCE OF WALES

(From the Portrait by Gainsborough)



FOX AND THE PRINCE

when Prince of Wales, and this in spite of the relevant circumstance that Frederick was married, and the father of a numerous family. Fox, however, thought he could give no less, although the majority of his colleagues thought the sum grossly extravagant. Fox declared that he had pledged his word to the Prince, and he would rather resign than break his promise. The Minister's proposal was made *in camera*. He does not seem to have thought it necessary to consult upon such a matter with his sovereign. When George learned some weeks later of the proposed arrangement (it was casually mentioned by the Duke of Portland in the royal closet) he was deeply offended. It was far, he said, from being either his wish or his policy to render his prodigal and disobedient son so suddenly and so entirely independent of parental control. In the next place, assuming the heir to the throne to have a fair claim to the liberal endowment proposed for him by Ministers, surely it was to his own father, and not to a party whose political opinions were diametrically opposed to those of his father, that the Prince should have been taught to feel himself indebted. Never, exclaimed the King in the bitterness of his feelings, could he forgive an administration that could sacrifice the interests of the public to gratify the wishes of an "ill-advised young man."¹ He ironically asked the Duke of Portland if he intended setting up his son in opposition to himself.²

¹ Russell's *Memorials of Fox*, ii. 113.

² Walpole's *Last Journals*, ii. 631.

GEORGE THE THIRD

The King's mind was soon made up. Taking into consideration, he said, the heavy expenses of the late war and the financial embarrassment under which the country at present laboured, he could on no account think of further burthening his subjects with an annual charge amounting to so large a sum as £100,000. To him £50,000 a year appeared quite a sufficient allowance for his son, and that sum he was ready to disburse out of his own Civil List.

After this, if the Ministers persisted in urging the larger sum their dismissal was a foregone conclusion. From this fate they were for the present saved by the Prince himself, who consented to release his friends from their obligation by accepting the King's offer of £12,000 a year from the Duchy of Cornwall, and £60,000 for his debts and present expenses.¹

As may be imagined, this episode had greatly distressed the King. In one of his interviews with the Duke of Portland he had actually burst into tears. In putting his son on the same allowance that his own father had enjoyed before him, and

¹ "I believe," wrote Fox to Northington, "he was naturally very averse to it, but Colonel Lake and others whom he trusts persuaded him to it, and the intention of doing so came from him to us spontaneously. If it had not, I own I should have felt myself bound to follow his royal highness's line upon the subject, though I know that by so doing I should destroy the Ministry in the worst possible way, and subject myself to the imputation of the most extreme wrong-headedness. I shall always, therefore, consider the Prince's having yielded a most fortunate event, and shall always feel myself proportionally obliged to him and to those who advised him."—*Russell's Memorials of Fox*, ii. 117.

FOX'S INDIA BILL

thereby saving the nation £50,000 a year, he realised that he had only widened the breach between himself and the Prince.

On the reassembling of Parliament in November Fox had in hand another measure which would give further dire offence to his sovereign. Its character was, in a word, revolutionary. Two Bills, chiefly drafted by Burke, were brought in affecting the constitution of the East India Company and its Indian administration. We have already had occasion to observe that George was deeply interested in the affairs of India. Clearly did he recognise the anomaly of the Company's sovereignty, the abuses which existed and the necessity for reform. Nevertheless, as himself representing the British nation which had conquered and maintained India, he could hardly see with equanimity the substitution of a third party for the royal authority. When this third party, which sought what was virtually regal power, happened to be Charles Fox and "my son's administration," the arrogant presumption was too great to be borne.

Under Fox's India Bill it was proposed to appoint a board of seven commissioners to conduct the government of India, who were to be irremovable by the Crown. These seven commissioners were to be Fox's adherents. "The effect of his Bill," says Macaulay, "was to give, not to the Crown, but to him personally, whether in office or in Opposition, an enormous power, a patronage sufficient to counterbalance the patronage of the Treasury and of the Admiralty, and to decide the

GEORGE THE THIRD

elections for fifty boroughs. He knew, it was said, that he was hateful alike to the King and people, and he had devised a plan which would make him independent of both."

Pitt, Grenville, and Wilberforce were vehement against the measure. The first-named prophesied that if the Bill passed "no public securities whatever—not public corporation—not the Bank of England—not even Magna Charta itself—would be secure from the innovations of a "ravenous coalition," whose harpy jaws were gaping to swallow a patronage amounting to more than two millions of money sterling."

Fox was charged with desiring to make himself "king of Bengal." A popular caricature of the day figures him as "Carlo Khan," riding in Leadenhall Street on an elephant (Lord North) led by Edmund Burke. The reception of the Bill by the public showed George clearly that the Ministry did not enjoy its confidence, and also that here was opportunity of ending the days and deeds of the coalition. With Thurlow and Lord Temple he had frequent interviews. Temple had instantly resigned his post of Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland when the Coalition Ministry was announced, and showed himself eagerly a warm friend and partisan of the King. There is a supposition indulged in by several contemporary writers that the King was ignorant of the true import and real danger of Fox's measure until on being apprised of it by Temple.¹ Such a notion is

¹ Thus we have this amusing passage in *The Rolliad* :—

"On that great day, when Buckingham, by pairs,
Ascended, Heaven impelled, the King's back stairs,

THURLOW'S OPPOSITION

absurd. "It is unreasonable," wrote Temple (afterwards Marquis of Buckingham), "to assume that his Majesty really was ignorant of the scope and design of the Ministerial proposal, which had called up remonstrance and protests from all parts of the kingdom." If George was ignorant, it was not for long. In Thurlow's memorandum to the King, delivered a full week before the Bill passed by a majority of two to one in the House of Commons, it is denominated "a plan to take more than half the royal power and by that means disable the King for the rest of the reign." "As I abhor tyranny in all its shapes," he declared, when the Bill came up to the Lords, "I shall oppose most strenuously this strange attempt to destroy the true balance of our constitution. I wish to see the Crown great and respectable, but if the present Bill should pass, it will no longer be worthy of a man of honour to wear. The King, in fact"—and he fixed his eyes pointedly on the Prince of Wales as he spoke—"will take the diadem from his own head and place it on the head of Mr. Fox."¹ Camden followed in a similar strain. "Were this Bill to pass into law," he cried, "we should see the King of England and the King of Bengal contending for superiority in the British Parliament." The Bill passed its first reading in the Lords. If it was

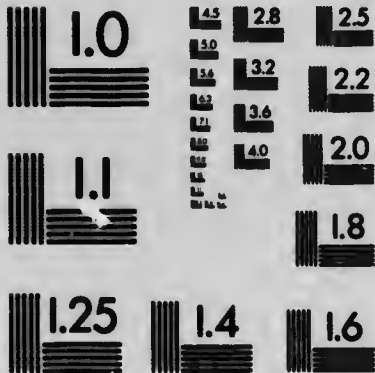
And panting, breathless, strained his lungs to show
From Fox's Bill what mighty ills would flow;
Still, as with stammering tongue he told his tale,
Unusual terrors Brunswick's heart assail,
Wide starts his white wig from the Royal ear,
And each particular hair stands still with fear."

¹ Stanhope's *Life of Pitt*, i. 146-7.



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GEORGE THE THIRD

to be prevented from entering the statute book, no time was to be lost. Such was the juncture, such the danger, when George took a bold step, the boldest of all possible steps. "If it ever be excusable in a King of England," comments Lord Chancellor Campbell, "to cabal against his Ministers, George III. may well be defended for the course he now took; for they had been forced upon him by a factious intrigue, and public opinion was decidedly in his favour."¹

What happened was this: Temple whispered to the wavering peers what the King had told him that day, that whoever voted for the Bill must be considered by him as an enemy. The rumour spread like flames in a wood. The Commons took alarm, and passed a resolution declaring "that to report the King's opinion on any question pending in Parliament with a view to influencing votes was a high crime and misdemeanour." The Lords laughed at the threat, and the Bill was thrown out by 95 to 70.

At Windsor George waited impatiently for the result of the division. On the morning after it occurred he was, according to custom, at the early meet of the royal staghounds. We are told by one who was present that the King's mind was obviously distracted, that when the hounds drew off he continued to linger behind as if momentarily expecting the arrival of important news. A horseman at full speed approached. The letter he bore was eagerly torn open by the King.

¹ Campbell's *Lives of the Chancellors*, vol. v. p. 555.

PITT THE YOUNGER

Mastering its contents in an instant the King raised both arms and cried fervently, "Thank God, it is over, the House has thrown out the Bill! So," he added, "there is an end of Mr. Fox."¹ For the remainder of that day did the King wait for the resignations of the two Secretaries of State. But these did not come. Only one course was open: he sent messengers to North and Fox commanding them to yield up their seals of office, as he would not receive them personally. At one o'clock in the morning North, who had already retired to his bedchamber, delivered up the seals. For the moment they were given to Temple.

Ever memorable is the following day, the 19th December. A young member named Arden moved that a new writ be issued for the borough of Appleby in the room of the Right Honourable William Pitt, who had accepted the office of First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. The announcement by many was hardly taken seriously. It was regarded as a "boyish freak," a "mince-pie administration," which would end with the Christmas holidays. The son of Chatham was not yet twenty-five years of age. Difficulties which would have appalled and taxed the powers of the most hardened political veteran confronted him. So hopeless seemed the task under the peculiar and, as many alleged, unconstitutional circumstances by which he had attained power, that it was doubted if he could even form a Ministry. Temple himself, who had mainly instigated the King, and who accepted

¹ *Quarterly Review*, cv. 482.

GEORGE THE THIRD

from his cousin Pitt the Secretaryship of State, resigned the seals three days afterwards. Temple's reason for this conduct was that he had not at once received a royal acknowledgment of his services in the shape of a dukedom; he felt that the appointment of a new Irish administration, "unaccompanied with any mark to me of the King's approbation of my conduct, as the strongest disavowal of my government in Ireland, and, not to use harsh expressions, as a most personal offence to me." Pitt was profoundly affected at this conduct in his friend and relation.

The new Cabinet comprised Lords Sydney and Carmarthen as Secretaries of State; Gower, President of the Council; Rutland, Privy Seal; Howe, First Lord of the Admiralty; while Thurlow returned again as Lord Chancellor.

The reins were now in Pitt's hands. George allayed Fox's alarm by assuring the House that he would not exercise his prerogative either by proroguing or dissolving Parliament. After the holidays the members reassembled. Pitt lacked a majority; he lacked also the aid of a single Cabinet Minister in the Commons. His friends urged him to advise a dissolution, that a dissolution would be a great advantage. Fox was on his legs in an instant: he questioned the right of the Crown to dissolve Parliament during the business of a session. "James II. had done so, and thereby put an end to his reign." To this Pitt replied that he "would not compromise the royal prerogative or bargain it away in the House of Commons." In a minority of 193 to 232 Pitt courageously brought in his

PITT'S ORDEAL.

own Bill for the reform government of India. He proposed to place the political administration of the Company under a board of control in England to be appointed by the Crown, while leaving to the Company its commerce and patronage.

A battle began, one of many months' duration. It was a battle, to use Dr. Johnson's phrase, "between George III.'s sceptre and Mr. Fox's tongue." No fewer than sixteen times in the course of the next ten weeks did the tellers announce to Pitt a minority. Fox put forth all his strength to compass Pitt's resignation. The House at his dictation actually petitioned the King to dismiss the new Prime Minister from his Councils. To no purpose: Pitt was not ready for dissolution. "I own," wrote George frankly to Pitt, "I cannot see the reason if the thing is practicable that a dissolution should not be effected; if not, I fear the constitution of this country cannot subsist." At one time Pitt began to fear that the game was up, but the King was on his side, urging him not to give way. "If you resign, Mr. Pitt," he once said, "I must resign too!"

On the 15th February George wrote: "Mr. Pitt is so well apprised of the mortification I feel at any possibility of ever again seeing the heads of Opposition in public employments—and more particularly Mr. Fox, whose conduct has not been more marked against my station in the Empire than against my person—that he must attribute my want of perspicuity, in my conversation last night, to that foundation."

GEORGE THE THIRD

The crisis told with severity on the King's health. His customary cheerfulness vanished. He hinted that were Pitt overthrown and his enemies returned there was no other course for him but to abandon England for his Hanoverian dominions, until recalled by the voice of the people. He now took long rides into the country accompanied only by a single equerry, to whom he rarely spoke, appearing to be lost in painful reflections. His old pastimes seemed no longer to afford him pleasure. "The first five or six years," long afterwards said General Budé,¹ "he knew him (the King) he thought he never saw such a temper. He was always cheerful; never for a moment discomposed or out of humour. But the American war, in some degree, altered his temper, from his extreme anxiety and disappointment on that head. The coalition, and having a Ministry forced on him which he detested, hurt him also."

George wrote Pitt, "If the only two remaining privileges of the Crown are infringed—that of negating Bills which have passed both Houses of Parliament, and that of naming the Ministers to be employed—I cannot but feel, as far as regard

¹ General Budé was sub-governor to Prince William, afterwards Duke of Clarence, and to Prince Edward, afterwards Duke of Kent. "I do not quite know," writes Madame D'Arblay, "what to say of General Budé, except that his person is tall and showy, and his manner and appearance are fashionable, but he has a sneer in his smile that looks sarcastic, and a distance in his manner that seems haughty.—*Quarterly Review*, cv. 475; *Diary and Letters*, iii. 40. The General died in the Upper Lodge, Windsor Castle, 30th October 1818, at the age of eighty-two.

THE GREAT SEAL STOLEN

my person, that I can be no longer of any utility to this country, nor can with honour continue in this island."¹

Lord Effingham brought in a motion that the House of Commons in certain of their resolutions had infringed the spirit of the constitution. It obtained a majority of 100 votes to 53, whereupon the King wrote: "My present situation is perhaps the most singular that ever occurred, either in the annals of this or any other country; for the House of Lords, by not less a majority than two to one, have declared in my favour, and my subjects at large, in a much more considerable proportion, are not less decided."² Yet the Commons were against both him and his Prime Minister.

Quickly the nation rallied to the support of its sovereign. Many who had long opposed the Court now became amongst its most eager champions. The masses of the people were seen plainly to be with the new Ministry. On 1st March Fox had a majority of only twelve in the House of Commons. A week later the majority had sunk to a single vote. On the 23rd, the Mutiny Bill having passed and the Supplies being voted, Pitt was ready to dissolve. For a moment an unforeseen difficulty arose. The Great Seal had been stolen from the house of the Lord Chancellor. But the foolish conspirator, whoever he was, was foiled; a new seal was fashioned in a few hours, and on the 25th the dissolution of Parliament was at last announced.

¹ Earl Stanhope's *Life of Pitt*, i., Appendix, p. vi.

² *Ibid.*, p. vii.

GEORGE THE THIRD

“The King and Pitt,” says Lord Rosebery, “were supported on the tidal wave of one of those great convulsions of feeling which in Great Britain relieve and express pent-up national sentiments and which in other nations produce revolutions. The country was sick of the ‘old lot,’ the politicians who had fought and intrigued and jobbed amongst themselves, with the result of landing Great Britain in an abyss of disaster and discomfiture such as she had never known since the Dutch ships had sailed up the Medway. . . . There was something rotten in the State, and the rottenness seemed to begin in the statesmen. The English mind moves slowly but with exceeding sureness, and it had reached this point at the election of 1784.”¹ “The King’s dismissal of a Ministry which commanded a large majority in the House of Commons,” says Mr. Hunt, “and his refusal to dismiss its successor at the request of the House, needed no pardon; they were endorsed by the declaration of the national will, and he gained a hold on the affection of his people such as he had never had before. His success must not make us forget the courage and the political insight which he displayed during this critical period.”² Again George had shown signally his rare qualities of statesmanship.

“The risk run by the King,” continues Pitt’s most recent biographer, “had been immense, and it is only fair to say he had made proof of rare and signal courage, for he had played on the throw all that to him made the throw worth having. The

¹ Rosebery’s *Pitt*, p. 60.

² Hunt, *Political History of England*, p. 280.

THE WHIGS OVERTHROWN

general election of May indeed condoned his absolute action of December, but had it fallen differently he must have become as much a prisoner of party, as Louis XVI. on his return from Varennes."

The overthrow of the Whigs was complete. One hundred and sixty of the Opposition candidates ("Fox's Martyrs," as a wit called them) were defeated. Fox himself, after an exciting conflict, was chosen for Westminster, but as second member only, and his victory here gave rise to a prolonged legal scrutiny, which Gillray's pencil has made immortal. Routed was the Whig party, and for seventeen years Pitt was to enjoy the glory and responsibilities of power.

All that George had so long struggled for was now attained. The power of the great families was broken, their pride was humbled, government by connection was a thing of the past. Nothing can be more unjust to the King, no misinterpretation of his conduct and his aspirations more perverse, than to attribute to George, as some commentators have attributed, hopes that Pitt would become his pliant tool and the agent of his power. Pitt, it is said, was too strong a man, too independent a character, to be entirely acceptable to the King. A woodman might as well say that his axe was too sharp, or a rifleman that his weapon carried too far. George had always sought strong men. When he had discarded them it was not for their strength, but for their weakness. He had complained that Butc had lacked political firmness, that Rockingham was ever truckling to the crowd. He had chosen North for his courage and independence, he had shrunk

GEORGE THE THIRD

from Fox because he was the slave of his vices. Several times had his Ministers disappointed him; Pitt also might disappoint. The first few months of administration, however, set George's mind at rest. He had at last found a man who could do the country's work. Amiable, fearless, incorruptible, industrious was Pitt, and so he gave to Pitt his full confidence.

Now began, therefore, perhaps the happiest and most tranquil period in the whole of the King's reign. His customary cheerfulness returned, and he found leisure for social and literary converse, and for those manifold dignified duties and employments which win for a sovereign the esteem of and set an example to his people. A strong and clear-eyed pilot at the helm, the ship now sailing in smooth waters, might not the master snatch a well-earned hour of repose?

As far back as the summer of 1776 George and the celebrated Mary Granville, Mrs. Delany, had become acquainted. She was then nearly seventy-seven years of age, but her wit and personal charm made her one of the most entertaining and most besought characters of the day. She was the friend of Swift, Prior, and Gay, of Soame Jenyns and Horace Walpole. In this venerable lady's correspondence we are furnished with many interesting glimpses of the King's private life.

In one of her letters she describes a family scene at the Queen's Lodge, Windsor. "The King carried about in his arms, by turns, Princess Sophia, and the last Prince, Octavius so called, being the

MRS. DELANY

eighth son. I never saw more lovely children, nor a more pleasing sight than the King's fondness for them and the Queen's. For they seem to have but one mind, and that is to make everything easy and happy about them. The King brought in his arms the little Prince Octavius to me, who held out his hand to play with me, which on my taking the liberty to kiss, his Majesty made him kiss my cheek. We had a charming concert of vocal and instrumental music; but no ladies, except those I have named, came into the second drawing-room, nor any of the gentlemen. They stayed in the concert room. The King and the rest of the royal family came backwards and forwards, and I cannot tell you how gracious they all were. They talked to me a great deal by turns. When any favourite song was sung the Queen, attended by her ladies, went and stood at the door of the concert room, and a chair was ordered to be placed at the door for the Duchess of Portland, when Prince Ernest—about nine years old—carried a chair so large he could hardly lift it, and placed it by the Duchess for me to sit by her. We stayed till past eleven; came home by a charming moon; did not sup till past twelve, nor in bed till two.”¹

Two days later Mrs. Delany again visited Windsor. “The King and Queen and the Princesses,” she writes, “received us in the drawing-room, to which we went through the concert room. Princess Mary took me by the left hand, Princess Sophia and

Life and Correspondence of Mrs. Delany, by Lady Llanover, i. pp. 472-3.

GEORGE THE THIRD

the sweet little Prince Octavius took me by the right, and led me after the Duchess of Portland into the drawing-room. The King nodded and smiled upon my little conductors, and bid them lead me to the Queen, who stood in the middle of the room. When we were all seated—for the Queen is so gracious she will always make me sit down—the Duchess of Portland sat next to the Queen, and I next to the Princess Royal. On the other side of me was a chair, and his Majesty did me the honour to sit by me. He went backwards and forwards between that and the music room. He was so gracious as to have a good deal of conversation with me, particularly about Handel's music, and ordered those pieces to be played which he found I gave preference to. In the course of the evening the Queen changed places with the Princess Royal, saying most graciously she must have a little conversation with Mrs. Delany, which lasted about half-an-hour. She then got up, being half-an-hour after ten, and said she was afraid she should keep the Duchess of Portland too late. There was nobody but their attendants, and Lord and Lady Courtown. Nothing could be more easy and agreeable.”¹

On another occasion she tells her correspondent “your affectionate heart would have been delighted with this royal domestic scene, and indeed it added dignity to their high station.”

In the summer of 1785, on the death of Mrs. Delany's friend and companion, the Dowager Duchess

¹ *Letters from Mrs. Delany to Mrs. Frances Hamilton*, pp. 2-4.
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QUEEN CHARLOTTE

(From the Portrait by Gainsborough)

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HIS DOMESTIC CIRCLE

of Portland, the King offered her an annuity of £300 and a residence at Windsor. It was the King's express injunction, wrote the Queen, that Mrs. Delany should bring to Windsor "only herself, her niece, her clothes, and her attendants." George and his Queen had in the meantime taken upon themselves to provide every article necessary either for her use or comfort. On her arrival she not only found the pleased and benevolent monarch on the spot eager to welcome her, but he had also caused the house to be stocked with plate, china, glass, and linen, the cellar with wine, and even the cupboards with sweetmeats and pickles."

"It is impossible for me," writes Mrs. Delany, "to do justice to her great condescension and tenderness, which were almost equal to what I had lost. She repeated, in the strongest terms, her wish and the King's that I should be as easy and happy as they could possibly make me; that they waived all ceremony, and desired to come to me like *friends*. The Queen delivered me a paper from the King, which contained the first quarter of £300 per annum, which his Majesty allows me out of his privy purse. Their Majesties have drank tea with me five times, and the Princesses three. They generally stay two hours or longer."

Mrs. Delany of course became a frequent guest at the Queen's Lodge, where she was more than ever charmed with the King as she saw more and more of him in the centre of his domestic circle. "I have been several evenings," she writes on the 9th of November, "at the Queen's lodge with no other company but

GEORGE THE THIRD

their own most lovely family. They sit round a large table, on which are books, work, pencils and paper. The Queen has the goodness to make me sit down next to her, and delights me with her conversation, which is informing, elegant, and pleasing beyond description; whilst the younger part of the family are drawing and working, &c.; the beautiful babe, Princess Amelia, bearing her part in the entertainment; sometimes in one of her sisters' laps, sometimes playing with the King on the carpet, which altogether exhibits such a delightful scene as would require an Addison's pen, or a Vandyke's pencil, to do justice to. In the next room is the band of music, which plays from eight o'clock till ten. The King generally directs them what pieces of music to play, chiefly Handel's." Such was George the Third as he constantly appeared in the society of those who loved him and whom he loved! "That the King," writes the venerable Earl of Guilford to Mrs. Delany, "has one of the best hearts in the world I have known from his birth, and I have known the same to be in the Queen ever since I had the honour of conversing with her *out* of a Drawing Room. *You*, who know them so well, will believe that it is not as King and Queen only that I love and respect them, but as two of the best persons I know in the world."

On the 20th August 1782 death visited the King's own inmost circle for the first time. While his youngest son Prince Alfred lay dying George wrote the following letter to his spiritual adviser the Bishop of Worcester: "There is no probability,

FAMILY AFFLICTIONS

and, indeed, scarce a possibility, that my youngest child can survive this day. Knowing you are acquainted with the tender feelings of the Queen's heart, convinces me you will be uneasy till apprised that she is calling the only solid assistant under affliction, religion, to her assistance. She feels the peculiar goodness of Divine Providence in never having before put her to so severe a trial, though she has so numerous a family. I do not deny that I also write to you, my good lord, as a balm to my mind. As I have not you present to converse with, I think it the most pleasing occupation, by this means, to convey to you that I place my confidence that the Almighty will never fill my cup of sorrow fuller than I can bear. And when I reflect on the dear cause of our tribulation, I consider his change to be so greatly for his advantage, that I sometimes think it unkind to wish his recovery had been effected. And when I take this event in another point of view, and reflect how much more miserable it would have been to have seen him lead a life of pain, and perhaps end thus at a more mature age, I also confess that the goodness of the Almighty appears strongly in what certainly gives me great concern, but might have been still more severe."¹

Less than nine months later died little Prince Octavius, only four years of age. "Many people," wrote George, who was much affected by the blow, "would regret they ever had so sweet a child, since they were forced to part with him. That is not my case; I am thankful to God for having

¹ Stanhope's *History of England*, vii., Appendix, p. xxxv.

GEORGE THE THIRD

graciously allowed me to enjoy such a creature for four years." During the ensuing summer Queen Charlotte gave birth to her fifteenth child and the last, Princess Amelia.

The conduct of the Prince of Wales was ever a blot on the King's happiness. The Prince's extravagant follies had placed him by the spring of 1785 £160,000 in debt. In this predicament he unbosomed himself to Lord Malmesbury. The King insisted on an exact statement of his debts, but one large item of £25,000 the Prince said he was in honour bound not to account for. Very well, was George's opinion, if it is a debt my son is ashamed to explain, it is one which I as a father ought not to defray. On receiving a letter from his son and Lord Southampton, the Prince's Groom of the Stole, the King wrote at once to Pitt: "This morning I received the enclosed note from Lord Southampton, on which I appointed him to be at St. James's, when I returned from the House of Peers. He there delivered to me the letter from the Prince of Wales. All I could collect further from him was, that the idea is that I call for explanations and retrenchments as a mode of declining engaging to pay the debts; that there are many sums that it cannot be honourable to explain; that Lord Southampton has reason to believe they have not been incurred for political purposes; that he thinks the going abroad is now finally resolved on; that perhaps the champion of the Opposition (Fox) has been consulted on the letter now sent. I therefore once more send all

MRS. FITZHERBERT

that has passed to Mr. Pitt, and hope to have in the course of to-morrow from him what answer ought to be sent to this extraordinary epistle, which, though respectful in terms, is in direct defiance of my whole correspondence. I suppose Mr. Pitt will choose to consult the Chancellor."¹

Lord Malmesbury in vain urged matrimony upon the Prince. It was the earnest desire of his father, he said, as well as his father's subjects, that he should marry. Then and then only the King and legislature would cheerfully consent to increase his income and liquidate his debts. "I will never marry," exclaimed the Prince vehemently, "my resolution is taken on that subject. Frederick will marry, and the Crown will descend to his children; I have settled it with Frederick; no! I will never marry."

Did any guess the truth? At that moment the Prince was deeply in love with the handsome and fascinating Mrs. Fitzherbert, a Roman Catholic, who refused to be his mistress, and could not, owing to the Royal Marriage Act, become his lawful wife. To escape from his importunities she had fled to the Continent, and there remained till December 1785. On the 21st of that month the Prince of Wales and Mrs. Fitzherbert were married in the presence of indisputable witnesses in the drawing-room of the lady's house in Park Lane. Still preserved at Coutts's Bank a the certificate of the marriage, with the signat. of the contracting parties.

¹ Stanhope's *Life of Pitt*, i., Appendix, p. xlv.

GEORGE THE THIRD

Not for several months after the wedding did rumours concerning it gain currency. When the question of increasing the Prince's income arose in Parliament it was impossible that the clandestine Fitzherbert marriage should not be mooted. The Prince became frightened. He realised for the first time the possible consequence of his rashness. Besides the ruin of his monetary fortunes, marriage with a Roman Catholic might involve the loss of a kingdom. He summoned Fox to Carlton House, and as a result of that interview Fox went down to the House of Commons and solemnly denied the fact of the marriage. It was said that the heir-apparent had completely imposed upon him, and that on discovering the imposition Fox broke off relations with the Prince for a twelvemonth. The Prince's subsequent treatment of Mrs. Fitzherbert reflects the greatest discredit upon him. After her abandonment by him, and when the fact of her marriage had been ascertained, through the interest of the Queen and the Duke of York Mrs. Fitzherbert was granted an annuity of £6000, and both the King and Queen showed her great kindness. Charlotte, as she herself told Lord Stourton, had always been her friend, and as for the King, he could not have treated her more affectionately even if she had been his own daughter.

Once secure in office as the result of the election of 1784, Pitt again brought in his Indian Government Bill, which after some amendments in Committee passed both Houses without a division. The system thus established lasted for more than

REFORM BILL REJECTED

seventy years. Less fortunate was Pitt's Reform Bill. George felt that the time was not yet ripe for striking at the roots of the existing representative system; nevertheless he told Pitt that he would not use any of his influence against the measure, and he kept his promise. "Mr. Pitt must recollect that though I have ever thought it unfortunate that he had early engaged himself in this measure, yet that I have ever said that as he was clear of the propriety of the measure he ought to lay his thoughts before the House. That, out of personal regard to him, I would avoid giving any opinion to any one on the opening of the door to the Parliamentary reform except to him, therefore I am certain Mr. Pitt cannot suspect my having influenced any one on the occasion. If others choose, on base ends, to impute such a conduct to me, I must bear it as former false suggestion." Indeed, on a question of such magnitude I should think very ill of any man who took part on either side without the maturest consideration, and who would suffer his civility to any one to make him vote contrary to his own opinion."¹ As Macaulay has pointed out, George refrained from prejudicing others against his Minister's projected plan of representative reform, but by the tenor of his speech from the throne, at the opening of the session, he was understood expressly to recommend the measure to the consideration of Parliament.

The motion to bring in the Bill was rejected by 248 to 174. Although defeated in this and in

¹ Tomline's *Life of Pitt*, ii. 30.

GEORGE THE THIRD

several other personal measures, it was no part of Pitt's plans to resign. Nor did anybody expect it.

It was in this same summer of 1785 that the King and the accredited envoy of his revolted Colonies, the United States of America, were first brought face to face. One of the most dramatic moments it was in George's career. Recollecting his position as sovereign lord of the exiled American loyalists now struggling to build up an empire on the northern side of the American border, considering the long battle he had waged to prevent the dismemberment of the Empire, this official interview between himself and one of the chief agents of the rebellion could not but be distasteful to him. The envoy selected by Congress was John Adams, one of the staunchest and most plain-spoken of the American nationalists. His country had not yet achieved a stable government. Many thought she would never do so. The thirteen Colonies were distracted, impoverished, torn with internecine jealousies and alarms. On 7th August 1783 George had written to Fox: "As to the question whether I wish to receive a Minister from America, I certainly can never express its being agreeable to me; and indeed I should think it wisest for both parties to have only agents who can settle any matters of commerce. But, so far I cannot help adding, that I shall ever have a bad opinion of any Englishman who would accept of being an accredited Minister for that revolted State, and which certainly for years cannot establish a stable government."¹

¹ Earl Russell's *Memorials of Fox*, ii. pp. 140-1.

AMERICA'S FIRST ENVOY

Two years later matters had become somewhat more tranquil and promising. The King was not the man to stand in the way of establishing good relations between Britain and the new Republic. On the 1st June Adams was ushered by Lord Carmarthen, one of the Secretaries of State, into the royal presence at St. James's Palace. As he passed on to the closet he had to run the gauntlet of a crowd of Peers, Bishops, Ministers of State, and Foreign Ambassadors, the cynosure of all eyes. "The door was shut," wrote Adams to Jay in his account of the day's proceeding, "and I was left alone with his Majesty and the Secretary of State. I made the three reverences—one at the door, another about half-way, and a third before the presence—according to the usage established at this and all the northern Courts of Europe, and then addressed myself to his Majesty in the following words:—

"SIR,—The United States of America have appointed me their Minister Plenipotentiary to your Majesty, and have directed me to deliver to your Majesty this letter which contains the evidence of it. It is in obedience to their express commands that I have the honour to assure your Majesty of their unanimous disposition and desire to cultivate the most friendly and liberal intercourse between your Majesty's subjects and their citizens, and of their best wishes for your Majesty's health and happiness, and for that of your royal family. The appointment of a Minister from the United States to your Majesty's Court will form an epoch in the history of England and of America. I think myself more

GEORGE THE THIRD

fortunate than all my fellow-citizens in having the distinguished honour to be the first to stand in your Majesty's royal presence in a diplomatic character; and I shall esteem myself the happiest of men if I can be instrumental in recommending my country more and more to your Majesty's royal benevolence, and of restoring an entire esteem, confidence, and affection, or, in better words, the old good-nature and the old good-humour between people who, though separated by an ocean, and under different Governments, have the same language, a similar religion, and kindred blood.

“I beg your Majesty's permission to add that, although I have some time before been intrusted by my country, it was never in my whole life in a manner so agreeable to myself.’

“The King listened to every word I said with dignity, but with apparent emotion. Whether it was the nature of the interview, or whether it was my visible agitation—for I felt more than I did or could express—that touched him, I cannot say, but he was much affected, and answered me with more tremor than I had spoken with, and said:—

“SIR,—The circumstances of this audience are so extraordinary, the language you have now held is so extremely proper, and the feelings you have discovered so justly adapted to the occasion, that I must say that I not only receive with pleasure the assurance of the friendly dispositions of the United States, but that I am very glad the choice has fallen upon you to be their Minister. I wish you, sir, to believe, and that it may be understood in America, that

RECEPTION OF ADAMS

I have done nothing in the late contest but what I thought myself indispensably bound to do, by the duty which I owed to my people. I will be very frank with you. I was the last to consent to the separation; but the separation having been made, and having become inevitable, I have always said, as I say now, that I would be the first to meet the friendship of the United States as an independent Power. The moment I see such sentiments and language as yours prevail, and a disposition to give to this country the preference, that moment I shall say, let the circumstances of language, religion, and blood have their natural and full effect.'

"I dare not say that these were the King's precise words, and it is even possible that I may have in some particular mistaken his meaning; for, although his pronunciation is as distinct as I ever heard, he hesitated some time between his periods, and between the members of the same period. He was indeed much affected, and I confess I was not less so, and, therefore, I cannot be certain that I was so cool and attentive, heard so clearly, and understood so perfectly, as to be confident of all his words or sense; and, I think, that all which he said to me should at present be kept secret in America, unless his Majesty or his Secretary of State, who alone was present, should judge proper to report it. This I do say, that the foregoing is his Majesty's meaning as I then understood it, and his own words as nearly as I can recollect them.

"The King then asked me whether I came last from France, and upon my answering in the affirma-

GEORGE THE THIRD

tive he put on an air of familiarity, and, smiling, or rather laughing, said, 'There is an opinion among some people that you are not the most attached of all your countrymen to the manners of France.' I was surprised at this, because I thought it an indiscretion and a departure from the dignity. I was a little embarrassed, but determined not to deny the truth on one hand, nor leave him to infer from it any attachment to England on the other. I threw off as much gravity as I could, and assumed an air of gaiety and a tone of decision as far as was decent, and said, 'That opinion, sir, is not mistaken; I must avow to your Majesty, I have no attachment but to my own country.' The King replied, as quick as lightning, 'An honest man will never have any other.'

"The King then said a word or two to the Secretary of State, which, being between them, I did not hear, and then turned round and bowed to me, as is customary with all kings and princes when they give the signal to retire. I retreated, stepping backward, as is the etiquette, and making my last reverence at the door of the chamber, I went my way. The Master of Ceremonies joined me at the moment of my coming out of the King's closet, and accompanied me through the apartments down to my carriage, several stages of servants, gentlemen-porters and under-porters roaring out like thunder as I went along, 'Mr. Adams's servants, Mr. Adams's carriage, &c.' I have been thus minute, as it may be useful to others hereafter to know.

UNDECEIVED TOO LATE

“The conversation with the King, Congress will form their own judgment of. I may expect from it a residence less painful than I once expected, as so marked an attention from the King will silence many grumblers, but we can infer nothing from all this concerning the success of my mission.”

Strange the Destiny, strange the seclusion of kings, that only now were many of John Adams's countrymen to learn so much of their late monarch's deportment and character as would make the calumnies of the Declaration of Independence impossible of credit and a laughing-stock! As for sturdy John Adams, second President of the United States, he ever treasured the memory of that interview with George, “and always,” we are told, “retained a strong attachment to his person and character.”

Too late—it was then too late!

CHAPTER XVIII

THE FIRST MENTAL MALADY

ONE afternoon in 1784 the inimitable Fanny Burney, Dr. Burney's daughter, and authoress of "Evelina," was visiting Mrs. Delany at Windsor. The aged gentlewoman had retired from her drawing-room to refresh herself by a nap, leaving there her nephew, Miss Burney, her pretty niece, Miss Port, and a little girl. All were in the middle of the room diverting themselves in holiday frolic, little expecting any visitors of distinction.

The door of the drawing-room was opened, and "a large man in deep mourning appeared at it, entering and shutting it himself without speaking. A ghost could not have scared me more, when I discovered by its glitter on the black a star! The general disorder that had prevented his being seen except by myself, who was always on the watch, till Miss Port, turning round, exclaimed, 'The King!—Aunt, the King!'" Mrs. Delany immediately made her appearance. "Every one," writes Miss Burney, "scampered out of the way; Miss Port to stand next the door, Mr. Bernard Dewes to a corner opposite to it. His little girl clung to me, and Mrs. Delany advanced to meet his Majesty, who, after quietly looking on till she saw

FANNY BURNEY

him, approached and inquired how she did? He then spoke to Mr. Bernard, whom he had already met two or three times here." ¹

This was Fanny Burney's first meeting with King George, of whom she was afterwards to present us with so many vivid glimpses. A few months later Dr. Burney's daughter was offered a situation in the Queen's household, where she gained much intimate knowledge of the talents and virtues of both King and Queen. As to the latter she says: "I had not imagined that, shut up in the confined limits of a Court, she could have acquired any but the most superficial knowledge of the world, and the most partial insight into character. But I find now I have only done justice to her disposition not to her parts, which are truly of that superior order that makes sagacity intuitively supply the place of experience. In the course of this month I spent much time alone with her, and never once quitted her presence without fresh admiration of her talents." ²

In 1786 George, who had already parted with the Duke of York and Prince William Henry, the former of whom was being educated as a soldier and the latter as a sailor, entered his three younger sons, afterwards the Dukes of Sussex, Cumberland, and Cambridge, as students in the University at Göttingen. In July he writes to the Bishop of Worcester: "My accounts from Göttingen of the little colony I have sent there is very favourable. All three seem highly delighted and pleased with those that have the in-

¹ Madame d'Arblay's *Diary and Letters*, ii. 371.

² *Ibid.*, iii. 169.

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spection of them. But what pleases me most is the satisfaction they express at the course of theology they have begun with Professor Less. Professor Heyne gives them lessons in the classics, and has an assistant for the rougher work. They learn history, geography, moral philosophy, mathematics, and experimental philosophy, so that their time is fully employed. I think Adolphus at present seems the favourite of all, which from his lively manners is natural, but the good sense of Augustus will in the end prove conspicuous.”¹

A few days later, on the 2nd August, an attempt was made on the King's life by a demented creature named Margaret Nicholson. George was alighting from his carriage at the garden entrance to St. James's Palace, when a respectably dressed woman darted from the crowd and apparently offered the King a petition. He smilingly extended his hand to receive it, when the would-be assassin thrust at his heart with a knife. The King made a sudden backward movement to avoid the blow, which was instantly succeeded by another. Neither, however, were effective. The woman was seized, and a moment later would have been handled roughly by the crowd, but for the King's generous interference. "The poor creature is mad," said George; "do not hurt her, she has not hurt me." With a countenance slightly pale, but with an unshaken nerve, he inclined his head to the crowd and entered the palace. His chief concern was for the Queen and his family, lest they should receive an exaggerated account of the attack made

¹ Bentley's *Miscellany*, vol. xxvi. pp. 334-5.

“FARMER GEORGE”

upon him. He hurried back to Windsor and sought to allay the consternation which seized them. “With the gayest good-humour,” remarks Miss Burney, “he did his utmost to comfort them, and then gave a relation of the affair with a calmness and unconcern that had any one but himself been the hero would have been regarded as totally unfeeling.”¹

The woman Nicholson was afterwards placed in Bedlam. Her rash act had only the result of setting the seal on the King’s popularity. Addresses of congratulation on his escape poured in from all parts of the kingdom. His levées became crowded with Peers, who had long wavered in their devotion to their sovereign or absented themselves from age, infirmities, or remoteness from Court. The hearty proofs which he had received of his people’s love on this occasion, said George, more than made amends for the danger and annoyance to which he had been subjected.

Amongst the various forms which the King’s energy took about this time was the study and promotion of agriculture. He was himself, as he was fond of boasting, a practical farmer (“Farmer George” many of his subjects affectionately called him), and under the nom-de-plume of “Ralph Robinson” he addressed to Arthur Young some letters, giving his views on practical agriculture and how farming could be made profitable. Besides his farms at Windsor, he owned and worked Keel’s farm in the parish of Mortlake, and had turned a part of Richmond New Park into arable land. “The

¹ Madame d’Arblay’s *Diary and Letters*, iii. pp. 45, 46.

GEORGE THE THIRD

ground, like man," he observed, "was never meant to be idle; if it does not produce something useful it will be overrun with weeds."¹ "The wise and benevolent example," it was remarked many years ago, "set by the monarch speedily spread its salutary influence. The spirit of rural improvement having been engendered and fostered in the royal shades of Windsor made its way, first to Woburn, then to Holkham and Petworth, whence it gradually penetrated the most distant and secluded corners of the island. The owners and occupiers of land throughout the country were effectually roused from the unprofitable lethargy in which they and their predecessors had so long slumbered. They were taught to appreciate the hitherto neglected resources of their paternal domains, and the light, which thus unexpectedly burst upon them, led to improvements more various, more important, and more beneficial to the public than any change which had taken place in this country during the lapse of the ten previous centuries."²

Numerous indeed were George's interests apart from politics. The efforts of Howard the philanthropist to mitigate the evils of the English prisons were actively seconded by the King. He sent for Howard to Windsor, and conversed with him on the subject with knowledge and sympathy. When it was proposed to erect a statue to the philanthropist George headed the subscription, but said, "Howard wants no statue; his virtues will live

¹ *Quarterly Review*, vol. li. p. 232.

² *Ibid.*, vol. xxxvi. p. 429.

PATRONAGE OF HERSCHEL.

when every statue has crumbled into dust." Howard himself refused the honour his zealous friends proposed to confer upon him.

Another celebrated person who owed much to George was the astronomer William Herschel. "The King," writes Madame d'Ar'blay, "has not a happier subject than this man, who owes wholly to his Majesty that he is not wretched; for such is his eagerness to quit all other pursuits to follow astronomy solely, that he was in danger of ruin when his talents and great and uncommon genius attracted the King's patronage." Not only did the King confer a pension upon Herschel, but authorised him to construct a new telescope, according to his own principles, and unrestricted by considerations of expense, which the King defrayed wholly.

The great Indian administrator, Warren Hastings, found a warm friend and champion in his sovereign, who did all in his power to mitigate the strictures passed upon him by his detractors.

Amongst the King's other acquaintances at this time we find him taking much pleasure in the conversation of the musician Handel, Sir Joseph Banks, Jacob Bryant, Sir Joseph Fenn, the editor of the *Paston Letters*, Argent, and Beattie. Much to her sovereign's regret Mrs. Delany died in April 1788, nearly eighty-nine years of age.

In political affairs the King never ceased his close interest, and was always ready with his advice, criticism, and warning. When an unfavourable division took place in the House of Commons we find him writing to Pitt: "I have delayed acknow-

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ledging the receipt of Mr. Pitt's note, informing me of the division in the House of Commons this morning, lest he might have been disturbed when it would have been highly inconvenient. It is amazing how, on a subject that could be reduced into so small a compass, the House would hear such long speaking. The object of Opposition was evidently to oblige the old and infirm members to give up attendance, which is reason sufficient for the friends of Government to speak merely to the point in future, and try to shorten debates, and bring, if possible, the present bad mode of mechanical oratory into discredit."¹

Although a temporary reconciliation with the Prince of Wales and the King was arranged in 1787 by the payment of his debts of £193,648 and a settlement of an additional £10,000 a year for him, the King's domestic felicity was not destined long to be cloudless. In less than twelve months his son was again giving great offence to his father, not only by his extravagance, but through his interference in politics. A still deeper affliction was the defection and contamination of his brother, the Duke of York, so greatly beloved by the King. "The Prince," writes General Grant to Lord Cornwallis, "has taught the Duke to drink in the most liberal and copious way, and the Duke, in return, has been equally successful in teaching his brother to lose his money at all sorts of play—quinze, hazard, &c."² The Duke of York, says another authority, "in politics talks both ways, and I think will end in Opposition. His con-

¹ Stanhope's *Life of Pitt*, vol. i., Appendix, p. xxiii.

² *Cornwallis Correspondence*, i. 362.

SYMPTOMS OF MALADY

duct is as bad as possible. He plays very deep and loses; and his company is thought *malvais ton*." Well might a correspondent of Lord Buckingham's write: "That the King and Queen begin now to feel how 'sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child.'" ¹

The misconduct of his sons could hardly fail to prey deeply on the King's mind. Fortunately his bodily health during the period of the greatest political stress continued excellent, but in the summer of 1788 the premonitory symptoms of grave malady began to be manifest. On 8th June we find him writing to Hurd, Bishop of Worcester, one of his closest friends: "Having had rather a sharp bilious attack, which by the goodness of Divine Providence is quite removed; Sir George Baker has strongly recommended to me the going for a month to Cheltenham, as he thinks that water efficacious on such occasions, and that an absence from London will keep me free from certain fatigues that attend long audiences. I shall therefore go there on Saturday." ² To Cheltenham he went, and on the 16th August returned to Windsor, apparently restored. Two months later he was attacked by spasms in the stomach. He came one night into the equerries' room, where he found Generals Budé and Goldsworthy; and, opening his waistcoat, showed them two large spots on his breast. "Both advised him to be careful not to catch cold, as the consequence would probably be a dangerous repelling of the eruption. The

¹ *Buckingham Papers*, i. 363.

² *Bentley's Miscellany*, xxvi. 337.

GEORGE THE THIRD

King as usual rejected this advice, with some degree of ill-humour. He rode in the Park, came home very wet; the spots disappeared, a slight fever first ensued, and soon after the mental derangement."¹

According to the biographer of Mrs. Siddons, the first person not connected with the royal family who suspected any mental derangement in the King was the celebrated actress. She was paying a visit to Windsor Castle at this time, and after one of her readings, the King "without any apparent motive placed in her hands a sheet of paper—blank, with the exception of his signature—an incident which struck her as so unaccountable that she immediately carried it to the Queen, who gratefully thanked her for her discretion."²

The eccentricity of the King's conduct was not lost upon his physician, Sir George Baker, who instantly communicated his apprehensions to the Prime Minister. Rumours began quickly to fly about the town. A levée was to be held at St. James's Palace, and George determined to appear, in order, as he wrote Pitt, "to stop further lies, and any fall of the Stocks. I am certainly weak and stiff, but no wonder. I am certain air and relaxation are the quickest restoratives."³

The levée was duly held. The King's altered manner was painfully noticeable, and the Lord Chancellor advised him to return instantly to Wind-

¹ *MS. Diary of Colonel Henry Norton Willis.*

² *Campbell's Life of Mrs. Siddons*, xi. 128, 129.

³ *Stanhope's Life of Pitt*, ii., Appendix, p. iv.

HIS OVER-TAXED ENERGIES

sor and take great care of himself. It was then that from George's lips escaped these significant words: "You too, then, my Lord Thurlow," he said, "forsake me, and suppose me ill beyond recovery; but whatever you and Mr. Pitt may think and feel, I, that am born a gentleman, shall *never lay my head on my last pillow in peace and quiet so long as I remember the loss of my American Colonies.*"¹ When George laid his head on that last pillow it was his fate to have forgotten—all!

The long strain on the King's mind and bosom told at last. He returned to Windsor in a high fever; his manner indeed continued, according to Miss Burney, who saw him frequently at the palace, gracious almost to kindness. On the other hand, the hoarseness of his voice, the volubility of his language, and the vehemence of his gestures startled her. During a conversation which lasted nearly half-an-hour the agitation of his manner, and the rapidity of his utterance, were no less painful, although in other respects he was kind and gentle to a degree that made it affecting to listen to him. Ill as he was, all his care seemed to have been to conceal his sufferings from and to allay the anxiety of others.²

On Wednesday, 29th August, in spite of the advice of his physicians, he persisted in violent exercise, being nearly five hours out hunting, and two days later he was again five hours in the saddle. Fiercely he fought against his growing weakness;

¹ Lord Malmesbury's *Diaries*, iv. 21.

² Madame d'Arblay's *Diaries and Letters*, iv. 273.

GEORGE THE THIRD

he "wished to God," he groaned, "he might die, for he was going to be mad."¹ To a dear friend, Lady Effingham, a lady of the Bedchamber, he murmured, "My dear Effy, you see me all at once an old man." The Queen was almost overpowered by terror. On the 5th November it began to be whispered vaguely among the tenants of the palace that some fearful catastrophe had occurred in the King's apartments. For some time, however, nothing more was known than that his Majesty was "in some strange way worse," and that the Queen also had suddenly been taken ill. Even the Princesses, amidst their tears, maintained the profoundest secrecy. Miss Burney has graphically described the awful stillness and gloom which pervaded the palace. For hours after dark she was seated in her solitary apartment, in silence, in ignorance and dread. Twelve o'clock struck, and she opened her door to listen, but not even the distant noise of a servant crossing one of the passages or ascending one of the staircases met her ear. "The Prince of Wales had come to the castle, and was present when the King's malady first took a violent form. His father caught him with both hands by the collar, pushing him against the wall with some violence, and asked him who would dare say to the King of England that he should not speak out, or who should prevent his whispering. The King then whispered."

The Prince sent for the Lord Chancellor. Thurlow received from the three physicians in attendance

Life of Sheridan, ii. 26 (3rd edition).

ALARM OF THE NATION

the distressing and alarming report of the King's state. During his fits of violence both physicians and courtiers shrank back in alarm, not daring to venture upon remonstrance. Digby, the Queen's Chamberlain, took a bolder part. He told the King in a tone of respectful authority that he must go to bed; he took him by the arm and endeavoured to lead him towards his apartment. "I will not go," cried the King; "who are you?" "I am Colonel Digby, sir," he answered; "your Majesty has been very good to me often, and now I am going to be very good to you, for you must come to bed. It is necessary to your life." So entirely was the King taken by surprise, that he allowed himself to be led to his bedchamber as passively as if he had been a child.¹

Throughout the kingdom, and especially in the capital, the news of the King's malady occasioned consternation. Stocks instantly fell. George's subjects were filled with a sense of impending calamity, everywhere save in the inner cabal, the chief shrine of the Opposition. At Brooks's Club Fox's friends began gleefully to overlook the promised land. Fox was himself at that moment on his way to Italy with his mistress, Mrs. Armistead. At Bologna he was overtaken by a courier bringing the news of the King's illness, and he at once started back for London, where he did not arrive before the 24th November. "You may naturally," wrote William Grenville, "conceive the exultation, not wearing even the appearance of disguise, which there is in

¹ Madame d'Arblay's *Diaries*, iv. 299, 300.

GEORGE THE THIRD

one party and the depression of those who belong to the other."¹

Already the Prince of Wales carried matters with a high hand at Windsor. "Nothing," says Miss Burney, "was done but by his orders, and he was applied to in every difficulty. The Queen interfered not in anything. She lived entirely in her two new rooms, and spent the whole day in patient sorrow and retirement with her daughters." He actually went the length of taking possession of his father's papers. "Think," wrote Grenville, "of the Prince of Wales introducing Lord Lothian into the King's room when it was darkened, in order that he might hear his ravings at the time that they were at the worst!"²

The singular feature of the King's malady was his perpetual loquacity, yet although speech came thick and fast, often for many hours at a time, not even in the midst of his delirium was he ever guilty of any impropriety of thought or expression. "The highest panegyric," observes Colonel Digby, who sat for hours in his room, "that could be formed of his character would not equal what in those moments showed itself; that, with his heart and mind entirely open, not one wrong idea appeared; that all was benevolence, charity, rectitude, love of country, and anxiety for its welfare."³

Sir William Grant said the King's insanity was on two points; one, that all marriages would soon be dissolved by Act of Parliament; the other, that

¹ *Buckingham Papers*, i. 447-8.

² *Ibid.*, ii. 12.

³ *Quarterly Review*, vol. cv. p. 490.

TEMPORARY ABERRATION

his Hanoverian dominion was restored, and that he was shortly to go there.

Amongst the news of the day was the almost sudden death of the Marchioness of Buckingham. George said, "He was very sorry for it, she was a very good woman, though a Roman Catholic." He expressed great regret for the Marquis, saying, "that he believed if she had lived till the marriages were dissolved, he would have desired to renew his. By-the-bye," he added, "I do not think many of my friends would do so."¹

For several weeks the King's condition fluctuated, and likewise the hopes of his people. Pitt meanwhile remained loyal to his trust. Although political ruin for himself would be the outcome of the King's death or permanent derangement, yet he resolved to do his utmost in the interests of his royal master while any doubt remained. "The great object to be looked to," wrote Grenville to his brother Buckingham on the 9th November, "seems to be the keeping of the Government in such a state as that, if the King's health should be restored, he might be as far as possible enabled to resume it, and to conduct it in such a manner as he might judge best. I suppose there never was a situation in which any set of men ever had, at once, so many points to decide, so essentially affecting their own honour, character, and future situation, their duty to their country in a most critical situation, and their duty to their unhappy master, to whom they are unquestionably bound by ties of gratitude and honour,

¹ Rose's *Diaries*, vol. i. p. 95.

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independent of considerations of public duty towards him. I hope God, who has been pleased to afflict us with this severe and heavy trial, will enable us to go through it honestly, conscientiously, and in a manner not dishonourable to our characters." ¹

Parliament assembled on the 20th November with Fox still absent. Owing to the state of the King's health an adjournment was made until the 4th December. In the interval Sheridan was deep in the affairs of the Prince of Wales. Already between them they were planning the new Government. Although Loughborough claimed the Chancellorship, Thurlow, convinced of the hopelessness of the King's state, secretly offered to go over to them on condition that he should retain his office. The Prince and Sheridan agreed. On Fox's arrival he was obliged to swallow the pill, and, as he wrote Sheridan, "a most bitter pill it was." Pitt quickly made up his mind as to the course he should follow. The Prince would be appointed Regent by Act of Parliament, with such limitations as would secure the King, on his possible recovery, from any obstacle in the exercise of his sovereign rights.

Of Thurlow's treachery the Prime Minister was not ignorant, but he wisely decided to take no notice of it. The day before Parliament met the King's physicians were examined on oath, and gave it as their opinion that the sovereign's indisposition rendered him incapable of opening Parliament and attending to business. There was a probability of his

¹ *Buckingham Papers*, i. 442, 443.

CAUSE OF HIS MALADY

recovery, but it was impossible to fix any time when it might be expected. Fox urged that the physicians should be examined by a Parliamentary Committee. To this Pitt gave his assent, because besides the physicians already examined another now appeared who was to play a famous part in the King's illness, both now and subsequently.

Dr. Francis Willis was a clergyman of the Church of England, who had once enjoyed a considerable living in the metropolis. Having, however, taken a medical degree at Oxford, he had long practised as a physician, and what is now termed an alienist. During twenty-eight years he had received in his asylum at Gretford, in Lincolnshire, some eight hundred lunatic patients. In the King's present incapacity and in the hope of his recovery all the physicians were agreed. His malady was the result, they said, of over great anxiety in public affairs and too violent exercise, which had caused a fever on the brain. As George had not before the attack been subject to melancholy, and as, according to Dr. Willis, nine out of ten patients so afflicted perfectly recovered, their hopes were well founded. In the case of any other patient, said Willis, he should scarcely entertain a doubt; but the King, by reflections on an illness of this kind, might depress his spirits and retard his cure. How long before the King would be convalescent? Here the doctors looked gloomy enough. Dr. Addington, Sir Lucas Pepys, and Dr. Willis thought that eighteen months or two years was the longest known duration of such maladies. Under favour-

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able circumstances they ended in six weeks or two months. Others were, however, far less sanguine.

Believing in his own mind that his dismissal was only a matter of weeks, Pitt moved some days later for a Committee to inquire into precedents. To this Fox offered vigorous objection. It was not for the Parliament, he held, to consider who should be Regent. "There was a remedy," he said, "immediately at hand. There was a person in the kingdom, an heir-apparent, of full age and capacity, to exercise the royal power. In his firm opinion, his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales had as clear and express a right to assume the reins of government, and to take upon him the sovereign authority during the continuance of the King's illness, as if his Majesty had suffered a natural demise."¹

Was it surprising that Pitt should denounce this doctrine as little less than treason to the constitution? The heir-apparent, he said, had no more right to the executive power than any other person in the realm. In the case of the incapacity of the sovereign, it belonged to the two remaining branches of the legislature to make provision for the temporary interregnum. Let every person in the House, he went on, consider that upon their future proceedings depended their own interests, as well as the interests and honour of a sovereign deservedly the idol of his people. "Let not the House, therefore, rashly annihilate and annul the authority of Parliament, in which the existence of the constitution was so

¹ Fox's *Speeches*, vol. iii. p. 400.

“MAY GOD FORGET ME!”

intimately involved.”¹ Sheridan raised a storm of indignation by foolishly threatening the danger of provoking the Prince to assert his claim. The Ministerial majority was 268 votes to 204.

Which side would Thurlow take? In the House of Lords, after the Duke of York had spoken on the Regency question, Thurlow quitted the Woolsack to address the House. “It was,” he said, “his fixed and unalterable determination to stand by his sovereign, a sovereign who, during a reign which had now continued for twenty-seven years, had ever shown a sacred regard for the principles which had seated the House of Brunswick on the throne of Great Britain.” As for himself individually, he continued, his grief at the present moment was naturally more poignant than that of others, on account of the personal kindness and indulgence which he had experienced at the hands of his afflicted master. “My debt of gratitude,” he concluded grandiloquently—“my debt of gratitude is indeed ample for the many favours which have been graciously conferred upon me by his Majesty. When I forget my sovereign, may my God forget me!” Pitt, well acquainted as he was with the facts of the Chancellor’s recent perfidy, was naturally thunderstruck at such unblushing effrontery. “Oh! the rascal!” escaped his lips—words uttered loud enough to be overheard by General Manners, and probably by others who were standing by. “God forget you?” commented Wilkes, eyeing him with that famous squint which seemed to add point to his

¹ Pitt’s *Speeches*, vol. i. p. 267.

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witticisms—"He'll see you d—d first!" "Forget you?" murmured Burke; "why, it's the best thing that can happen to you!"

Pitt's plan to provide for the royal assent by placing the Great Seal in commission with authority to affix it to the Regency Bill was also carried by a large majority. The restriction on the power of the Regent agreed upon by the Cabinet were laid before the prospective Regent. He was not to confer peerages except on the King's issue of full age, to grant reversions or any office or pension, nor to dispose of the King's property. The charge of the King's person and the management of the household were to be in the hands of the Queen. If, however, the King's illness was prolonged the foregoing restrictions were to be open to revision. The Prince while protesting against the restrictions promised to accept the Regency.

George had now been removed from Windsor to Kew. Each fresh examination of the physicians provoked the most contradictory evidence. Pitted against one another were the two leading physicians. Willis for taking a favourable view was denounced by the Prince's party as a charlatan; Warren being pessimistic, was spoken of as the doctor of the Opposition. The whole inquiry makes curiously interesting reading. Three points were pressed against Willis, first, that he had permitted the King to read, but having done so, that he allowed him to read the tragedy of *King Lear*, "the most improper in the English language to be put into his hands"; secondly, that he had suffered the royal patient to

HIS PHYSICIAN'S RISK

use a razor and scissors ; and lastly, that he afforded him interviews with the Queen and some of the young Princesses.

Willis defended himself at length. When his Majesty was allowed the amusement of reading, he had himself asked for *King Lear*, which Dr. Willis refused, and ordered that a volume of comedies should be supplied. George Colman's works were accordingly produced, the royal attendants not knowing, as indeed was not surprising, that the author of the *Jealous Wife* had also adapted *Lear* from Shakespeare, which adaptation happened to be in the book which was brought to the King! Happily Dr. Willis discovered and removed it without the royal patient's knowledge. We are told that when George began to recover it was found necessary to remove his beard, which had grown to a "frightful length," and some portion of his hair. So awkward were the operations of the attendants that the King at his earnest request was permitted to handle the necessary implements. No mischief followed, but Willis declared afterwards that he shuddered to reflect on what he had done, but, he added, "I could not apprehend any harm, having the firmest reliance in his Majesty's sentiments of piety, which, even in this dreadful crisis, never altered." As to the third charge, strolling about the garden the King's eyes were often fixed on the window of the apartment allotted to his younger children. To his pathetic appeals the physicians yielded and grant occasional interviews. At one of these interviews the King, "without any appearance of violence or insane passion,

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told the Princess Amelia, then in her sixth year, and an object of his peculiar affection, that he would not permit her to quit the room unless she would promise to return with the Queen." Having given his pledge that he would not detain his consort more than a quarter of an hour "the interview took place, the time was faithfully observed, and the patient, far from sustaining injury, was benefited by the indulgence."¹

The whole examination lasted a week, and during its progress, strenuous, but futile, efforts were made to excite popular prejudice against the Queen. Poor Charlotte was represented as a woman of ambitious and intriguing character, desirous for the sake of personal advantages to invade the rights and diminish the honour and dignity of her son, the prospective Regent. Charlotte's twenty-seven years of virtuous, unambitious, and unobtrusive life ought to have returned a sufficient answer.

By his supporters the public elevation of the Prince to the Regency was received with undisguised glee. Medals were actually struck in commemoration. Whig ladies took to Regency caps, ribbons, and such other party emblems. By the 12th February the Regency Bill had finally passed the House of Commons. But alas! for the vanity of human wishes, on that very day symptoms of the King's approaching convalescence were apparent. By the time the Bill had reached the Committee stage in the Lords the Opposition were flung into confusion and disappointment by the announcement of his virtual recovery.

¹ *Enquiry into the King's Late Illness.*

RESTORATION TO HEALTH

He received the Lord Chancellor, who had been warned to avoid all discussion on State affairs. "No politics!" said George; "my head is not yet strong enough for that subject."

Thurlow told Pitt that he never at any period saw the King more composed, collected, or distinct, and that there was not the least trace of any disorder. "I understand," wrote Windham, "that his Majesty was by no means the worse for this conversation. Dr. Willis, who attends him, says that were he a private man, he should advise his following now his usual occupation as the mode of living most likely to restore him. But God knows! his Majesty will have a severe trial when he is informed of all that has passed during the unhappy interval. Every possible care will no doubt be taken to prepare him. You will hear from other hands probably that the Prince of Wales has got complete possession of the Duke of York, and that they had meditated such changes in the State and the Army as would have grieved him exceedingly. No scruple has been made of declaring that a general sweep of all places would be made if the Regency were to last only a day."

On the 23rd George received his two eldest sons in the Queen's presence, and welcomed them with touching affection. George told Digby that he "never shed tears," yet at the very moment when he uttered the words the tears were ready to burst from his eyes.¹ On that same day he wrote Pitt: "It is with infinite satisfaction that I renew my correspon-

¹ *Cornwallis Papers*, vol. i, p. 405.

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dence with Mr. Pitt, by acquainting him with my having seen the Prince of Wales and my second son.¹ Care was taken that the conversation should be general and cordial. They seemed perfectly satisfied. I chose the meeting should be in the Queen's apartment, that all parties might have that caution which, at the present hour, could not but be judicious.

"I desire Mr. Pitt will confer with the Lord Chancellor, that any steps which may be necessary for raising the annual supplies, or any measures that the interests of the nation may require, should not be unnecessarily delayed, for I feel the warmest gratitude for the support and anxiety shown by the nation at large during my tedious illness, which I should ill requite if I did not wish to prevent any further delay in those public measures which it may be necessary to bring forward this year; though I must decline entering into a pressure of business, and, indeed for the rest of my life shall expect others to fulfil the duties of their employments, and only keep that superintending eye, which can be effected without labour or fatigue.

"I am anxious to see Mr. Pitt any hour that may suit him to-morrow morning, as his constant attachment to my interest and that of the public, which are

¹ "The two Princes were at Kew yesterday, and saw the King in the Queen's apartment. She was present the whole time, a precaution for which, God knows, there was but too much reason. They kept him waiting a considerable time before they arrived, and after they left him drove immediately to Mrs. Armistead's in Park Street, in hopes of finding Fox there to give him an account of what had passed."—*Buckingham Papers*, ii. pp. 125-6.

GRATITUDE TO OLD FRIENDS

inseparable, must ever place him in the most advantageous light.”¹

The dignity, benevolence, and quiet strength of this letter make it, under the circumstances, one of the most remarkable of any of the King's writings.

On the following day Pitt waited on the King. Returning to London, he told Grenville that George appeared to be perfectly free from all disorder, that his manner was unusually composed and dignified, and that when he spoke of his illness it was as a thing that had passed, and which had left no other impression on his mind than gratitude to Heaven for his recovery, as well as to those who had stood by him in his calamity. While he spoke of the kindness he had experienced it was with tears in his eyes; yet even when thus affected, added Pitt, there was not the slightest appearance of mental disease.²

Afterwards the King sent for several of his old friends to thank them for the “affectionate fidelity with which they had adhered to him when so many others had deserted him.” Amongst these was Eldon, the Solicitor-General, and Chief Justice Kenyon. To the latter he observed, “Frederick only voted against us once—did he?” “Your Majesty,” returned the tactful Chief Justice, “must be aware to what trials one in his situation is exposed.” “Very true,” said George gently, “very true.”³

On the 10th March the announcement was made to Parliament of the King's complete restoration to health, and both on that night and on St. George's

¹ Rose's *Diaries*, vol. i, pp. 97, 98.

² *Buckingham Papers*, vol. ii, p. 125.

³ Lord Campbell's *Lives of the Chancellors*, vol. v, p. 678.

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Day, when he returned thanks in the cathedral of St. Paul's, London was illuminated, and there were great and sincere public rejoicings.

Towards the close of June George left Windsor to pass the summer at Weymouth. During the journey he was greeted with fresh instances of the popular devotion. At church the congregation, unable to restrain its enthusiasm, burst out into "God save the King" instead of the appointed Psalm. "Misplaced," says Miss Burney, "as this was in church, its intent was so kind, loyal, and affectionate, that I believe there was not a dry eye amongst either singers or hearers."¹

To Pitt, George expressed his gratitude in the strongest and most touching terms. He urged him to accept the Order of the Garter, an offer Pitt refused, intimating his wish, however, that it should be given to his brother, Lord Chatham. To this George replied: "Mr. Pitt's note has just arrived, intimating a wish that I should confer the third vacant Garter on his brother, Lord Chatham. I trust he is too well convinced of my sentiments to doubt that I shall with pleasure to-morrow give this public testimony of approbation, which will be understood as meant to the whole family."²

For the present the shadow over the King's intellect had passed, but another shadow, deeper and more portentous, had loomed up over the horizon and was threatening to involve his kingdom in a blinding and devastating storm.

¹ Madame d'Arblay's *Diary*, vol. v. 31.

² Stanhope's *Life of Pitt*.

CHAPTER XIX

"FROM THE ASSASSIN'S BLOW"

IN 1789 the long-pent tempest burst with fury upon France. On the British side of the Channel its true purport was at the outset ludicrously misunderstood. The violence of the mob, the *débâcle* of the entire social structure, was not at first apprehended. The attack on the Bastille which marked the beginning elicited much applause. Fox could write, "How much the greatest event it is that ever happened in the world, and how much the best!"¹

How did George view these Revolutionary portents?

"He conversed," writes Miss Burney in April 1790, "almost wholly with General Grenville upon the affairs of France, and in a manner so unaffected, open, and manly—so highly superior to all despotic principles even while most condemning the unlicensed fury of the Parisian mob—that I wished all the nations of the world to have heard him, that they might have known the real existence of a patriot King."²

Even Pitt, cool, collected, shrewd as he was,

¹ Russell's *Memorials of Fox*, ii. 361.

² Madame d'Arblay's *Memoirs*, vol. v. p. 100.

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could find terms of praise for the new-fledged Gallic monster. The King of England appears to be one of the few who sighted at least as much danger to the people as to monarchs. He himself held the most secure throne in Europe. In his diagnosis George's natural acumen was of course supplemented by a long-acquired distrust of demagogues and doctrinaires. He had had during the thirty years he had sat on the throne ample opportunity for studying revolutionary symptoms. The only way the disease could be averted was by firmness and good government, and good citizenship on the part of the people. Well did he surmise that the whirlwind would not wholly spend itself in France, and that even if no immediate damage were done in Britain, the seeds of discontent and disorder would be borne irresistibly into his kingdom and take root in the minds of the weak and discontented. For the present, in spite of many inflammatory speeches and pamphlets, Britain remained throughout the first year of the French Revolution a passive spectator of events. She herself enjoyed peace and happiness, while anarchy and bloodshed were already marking the course of affairs in the neighbouring kingdom.

In 1790, on the 21st January, a date full of omen to kings, Parliament was opened. As George, going in State to Westminster, was passing the corner of Carlton House, a madman threw a large stone into the coach. He was immediately apprehended and taken to Grenville's office, where he underwent a four hours' examination by the Attorney-General. The assailant proved to be one John Frith, an army

HIS OWN SECURITY

lieutenant, who had already written a libel against the King and posted it in the courtyard of St. James's. Frith was committed to Newgate, but the proofs of his lunacy were so clear that he was afterwards sent to Bedlam.

When George was informed of the assassination of the King of Sweden, he made particular inquiries of a foreign ambassador conversant with the facts. His interlocutor thought it necessary to caution the King on the danger of a sovereign exposing his person too incautiously in such times. George cut the speaker short. "Sir, I must differ from you there. If there be any man so desperate to devote his own life to the chance of taking away the life of another, no precaution is sufficient to prevent him altogether from making the attempt. A system of constant precaution against such dangers, they being in a thousand instances to one wholly imaginary, converts the life of a person so guarded into a scene of perpetual restraint, anxiety, and apprehension. No, sir, the best security that a man can have against such dangers is to act openly and boldly as a man. If an attack be made upon him, his best chance of escaping is to meet it like a man; but if he should fall under it, why, sir, he will fall like a man!"¹

In the session of 1790 the usual motion for the repeal of the Test Act made by a Dissenting member was renewed and gave rise to a very simoom of debate, both inside and outside Parliament. The Dissenters certainly went about the business in an

¹ Huish, p. 554.

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injudicious way. The fears of the orthodox were so violent as to be ridiculous. George's principles of toleration were well known, but he declared it his opinion that the attempt of the Dissenters was ill-timed. At such a crisis every innovation or change in the religious establishments were to be regarded with a jealous eye. Atheism and infidelity were too rampant abroad not to have their germs eventually dispersed throughout his own kingdom.

Blacker and fiercer grew the storm in France. Louis XVI. and his beautiful queen became doomed prisoners in the Tuileries, and the bosoms of democrats and malcontents everywhere were filled with joy. "I have lived," cried Fox, "to see thirty millions of people indignantly and resolutely spurning at slavery, and demanding liberty with an irresistible voice; their king led in triumph, and an arbitrary monarch surrendering himself to his subjects. After sharing in the benefits of one Revolution I have been spared to be a witness to two other Revolutions, both glorious; and now methinks I see the ardour for liberty catching and spreading, and a general amendment beginning in human affairs; the dominion of kings changed for the dominion of laws, and the dominion of priests giving way to the dominion of reason and conscience." Various British associations were formed, and the French people enthusiastically congratulated on their triumph over "despotism and bigotry." Lord Stanhope, an avowed Republican, distinguished himself by composing an intemperate address to the French National Assembly. Suddenly an unexpected champion arose, and monarchy found

CHECKING SEDITION

a zealous and eloquent defender in the person of Edmund Burke. Burke's elaborate attack upon the French Revolution gave rise to several powerful as well as indecent rejoinders. But none of the replies to Burke's pamphlet—certainly not Sir James Mackintosh's *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*—enjoyed such popularity as Tom Paine's reckless production, *The Rights of Man*.

It was against the King in his character of sovereign that the efforts of revolutionary partisans became directed. "His 'divine authority' became the subject of ridicule," we are told, "and the pillars on which his throne was fixed were shaken to the foundation. The most treasonable papers were circulated in the very precincts of his palace, and he had once the unpleasant sight before him of himself burning in effigy. A host of scribblers inundated the country with their seditious pamphlets, in all of which his Majesty, in his abstract relation as sovereign, was the chosen object of their attack."

Revolutionary principles were fast spreading over all Europe and undermining the strongest thrones. Every seditious scribbler who could find a printer for his wares began busying himself with sowing the seeds of treason and rebellion. Under these circumstances the King resolved to take some measure of precaution against the revolutionary mania, and supported by Pitt and his colleagues issued in May a strong proclamation against them:—

"Whereas divers wicked and seditious writings have been printed, published, and industriously dispersed, tending to excite tumult and disorder,

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by endeavouring to raise groundless jealousies and discontents in the minds of our faithful and loving subjects, respecting the laws and happy constitution of government, civil and religious, established in this kingdom; and endeavouring to vilify and bring into contempt the wise and wholesome provisions made at the time of the glorious revolution, and since strengthened and confirmed by subsequent laws, for the preservation and security of the rights and liberties of our faithful and loving subjects: And whereas divers writings have also been printed, published, and industriously dispersed, recommending the said wicked and seditious publications to the attention of all our faithful and loving subjects: And whereas we have also reason to believe that correspondences have been entered into with sundry persons in foreign parts, with a view to forward the criminal and wicked purposes above mentioned: And whereas the wealth, happiness, and prosperity of this kingdom do, under Divine Providence, chiefly depend upon a due submission to the laws, a just confidence in the integrity and wisdom of Parliament, and a continuance of that zealous attachment to the government and constitution of the kingdom, which has ever prevailed in the minds of the people thereof: And whereas there is nothing which we so earnestly desire as to secure the public peace and prosperity, and to preserve to all our loving subjects the full enjoyment of their rights and liberties, both religious and civil: We therefore, being resolved, so far as in us lies, to repress the wicked and seditious practices aforesaid, and to deter

PATRIOTIC RALLYINGS

all persons from following so pernicious an example, have thought fit, by the advice of our Privy Council, to issue this our royal proclamation, solemnly warning all our loving subjects, as they tender their own happiness, and that of their posterity, to guard against all such attempts which aim at the subversion of all regular government within this kingdom, and which are inconsistent with the peace and order of society: and earnestly exhorting them at all times, and to the utmost of their power, to avoid and discourage all proceedings tending to produce riots and tumult."

By the nation at large this proclamation was received with peculiar satisfaction. In a short time no fewer than three hundred and forty-one addresses, including almost all the counties, corporations, cities, boroughs, and towns in Great Britain, were presented to the sovereign.

The Revolution indeed had the effect of throwing all but the extreme Whigs, the Radicals of our own time, on the side of the King. The time was not one for factious opposition; every patriot now stood forth to serve, when the institutions of the realm were so assiduously threatened by the cohorts of destruction.

George noted this softening of political asperities with grave satisfaction. The claws of the Whig dragon having been pared, the temper of the animal furnished no cause for alarm. The King even conceived that it would be good political strategy to allow the Whigs to have a share in the government. An intimation to this effect was conveyed to the

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Duke of Portland, who transmitted it to Fox. But Fox proved peevish and obstinate. He began by telling Malmesbury that "as a party man he thought it a good thing for his party to come into office, were it only for a month; and that, under the particular circumstances of the country, he thought it of very great importance that a strong administration should exist." But he went on to say "with a degree of harshness, very unlike his usual manner, that he did not believe that Pitt was sincere, and that even if he was sincere, he did not believe any coalition could take place."¹

Upon conferring with Sheridan, Fox's terms grew exorbitant. "Fox," writes Malmesbury in July 1792, "made Pitt's quitting the Treasury a *sine quâ non*, and was so opinionative and fixed about it, that it was impossible even to reason with him on the subject." An effort to detach the Duke of Portland and his friends from Fox was so far successful, that most of them accepted office under Pitt. With "his party broken, his popularity gone, his friends deserting him, his eloquence useless, his name held up to detestation," Fox was left alone, and his party was shattered to pieces. "Fox," said a lady, quoted by Sir Walter Scott, "is a very clever and highly gifted man, but he has never discovered the great secret, that John Bull is a Tory by nature!"

So the horrors in France quickened the tide of British opinion. French revolutionary principles were regarded with daily increasing detestation; for

¹ Malmesbury's *Diaries*, ii. p. 429.

HIS EXTREME SELF-RESTRAINT

the old cry of "Wilkes and Liberty" was now substituted "King and Constitution." "God save the King" was so much the most popular melody of the day, that even dances at the Opera were set to it, and the London populace bared whenever their ears caught the loyal strains. From this moment Fox's defection from decency and decorum grew monstrous indeed. The Prince of Wales had some time before deserted him. At a moment when Britain was face to face with the most terrible enemy mankind has ever seen, at the beginning of a conflict the most deadly, the most protracted, and the costliest in which she was ever involved, the former leader of a great political party openly boasted that he was a Jacobin and an admirer of Robespierre and Marat. On one occasion, according to Lord Sheffield, "Charles told us distinctly that the sovereignty was absolutely in the people; that the monarchy was elective—otherwise the dynasty of Brunswick had no right—and that when a majority of the people thought another kind of government preferable, they undoubtedly had a right to cashier the King." A favourite toast of his was "The Majesty of the people."

George studiously avoided any exhibition of anger or violent reproach during all the events of the next few years. It was not until 1798 that Fox's continued extravagances induced him to strike out his name with his own hand from the list of the Privy Council. When Priestley had been mobbed by the Birmingham loyalists in 1791 he wrote to Secretary Dundas: "The sending an order

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for three troops of the 15th Regiment of Dragoons to march towards Birmingham to restore order, if the civil magistrates have not been able, is incumbent on Government. Though I cannot but feel better pleased that Priestley is the sufferer for the doctrines he and his party have instilled, and that the people see them in their true light, yet I cannot approve their having employed such atrocious means of showing their discontent."¹

A year or so later Auckland writes: "It is impossible to describe to you how perfectly well the King is. He is quite an altered man, and not what you knew him even before his illness. His manner is gentle, quiet, and, when he is pleased, quite cordial. He speaks, even of those who are opposed to his government, with complacency, and without sneer or acrimony. As long as he remains so well, the tranquillity of this country is on a rock, for the public prosperity is great, and the nation is right-minded, and the commerce and resources are increasing."²

Let a candid, dispassionate posterity say how much of this tranquillity, this right-mindedness, was owing to the example of George III.

The death of Lord North in 1792 rendered it possible for the King to testify in a public manner his appreciation of Pitt's services. North had succeeded two years previously as third Earl of Guilford. "Having this morning received," wrote George to his Minister on the 6th August, "the

¹ *Quarterly Review*, vol. lxxix. p. 517.

² *Auckland Correspondence*, ii. 396.

THURLOW DISMISSED

account of the death of the Earl of Guilford, I take the first opportunity of acquainting Mr. Pitt that the Wardenship of the Cinque Ports is an office for which I will not receive any recommendations, having positively resolved to confer it on him as a mark of that regard which his eminent services have deserved from me. I am so bent on this, that I shall be seriously offended at any attempt to decline. I have intimated these my intentions to the Earl of Chatham, Lord Grenville, and Mr. Dundas."¹

Pitt wrote his friend George Rose to say, "I have had a letter from the King making the offer in the handsomest way possible, and have accepted."² It was about this time that Pitt parted company with Thurlow, the Lord Chancellor. Thurlow's ill-temper, his domineering manners, and the high personal regard of the King, made him a difficult colleague. The Chancellor thought he was indispensable. "Thurlow," said Lord North shortly before his death, "thinks that his personal influence with the King authorises him to treat Mr. Pitt with humour. Take my word for it, whenever Mr. Pitt says to the King, 'Sir, the Great Seal must be in other hands,' the King will take the Great Seal from Lord Thurlow, and never think any more about him." The prophecy was fulfilled, although George did make an indulgent appeal for his Chancellor. "I did not think," Thurlow told Eldon, "that the King would have parted with me so easily. As to that other man," he added grimly, referring to Pitt, "he

¹ Stanhope's *Life of Pitt*, xi., Appendix, p. xv.

² Rose's *Diaries and Correspondence*, i. p. 114.

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has done to me just what I should have done to him
—if I could.”

Such was the political state of affairs, internal as well as external, when Parliament met on the 13th of December 1792. The speech from the throne intimated that the King had judged it necessary to embody a part of the militia, and to summon Parliament within the time limited for that purpose. The discovery of seditious practices was mentioned, and the spirit of tumult and disorder evinced in acts of riot and insurrection, requiring military intervention in support of the civil magistrate. “The industry,” it added, “employed to excite discontent on various pretexts, and in different parts of the kingdom, appeared to proceed from a design to attempt the destruction of our happy constitution, and the subversion of all order and government, and that this design had evidently been pursued in connection and concert with persons in foreign countries.”

The King had carefully observed, it went on, a strict neutrality in the present war on the Continent, and had uniformly abstained from any interference with respect to the internal affairs of France. But it was impossible for him to see without the most serious uneasiness the strong and increasing indications which had appeared there of an intention to excite disturbances in other countries, to disregard the rights of neutral nations, and to pursue views of conquest and aggrandisement, as well as to adopt towards his allies, the States-General, measures neither conformable to the law of nations, nor to the

FRANCE DECLARES WAR

positive stipulations of existing treaties. Under all these circumstances, he felt it his indispensable duty to have recourse to those means of prevention and internal defence with which he was intrusted by law, and thought it right to take some steps for making some augmentation of his naval and military force, being persuaded that these exertions were necessary in the present state of affairs, and were best calculated both to maintain internal tranquillity and to render a firm and temperate conduct effectual for preserving the blessings of peace.¹

The vigorous measures adopted were received by the nation with satisfaction. Fresh addresses poured in. All this, however, only seemed to harden Fox and his little band of "stalwarts."

At first Pitt was resolved not to be led into war, but the conduct of the French Convention in invading Holland, together with its invitation to the subjects of other States in Europe to revolt, made war inevitable. The Foreign Secretary, Grenville, the son of George's early Prime Minister, was not surprised when it came. The execution of Louis XVI. on the 21st January was followed by an order to the French emissary Chauvelin to quit the kingdom, and on the 1st of February France declared war on England and Holland.

George was far from anxious for war, but he, like the rest of the nation, was roused by the "insolence" of France and the menace which the Revolution offered to the true liberties of Europe. The King, observes Jesse, was "reluctantly induced

¹ *Parliamentary History.*

GEORGE THE THIRD

to join in the almost general desire for a crusade on behalf of religion, property, and order." "If," he wrote Pitt on the 2nd February 1793—"if the occasion ever could occur that every Power, for the preservation of society, must stand forth in opposition to France, the necessity seems to be at the present hour. Indeed my natural sentiments are so strong for peace, that no event of less moment than the present could have made me decidedly of opinion that duty, as well as interest, calls on us to join against that most savage as well as unprincipled nation."¹

While the nation was thus facing a dangerous foe, in 1794 the Prince of Wales consented, from his dire pecuniary necessity, to obey his father's and the express wish of the country and marry as became his station. On the 24th August George wrote from Weymouth: "Agreeable to what I mentioned to Mr. Pitt before I came here, I have this morning seen the Prince of Wales, who has acquainted me with his having broken off all connection with Mrs. Fitzherbert, and his desire of entering into a more creditable line of life by marrying; expressing at the same time that his wish is that my niece, the Princess of Brunswick, may be the person. Undoubtedly she is the person who naturally must be most agreeable to me. I expressed my approbation of the idea, provided his plan was to lead a life that would make him appear respectable, and consequently render the Princess happy. He assured me that he perfectly coincided with me in opinion. I then said that

¹ Stanhope's *Pitt*.

DUKE OF YORK RECALLED

till Parliament assembled no arrangement could be taken except my sounding my sister, that no idea of any other marriage may be encouraged.”¹

The Princess Caroline was then in the twenty-seventh year of her age. She had, according to Malmesbury, who conducted the negotiations, “a pretty face, not expressive of softness; her figure not graceful; fine eyes, good hands; tolerable teeth, but going; fair hair and light eyebrows; good bust; short, with what the French call *les épaules impertinentes*; vastly happy with her future expectations.”²

On the 8th April Caroline arrived, and was married to the Prince in the Chapel Royal of St. James's Palace. The King gave away the bride. As for the Prince, he not only was completely miserable, but manifested it on this occasion by drinking somewhat more wine and spirits than were good for him. It was destined to be, what its preliminaries augured, an ill-starred marriage.

The failure of George's son, the Duke of York, in the Netherlands campaign was a further cause of mortification to his father. No doubt the Duke was a brave and even an able officer, but he had undertaken a task where success was all but impossible. Pitt held out as long as he could, but the popular outcry was too great, and he felt it his duty to urge the King to recall the Duke from his command. To his letter George replied as follows:—

¹ Stanhope's *Pitt*, ii., Appendix, p. xx.

² Malmesbury's *Diaries*, iii. pp. 148-9.

GEORGE THE THIRD

“Mr. Pitt cannot be surprised at my being very hurt at the contents of his letter. Indeed he seems to expect it, but I am certain that nothing but the thinking it his duty could have instigated him to give me so severe a blow. I am neither in a situation of mind, nor from inclination, inclined to enter more minutely into every part of his letter; but I am fully ready to answer the material part, namely, that though loving very much my son, and not forgetting how he saved the Republic of Holland in 1793, and that his endeavours to be of service have never abated, and that to the conduct of Austria, the faithlessness of Prussia, and the cowardice of the Dutch, every failure is easily to be accounted for, without laying blame on him who deserved a better fate, I shall certainly now not think it safe for him to continue in the command on the Continent, when every one seems to conspire to render his situation hazardous by either propagating unfounded complaints against him, or giving credit to them.

“No one will believe that I take this step but reluctantly, and the more so since no successor of note is proposed to take the command. Truly I do not see where any one is to be found that can deserve that name now the Duke of Brunswick has declined; and I am certain he will feel the propriety of the resolution he has taken when he finds that even a son of mine cannot withstand the torrent of abuse.”

After this the Duke was recalled to England. Three weeks after his return he was advanced to field-marshal's rank and appointed commander-in-

LIFE AGAIN ATTEMPTED

chief of the army. The more shameful troubles which were to overtake him were still far away.

In the course of the ensuing twelvemonth, when the war had sent up the price of provisions and caused serious outbreaks in the kingdom, there were two attempted assassinations of the King. The first happened on the 29th October, when the King was on his way to open Parliament. The crowd in the streets was obviously bent on disorder, and the example of mobs on the other side of the Channel was before them. Cries of "Bread, bread," "Peace, peace!" "Down with Pitt!" together with groans and hisses, rang out all along the route. One of the two Peers sitting with the King sprang up in alarm. "Sit still, my lord," said George quietly; "we must not betray fear whatever happens." As the royal carriage moved slowly on, the mob pressed close upon it. Midway between St. James's Palace and the gates of Carlton House the mob separated the royal carriage from the guards who accompanied the King, pressing so close that many feared to see the King dragged out and sacrificed to their fury. Contemporaries compared this British mob to the French mob who stopped the unhappy Louis XVI. on his road to St. Cloud. "Everything seemed French about them; their cries, their gestures, their principles, and their actions, all plainly indicated the polluted source whence they sprung, and proved that they were not of British origin or growth."

"I had the misfortune," says Gifford, "to be a spectator of this disgraceful scene. I have seen many mobs in my life, but never did I behold such

GEORGE THE THIRD

an assemblage of ill-looking, desperate wretches as were collected together on the present occasion. And as far as the designs of men can be inferred from their looks, their language and gestures, the designs of this rabble, who so basely dishonoured the name and character of Englishmen, were most treasonable and murderous."

The King reached Whitehall in safety. As the coach was passing through the palace yard the window was perforated by a bullet fired from an air-gun. The bullet proceeded from an empty house. The windows of every other house on the road were filled with spectators. This alone was untenanted.

At St. Stephen's, George ("than whom," says Mr. Hunt, "no braver man lived in his dominions") ascended the stairs, robed himself, and free from the smallest agitation, read the speech with peculiar correctness, and without a trace of perturbation. Not so his courtiers, who were filled with agitation. In getting into his coach again to return he said, "Well, my lords, one person is proposing this, and another is supposing that, forgetting there is One above us all who disposes of everything, and on Whom alone we depend." As the coach turned the corner it again encountered the mob in great numbers. Loudly vociferating "D—n him, out with him," they charged and took hold of the spokes of the wheels. At that critical moment a member named Bedingfield, who was standing near the wall of the garden waiting for his horses, darted forward to the King's assistance. Several ruffians who had hold of the carriage, and impeded its progress, were felled on the

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GEORGE III., ETAT. 60



ENGLAND'S DARKEST DAYS

spot, and one man at least had bones broken. The King quietly thanked his rescuer, saying that he came just in time. "Thus," comments an earlier biographer of Pitt, "to the activity and presence of mind of this loyal gentleman was the country in all probability indebted for having rescued her character from the foulest stain which the hand of a regicide could inflict, and which no expiation, no atonement, ever would have effaced."¹

In consequence of the day's outrages against his Majesty, Lord Grenville carried a Bill through Parliament, by which it was enacted that "if any persons should compass, or imagine, or intend death, destruction, or any bodily harm to the person of the King, or to depose him, or waylay, in order, by force, to compel him to change his measures or counsels, or to overawe either House of Parliament, or to incite an invasion of any of his Majesty's dominions, and shall express and declare such intentions by printing, writing, or any overt act, he shall suffer death as a traitor."

These were indeed England's darkest days. There was little consolation abroad, and despondency at home. Famine stalked through the kingdom, and many perished through absolute want. Distress made the people desperate, and treason and rebellion threatened the realm.

The alarm of the attack in Whitehall on the King had hardly subsided when another occurred. On returning through Pall Mall to Buckingham House from Drury Lane theatre on the 1st February

¹ Gifford, *Political Life of Pitt*.

GEORGE THE THIRD

1796 a stone was launched at the coach, containing George and Charlotte and the lady-in-waiting. The stone broke the window, but only fell into Lady Harrington's lap. A reward of £1000 was immediately offered for the detection of the offender, who was never discovered.

How deeply alive the King was to these omens may be gathered by the fact that he calmly told Lord Eldon that he considered it not improbable that he should be the last King of England.¹

Like sunshine came Jervis's glorious victory over the Spanish fleet off Cape St. Vincent, and the further one in 1797 of Camperdown. George wrote to his friend Bishop Hurd, "The valour of the Navy never shone more than in the late glorious action off Camperdown on the Dutch coast, and I trust its effects will render our enemies more humble, and that while my subjects praise the conduct of the officers and sailors, that they will return thanks, where most due, to the Almighty, who has crowned their endeavours with success. I feel this last sentiment so strongly, that I propose to order a thanksgiving on the occasion, in which I mean to join, in consequence of the success over the Dutch, the two memorable battles of Earl Howe over the French, and the Earl of St. Vincent over the Spaniards. Without true seeds of religion no people can be happy, nor will be obedient to legal authority; nor will those in command be moderate in the exercise of it, if not convinced that they are answerable to a Higher Power for their conduct. But were I to indulge myself on

¹ Twiss's *Life of Eldon*, vol. i. p. 293.

THE NORE MUTINY

this subject, I should certainly obtrude too long on your patience. I will, therefore, conclude with every assurance of feeling much interest, my good lord, in your health and happiness."

"I was in the room at Windsor Castle," writes a lady who knew the King and Queen well, "when the news was brought of the victory over the Dutch fleet at Camperdown by Admiral Duncan. The King seemed overpowered with its magnitude, and pacing up and down the long dark room in which he usually sat, appeared occasionally to ejaculate something in a low voice, when the Princess Augusta said to him, 'Papa, you are not half happy enough; so many of the Dutch have fallen, and so few of our English!' Repeating her observation, he turned short, as if awakened from a reverie, and said, with a sharpness not usual with him, 'Remember, Augusta, there are just as many widows and orphans as if they were all English!' So feelingly and meekly did he bear prosperity!"¹

As to the famous mutiny at the Nore which occurred in 1797, it was chiefly owing to George's good sense and resolution, added to the mild, though decisive, measures he recommended, that it was favourably ended. It is said he even felt some reluctance to sign the death-warrant of Parker, the ringleader, but it was urged that the safety of the State required that an example should be made of so desperate a rebel. "Then," said George, "my private feelings must not be consulted."

One of his sayings to Lord Northesk was: "I am

¹ *Stuart MS.*

GEORGE THE THIRD

not ignorant of the character of a British sailor ; he may be misled for a time, but he will eventually return to his duty. However, to give is one thing, to demand is another, and in the latter case concession would be a fault."

During 1798 and 1799 the King spent some weeks at Weymouth, to which watering-place he evinced a decided partiality. From Weymouth we find him addressing many letters to his advisers and to his soldiers and sailors, letters which evince his great interest in the affairs of the realm, and proof of his wisdom and experience. Three or four weeks after the death of General Howe George wrote to his sister : " I trust Mrs. Howe knows me better than to suppose my long silence on the great loss the public has sustained, as well as her family, by the unexpected death of her excellent brother, has been occasioned by any other motive than the desire not to intrude while she was so fully employed in acts of attentive kindness to his relations, who must have found much comfort from such attention. I trust the example he has set the Navy will long continue to stimulate, not only the matchless bravery of the officers, but convince them of the necessity to view the profession in a scientific light, by which alone those improvements are to be acquired which will retain that superiority over other nations which every Englishman must desire.

" His exemplary conduct in private life must, on the present melancholy occasion, be the only true comfort to those who loved him, as it gives that hope of his having quitted this transient world for eternal

“A CORSICAN ADVENTURER”

happiness through the mediation of our blessed Redeemer. If I did not feel the propriety of not adding more on so glorious a theme, my pen would but too willingly continue.

“The family, I find, are removed to Porter’s Lodge. The first moments there were of fresh sorrow, but I trust that the quietness of the place, and the good air, will be of use. I fear Mrs. Howe does not now render that justice to air she formerly did ; but if she was here, and saw how well it agrees with her *little* friend, and how much she hops about, I think she could not deny it has some efficacy.”¹

In a letter to the Bishop of Worcester, dated New Year’s Day 1800, we find the first reference in the King’s letters to Napoleon, who a few weeks before had procured his election as First Consul. “I know you are no great lover of political subjects, yet the impudent overthrow of the monstrous French Republic by a Corsican adventurer, and his creating himself to be lawgiver and executor of his own decrees, must have astonished you. Without more foresight than common-sense dictates, one may allege that his impious pre-eminence cannot be of long duration.”²

But Bonaparte’s future could not be prophesied by the rules of common-sense. Before long the Scourge of Europe was to plunge George and his subjects into greater and a more prolonged uneasiness than they had ever felt before.

In the spring of this year, and the last of the

¹ Barrow’s *Life of Earl Howe*, pp. 387, 388.

² Bentley’s *Miscellany*, vol. xxvii. p. 513.

GEORGE THE THIRD

century, while George was reviewing the Grenadier Guards in Hyde Park, a gentleman standing not far from the King received, just after an order to the Guards to fire a discharge of blank cartridges, a bullet in his thigh. The instantaneous thought was that this was an attempted assassination, and the utmost excitement prevailed. In the midst of it the King serenely spurred his horse towards the victim, and after making inquiries ordered two military officers of rank to attend him. An equerry proposed to send the Princesses from the field. "I will not," said George, "have one of them stir for the world."

The same evening the King and Queen and the Princesses Augusta, Elizabeth, Mary, and Amelia, with the usual attendants, honoured the theatre with their presence to see the comedy of "She would and She would not," and the farce of the "Humourist." Just as George entered his box, and while he was bowing to the audience with his customary condescension, an individual sitting in the second row of the orchestra stood up, levelled a horse-pistol towards the King's box, and fired it. So instantaneous was the action as to prevent any from seeing his design in time to defeat it. A neighbour, however, knocked up the arm of the would-be assassin, and the contents of the pistol only struck the roof of the royal box.

"Never," writes Michael Kelly, the author of the "Reminiscences," who was on the stage at the time, "shall I forget his Majesty's coolness. The whole audience was in an uproar. The King on hearing the report of the pistol retired a pace or two, stopped, and stood firmly for an instant, then came

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GEORGE III, ÆTAT. 63
(From the Portrait by Corbould)



SHERIDAN'S IMPROMPTU

forward to the front of the box, put his opera-glass to his eye, and looked round the house without the smallest appearance of alarm or discomposure."¹

Lord Salisbury, the Lord Chamberlain, who pressed the King to withdraw to an anteroom, received a similar reply to that addressed to the equerry in the morning: "Sir," said his sovereign, "you discompose me as well as yourself; I shall not stir one step."

It so happened that behind the scenes was Richard Brinsley Sheridan. The National Anthem being demanded no fewer than three times during the performance, Sheridan seized a pen and paper and dashed off the following additional stanza:—

From every latent foe,
From the assassin's blow,
 God save the King!
O'er him Thine arm extend,
For Britain's sake defend
Our Father, Prince and Friend:
 God save the King!

The impromptu was delivered by Kelly, and was received with most rapturous approbation. From the moment George heard of this incident his feelings towards Sheridan visibly softened.

"The King," wrote Hannah More to one of her sisters, "was wonderfully great and collected through the whole; but when the house continued shouting for an unreasonable length of time, he appeared much affected, sat down, and looked for a minute

¹ *Reminiscences of Michael Kelly*, ii. p. 156.

GEORGE THE THIRD

on the ground. When he got home he said to the Queen, 'As it is all safe, I am not sorry it has happened, for I cannot regret anything that has caused so much affection to be displayed.'¹

Wraxall in his "Memoirs," speaking of the conduct of the King on this occasion, says: "Few of his subjects would have shown the presence of mind, and attention to everything except himself, which pervaded his whole conduct. His whole anxiety was directed towards the Queen, who, not having entered the box, he apprehended, on hearing of the event, would be overcome by her surprise or emotions."

When George bade his family good-night he calmly said, "I am going to bed with a confidence that I shall sleep soundly, and my prayer is, that the poor unhappy prisoner who aimed at my life may rest as quietly as I shall." The would-be assassin turned out to be an ex-soldier named Hadfield, whose insanity was so manifest that he was merely confined.

At the first levée held by the King after Hadfield's attempt, the multitude of persons of distinction of every party who came to offer congratulations was unprecedented. Congratulatory addresses were voted by Parliament and by the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. "I was amply compensated," writes Somerville, who had been disappointed of his presentation at Court, "by witnessing a congratulatory address presented to his Majesty on the throne, and hearing his answer, delivered with great dignity, and with sensible emotion when he referred to the danger which he had escaped."

¹ *Memoirs of Hannah More*, vol. iii. pp. 106-7 (3rd edition).

NO FEAR OF DEATH

Besides the several open attacks, George received during the course of his reign innumerable anonymous letters threatening his life, all of which he treated with uniform indifference. Lord Sandwich once assured Wraxall that he had seen several of them, shown him by the King at Weymouth. While residing there during successive seasons, he was warned not to ride out on particular days on certain roads if he valued his safety. Despite this George never failed to mount his horse and to take the very road indicated in the letter. "I very well know," he said to Sandwich, "that any man who chooses to sacrifice his own life may, whenever he pleases, take away mine, riding out, as I do continually, with a single equerry and a footman. I only hope that whoever may attempt it will not do it in a barbarous or brutal manner."¹

Surely it is not surprising that a sovereign such as this had earned the respect of the brave, as he had the esteem and reverence of the wise in his dominions.

¹ Wraxall, vol. i. pp. 297--8.

CHAPTER XX

PITT GOES AND PITT RETURNS

THROUGHOUT his reign the government of Ireland had caused George great trouble and anxiety. He was perpetually interfering to prevent the bickerings and jealousies of Irish politicians, next to those of the South American Republics the most factious on the face of the earth.

It was a shrewd observation of the King's, when time and experience had taught him a thorough knowledge of mankind, that "he had never known a Scotchman speak *ill* of another unless he had a motive for it, and that he had never known one Irishman speak *well* of another except from a similar selfish inducement."

George had been one of the first to urge the expediency of a legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland. He had lived to see that expediency forced upon the minds of statesmen, and the rebellion of 1798 served to hasten the measure. On the 6th May we find him writing to Pitt: "I shall receive the joint address of the two Houses, which will, I trust, effect one of the most useful measures that has been effected during my reign—one that will give stability to the whole Empire, and, from the want of industry and capital in Ireland, be

THE IRISH UNION

little felt by this country as diminishing its trade and manufactures; for the advantages to Ireland can only arise by slow degrees, and the wealth of Great Britain will undoubtedly, by furnishing the rest of the globe with its articles of commerce, not feel any material disadvantages in that particular from the future prosperity of Ireland."¹

In spite of the hostility to the Bill on the part of Fox, Sheridan, Grey, and Tierney, it became, on the 2nd July, the law of the land, and on the 1st January 1801 the imperial Union banner waved for the first time over Dublin Castle. But the Act of Union was destined to bring immediate evils in its train. Not the least of these was the retirement of Pitt. For the Union inevitably raised the great question of Catholic Emancipation. On this question we can only say for George III. that he was not in advance of his time. Some of the clearest heads and warmest hearts in Britain were opposed, and violently opposed, to that measure. We have only to read the witty and forcible pleas of Sydney Smith to become aware of the great change in the direction of enlightenment and tolerance which a single century has brought about in Britain. Statements which were amazing paradoxes are now veriest commonplaces; arguments that to us seem absurd in their elaborate ingenuity were brought to bear by the greatest of wits on the most enlightened and benevolent classes in Europe, and were brought to bear in vain. The fear of "Popery" was too real; the Scots threatened revolt. Was this a time, men

¹ Stanhope's *Pitt*, vol. iii., Appendix, p. xx.

GEORGE THE THIRD

asked, when we should assimilate the loose doctrines and wicked latitudinarianism of the free-thinking French? On general principles, George would not perhaps have lent his opposition to Catholic Emancipation, he would not have been averse from permitting Irish Roman Catholics to sit in Parliament and to hold offices of State. But here, as in the American contest, he had a grave and fundamental reason for his own opposition. He was against every kind of religious persecution. On the other hand, there was a conscientious conviction of his duty. "I could give my crown and retire from power," said George to Lord Eldon, "I could quit my palace and live in a cottage, I could lay my head on a block and lose my life, but I cannot break my Coronation oath."¹

The Coronation oath is distinct and implicit. The King had sworn to maintain the Protestant reformed religion established by law; he had sworn to preserve to the Protestant bishops and clergy, and to the churches committed to their charge, all their rights and privileges. It is perfectly clear that what actuated George in his pertinacious resistance to that measure was not theological bigotry. The doctrinal differences between Protestants and Roman Catholics were of little moment to him. But the oath which he had taken at his coronation to support the established Church was everything. George was a man of steadfast principles: a man of steadfast principles is perhaps a little hard to understand to-day. The obligation the State had laid upon him, to which he had vowed his un-

¹ *Twiss's Life of Eldon*, ii. 358.

CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION

reserved adherence, he resolved at all costs to abide by. "A sense of religious as well as political duty," he wrote Pitt, "has made me, from the moment I mounted the throne, consider the oath that the wisdom of our forefathers has enjoined the kings of this realm to take at their coronation, and enforced by the obligation of instantly following it in the course of the ceremony with taking the Sacrament, as a binding religious obligation on me to maintain the fundamental maxims on which our constitution is placed: namely, that the Church of England is the established Church; that those who hold employments in the State must be members of it, and consequently obliged not only to take oaths against Popery, but to receive the Holy Communion agreeably to the rites of the Church of England." To concede materially political power to the Roman Catholics would be to diminish the rights and privileges of the Protestants. "Were I to consent to a Catholic Emancipation," George said to the Duke of Portland, "I should betray my trust, and forfeit my crown."

He even thought there was some danger of the framers of the measure being brought to the scaffold. Such scruples, such apprehensions may seem singular to us to-day, but they were shared by several of the King's advisers, by the Primates of England and Ireland, by the Lord Chancellors of both countries, the Chief Justice of England, the bench of Bishops, and by a large majority of the British people. If George had never opposed it, had he even favoured Catholic Emancipation, Pitt could never have carried

GEORGE THE THIRD

it in the House of Commons, and it would certainly have never been passed by the Lords.

Yet it was this Bill Pitt now announced his intention of introducing into Parliament. It was the only difference of opinion, said George, which had ever been between Pitt and himself. Worse still, the Minister appeared to have sprung it upon his sovereign without notice. When he heard of it a few days before the King's Speech, George sent off a letter to Addington, the Speaker. To him he confided the very strong apprehension which he entertained, that "a most mischievous measure" for enabling Roman Catholics to sit in Parliament is in contemplation by the Cabinet, and earnestly urges him to use his utmost endeavours to divert his friend, the Premier, from his purpose. "I should be taking up the Speaker's time very uselessly," writes the King, "if I said more, as I know we think alike on this great subject. I wish he would, from himself, open Mr. Pitt's eyes on the danger arising from the agitating this improper question, which may prevent his ever speaking to me on a subject on which I can scarcely keep my temper."¹

Addington saw Pitt, but in vain were his endeavours to persuade him. The Prime Minister was determined to bring in his Bill or resign. A correspondence between Pitt and the King followed. "The perusal of the King's letters," afterwards wrote Phillpotts, Bishop of Exeter, "can excite but one feeling towards the King's memory, that of increased veneration for his single-minded, uncon-

¹ Pellew's *Life of Viscount Sidmouth*, vol. i. pp. 285-6.

PITT RESIGNS

promising, conscientious regard to the solemn obligation which the duties of his high office, and above all, his oath, had imposed upon him."¹

George, greatly distressed, passed several sleepless nights. The pressure suddenly brought upon him by Pitt with regard to Catholic Emancipation was driving him into an illness. He unbosomed himself to one of his equerries, General Garth. "Where," he asked forcibly, "is that power on earth to absolve me from the due observance of every sentence of that oath, particularly the one requiring me to maintain the Protestant reformed religion? Was not my family seated on the throne for that express purpose, and shall I be the first to suffer it to be undermined, perhaps overturned? No! I had rather beg my bread from door to door throughout Europe than consent to any such measure."² On another occasion, having read his Coronation oath to his family and asked them if they understood it, he exclaimed, "If I violate it I am no longer legal sovereign of this country, but it falls to the House of Savoy!"³

The upshot was that Pitt resigned. On Pitt's resignation George instantly summoned Addington to take the seals. The Speaker shrank from the task. He was one of Pitt's dearest friends; they had been children together, their fathers had been close friends before them. While Addington hesitated, Pitt came forward and urged his friend to accept

¹ *Letters from the King to Lord Kenyon.*

² *Pellew's Life of Lord Sidmouth*, vol. i. pp. 285-6.

³ *Lord Malmesbury's Diaries*, vol. iv. p. 22.

GEORGE THE THIRD

the vacant post. Believing that Pitt would return again to power, he modestly spoke of himself as a "sort of *locum tenens*." To the Bishop of Worcester George wrote in February 1801, "An unfortunate resolution implanted in the mind of Mr. Pitt, by persons in no way friends to our happy Church and State establishment, to bring in a Bill enabling Dissenters to hold offices without taking the Test Act, and repealing the law of 30 Charles II., which precludes Papists from sitting in Parliament, has made me reluctantly permit him to retire from my service. My sense of my Coronation oath, of the compact on which my family was invited to mount the throne, and the Act of Union with Scotland, precluded me from not opposing such an opinion. I have persuaded Mr. Addington to succeed Mr. Pitt, and can assure you his attachment to the Church is as sincere as mine, and you may depend on his equal attachment to our happy civil constitution, and his being no admirer of any reforms or supposed improvements."¹

This weighty business, it was soon apparent, had told upon the mental and physical health of the King. On the 15th, Addington found his royal master suffering from a severe cold and scarcely able to speak. Less than a week later the King was in such a high fever that the services of the younger Dr. Willis were demanded. From that date until the 3rd March the King's mind was under a cloud. One of his first coherent remarks was to his son Frederick, "I know full well how ill I have

¹ Bentley's *Miscellany*, vol. xxvi. p. 515.

ADDINGTON IN POWER

been. I have presumed a great deal more than I ought on my constitution. Be assured I shall be more careful in the future."¹

Those privileged to see George found him grown thinner and paler, and his eyes seemed affected. The loyal jubilation of his subjects on his recovery greatly touched him. He trusted, he said, "that God would prolong his life in order that he might prove to his people how deeply grateful he was for their attachment."

On recovering his reason, one of the questions the King had put to Dr. Willis was whether Pitt had been much affected by the sufferings which he had undergone. "Tell him," said the King, "that I am now quite well—quite recovered from my illness. But what has he not to answer for who is the cause of my having been ill at all?" On receiving this communication from Dr. Willis Pitt was deeply affected; he pledged himself on the spot never again to intrude upon the King a question fraught with such afflictive consequences. He asked Willis whether a formal assurance from him to that effect might not materially conduce to the restoration of his sovereign's health. "Certainly," replied Willis, "and to the recovery of his life also." Under these circumstances Pitt not only authorised Willis to assure the King that, whether in or out of office, he would never again, during his Majesty's reign, agitate the question of Catholic Emancipation,² but he is also said to have addressed to him a "most dutiful, humble, and contrite" letter, in which he gave a similar guarantee in

¹ Malmesbury's *Diaries*, vol. iv. p. 34.

² *Ibid.*

GEORGE THE THIRD

writing.¹ Pitt's assurance caused the King instant relief. "I told him," writes Willis to Pitt, "what you wished; and after saying the kindest things of you, he exclaimed, 'Now my mind will be at ease.' Upon the Queen coming in, the first thing he told her was your message, and he made the same observation upon it."

Having by his action been released of his promise to the Roman Catholic party Pitt might now have returned to office. But Addington had already tasted power; he was by no means convinced that the arguments were sufficiently strong for him so soon to give up his official seals to his friend. He declined under the circumstances to advise the King to send for Pitt. Too proud was Pitt to demand the seals again, and George, grateful for Addington's having rescued him at a critical moment, could hardly be expected to solicit him to resign. Besides, Pitt had promised his full support to the new administration. "If," said the King, "we three do but keep together, all will be well."

The King and Pitt parted on affectionate terms, the King saying that "it is a struggle between duty and affection, and duty carries it."

"The parting honour," says Lord Rosebery, "that he awarded his Minister is notable. He knew that it was of no use to offer Pitt money, or ribbons, or titles, so he began a letter to him 'My dear Pitt,' a circumstance which throws a little light on the character of both men."²

¹ Stanhope's *Life of Pitt*, vol. iii, p. 303.

² Rosebery's *Pitt*, p. 223.

A GENEROUS OFFER

Pitt, careless, even reckless, in money matters, had made so little provision for himself, that he was dogged daily by his creditors. Learning of his financial embarrassments George authorised Rose to offer Pitt a personal gift of £30,000, stipulating that the donor should be anonymous. "The scheme," says Rose, "was found to be impracticable without a communication with Mr. Pitt. On the mention of it to him, he was actually more affected than I recollect to have seen him on any occasion, but he declined it, though with the deepest sense of gratitude possible. It was indeed one of the latest circumstances he mentioned to me, with considerable emotion, towards the close of his life."¹

When Pitt died Rose's natural desire was that his royal master's generosity should be made known; he intimated his wish to the King, but George shrank from the idea. He would not, he said, "on any account permit his name to be used. It would bear the appearance of making a parade of his intentions."²

If Loughborough expected to retain the seals under Addington, he was doomed to disappointment. George resolved on giving them to Eldon. "I was," said Eldon afterwards, "the King's Lord Chancellor, and not the Minister's." When Eldon came to kiss hands on his appointment, George drew the Great Seal from the left breast of his greatcoat and handed it to him with the playful and affectionate remark, "I give it to you from my heart."³ "My remem-

¹ Rose's *Diaries*, vol. i. p. 338. ² *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 216.

³ Twiss's *Life of Eldon*, vol. i. p. 368.

GEORGE THE THIRD

brances," added the King, "to Lady Eldon. I know how much I owe to Lady Eldon. I know that you would have made yourself a country curate, and that she has made you my Lord Chancellor."¹ As a salve to Loughborough, he was created Earl of Rosslyn.

On the 21st May we find Addington writing to Eldon after an interview with the King at Kew: "During a quiet conversation of an hour and a half with the King, there was not a sentiment, a word, a look, or a gesture that I could have wished different from what it was. And yet my apprehensions, I must own to you, predominate. The wheel is likely to turn with an increasing velocity, as I cannot help fearing, and if so, it will very soon become unmanageable. God grant that I may be mistaken! We have, however, done our best."²

It seemed by the end of the month as if the King had completely recovered. "After a most tedious and severe illness," he wrote to Bishop Hurd, "from which, by the interposition of Divine Providence, I have most wonderfully escaped the jaws of death, I find myself enabled to pursue one of my most agreeable occupations, that of writing to you, who have never been in the most gloomy moments out of my thoughts. I can now assure you that my health is daily improving, though I cannot boast of the same strength and spirits I enjoyed before. Still, with quiet and sea bathing I trust they will soon be regained. Public events in every part of the globe

¹ *Life of Wilberforce*, vol. iii. p. 2.

² *Twiss's Life of Eldon*, vol. i. p. 375.

SYMPTOMS OF RELAPSE

appear more favourable, and the hand of Divine Providence seems stretched forth to protect this favoured island, which alone has stood forth constantly in opposition to our wicked neighbours. I flatter myself, the fact of having a Ministry composed of men of religion and great probity will tend to the restoration of more decorum. Neither my advice nor example shall be wanted to effect it.”¹

But the favourable symptoms did not continue; on the contrary, a relapse began to be foreshadowed. The elder Willis was consulted. He described the King to Eldon as being five or six hours on horseback daily. “His attendants thought him much hurried, and so think his pages. He has a great thirst upon him, and his family are in great fear. His Majesty still talks much of his prudence, but he shows none. His body, mind, and tongue are all upon the stretch every minute; and the manner in which he is now expending money in various ways, which is so unlike him when well, all evince that he is not so right as he should be.”²

At this very time George was interesting himself in preparing the untenanted White Lodge in Richmond Park for the occupaney of his Minister, who was destined to occupy it for more than forty years. He took the greatest interest in the arrangements for Addington's comfort, and the latter was proportionately grateful. He received the following note: “The King is highly gratified at the repeated marks of the sensibility of Mr. Addington's heart,

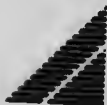
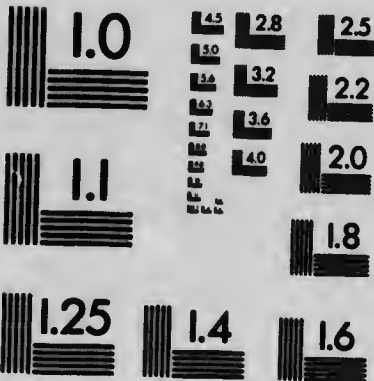
¹ Bentley's *Miscellany*, vol. xxvi. p. 516.

² Twiss's *Life of Eldon*, vol. i. p. 381.



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GEORGE THE THIRD

which must greatly add to the comfort of having placed him with so much propriety at the head of the Treasury. He trusts their mutual affection can only cease with their lives.”¹

Towards the Willises, however, George's attitude was one of great impatience. He resented their intrusion, and the reason he gave seems perfectly rational. “No person,” he wrote Eldon, “that has ever had a nervous fever can bear to continue the physician employed on the occasion; and this holds much more so in the calamitous one that has so long confined the King, but of which he is now completely recovered.”²

At the end of June George and his family left Kew for Weymouth, spending *en route* the week end at George Rose's seat of Cuffnells, on the borders of the New Forest. “Unfortunately,” wrote Rose to Eldon, “a heavy shower fell while his Majesty was on the road about a mile and a half short of this place. No entreaties could prevail with him to put on a greatcoat, and he was wet through before he reached the Town Hall, where he remained about three-quarters of an hour speaking to the Mayor and several gentlemen. He then went to Sir Harry Neale's, and dined without changing his clothes; then rode back here, and was again wet, but changed his dress as soon as he got in. There is no describing the uneasiness I felt at his Majesty keeping on his wet clothes, because I recollect Mr. Pitt telling me that his

¹ Dean Pellew's *Life of Lord Sidmouth*, vol. i. p. 407.

² Twiss's *Life of Eldon*, vol. i. p. 382.

PRIVACY AT KEW

first illness, in 1788, was supposed to be brought on by the same thing; but there was no possible means of preventing it. The exercise, too, must have been, I fear, too much after the disuse of riding for some time. His Majesty intends going to Southampton—ten miles—on horseback to-day and returning to dinner.”¹

Soon after his return from Weymouth George wrote to Bishop Hurd: “Sea bathing has had its usual success with me, and in truth it was never more necessary, for the severe fever I had the last winter left many unpleasant sensations. These I have every reason to say, by the blessing of the Almighty, are nearly removed. I am forced to be very careful, and to avoid everything of fatigue, either of mind or body, but feel I am gradually gaining ground. The next week will be rather harassing, as I must open the session of Parliament, and attend the ceremonies in consequence; but I shall return every day to Kew, that I may be more quiet.”²

At Kew, where the King continued to pass the summer months during many succeeding years, he delighted in living in the greatest privacy. The late King of Hanover, speaking of his father, writes on the 5th January 1845: “He certainly appeared to me, the latter ten years of his life—I mean from 1801 to 1810—to take more interest in what was going on in private life than ever he did before; and my brother (George IV.) told me that, before

¹ Twiss's *Life of Eldon*, vol. i. p. 386.

² Bentley's *Miscellany*, vol. xxvi. p. 517.

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my time, the style of life which he used to lead, part of which I can still recollect, was the most recluse that ever man lived, for he lived as regular as clock-work. He resided constantly at Kew from May till November, and literally never saw a living soul there but the equerry-in-waiting, who came down every morning from London to accompany him on horseback, and then instantly returned back to town, so that he had not a single gentleman near him.”¹

This, together with other statements from the same source, hardly quadrates with the testimony of Rose, Eldon, and Malmesbury, and is doubtless overdrawn.

By this time the preliminary articles of peace with France had been signed. Far from satisfactory as were the terms, the nation was only too ready to welcome peace to cavil. Addington was filled with “childish exultation and joy.” Fox declared that he had never assented to any public measure with greater satisfaction. In the midst of the flaming bonfires and flaunting banners which signalised the national jubilation there were some who felt that such rejoicings were premature. Amongst these was George, who called it an “experimental peace.” It would, he prophesied, be of short duration. “I place little reliance on the assurance of those who set every religious, moral, and social principle at naught.” He strongly combated the idea of reducing the military strength of the country. In his opinion, “on the maintenance of a strong army and navy Britain could alone expect to meet with

¹ Jesse, vol. ii, p. 289.

“AN EXPERIMENTAL PEACE”

that respect which the honourable and gallant conduct we have shown deserves.”

In truth, hardly any measure of State his Ministers could adopt was at that juncture less prudent or more short-sighted. The Cabinet so well knew this, that Lord Hawkesbury signed the articles, not only without the King's consent or approbation, but without his knowledge. On the 1st of October, just as George was about to return from Weymouth to Windsor, Addington instantly sent off a messenger with the intelligence. The messenger met the King at Andover, and the packet was brought to him as he stood in the drawing-room of the inn engaged in conversation with three peers, Cardigan, Chesterfield, and Walsingham. Not expecting to receive any news of importance, George told them not to leave the apartment while he read the despatch. On inspecting its contents he showed so much surprise in looks and gesture, that they sought to withdraw. “My lords,” said George addressing them, holding the despatch open in his hand, “I have received surprising news, but it is no secret. Preliminaries of peace are signed with France. I knew nothing of it whatever; but since it is made, I sincerely wish it may prove a lasting peace.”¹

It was at this time that Fox permitted himself to express the real reason for his joy over the peace. “The truth is,” he wrote to Grey, “I am gone something farther in hate to the English Government than perhaps you and the rest of my friends are, and certainly farther than can

¹ Wraxall, vol. i. p. 288.

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with prudence be avowed. 'The triumph of the French Government over the English does in fact afford me a degree of pleasure which it is very difficult to disguise.'¹

How a man calling himself a statesman and a patriot could feel and permit himself to pen such sentiments, or can ever be regarded by posterity in his own country with reverence and affection, is, save to those who recognise the perversity of human passions and opinions, well-nigh inexplicable.

It was Pitt's opinion that "rest for England, however short, was desirable." But he soon saw his mistake. As the months wore on and the intentions of Bonaparte became known, there was a widespread demand for Pitt's return to office. If Addington would only waive his claims, George would have offered no objection to the return of his former Prime Minister. Negotiations were begun by their respective friends, but Pitt's language soon grew too high and imperious to please Addington. A rupture occurred in their friendly relations. Pitt insisted on a "general sweep" of all officials. While they haggled between themselves as to who was to be the new Prime Minister, who to fill this office, who to fill that, they left entirely out of account the King himself. Pitt, said George, carried his plan of removals so extremely far and so high that it might reach him.² He spoke of Pitt's possible intention of "putting the Crown in commission." Pitt remembered his duty at length, and told Addington

¹ Earl Russell's *Memorials of Fox*, vol. iii. p. 349.

² Lord Malmesbury's *Diaries*, vol. iv. p. 190.

WAR RENEWED

flatly, "It is a principle of mine that a change of administration should on no account be forced upon the King. He was aware, he said, how fatal might be the consequences which such a step might produce on his Majesty's mind; he was resolved therefore not to come into office unless his return could be accomplished without in the smallest degree affecting the King's health, comfort, and tranquillity." Pitt added that, in thus feeling and expressing himself, he was doing "little more than feeling and speaking as a gentleman."¹

He requested Addington to lay all the correspondence and details of the negotiations before the King. George very properly refused to trouble himself about the dispute. It had been conducted without either his sanction or knowledge, and having failed, he could hardly consider it of any importance to himself or his kingdom. "It is a foolish business," he said to Lord Pelham, "from one end to the other. It was begun ill, conducted ill, and terminated ill."² And this is the avowed opinion of Lord Macaulay.

In the following month Britain and France were again at war. "Had I," said George, "found more opinions like mine, better might have been done. Lord Malmesbury, you and I have lived on the active theatre of this world these thirty years. If we are not become wise enough to consider every event which happens quietly and with acquiescence, we have lived very negligently. What would the

¹ Rose's *Diaries*, vol. iv. p. 64.

² Lord Malmesbury's *Diaries*, vol. iv. pp. 191-2.

GEORGE THE THIRD

good man who wrote these excellent books"—pointing to the copy I had just presented to him of my father's works, and which lay on the table—"say if we were such bad philosophers, having had such means of becoming good ones?"¹

A vote of censure was moved upon the Ministry. Pitt delivered a splendid speech upholding Addington's policy. But although Pitt was beaten on several of his motions, Addington constantly deferred to him. "His influence and authority in the House of Commons," wrote Romilly, "exceeds all belief. The Ministry seems in comparison with him to be persons of no account." If it had not been for the steady support of the King, it is doubtful whether Addington would have remained many weeks in power.

"We are here," wrote George to Bishop Hurd from Windsor, "in daily expectation that Bonaparte will attempt his threatened invasion, but the chances against his success seem so many, that it is wonderful he persists in it. I own I place that through dependence on the protection of Divine Providence, that I cannot help thinking the usurper is encouraged to make the trial that his ill-success may put an end to his wicked purposes. Should his troops effect a landing, I shall certainly put myself at the head of mine, and my other armed subjects, to repel them; but as it is impossible to foresee the events of such a conflict should the enemy approach too near to Windsor, I shall think it right the Queen and my daughters should cross

¹ Lord Malmesbury's *Diaries*, vol. iv. pp. 64-5.

INVASION EXPECTED

the Severn, and shall send them to your Episcopal Palace at Worcester. By this hint I do not in the least mean they shall be any inconvenience to you, and shall send a proper servant and furniture for their accommodation. Should such an event arise, I certainly would rather that what I value most in life should remain during the conflict in your diocese and under your roof, than in any other place in the island."¹

To this letter Hurd replied: "If it please God that your Majesty be opposed to the attack of this daring adventurer, you will have your whole people ready to stand or fall with you, and Divine Providence I firmly believe to be your protector and preserver. If the occasion should happen, which your Majesty's tender concern for those most nearly and dearly related to you suggests to your apprehensions, my old and formerly so much honoured mansion at Worcester shall be ready to receive them, and in as good a condition as I can contrive. But your Majesty is pleased to add that if such an occasion should fall out you would certainly rather what you value most in this life should remain during the conflict in my diocese and under my roof, than in any other place in the island. I must beg your Majesty's pardon if I feel myself too much impressed by a sense of so much goodness to me, to make my acknowledgments for it."

George, doomed to experience the mortification of having his Hanoverian dominion wrested from him by the enemy, watched events with great sagacity

¹ Bentley's *Miscellany*, vol. xxvi. p. 519.

GEORGE THE THIRD

and with a high courage. He constantly conferred with his Ministers on the disposition of the troops and the necessary arrangements consequent upon Bonaparte's landing. In Lord Colchester's Diaries we have the following memoranda, which at this time was drawn up by the King:—

“Lord Cornwallis to take the command of the central army, being the real reserve of the Volunteers and all the producible force of the kingdom, in case the French made any impression on the coast.

“The King to move to Chelmsford if the landing was in Essex, or to Dartford if in Kent, taking with him Mr. Addington and Mr. Yorke of the Cabinet.

“The Queen, &c., to remove to the Palace at Worcester.

“The Bank books to be removed to the Tower, and the duplicate books and treasure to the cathedral at Worcester in thirty waggons under Sir Brook Watson's management, escorted from county to county by the Volunteers.

“The merchants to shut up the Stock Exchange.

“The artillery and stores from Woolwich to be transported inland by the Grand Junction Canal.

“The Press to be prohibited from publishing any account of the King's troops, or of the enemy, but by authority from the Secretary of State, to be communicated officially twice a day to all news-writers indiscriminately who may apply for it, else their presses to be seized and their printers imprisoned.

“The Privy Council to be sitting in London, to issue all acts of Government.”¹

¹ Lord Colchester's *Diaries*, vol. i. pp. 470, 471.

DESPARD'S PLOT

In 1803 occurred the discovery of the Despard plot, by a desperate Colonel of that name of questionable sanity, who sought to assassinate the King. A piece of ordnance on the north side of St. James's Park, which had recently been captured from the French by the English, was to have been fired at the sovereign as he went to open Parliament. "The King's composure," says Lord Malmesbury, "on hearing of Despard's horrid designs was remarkable, and evinces a strength of mind, and tranquillity of conscience, that prove him to be the best of men."¹ Despard and his fellow-conspirators were hanged for their crime.

In such a time of national emergency we find the Prince of Wales coming forward as his father had done nearly half a century before, asking for some responsible military command. "I neither did," wrote the Prince to Addington, "or do presume on supposed talents as entitling me to such an appointment. I am aware I do not possess the experience of actual warfare. At the same time I cannot regard myself as totally unqualified or deficient in military science, since I have long made the service my particular study." To the King also the Prince writes: "Ought I not to come forward in a moment of unexampled difficulty and danger? Ought I not to share in the glory of victory when I have everything to lose by defeat? The highest places in your Majesty's service are filled by the younger branches of the royal family. To me alone no place is assigned. I am not thought worthy to

¹ Lord Malmesbury's *Diaries*, vol. iv. p. 204.

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be even the junior Major-General of your Army.”¹ The Prince had forgotten, perhaps, that his brother, the Duke of Clarence, had enrolled himself a private in the Teddington Volunteers.

The King had already informed his son that he was on no account to regard the army as a profession, or to expect a higher rank than that of Colonel. George was not as moved by the Prince's numerous letters on this subject as he might have been had he not known that they were the composition of others. He suspected Sheridan, but the real authors of the heir-apparent's appeals were Sir Robert Wilson and Lord Hutchinson conjointly.

“MY DEAR SON,” he replied in one of his letters, dated Windsor, 7th August 1803, “though I applaud your zeal and spirit, of which, I trust, no one can suppose any of my family wanting, yet, considering the repeated declarations I have made of my determination on your former applications to the same purpose, I had flattered myself to have heard no further on the subject. Should the implacable enemy so far succeed as to land, you will have an opportunity of showing your zeal at the head of your regiment. It will be the duty of every man to stand forward on such an occasion, and I shall certainly think it mine to set an example in defence of everything that is dear to me and to my people.—I ever remain, my dear son, your very affectionate father, G. R.”

The correspondence was published in the newspapers at the close of 1803, which publication occasioned considerable annoyance to the King.

¹ *Annual Register for 1803*, pp. 564, 566.

HIS GIFT TO ELDON

Early in 1804 George experienced a return of his former dangerous and distressing affliction. No communication whatever had been made on this very delicate topic to either Houses of Parliament until the 27th February, when the King's Ministers were called upon for an explicit communication. In reply it was stated that such a communication would be "not only inexpedient, but highly indecent under the particular circumstances of the King's indisposition." The Opposition persisted. What would be the consequence, they asked, on the total suspension of the executive authority if the French, at such a crisis, were to effect a landing in this country? Let the two Houses of Parliament be apprised of the actual state of the King's health, in order to form an opinion of the steps necessary to be adopted in the public interest.

Addington answered that the Ministerial resolution had not been hastily adopted, but was the result of much consultation; it was brought forward under the fullest impression of its necessity, and the most grave conviction of the responsibility which it involved. If any extraordinary occasion should arise, in which the executive power might be called upon to act, there existed no obstruction to the exercise of the royal functions.

Fortunately the shadow again passed away, and George recovered.

On the King's being declared convalescent Eldon visited him at Buckingham House. Here an interesting episode occurred. During the conversation George took from a drawer a watch and chain which

GEORGE THE THIRD

he had worn for twenty years, and begged Eldon to accept and wear them for his sake. The Chancellor, greatly embarrassed, declined the gift. Whereupon, with an equal degree of embarrassment, mingled with some anger, the King desired Lord Eldon to tell him why he had treated him after this fashion. "I told him," said Eldon, "that there were people who envied me every mark of my sovereign's favour, and who would give an unfavourable construction to my receiving anything from him at that time; and, therefore, greatly as I valued his gifts, under the circumstances I thought it was best to return the watch with the chain and seal." To this the King made no reply, but the degree to which he was affected by them was shown by his shedding tears.¹

But George was not to be baulked in presenting this testimony of his affection for Eldon. At the beginning of the following year, while the Chancellor was presiding in his Court, a royal messenger entered and placed before him a red box accompanied by the following note:—"The King takes this opportunity of forwarding to the Lord Chancellor the watch he mentioned the last spring. It has undergone a thorough cleaning, and been left with the maker many months, that the accurateness of its going might be ascertained. Facing ten minutes here is a spring, which if pressed by the nail will open the glass for setting the watch; or, turning the watch, pressing the back edge facing 50 minutes, the case opens for winding up." On the seal of the chain were, and are—for the watch is still treasured

¹ Twiss's *Life of Eldon*, vol. i. p. 424.

ADDINGTON'S INEFFICIENCY

by Eldon's heirs—two figures, one of Religion and one of Justice, which had been engraved, with the motto "His dirige te."¹ "My illness," said George, "has had at least one good effect, that of enabling me to distinguish the difference between my real and my pretended friends."²

It could not be gainsaid that the Addington administration was weak, and its weakness at length forced itself on the King. He was ready in the public interest to promote a salutary change. Unluckily at this very juncture a *rapprochement* was in progress between Pitt and Fox. Late, almost too late, the latter had realised his life blunder. So far had he retreated from his lonely, untenable, and unpatriotic position as to offer to support his country in her struggle. Not till death was almost at his door did his asperities soften, and he saw that the dire necessity of the State called upon all men to bury their political feuds in oblivion. He announced himself ready to unite himself and his handful of trusty followers in cementing a strong Ministry. Startling and obnoxious was the prospect of a coalition between Pitt and Fox. Only a few months before Fox had spoken of his rival as "a mean rascal," and again as "a mean, low-minded dog."³ Was Fox a man absolutely without principles, only desiring power and applause? Was he ready to embark on any desperate venture which might secure these to him? In any case, the King could hardly,

¹ Twiss's *Life of Eldon*, vol. i. p. 424.

² *Ibid.*, p. 426.

³ Russell's *Memorials of Fox*, vol. iii. pp. 440, 455.

GEORGE THE THIRD

however, approve of a coalition which bore so marked a resemblance to the infamous conjunction of Fox and North twenty years before. He showed "great marks of concern and indignation," yet his strong sense of religion and duty was paramount. "At a time," he told Eldon, "when it had pleased Providence to recover him from the severe affliction with which he had been visited, it would ill become him to indulge in hasty and impatient ebullitions of anger. Still less justifiable, he said, would it be at such a crisis of national difficulty to allow himself to be biased by private feelings or personal prejudices. His duty, he added, was to prevent confusion in his dominions, and that duty he would religiously perform. "From that moment," said Eldon, "his Majesty never betrayed the least hastiness of temper, but attended to all that was said with the greatest attention, and in the most placid manner." Of Pitt he spoke not only without animosity, but in terms of commendation. "I am persuaded," he said, "Mr. Pitt will never perform any engagements, or enter into any connection, which will be injurious either to the rights of my subjects or to the royal prerogative. I feel sure of this," and he added emphatically, "I also feel my Coronation oath safe in his hands."¹

At first Pitt made it clear that he intended to bring in Fox. It would make the Government invincible. This George still regarded as unnecessary. "The whole tenor," he wrote, "of Mr. Fox's conduct since he quitted his seat at the Board of Treasury, when under age, and more particularly at

¹ Malmesbury's *Diaries*, vol. iv, p. 303.

FOX PROSCRIBED

the Whig Club and factious meetings, rendered his expulsion from the Privy Council indispensable, and obliges the King to express his astonishment that Mr. Pitt should for one moment harbour the thought of bringing such a man before his royal notice. To prevent the repetition of it, the King declares that if Mr. Pitt persists in such an idea, or in proposing to consult Lord Grenville, his Majesty will have to deplore that he cannot avail himself of the ability of Mr. Pitt with necessary restrictions. These points being understood, his Majesty does not object to Mr. Pitt's forming such a plan for conducting the public business as may, under all circumstances, appear to be eligible. But should Mr. Pitt unfortunately find himself unable to undertake what is here proposed, the King will in that case call for the assistance of such men as are truly attached to our happy constitution, and not seekers of improvements which to all dispassionate men must appear to tend to the destruction of that noble fabric which is the pride of all thinking minds, and the envy of all foreign nations."¹

The prospect of receiving Fox greatly perturbed the King's mind. Even the first interview with Pitt was regarded with forebodings, but George received his former Minister with the utmost kindness. When Pitt congratulated him on looking so much better than he had done after his former illness, "It is not to be wondered at," said George; "I was then on the point of parting from an old friend, I am now about to regain one."²

¹ Stanhope's *Pitt*, vol. iv., Appendix, pp. ix-x.

² Rose's *Diaries*, vol. ii. pp. 121-2.

GEORGE THE THIRD

Pitt went into the King's closet firmly resolved to press Fox upon the King, and absolutely to refuse office unless he could ensure by coalition the support of his rival. He left the royal closet with the King's approval of all the proposed Ministers with the single exception of Charles James Fox!

There are few acts of George's reign for which he has been so severely indicted as this proscription of Fox. To our minds there is scarcely any act of his reign which was more courageous, more consistent, and meriting more of our applause. Fox, in the language of his friend and former political associate, Portland, "had expressed opinions so strong, and had advocated administrative changes so directly opposed to the recognised and constitutional duties of every department at the head of which he was eligible to be placed, that there was no office, tenable with a seat in the Cabinet, for which he had not disqualified himself from filling."¹

As for Fox himself, his conduct on learning of his proscription did him more credit than most of his acts and speeches. He permitted his followers, Grenville and the rest, to accept office under Pitt. But Fox's friends declined to avail themselves of this permission. Grenville deserted Pitt at this juncture, and thereby earned Pitt's lasting enmity.

On the 12th May 1804 William Pitt entered on his second administration. A few days before George had written Addington: "The King has this instant finished a long but most satisfactory conversation with Mr. Pitt, who will stand forth though Lord Grenville,

¹ Lord Malmesbury's *Diaries*, vol. iv. p. 325.

PITT'S SECOND TERM

Lord Spencer, and Mr. Windham have declined even treating, as Mr. Fox is excluded by this express command of the King to Mr. Pitt. This being the case, the King desires Mr. Addington will attend here at ten to-morrow morning with the seals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

"The King's friendship for Mr. Addington is too deeply graven on his heart to be in the least diminished by any change of situation. His Majesty will order the warrant to be prepared for creating Mr. Addington Earl of Banbury, Viscount Wallingford, and Baron Reading; and will order the message to be carried by Mr. Yorke to the House of Commons for the usual annuity, having most honourably and ably filled the station of Speaker in the House of Commons. The King will settle such a pension on Mrs. Addington, whose virtue and modesty he admires, as Mr. Addington may choose to propose."¹

Although repeatedly urged by the King, Addington unhesitatingly declined under the circumstances to accept either honours or pension. In a personal interview George said to his departing Minister, "You are a proud man, Mr. Addington, but I am a proud man too; and why should I sleep uneasy on my pillow because you will not comply with my request?" "Addington," wrote the King to Eldon, "seems to require quiet, as his mind is perplexed between returning affection for Mr. Pitt, and great soreness at the contemptuous treatment he met with at the end of the last session from one he has ever looked upon as his private friend. This makes

¹ Pellew's *Life of Lord Sidmouth*, vol. ii. p. 288.

GEORGE THE THIRD

the King resolved to keep them for some time asunder."¹

"It may be mentioned," says Mr. Jesse, "as affording remarkable evidence of the King's knowledge of, and of the interest which he took in public business, that he made a point with Addington that, before he vacated his seat at the Board of Treasury, certain clerical arrears in that department should be cleared off."²

The King's diagnosis of Addington's state of mind was truer of his own. "I do not think there was anything positively wrong," wrote Pitt three days before he received the seals, "but there was a hurry of spirits and an excessive love of talking which showed that either the rising of this morning, or the seeing so many persons, and conversing so much during these three days, has rather tended to disturb."³

A fortnight later Malmesbury writes: "Lady Uxbridge very anxious about the King. Said his family were quite unhappy; that his temper was altered. He had just dismissed his faithful and favourite page, Braun, who had served him during his illness with the greatest attention. Quiet and repose were the only chance."⁴

And indeed it seemed as if George's sweet and gracious temper was altered. Irritable expressions escaped him; he grew suspicious of his servants, he

¹ Twiss's *Life of Eldon*, vol. i. p. 450.

² Lord Colchester's *Diaries*, vol. i. p. 512.

³ Twiss's *Life of Eldon*, vol. i. p. 445.

⁴ Lord Malmesbury's *Diaries*, vol. iv. p. 325.

HIS PARTIALITY FOR ETON

insisted on the most capricious changes in his household; the Queen's favourite coachman was dismissed, footmen were told that they would henceforward serve as grooms, grooms were appointed footmen, lords of the Bedchamber were ordered to leave the palace. It was only too plain that the strain which he had recently been subjected to had told severely on the King's mind. Yet on returning to Windsor, the warmth of the greeting by the schoolboys as his carriage passed through Eton brought the tears to the King's eyes. The cheering of the youngsters, betokening their loyalty and affection, greatly touched the King. On the following day while on horseback he met a couple of Eton boys on the road. He stopped his horse and thanked them with a smile for their goodwill. "I have always loved Eton, but now I shall be more partial to it than ever. I shall in future," he added laughing, in allusion to the rivalry between the two schools, "be an anti-Westminster."

"His Majesty," says a writer in *Etoniana*, "took a lively interest in the boys, and knew the most distinguished of them by name and sight. 'All people think highly of Eton, everybody praises Eton,' he said to young De Quincey. He was hospitable to them in his odd way. On one occasion he sent to invite them in a body to the Terrace, and kept them all to supper—'remembering to forget' to extend the entertainment to the masters who had accompanied them, and who returned home in great dudgeon. There were many instances of his kindness to individuals in the school. A boy

GEORGE THE THIRD

was once rushing 'down town' at a tremendous pace, being rather late for 'absence,' when he ran full butt against the King, and 'took the wind very considerably out of the royal person.' Of course he stopped to apologise, which made his appearance, even at 'second name,' absolutely hopeless. But the good-natured King asked him his name, and took the trouble to write a note to the headmaster to explain the delay. On another occasion, when a boy was expelled for poaching in Windsor Home Park—a misdemeanour which was not uncommon—the King, thinking that the punishment was too severe for the offence, gave him a commission in the Guards."¹

George had through life, as he told Rose a few months later, made it an invariable rule to store in his memory the better qualities and feelings of others, and to discard as much as possible from his thoughts the bad. "On this principle," he added, "I shall always cherish the remembrance of the natural and sudden impulse by which the Eton boys were actuated when they received me with such affectionate and marked congratulations after my last recovery."²

On the 31st July, when George prorogued Parliament in person, we are told by Lord Colchester that "he looked extremely well, and read the speech well, with great animation, but accidentally turned over two leaves together, and so omitted about one-fourth of his intended speech. It happened, however, that the transition was not incoherent, and it escaped

¹ *Etoniana*, pp. 92-3.

² Rose's *Diaries*, vol. ii. pp. 146, 147, 167.

A RECONCILIATION URGED

some of the Cabinet who had heard it before the King delivered it."¹

A reconciliation with the Prince of Wales was being strongly urged by Pitt, the Prince himself appearing anxious for the reconciliation. An interview was anticipated by George with pain. "The King trusts his excellent Lord Chancellor," he wrote Eldon a few days before setting out for Weymouth, "felt himself authorised on Saturday to acquaint the Prince of Wales that, in consequence of what the Earl of Moira has been authorised to express, his Majesty is willing to receive the Prince of Wales on Wednesday at Kew, provided no explanation or excuses are attempted to be made by the Prince of Wales, but that it is merely to be a visit of civility, as any retrospect could but oblige the King to utter truths which, instead of healing, must widen the present breach. His Majesty will have the Queen, Princesses, and at least one of his sons, the Duke of Cambridge, present on the occasion. The Lord Chancellor is to fix on twelve o'clock for the hour of the Prince of Wales's coming to Kew."²

The Prince, however, refused to come on these terms, and told the Lord Chancellor to tell his father so. Eldon sought to remonstrate. "Sir," said the Prince in anger, "who gave you authority to advise me?" Eldon said it was a matter of regret that he should have given offence to his Royal Highness, but added in a firm tone, "I am his Majesty's

¹ Lord Colchester's *Diaries*, vol. i. p. 522.

² Twiss's *Life of Eldon*, vol. i. p. 462.

GEORGE THE THIRD

Chancellor, and it is for me to judge what messages I ought to take to his Majesty. Your Royal Highness must send some other messenger with that communication. *I will not take it!*"

Eldon seems to have thought the Prince would relent and keep the appointment at Kew; so too did the Prince's mother and sisters. But after keeping them waiting some little time, their hopes of a reconciliation were dashed to the ground by a curt message from the Prince to the effect that he was indisposed. In vain Charlotte tried to induce George to write directly to their son, but the King would not consent to this course. He would never again, he said, write to any one who published his letters.

George visited Weymouth as usual this summer. On his return he again honoured George Rose with a visit to Cuffnell's, his country seat near Southampton. Here he rode and chatted freely with his friend. A diverting conversation took place during their ride "across the wildest part of the forest (in one of the heaviest rains I ever felt) to Cadlands, where we dined at Mr. Drummond's, the King's banker." George repeated an observation he had made at Weymouth, in somewhat different words, "that his memory was a good one, and that what he did not forget, he could not forgive. He said that in his intercourse with men, it had been an invariable rule with him not to *suppose* them bad till he found them so; that there had been instances of men becoming good, or at least considerably improving, by letting them understand they were considered as better than they were."



GEORGE ROSE

(From the Portrait by Beechey)



CONVERSES WITH ROSE

Di cussing the war, he said "something should be done to bring it to a point; that the sort of warfare going on would wear out the resources of the country, without leading to *any* conclusion of it; that he was aware that we could have no assistance from any of the Continental Powers without paying them; and I observed, that beyond all comparison it would be cheaper to subsidise them to a great extent, rather than send British armies to the Continent, not taking into account the loss of English blood or the expense of recruiting. After breakfast we rode to Cadlands, with the Dukes of Cumberland and Cambridge, and the Princesses Amelia and Sophia, with their attendants, in a storm of wind and heavy rain, which came on before we got a mile from Lyndhurst. The King renewed the subject of Continental politics, and surprised me beyond measure by telling me that he had suggested to Mr. Pitt the propriety of getting the co-operation of Austria and Russia, and if possible Prussia; that it should then be put to the first Power to declare whether she wishes to repossess Flanders or not; that she would probably say no; in which case measures should be taken for securing that country to Great Britain, not to be annexed to it as a part of the British dominions, but to be under a prince of the blood of Great Britain, with their former constitution or something resembling it. To have the Joyeuse Entrée restored to them; the army there to consist of about half Flemings and half English; under an impression that with sufficient guarantee the country might be maintained in a state of inde-

GEORGE THE THIRD

pendence, at very little expense, except that of first putting the fortified places, or rather those that formerly were such, in a respectable state of defence. The King said he had always considered the Barrier Treaty as a very wise and a very effectual one, for a long time, for preserving the balance of power in Europe. All this I will fairly own appeared to me to be so visionary, that I could not resist saying, "However desirable such an arrangement might be, it must, I feared, be considered a hopeless one in the degraded state of the minds of most of the sovereigns on the Continent, in which the King acquiesced, but still thought if Austria and Prussia could be roused, as well as the Court of St. Petersburg, the attempt would be worth making."¹

Soon after the King's return from Weymouth an interview with the Prince of Wales was arranged. It took place on the 12th November. By this time George's health had not improved. Pitt wrote Eldon, "The account I have just had of the interview tallies in the main with that sent to you, but with the addition of great lamentations at having found the King so much broken in all respects. I find great efforts may be expected to be immediately made to prevent any further progress towards real reconciliation, but still, my informant thinks, the disposition is favourable."²

As to the matter of the interview, we find Fox writing, "There was no cordiality or pretended affection, but common talk on weather, scandal, &c.—a

¹ Rose's *Diaries*, vol. ii. pp. 175-8.

² Twiss's *Life of Eldon*, vol. i. p. 473.

UNSETTLED HEALTH

great deal of the latter—and, as the Prince thought, very idle and foolish in the manner, and running wildly from topic to topic, though not absolutely incoherent. With respect to Lord Moira's meeting with Pitt, he said that Pitt had expressed a particular desire of having him, Moira, in the Cabinet, and a general wish to admit many of the Prince's friends. I rather think Moira, whom I saw separately, added hopes of time bringing about all."¹ "Within the family," writes Lord Auckland, "are strange schisms, and cabals, and divisions among the sons and daughters. Every endeavour was made to induce the King to lie down and repose himself for two hours a day, but without effect."²

Lord Grenville writes to his brother the Marquis of Buckingham, that he found things at Windsor as bad as they had been represented. 'The King had the "power of restraining himself, and talked rationally for some time and on some points, but no day passed without much of a different description, and many points very prevalent in his mind of a character extremely irrational."³ Even the Queen was beset by suspicions and distress of the King's temper. Certainly the intrigues and dissensions of the royal family were sufficient to unbalance the strongest mind. The care of the heiress-apparent to the throne, the Princess Charlotte, occasioned further difficulty.

A gleam of sunshine was afforded by the recon-

¹ *Earl Russell's Memorials of Fox*, vol. iv. p. 62.

² *Auckland Correspondence*, vol. iv. pp. 213, 214.

³ *Buckingham Papers*, vol. iii. p. 381.

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ciliation between Pitt and Addington. "I have seen the King to-day," writes Lord Hawkesbury to Addington on December 19th, "who has expressed in the strongest terms his personal gratification at the revival of intercourse which is likely to take place between yourself and Mr. Pitt. I am confident that this event will of itself produce a very beneficial effect upon his health."¹

Never even in the gloom and tension which his mind had undergone did George lose his grip on public affairs, and his letters of this period indicate a clear, sane interest in and an ardent desire to further the prosperity of the administration and of his realm. "The King cannot omit one moment, after reading the note of Mr. Pitt, to express his joy at seeing the very proper state of Mr. Pitt's mind, in suggesting a willingness to call forth the assistance of Mr. Addington and his friends to the support of Government. His Majesty has—from the first hour of meeting Mr. Pitt the last spring, to engage him again into public life—intimated a desire of being the restorer of two friends to the state of affection which would be most gratifying to his own feelings, as well as advantageous to the ease of carrying on the public business."²

On Christmas Day he wrote to Addington: "The King has received from Lord Hawkesbury the much-wished-for account of Mr. Addington having met Mr. Pitt at Coombe Wood on Sunday, and that he is convinced their early habitudes of cordial affection

¹ *Pellew's Life of Lord Sidmouth*, vol. ii. p. 329.

² *Earl Stanhope's Life of Pitt*, vol. iv., Appendix, p. xx.

APPOINTING AN ARCHBISHOP

are renewed. This gives the King the more satisfaction, as he is fully sensible that their personal attachment to him and to their country are the true causes of this most gratifying event."¹

Early in the new year Addington was created Viscount Sidmouth, and was sworn in as Lord President of the Council. The King's words to him when he kissed hands were, "I am glad to have you with me again." When, about the middle of January, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Moore, died, it was expected that Pitt would have raised his old tutor, secretary, and friend, Bishop Tomline, to the Primacy. Tomline himself during the Archbishop's illness expected this. "Mr. Pitt," he wrote to Rose, "means to write fully upon the subject. I am confident that he will do everything in his power, short of absolute force. But George's intentions ran in a contrary direction. He designed to appoint Sutton, Bishop of Norwich, to the vacant Primacy. "If a private secretary of a first Minister," said George, "is to be put at the head of the Church, I shall have all my Bishops party-men and politicians."²

This issue between the King and his Prime Minister was watched with deep interest. "The King," says a well-informed contemporary, "received a message from Pitt that Archbishop Moore was dead, and that he would wait upon his Majesty the next morning. The King, suspecting the cause, ordered his horse, and rode over to Bishop Sutton,

¹ Pellew's *Life of Lord Sidmouth*, vol. ii. p. 334.

² Lord Malmesbury's *Diaries*, vol. iv. p. 383.

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then residing at Windsor. He found he was at dinner with some friends, and sent in the servant to say a gentleman wished to speak to him. The Bishop said immediately he could not go, but something in the servant's manner made him change his determination. When he came out, he found the King standing in a little dressing-room near the hall door. The King took him by both hands. 'My Lord Archbishop of Canterbury,' he said, 'I wish you joy. Not a word; go back to your guests.' On Pitt's arrival the next day the King said to him he was sure he would be glad to have an opportunity of providing for a most deserving friend and relative. 'A friend, indeed,' said Pitt, 'but your Majesty is mistaken as to there being any relationship.' The King, not minding him, lashed on: 'And then it is such a good thing for his twelve children.' This was quite too much for the Premier, and he said, 'Bishop Pretyman¹ I am certainly most anxious to promote: but he is not my relative, nor has he such a family.' 'Pho! Pho!' said the King, 'it is not Pretyman whom I mean, but Sutton.' 'I should hope,' said Pitt, 'that the talents and literary eminence——' 'It can't be, it can't be; I have already wished Sutton joy, and he must go to Canterbury.'"

"The business," says Lord Rosebery, "was settled in a moment and at the front door; the sovereign went off chuckling at having outwitted

¹ Bishop Pretyman had changed his name to Tomline on coming into possession of some valuable estates in Lincolnshire in 1803.

A JUST PREROGATIVE

Pitt. It is said, however, that when they met language of unprecedented strength passed between King and Minister. It cannot, though, be doubted that the King was right.”¹

¹ Rosebery's *Pitt*.

CHAPTER XXI

THE LONG NIGHT AND THE DAWN

IT is in the highest degree doubtful if Napoleon, with all his pretended insight into character, ever quite understood George. He was perpetually making inquiries concerning him. Nothing was too trivial that he could glean from ambassadors, and travellers, and correspondents. George's habits, his manner of life, his sayings were all poured into the First Consul's ear. He who thought all men had their price and their weakness found some difficulty in ascertaining just what was his English neighbour's ruling passion. The Prince of Wales, with his love of power, of women, of display, he could and did understand; but "Farmer George" baffled him.

At the beginning of 1805, a month only after his coronation, Napoleon took the unusual step of trying to place himself directly and personally *en rapport* with the King of Great Britain. The letter he addressed to George is now a curiosity. It was composed by Napoleon with great pains, and he expected that it would exert as great an effect upon George as it would have done upon Alexander or Joseph.

"SIR AND BROTHER," it began grandiloquently, "called to the throne of France by Providence,

LETTER FROM NAPOLEON

and by the suffrages of the Senate, the people and the army, my first sentiment is a wish for peace. France and England abuse their prosperity. They may contend for ages; but do their Governments well fulfil the most sacred of their duties, and will not so much blood, shed uselessly, and without a view to any end, condemn them in their own consciences? I consider it as no disgrace to make the first step. I have, I hope, sufficiently proved to the world that I fear none of the chances of war; it besides presents nothing that I need to fear; peace is the wish of my heart, but war has never been inconsistent with my glory. I conjure your Majesty not to deny yourself the happiness of giving peace to the world, nor to leave that sweet satisfaction to your children; for certainly there never was a more fortunate opportunity, nor a moment more favourable, to silence all the passions, and listen only to the sentiments of humanity and reason. This moment once lost, what end can be assigned to a war which all my efforts will not be able to terminate? Your Majesty has gained more within ten years, both in territory and riches, than the whole extent of Europe. Your nation is at the highest point of prosperity; what can it hope from war?—to form a coalition with some Powers of the Continent? the Continent will remain tranquil; a coalition can only increase the preponderance and Continental greatness of France. To renew intestine troubles?—the times are no longer the same. To destroy our finances?—finances founded on a flourishing agriculture can never be destroyed. To take

GEORGE THE THIRD

from France her Colonies?—the Colonies are to France only a secondary object; and does not your Majesty already possess more than you know how to preserve? If your Majesty would but reflect, you must perceive that the war is without an object, without any presumable result to yourself. Alas! what a melancholy prospect to cause two nations to fight merely for the sake of fighting! The world is sufficiently large for our two nations to live in it, and reason is sufficiently powerful to discover means of reconciling everything when the wish for reconciliation exists on both sides. I have, however, fulfilled a sacred duty, and one which is precious to my heart. I trust your Majesty will believe in the sincerity of my sentiments, and my wish to give you every proof of it, &c.

NAPOLEON."

George was, however, not to be seduced by the magniloquent Corsican. He had never been dazzled. He handed the letter to Malmesbury, and a dignified official reply was sent, in which the King repeated his wishes for peace, but at the same time was fully convinced that a permanent and honourable peace could only be attained by arrangements that should provide for the future safety and tranquillity of Europe and the world.

In 1805 the King's eyesight became greatly impaired, so that, as he told Rose, he could scarcely see with the strongest spectacles. The speech at the commencement of this year was the last he ever delivered personally in Parliament. All the later speeches from this date to that of the Regency in 1811 were delivered by Royal Commission.

FAILING EYESIGHT

At the end of June the physicians discovered that a cataract had formed over one of his eyes, while the other was similarly threatened. He could recognise persons at a distance of three or four yards, and could write letters with his usual distinctness, but reading was denied him. George bore this calamity with great fortitude and resignation. Although his vision continued bad, his general health showed an improvement. "I am fully persuaded," wrote the Duke of York to the Lord Chancellor, "that your lordship participates in our affliction at the heavy calamity with which his Majesty is visited. I need not, I am sure, mention to your lordship the firmness of mind, meekness, and resignation with which he bears it. Your lordship and I know his Majesty well, but I am certain his worst enemy must pity and admire him upon the present most trying occasion."¹

Nevertheless so much confidence had George in the treatment, that he believed it might prove successful in restoring his sight.² "No one ever experienced," he writes to Bishop Hurd, "a more striking instance of the protection of Divine Providence than I have done. The cataract was first formed in the left eye, and much advanced in the right one, but by an unexpected inflammation in the left eye this had dispelled the apparent mischief

¹ *Eldon MS., Original.*

² To Mrs. Howe George writes, July 1805: "The King takes up his pen to acquaint Mrs. Howe that he certainly sees better than he did some days past, and begins to flatter himself that with time he shall regain perfect sight."—Barrow's *Life of Earl Howe*, p. 397.

GEORGE THE THIRD

in that eye, and that in the other also diminished, so that Mr. Phipps seems sanguine that he will effect a cure. Did I not feel, my good lord, how you interest yourself, I should not have been so particular on this occasion."

George appears at this time to have given up all intention of residing in future in town. In the course of the summer of 1805 the whole of his magnificent library was removed from Buckingham House to Windsor, retaining only at the former a few books of general reference for immediate use in matters of State or politics. These were deposited in a small library fitted up for the purpose.

In one passage of his letter to George Napoleon was certainly right: Britain had in truth gained much in the last ten years. A new Empire was slowly arising to take the place of the old.

The secret expedition to capture the Cape of Good Hope from the Dutch had the King's cordial support, in spite of the fact that it was not approved of by his advisers. On 24th July 1805 he wrote to Castlereagh, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies: "The King most cordially approves of the proposal of attempting the reduction of the Cape of Good Hope, and of the intended commanders of the fleet and army; and sees so forcibly the advantage of no delay, that he authorises Lord Castlereagh, should the Cabinet approve of the idea, that not an hour be lost in putting the execution of it into effect."

In the autumn of that year George again wrote to Castlereagh: "The King by no means objects to

VICTORY OF TRAFALGAR

the instructions to be sent to the Marquis Cornwallis and Sir David Baird, though—having much attachment to the idea of the Cape remaining a British possession—he hopes the necessity will not occur of being obliged to abandon it for succouring the forces in the East Indies.

At the same time George took a deep interest in the settlement of New South Wales and Van Dieman's Land. Some of the first sheep in the former colony came from his own flocks at Kew.

As to the renewed Continental struggle he was ever alert. In October 1805 he writes: "The King highly approves of the proposal of sending five thousand British infantry with the infantry of the German Legion to the Elbe; as also the light regiment of dragoons of that legion, under the command of Lieutenant-General Don, who is very properly to proceed in the first instance to Berlin, and on his return to the Elbe, to order the disembarkation of the troops if there is no objection to that taking effect.

"A good proportion of arms and ammunition ought to be sent with this corps, to arm the Hanoverians that will certainly flock to our standard.

"As to the proposed attempt on the Boulogne flotilla, his Majesty does not place much expectation of success; though if it be attempted with prudence, no great risk may be run, and if successful, the event will be most salutary."

On the 6th November George received tidings of the glorious victory and death of Nelson. "I have not upon any occasion," said Sir Herbert

GEORGE THE THIRD

Taylor, his private secretary, "seen his Majesty more affected. Every tribute of praise appears to his Majesty due to Lord Nelson, whose loss he can never sufficiently regret."

The continued triumphs of Napoleon, and the consequent danger that threatened the kingdom, rendered Pitt's position one of terrible responsibility. He did his duty; ill-fortune prevented his doing more. George could not perceive that the administration would gain any real strength, even at this critical juncture, by the adhesion of Fox, Grenville, and their friends. He believed "that the Government, as at present constituted, might be carried on quite as well, and with much more respectability, than if he consented to a coalition, which he alike regarded as an unnatural one, and as fraught with danger to the State." "He was determined," he said, "not to take a single person of the Opposition into the administration. I could not," he added, "trust them, and they could have no confidence in me."¹

Britain had now for some time stood alone in opposing the power of Napoleon, her money alone keeping up the struggle. We have seen that it was the King who had suggested to Pitt the combination of Austria, Russia, and Sweden, whose hopes were so sadly frustrated by Napoleon's crushing victory at Austerlitz. This defeat is said to have killed Pitt. On the 23rd January 1806 the great Prime Minister died, moaning "My country! Oh! how I leave my country!" "The effect on

¹ Rose's *Diaries*, vol. ii. p. 198.

DEATH OF PITT

the King's mind," wrote Lord Henley, "and the embarrassments into which this event must plunge him, I greatly fear."¹ For two days George was almost prostrated. He offered the Premiership to Lord Hawkesbury, but Hawkesbury refused. Grenville was sent for, and to him George intimated that he must construct the strongest Ministry he could. "There are," he added significantly, "to be no exclusions."

"At the period of Mr. Fox's return to power," wrote Princess Augusta long afterwards, "the King—then in full possession of his faculties—showed for several days considerable uneasiness of mind. A cloud seemed to overhang his spirits. On his return one day from London the cloud was evidently removed, and his Majesty on entering the room where the Queen and Princess Augusta were, said he had news to tell them. 'I have taken Mr. Fox for my Minister, and on the whole am satisfied with the arrangement.' When Mr. Fox," added the Princess, on the King's authority, "came into the closet for the first time, his Majesty purposely made a short pause, and then said, 'Mr. Fox, I little thought you and I should ever meet again in this place. But I have no desire to look back upon old grievances, and you may rest assured I never shall remind you of them.' Mr. Fox replied, 'My deeds and not my words shall commend me to your Majesty.'"²

Thus began the "Ministry of the Talents."

¹ *Auckland Correspondence*, vol. iv. p. 265.

² *Quarterly Review*, vol. cv. p. 482.

GEORGE THE THIRD

Fox showed himself to be no longer the Fox of old. His manner, as George was later fond of saying, "contrasted remarkably with that of another of his Whig Ministers, who, when he came into office, walked up to him in the way he should have expected from Bonaparte after the battle of Austerlitz."¹ "Fox," said Sidmouth, "was always peculiarly respectful and conciliatory in his manner towards the King, and most anxious to avoid every question which did not harmonise with his Majesty's conscientious feelings."²

George parted with Eldon with affliction. When the Chancellor attended to deliver up the Great Seal, "the King," he wrote, "appeared for a few minutes to occupy himself with other things. Looking up suddenly he exclaimed, 'Lay them down on the sofa, for I *cannot* and *will not* take them from you. Yet,' he afterwards added, 'I admit you can't stay when all the rest have run away.'"

Before many months were passed Eldon was once more the recipient of the Great Seal from his sovereign's hand. The Catholic question was not to be introduced by this new and short-lived administration. "I am determined," said Fox, in his new rôle, "not to annoy my sovereign by bringing it forward." This course of action was creditable, but on the 13th September 1806 Fox followed his old antagonist, Pitt, to the grave.

What Fox had not ventured to do, Grenville embarked upon in 1807. He proposed to insert a clause in

¹ Twiss's *Life of Eldon*, vol. i. p. 510.

² Pellew's *Sidmouth*, vol. ii. p. 435.

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GEORGE III., ÆTAT. 70



CATHOLIC QUESTION AGAIN

the annual Mutiny Bill extending the privilege of rising to the rank of Colonel to Catholic officers serving in the army in England and Scotland. Although fearing that this was the precursor of many innovations on the part of his new Ministers, George was ready to concede the point. He wrote Grenville: "The King has naturally considered what is stated in Lord Grenville's letter of the 10th instant, and the accompanying minute of the Cabinet. He is disposed in this, as in all other instances, to do full justice to the motives which influence any advice which may be submitted to him by Lord Grenville and his other confidential servants; and however painful his Majesty has found it to reconcile to his feelings the removal of objections to any proposal which may have even the most distant reference to a question which has already been the subject of such frequent and distressing reflection, he will not, under the circumstances in which it is so earnestly pressed, and advert'ing particularly to what passed in 1791, prevent Ministers submitting to the consideration of Parliament the propriety of inserting the proposed clause in the Mutiny Bill. While, however, the King so far reluctantly concedes, he considers it necessary to declare that he cannot go one step farther; and he trusts that this proof of his forbearance will secure him from being at a future period distressed by any further proposal connected with this question."¹

That the King feared soon came to pass. British Roman Catholics were to be no longer proscribed. A Bill was drafted and sent to the King. This

¹ Lord Holland's *Memoirs of the Whig Party*, ii. 293.

GEORGE THE THIRD

he returned unread, a circumstance which induced the Ministry to believe that he had no objection to its passage. But Sidmouth and others opposed to Catholic Emancipation were on the alert. They threatened to oppose the Bill in Parliament, and informed the King of their intentions. Perceval, as leader of the Opposition, attacked it as a most objectionable measure. "In his opinion," he said, "it was one of the most dangerous measures that had ever been submitted to the judgment of the legislature. Its tendency was obviously to abolish all those tests which the wisdom of our ancestors had established for the safeguard of the Church of England; in fact, the Bill was but another instance of that principle of innovation which, for some time past, had been stealing in by degrees, and which was gradually growing stronger and stronger." The usual arguments and counter-arguments were made use of on both sides of the House, the result being that the Bill was read a first time.

The Ministry supposed that the King, who had all along said nothing further as to his views, would give his consent to the measure. According to Malmesbury, "We were totally in the dark as to what was going on." They supposed George to be apathetic and insensible. They were deceived. He had all along decided that he could never consent to the Bill, and regretted that he had ever given his sanction to any part of it. He did not need the language of the Duke of Portland to instigate him to do his duty. "The King," he

PORTLAND ADMINISTRATION

wrote to Grenville on the 17th March, "considers it due to himself, and consistent with the fair and upright conduct which it has been, and ever will be his object to observe towards every one, to declare at once, most unequivocally, that upon this subject his opinions never can change; that he cannot ever agree to any concessions to the Catholics which his confidential servants may in future propose to him; and that, under these circumstances, and after what has passed, his mind cannot be at ease unless he shall receive a positive assurance from them which shall relieve him from all future apprehension."¹

Grenville waited on the King, and told him that the Cabinet could not yield. "Is your resolution final?" asked George. To this the Minister answered that it was. "Then," said the King, "I must look about me." Any conduct more imprudent than that of the Grenville administration can hardly be conceived. There was no necessity for the recrudescence of Catholic Emancipation. "I have known," observed Sheridan, "many men knock their heads against a wall, but I never before heard of a man collecting bricks and building a wall for the express purpose of knocking out his own brains against it."²

George called in Lords Eldon and Hawkesbury, desiring that they should repeat to the Duke of Portland his pleasure that the Duke should set

¹ Lord Holland's *Memoirs of the Whig Party*, vol. ii. 510, Appendix.

² *Auckland Correspondence*, vol. iv. p. 294.

GEORGE THE THIRD

about forming a new administration. "I have," he said, "no restrictions, no exceptions, to lay on the Duke; no engagements or promises." It was said that never had the King been more collected and more composed and cheerful than on the occasion of this change of Ministry. Yet all the political prophets thought the King's conduct unwise, and that it would only end in further disorder. Erskine actually was bold enough to tell George that he could have taken no step more fatal than that of dismissing his late Ministers, that, in fact, he stood upon "the brink of a precipice." The King's reply was sufficiently concise. "My lord," he said, "you are a very honest man, and I am very much obliged to you."¹ "Hardwicke went of his own accord, unsent for, to remonstrate against the steps which the King had taken, and to tell him that he could not answer for the safety of Ireland if he persisted in demanding of Ministers the pledge. The King bowed him out of the room, complimenting him ironically on his independence, and upon his belonging to no party, and telling him that he could not depart from the resolution he had taken to insist on the pledge."²

"All will come right yet," said George to Sidmouth. In a few days the result showed how correct had been his expectations. Addresses began to pour in from every corner of the kingdom, full of devotion and loyalty to the King, and of gratitude to him for "his late wise, pious, and steady resolu-

¹ *Memoirs of Sir Samuel Romilly*, vol. ii. pp. 187-9.

² *Buckingham Papers*, vol. iv. p. 146.

DUKE OF YORK SCANDAL

tion," and the paternal care with which, in days of innovation and change, he had guarded the religious interests of his people.¹

On the 25th April Parliament was unexpectedly prorogued by a speech from the Lords Commissioners prior to a dissolution. It was stated that "His Majesty was anxious to recur to the sense of his people while the events which had recently taken place were yet fresh in their recollections." The elections proved George in the right, and the Portland Ministry was more than justified by the majority in both Houses.

Until 1809 the King's health continued good, and his vision, though sorely afflicted, grew no worse. Early in January of that year a further blow was to fall upon the King, in the charges of misconduct brought against his son, the Duke of York, in Parliament. The Duke was charged with corrupt practices in discharge of his duties as commander-in-chief. It was alleged by Colonel Wardle, member for Oakhampton, that he had allowed his mistress to sell military commissions for her own advantage, and having himself participated in the proceeds. George relied firmly on his son's innocence. He did not, nor did the Duke's friends, object to the most public inquiry. Publicity, as it happened, was a grave mistake. For two months Parliament was given over daily to a scene which shocked every right-minded citizen. Mrs. Clarke, the Duke's mistress, was examined. "The scene which is going on in the House of Commons," wrote a contemporary, "is

¹ *London Gazette*.

GEORGE THE THIRD

so disgusting, and at the same time so alarming, that I hardly know how to describe it to you. Every day and every hour adds to the evidence against the Duke of York, and it is quite impossible but he must sink under it. You may judge of the situation of the House, when I tell you we were last night nearly three-quarters-of-an-hour debating about the evidence of a drunken footman, by Perceval suggesting modes of ascertaining how to convict him of his drunkenness; Charles Long, near whom I was sitting, telling me at the time what a lamentable proof it was of the want of some man of sense and judgment in the House. There is no government in the House of Commons. You may be assured the thing does not exist, and whether they can ever recover their tone of power remains to be proved.”¹

It is not to be wondered at that the royal family were prostrated by shame and humiliation. The King alone, though in great agony of mind, preserved a stoical demeanour. In the result the Duke was acquitted of the knowledge of the corrupt practices of his mistress, and the same day resigned his post of commander-in-chief. “The King,” wrote George from Windsor, “acquainted the Duke of Portland that he has this day reluctantly accepted the resignation of the Duke of York, which has been conveyed to his Majesty in a letter of which he has sent a copy to Mr. Perceval, and which he will, of course, communicate to his colleagues.”

“Under these painful circumstances his Majesty’s attention has been directed to the necessary arrange-

¹ *Buckingham Papers*, vol. iv. p. 318.

PORTLAND'S RETIREMENT

ments for the future administration of the army, and after consulting the Army List, the King has satisfied himself that General Sir David Dundas is, of all those whose names have occurred to him, the fittest person to be entrusted with the chief temporary command, both from habits of business, respectability of character, and from the disposition which his Majesty is convinced he will feel to attend strictly to the maintenance of that system and those regulations which, under the direction of the Duke of York, have proved so beneficial to the service.

“It does not appear to his Majesty that any change will be required in the constitution of the commander-in-chief's office, or in the various official establishments connected with it.”¹

Following close upon the disaster of the Walcheren expedition was the illness of the Duke of Portland, which made his retirement inevitable, and occasioned the King further distress. Nothing, it was said, could equal the gloom it has created at Windsor. “I know him to be in the greatest distress of mind,” said Buckingham, “but not irritable in the slightest manner.”²

What would happen on Portland's death or retirement? To Lady Eldon the Chancellor writes: “I am just going to a meeting of such of us as have hearts feeling for the King to see what can possibly be done, as all attempts to bring matters to rights again have finally failed. I cannot, for one, see a ray of hope that anything can be arranged which can

¹ Castlereagh, *Letters and Despatches*, vol. viii. p. 199.

² *Buckingham Papers*, vol. iv. pp. 349-52.

GEORGE THE THIRD

have any endurance if, indeed, any arrangement whatever can be made. And yet the poor King in language that makes one's heart bleed for him urges that we should not run away from him. My head and heart are perplexed and grieved for my old master's sake."¹ To Eldon George said fervently, "For God's sake, don't you run away from me! Don't reduce me to the state in which you formerly left me. You are my sheet-anchor!"²

A coalition was proposed to the King of Lords Grenville and Grey. George said he was extremely averse from making any such overture, but nevertheless consented to take it into consideration. On the appointed day, the 21st September, the Cabinet met, but no letter from the King had been received. "I infer from this," wrote Eldon, "that he is in a most unhappy state of difficulty and knows not what to do, and I greatly fear that something of the very worst sort may follow upon the agitation." On the following day the Cabinet met again, the promised communication from the King having come in the interval. "After I wrote to you yesterday," continues the Lord Chancellor, "I went to the meeting, and I there found that Perceval had received the King's paper, which is one of the finest compositions, and the most affecting, I ever saw or heard in my life. After discussing the strength which any administration could have that did not include Grenville and Grey, he acknowledges that there would be a weakness in it which a sense of duty to his people calls upon him, by every personal sacrifice

¹ Twiss's *Life of Eldon*, vol. ii. p. 93.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 93-4.

LETTER TO PERCEVAL

not affecting his honour and conscience, to endeavour to avoid. He therefore permits his present servants to converse with them upon a more extended administration than his present servants could themselves make; but declares previously and solemnly that if any arrangement is offered to him which does not include such a share of his present servants as shall effectually protect him against the renewal of measures which his conscience cannot assent to, that he will go on with his present servants at all hazards, throwing himself upon his people and his God—his people whose rights, he says, he never knowingly injured, and his God to whose presence he is determined, whenever he is called hence, to go with a pure conscience. He predicts, however, that though he in duty to his people submits to this mortifying step, they, Grenville and Grey, will not allow any effect to it; and then addresses himself in the most pathetic strains to all his present servants, calling forth all their courage, their resources, and the discharge of their duty to him.”¹

It is a pity that this letter has not been preserved, or that its present whereabouts cannot be ascertained. Contemporary testimony pronounces it to have been one of the best and most carefully written of the King's compositions.

In George's interviews with Perceval at this time he not only repeatedly expressed his determination to resist the Roman Catholic claims, but reiterated what he had said years before, that sooner than yield to them he would abandon his throne. “The con-

¹ Twiss's *Life of Eldon*, vol. ii. pp. 98-9.

GEORGE THE THIRD

victions of the two lords," he added, "were but the convictions of yesterday, while on his part he was required to abandon the fixed principles of a whole life."¹

Grenville and Grey rejected the King's propositions, and Perceval as a forlorn hope became Prime Minister, with colleagues drawn from the Portland Ministry. In such halting, untoward fashion began a Tory administration under various names which was to endure for many years. Eldon and Westmoreland, two of its members, continued in office for eighteen years, Palmerston, the Secretary for War, a year longer. When the Duke of Portland died in October he had witnessed the growing strength of the administration and the continued popularity of his sovereign, whose reign of fifty years was celebrated throughout the kingdom with unexampled jubilation.

It was in the latter part of October 1810 that George once more began to show the approaching symptoms of that mental derangement which lasted until his death. Was it to be wondered at? Trouble after trouble had like a flock of ravens settled down on the throne of George the Third. Political anxiety, apprehensions for his country and the monarchy, domestic afflictions and indignities—what earthly sovereign had ever been visited so sorely? And now his beloved, his most cherished daughter, Amelia, whom he idolised, lay dying. Human nature, even such a virile nature as George's, could scarce continue to stand such repeated shocks.

¹ Lord Colchester's *Diaries*, vol. ii. p. 211.

PRINCESS AMELIA'S DEATH

"Nothing," wrote one who was in official attendance on the Princess Amelia during her illness, "can be more striking than the sight of the King, aged and nearly blind, bending over the couch on which the Princess lies, and speaking to her about salvation through Christ as a matter far more interesting to them both than the highest privileges and most magnificent pomps of royalty."

During this ordeal the King's intellect became clouded. "The immediate cause," wrote Willis, Dr. Willis's son, "was imputed to the extreme grief he felt for the situation of the Princess Amelia, who then lay on the point of death. On the 31st October I received a note from Colonel McMahon, signifying the Prince of Wales's commands to see me at Windsor. I went the next day; was kindly received by the Prince, who saw me as soon as I arrived, and informed me the cause of his sending for me was to make some arrangements about wine for the Queen at Frogmore. He then entered into the King's situation; said that he was quite as ill as ever; that the Ministers—that is, the Lord Chancellor and Lord Wellesley—had called him out of bed in the morning to state his Majesty's condition to him; adding emphatically, these are times that require the entire vigour of Government while its whole vigour cannot be asserted, and you must see that the present state of things cannot add to the strength of the present Ministry. He continued, I am going to dine with the Queen. You will stay and dine with Tyrwhitt. When I return, we shall spend a comfortable evening together.

GEORGE THE THIRD

“About eight o'clock the Prince returned, and on coming into the room said, ‘The Duke of Cumberland will sit the evening with us, but remember, though we are on terms of civility together, you are not to suppose there exists any cordial union between us.’ Soon after the Duke entered. His reception of me was rather dry and distant—I conceive because he thought I took part with Stephenson. We sat till twelve o'clock; the Prince very familiar; seemed suspicious of the designs of the Ministers; talked on a variety of subjects; among other things mimicked Grattan, the Irish orator, in a manner that would not have disgraced Foote the actor.

“The Duke of Cumberland's behaviour and conversation the whole evening was of a nature, as to coarseness, as would have disgraced one of his grooms. About ten o'clock a messenger brought a letter from Mr. Perceval, stating what had been done in Parliament and with respect to adjournment. The Prince seem pleased with the attention. We parted about twelve. I breakfasted next morning with Tyrwhitt, and returned to town perfectly satisfied with my reception. The Princess Amelia died the same day, 2nd November—Duke of Kent's birthday.”¹

Nevertheless there was still hope that the aberration would pass, and the King was able to sign a commission for the prorogation of Parliament to the 1st November. By virtue of this commission, when Parliament met on the day to which it was first prorogued a further prorogation

¹ MS. *Diaries of Colonel Henry Norton Willis.*

HE DEPRECATES ABDICATION

legally took place. There being no immediate and urgent necessity why Parliament should actually proceed to business on the 1st November a proclamation was issued by the King in Council, stating it to be the royal pleasure that it should be further prorogued. The intention was that this proclamation should be followed by the usual commission, signed by the King, and read in the House of Peers, by commissioners appointed for that purpose. But the intention was frustrated by a higher Power: the King could not sign—his faculties were gone, and he “stood solitary and alone, living in a world of his own creation.”

Three months passed, and there promised to be some lightening of the gloom.

On the 29th January 1811 Perceval was admitted to an audience with the King, during which he detailed to him all that had passed in Parliament and in political circles from the commencement of his illness. The King listened to him with great composure. He was satisfied, he told Perceval, that everything had been done for the best. When informed that, in the opinion of his physicians, he was still scarcely sufficiently recovered to be troubled with public business, he merely observed that they were the best judges, and that he should conform himself to their advice. At his time of life, he said, it was necessary for him to think of retirement. Not, he added, that he could ever part with the name of “King,” for King he must still continue; but the *otium cum dignitate* was the most suitable to his age. When Perceval intimated

GEORGE THE THIRD

to him that a due discharge of his kingly duties was required of him by his "religious obligations," he listened to him with some slight impatience. "If I am wanted," he said, "I shall always be at hand to come forward." Throughout their long interview, said Perceval, there was perceptible a most marked improvement in the King's mind and manner since he had last conversed with him.¹

Already the Ministers had introduced a Bill into Parliament by which the Prince of Wales became Regent with certain restrictive provisions. The charge and care of the King's person, and the disposition of the royal household, were, very properly, vested in the Queen. By the provisions of the Act the Prince was disqualified from granting peerages, except for naval and military services, as well as from awarding life pensions or places. "It was the anxious wish of Perceval, as it had formerly been the anxious wish of Pitt under similar painful circumstances, that the afflicted King, in the event of his recovery, should miss none of the comforts to which he had been accustomed, nor any of the faces with which he was familiar, but, on the contrary, that he should find his affairs, private as well as public, as little disarranged as possible. The Whigs, however, had been far too long excluded from power and place not to fret at the important restrictions which Perceval meditated laying upon the Prince, and more especially at the proposed endowment of the Queen with the patronage of the royal household, conferring, as

¹ Lord Colchester's *Diaries*, vol. ii. p. 312.

THE KING'S SONS PROTEST

it did, on those having the dispensation of it a formidable amount of political power. As for the Prince, he regarded, or affected to regard, the selection of the Queen as a personal affront put upon himself. He had expected, he said, to be treated as a gentleman, and not like a ruffian."¹

As will be seen by the following protest addressed to Perceval, all the King's sons, the princes of the blood, sided with the heir-apparent :

"The Prince of Wales having assembled the whole of the male branches of the royal family, and having communicated to us the plan intended to be proposed by his Majesty's confidential servants to the Lords and Commons for the establishment of a restricted Regency, should the continuance of his Majesty's ever-to-be-lamented illness render it necessary, we felt it a duty we owe to his Majesty, our country, and ourselves, to enter our solemn protest against measures that we consider as perfectly unconstitutional as they are contrary to, and subversive of, the principles that seated our family upon the throne of these realms.

" Frederick (Duke of York).

" William (Duke of Clarence).

" Edward (Duke of Kent).

" Ernest (Duke of Cumberland).

Augustus Frederick (Duke of Sussex).

" Adolphus Frederick (Duke of Cambridge).

" William Frederick (Duke of Gloucester)."²

¹ Rose's *Diaries*, vol. ii. p. 459.

² Twiss's *Life of Eldon*, vol. ii. p. 136.

GEORGE THE THIRD

"The offence and disgust," Rose tells us, "which this occasioned, to the country gentlemen in particular, was beyond everything I ever remember. Many spoke to me of it in terms of the strongest disapprobation mixed with great resentment."

"'And then,' writes Hatsell to Lord Auckland, 'the Dukes of Clarence and Sussex voting and speaking on a question in which their father's domestic comforts were so intimately connected. It is a discouraging prelude to future scenes.'"¹

What was feared by the nation at large did not come to pass. The expectations of the Whigs that the Regent would call in a new administration were unexpectedly frustrated. The Regent announced that he would make no changes. "In the streets," writes one observer, "it was not unpleasing to see the effect of all this, where crowds of all ranks were expressing their satisfaction that the Ministry was not to be changed." According to Perceval, "It was a touchstone of the people's love for the King."²

At Carlton House on the 6th February, supported by his six brothers, the Prince took the required oath as Regent. During the early months of the Regency the sovereign's health fluctuated. In May 1811 he is described as being materially worse both in body and mind, it being still "an unfavourable feature of his disorder that his thoughts continued to brood over the mental derangements of former

¹ *Auckland Correspondence*, vol. iv. p. 361.

² *Phipp's Memoirs of Ward*, vol. i. pp. 377, 378, 381.

THE REGENCY

times." He applied himself to making a selection from the works of his favourite composer, Handel, and the passages he chose were descriptive either of madness or blindness. These were, by his request, actually performed at a concert given by the Ancient Music Society, and comprised a representation of madness caused by love in the opera of "Samson," and the lamentation of Jephthah at the loss of his daughter. The performance could hardly help being singularly impressive and affecting, more especially when the striking up of "God save the King" recalled to the minds of the audience the sorrows and sufferings of the stricken monarch.¹

Towards the close of May 1811 the inhabitants of Windsor, for the last time, beheld amongst them the kingly form with which from their earliest years nearly one and all of them had been so familiar. "Rumours," writes one of them, "went forth that the King was better. On Sunday night, the 20th of May, our town (Windsor) was in a fever of excitement at the authorised report that the next day the physicians would allow his Majesty to appear in public. On that Monday morning it was said that his saddle-horse was to be got ready. This truly was no wild rumour. We crowded to the Park and the Castle Yard. The favourite horse was there. The venerable man, blind but steady, was soon in the saddle, as I had often seen him—a hobby-groom at his side with a leading-rein. He rode through the Little Park to the Great Park. The bells rang. The troops fired a *feu de joie*. The

¹ *Memoirs of Herner*, vol. ii. p. 88.

GEORGE THE THIRD

King returned to the Castle within an hour. He was never again seen without those walls."¹

Thenceforward George's bodily health grew worse, and the eight final years of his long life were, save for rare intervals, passed in mental and visual darkness. Within the walls at Windsor Castle the King occupied a large and convenient suite of apartments on the ground floor fronting the North Terrace; the very rooms—looking "towards the fair College of Eton"—which Sir Thomas Herbert, the faithful attendant of Charles the First, informs us that his royal master tenanted during his brief and mournful sojourn at Windsor on his way from Carisbrooke Castle to the scaffold.²

We are told that even in his intellectual disorder George never forgot that he was King of England. Kind and condescending in his manner to his attendants, he exacted from all the respect and deference they had paid him in former days.

On the 17th November 1818, in the seventy-fifth year of her age, died his consort, Queen Charlotte. On her death the guardianship of the King devolved on his favourite son, the Duke of York. Once in 1817 when the King's ear happened to catch the sound of the passing bell of Windsor Church, he inquired for whom it was tolling. He was informed by his attendant that it was for a person whom he had known, and for whose character he entertained a respect—the wife of one of his neighbours, a Windsor

¹ Charles Knight, *Passages of a Working Life*, vol. i. pp. 87, 88.

² Herbert's *Memoirs of the Last Two Years of the Reign of Charles I.*, p. 143.

HIS DEATH

tradesman. "Ah, she was a good woman," he said; "she brought up her family in the fear of God. She has gone to heaven, and I hope I shall soon follow her."

To the infinite honour of those in immediate attendance upon their sovereign during the long night of his mind, no improper disclosures of his conversation or domestic habits leaked through to the public. Their affectionate veneration prevailed over all the temptations of curiosity. His privacy was never, apparently, invaded by any unauthorised eye. While Charlotte lived she drew a strict line as to the persons admitted into the King's presence, in order to guard against any unpleasant or imprudent communication. Save the Prince Regent, none of the royal family approached his chamber.

With the exception of the passing glimpse of reason we have just recorded, the King's mind to the evening of his death was a blank. At half-past eight o'clock on the 29th January 1820 George III. was no more. A few hours later the couriers bearing the news reached London, and by midnight the tolling bell of St. Paul's Cathedral announced it to the people of his capital. George the Third had attained the age of eighty-one years and eight months, and had reigned for more than sixty years. The period was longer than had ever been attained by any English sovereign, and was afterwards exceeded only by four days in the case of his grand-daughter, Queen Victoria.

He was buried in St. George's Chapel, Windsor.

CHAPTER XXII

CONCLUSION

IF the political student is puzzled as to what place George is to be allotted as monarch and statesman, it is owing to the unparalleled confusion of the circumstances of his reign. Few earthly sovereigns have ever played a less negative part, and yet on the stage of history George's rôle almost seems negative. On that fateful scroll—1760—1811—chequered by battles, splashed with blood, and inscribed boldly with the names of Chatham, Pitt, Clive, Nelson, Hastings, Burke, Fox, and Wellington, the name of George III. has been writ far too small.

True, certain popular historians, of Whiggish proclivities, have been willing to accord him the virtues of initiative, but the measures he initiated were evil measures; they allow him courage, but it was courage in defence of tyranny; they grant him energy of character and purity of private life, but it was energy ill-directed, and a private life which did not even impress his own children. It was not that George the Third was a *fainçant* King; he was too active, and one tremendous result of his activities was that "we lost America."

It is only when we come to disentangle this mass of circumstances, to probe the causes, detach the

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GEORGE III., ETAT. 82



HIS GREAT QUALITIES

irrelevancies, and appraise the conditions, that we are able to see, even as yet dimly perhaps, what George really was, and what mighty part he played. Whichever way we turn, into whichever political movement or social phenomenon we thrust our pen, George is there. He is at the very heart of his reign, nay, he is the heart itself; so that when we seek to dissect that eighteenth-century body politic, in letters, art, law, statesmanship, the army or navy, each vital incision we make lays bare a royal ganglion.

Not many months had George been on the throne before we find Lord Barrington writing: "Nothing can be more amiable, more virtuous, better disposed, than our present master. He applies himself thoroughly to his affairs; he understands them to an astonishing degree. His faculties seem to me equal to his good intentions, and nothing can be more agreeable or satisfactory than doing business with him. A most common attention, a quick and just conception, great mildness, great civility, which takes nothing from his dignity, caution, and firmness, are conspicuous in the highest degree."

As at the beginning, so at the end of his reign. "He made himself," writes Lord Brougham, no friend to George, "thoroughly master of all the ordinary details of business, insomuch that a high authority has ascribed to him a more thorough knowledge of the duties of each several department of the State than any other man ever possessed." Elsewhere Brougham observes: "The correspondence which he carried on with his confidential servants during the ten most critical years of his life lies before

GEORGE THE THIRD

us, and it proves that his attention was ever awake to all the occurrences of the Government. Not a step was taken in foreign, colonial, or domestic affairs that he did not form his opinion upon it and exercise his influence over it. The instructions to ambassadors, the orders to governors, the movements of forces, down to the marching of a single battalion in the districts of this country, the appointments to all offices in Church and State—not only the giving away of judgeships, bishoprics, regiments, but the subordinate promotions, lay and clerical—all these form the topics of his letters; on all, his opinion is pronounced decisively; on all, his will is declared peremptorily. In one letter he decides the appointment of a Scotch puisne judge; in another the march of a troop from Buckinghamshire into Yorkshire; in a third the nomination to the Deanery of Worcester; in a fourth he says that if Adam, the architect, succeeds Worsley at the Board of Works, he shall think Chambers ill-used.”¹

“George III.,” even the implacable Landor admits, “was a virtuous, kind, just man.” He declares that his glory was not tarnished by any exercise of arbitrary power. “In reading and in memory he was not inferior to Mr. Fox; in judgment they were too equal. He was uniformly moral; and if not always dignified, he knew that dignity was more requisite in the second place than in the first. . . . The King was not at any time urgent with Parliament to make encroachments at home or abroad. The fault was totally with the people,” whose representatives

¹ Brougham's *Statesmen of the Time of George III.*, vol. i. p. 11.

HIS SAGACITY AND INTEGRITY

ought, he adds savagely, to have been "sent in a body to the hulks."¹

"He talked," wrote Sir George Rose, "most freely, and with *more sagacity, fairness, and acuteness than I ever met with elsewhere in any man's talk*. He at times surprised me: astonished to find one so gifted, and so exercising his gifts under the disadvantages attending the education and entrance into life of a King. . . . His thoughts were earnest and just."

And again he says: "He often spoke with great freedom of men and things, and constantly of the past event of his reign; trying his own conduct over again, and asking why he did such and such a thing; and I never knew a case where his ingenuity and his conscience had not led him to a more extensive view of different duties, and to a juster balance of them, than I could guess, or the world has given him credit for. High in his moral scale was the fulfilment of his obligations as a King of England according to the constitution; and his knowledge of how such and such men would be actuated by connections, interest, &c., was deep and extensive. His courage was undaunted, his integrity unimpeachable. He was an extraordinary man."

"I can scarcely conceive," wrote Benjamin Franklin the republican, "a King of better dispositions, of more exemplary virtues, or more truly desirous of promoting the welfare of his subjects."²

"The King," said Lord North, "would live on

¹ Walter Savage Landor, *Commentaries on C. J. Fox*, p. 90.

² *Chatham Correspondence*, vol. iii. p. 261.

GEORGE THE THIRD

bread and water to preserve the constitution of this country. He would sacrifice his life to maintain it inviolate."¹

George was a living force, but it was not constructive. It was a conservative force. His extraordinary powers bore an exact relation to the nature of the demands of the era in which he lived.

That which George the Third possessed in a pre-eminent degree, which marks him out amongst the men of his time, was not vast intellectual power, profound learning, or originality of view, but that which we of British stock proudly hold to be a quality commoner amongst our people than amongst other peoples, and esteem to be superior even to genius—CHARACTER. Duty, dignity, devoutness, truth, courage, sum up George's leading traits. His life was simple; he revered the sterling good rather than the glistening great; he loved his people; he pitied the unhappy, and helped the poor; he strove valiantly and intelligently for the right.

It has been said that the difference of character between the two sovereigns of Great Britain and France constituted the one great cause of the different fate that attended the two monarchies. George III. when attacked prepared to defend his throne, his family, his country, and the constitution entrusted to his care.

If infirmities he possessed—from which no man is exempt—they cannot "impugn his right to the affectionate veneration of posterity for the inflexible uprightness of his public conduct; and as little can

¹ Jesse, vol. ii. p. 45.

COWPER'S TRIBUTE

they deprive him of the suffrages of the wise and good of every age, who will bear testimony to the expansion of his mind and the invariable rectitude of his intentions."¹

No courtier or flatterer was the poet Cowper, who thus in one of his chief poems draws this picture of the character of George and his life-work :

“ Oh ! bright occasions of dispensing good,
How seldom used, how little understood !
To pour in virtue's lap her just reward ;
Keep vice restrained behind a double guard,
To quell the faction that affronts the throne
By silent magnanimity alone ;
To nurse with tender care the thriving arts,
Watch every beam philosophy imparts ;
To give religion her unbridled scope,
Nor judge by statute a believer's hope :
With close fidelity and love unfeigned,
To keep the matrimonial bond unstained :
Covetous only of a virtuous praise,
His life a lesson to the land he sways :
To touch the sword with conscientious awe
Nor draw it but when duty bids him draw ;
To sheath it in the peace-restoring close
With joyous bound what victory bestows ;
Blest country, where these kingly glories shine :
Blest England, if this happiness be thine ! ”

Ere George died, in a remote island of his dominions one summer day a miserable captive, yet the most astonishing genius that ever lived, listened while his friend and loyal adherent Las Cases dilated

¹ Wrayall, vol. i. p. 284.

GEORGE THE THIRD

at his master's urgent request on the character of the British monarch.

"George the Third," Las Cases told Napoleon, "was the honestest man in his Empire. The dominating sentiment of this prince was love of the public good and the well-being of his country. To this he ever sacrificed all. His private virtues rendered him a general object of profound veneration; an extreme morality, a great respect for the laws, were the chief characteristics of his whole life."¹

Did Bonaparte not feel what antithesis to his own character and career was here expressed, what rebuke was then implied?

If such views of George be just views, how then, it may be asked, is it possible that history has so maligned him? How comes it that the real George the Third is so obscured in the Empire's annals, that so often another figure, that of an ignorant, peevish, obstinate, half-witted blunderer, is presented to us?

"It is too long a story," wrote Sir George Rose fifty years ago, "to explain why his powers of mind were misapprehended and undervalued by the vulgar herd—I mean those who do not or will not think for themselves." To us it appears that the chief causes of contemporary misconception are Whig and American traditions, and the loose and sketchy opinions which disfigure the writings of certain ill-informed and prejudiced men of genius. One might sometimes fancy that history stopped at Anno Domini 1776. In reading some commentaries—especially

¹ Las Cases, *Memorials de Ste. Helène*.

HIS TRADUCERS

those current in America—one almost hears Fox's philippics, the libels of Paine and "Junius," the rant of Wilkes. One can understand, and even excuse, this—in America. Those who understood and trusted and revered their King left that country or held their tongues; those who did and felt otherwise transmitted the bogey who figures in the Declaration of Independence to their descendants. But not so easy is it to forgive British historians for perpetuating the defamation which Wilkes himself lived to disavow and regret.

"I venture," writes an able Canadian jurist, "to question a little the truth, as I cannot admire the generosity with which modern English writers hasten to throw the whole guilt of the war of separation upon the head of George III." He points out what we have already discussed in this book, a fact than which none is clearer, that "until estrangement had gone very far the King, not the Parliament, was the object of American loyalty. It accords not only with sentiment, but with the logic of our constitution, that the throne should be the link to which Colonial allegiance is attached. To the King, the Colonies first appealed against the unjust usurpations of Parliament. Their theory of allegiance joined with loyal sentiment to inspire that resort."²

A point which he like other writers sees, but does not sufficiently emphasise, is that whether the Colonial policy were right or wrong, whether American

¹ O. A. Howland's *The New Empire*, pp. 73-4.

² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

GEORGE THE THIRD

taxation were just or unjust, whether a continuation of the conflict was wise or unwise, from beginning to end the King had a large body of loyal American subjects, perhaps more than half the population, never less than one-third, wholly with him. He would not abandon them, and when the final disaster came, scores of thousands would not abandon him, but shook the soil of the new Republic from the soles of their feet as if it were an alien land.

“The contest in America was far from being wholly, perhaps even chiefly, an international war. Modern readers have no excuse for falling into the mistake of so regarding it. On this subject, among so many others, modern historical investigation, as with customary frankness and thoroughness it lifts the veil from the facts of the past, is dissipating the clouds of popular prepossession and prejudice.”¹

To George, then, posterity has hardly been generous. Perchance the day will come when the pert and infelicitous effigy which stands not a stone's throw from his London birthplace will be replaced by one worthier of the merits of a great and good King, to whom Britain and the New Empire beyond the seas owe so much.

In the Council Chamber of the Guildhall, the corporation of the Imperial capital long ago, when the last century was young, caused a marble statue to be reared. The art of the sculptor is less worthy of our regard than the truth and happiness of the inscription carved upon the pedestal which epitomises

¹ *The New Empire*, p. 45.

AN INSCRIPTION

the character and life-work of a monarch whose merit
malice and ignorance can not for ever obscure:—

GEORGE THE THIRD

born and bred a Briton ;
endeared to a brave, free, and loyal people
by his public virtues ;
by his pre-eminent example
of private worth in all the relations of domestic life ;
by the uniform course of unaffected piety,
and entire submission to the will of Heaven.
The wisdom and firmness
of his character and councils
enabled him so to apply the resources of his empire,
so to direct the native energies of his subjects,
that he maintained the dignity of his crown,
preserved inviolate the constitution in Church and State,
and secured the commerce and prosperity
of his dominions,
during a long period of unexampled difficulty ;
in which the deadly contagion of French principles,
and the domineering aggressions of French power,
had nearly dissolved the frame,
and destroyed the independence
of every other government and nation in Europe.
The Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons
of the City of London
have erected this statue
in testimony
of their undeviating loyalty and grateful attachment
to the best of kings.



APPENDIX A

LETTERS OF GEORGE III

GEORGE III. was an indefatigable letter-writer. During the fifty years of the King's active reign he penned several thousands of letters to his family, his constitutional advisers and personal friends, hundreds of which have been published. For the most part they are couched in strong, lucid, nervous English. "No man," says his son, afterwards King of Hanover, "wrote better or knew how to express his opinions in a conciser way than George III." Yet he bestowed little thought upon the business of composition; once his opinion was formed, its literary expression was struck off at white heat. Not being able to attack the matter, the ill-chosen editor of his Letters to Lord North, the late W. B. Donne, proceeds to attack the orthography, and a plethora of "[sic]" after words misspelt according to modern fashion disfigure that work and betray the editor's extreme Whig bias. But a comparison of George's correspondence with those of the leading statesmen of his day yields this fact, if it is of any value, that the King spelt better than Bute, Holland, Rockingham, and Shelburne, and at least as well as Chatham, Grenville, and North. No sensible commentator thinks of inserting a "[sic]" when Oliver Cromwell spells throne "thrown," or when William III. writes of his "hevvinesse" of spirit. Besides the many examples already printed in the text, the following selection from the King's letters will give a fair idea of the King's style, his views and the multiplicity of his interests. It may be mentioned that each letter was most punctiliously dated as "Queen's House, twelve minutes past 11 P.M.," and usually began with the simple name of the recipient, as "Lord North," although, as we have seen, the King occasionally unbent, as in his letter to "My dear Pitt."

To GENERAL CONWAY

Writing to General Conway on 6th December 1766 the King says: "The debate of yesterday has ended very advantageously for administration. The division on the motion for adjournment

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will undoubtedly show Mr. Grenville that he is not of the consequence he figures to himself. I am so sanguine, with regard to the affair of the East India Company, that I trust Tuesday will convince the world that, whilst administration has no object but the procuring what may be of solid advantage to my people, it is not in the power of any men to prevent it. Indeed, my great reliance on its success in the House of Commons is in your abilities and character; and I am certain I can rely on your zeal at all times to carry on my affairs, as I have no one desire but what tends to the happiness of my people."

To LORD CHATHAM

(EXTRACTS)

3rd March 1767.

. . . I do not think it fair to detain you longer, but cannot conclude without expressing my reliance that your firmness will be encouraged with redoubled ardour to withstand that evil called connection, after the extraordinary event of Friday:¹ as to myself, I own it has that effect on me.

GEORGE R.

7th March 1767.

. . . Now you are arrived in town, every difficulty will daily decrease, and though I confess that I do not think I have met with that treatment I had reason to expect from many individuals now strangely united in opposition, without any more honourable reasons than because they are out of place, yet I can never believe but the majority of the nation must feel themselves interested to wish to support my measures, while my Ministers steadily assist me in pursuing such as are calculated solely for the benefit of my dominions.

30th April 1767.

. . . I embrace this opportunity of assuring you, that I am fully persuaded of your zeal and attachment to my service, and that nothing but the weight of your disorder prevents your taking the vigorous part your heart at all times prompts you to. I therefore strongly recommend it to you, the moment this very unfavourable wind changes, to remove for a few days to North-end

¹ The defeat of the Ministry in the House of Commons.

Richmond Lodge
July 29th 1766
2⁵ past Five P.M.

M^{rs} Pitt,

I have sign'd

this Day the Warrant for Creating You an Earl
& shall with pleasure receive You in that
Capacity tomorrow, as well as retrust You with
My Privy Seal; as I know the Earl of Chatham
will zealously give his Aid towards destroying
all party Distinctions & restoring that subordination
to Government which alone can preserve that
inestimable Blessing Liberty, from degenerating
into Licentiousness.

George III

FACSIMILE OF LETTER OF GEORGE III. TO PITT ON HIS
CREATION AS EARL OF CHATHAM, 1766



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to resume the riding on horseback ; and I doubt not that this method, with the knowledge that I desire you will there give up your attention to your health alone, will soon enable you to come out in perfect health. The Duke of Grafton and Lord Bristol know that I have avoided sending to you, lest it should only hurry you, and that through their means and that of Dr. Addington I have received constant accounts of the progress of your fever.

GEORGE R.

30th May 1767.

. . . My firmness is not dismayed by these unpleasant appearances ; for, from the hour you entered into office, I have uniformly relied on your firmness to act in defiance to that hydra faction, which has never appeared to the height it now does till within these few weeks. Though your relations, the Bedfords, and the Rockinghams are joined with intention to storm my closet, yet, if I was mean enough to submit, they own they would not join in forming an administration ; therefore nothing but confusion could be obtained.

I am strongly of opinion with the answer you sent the Duke of Grafton ; but, by a note I have received from him, I fear I cannot keep him above a day, unless you would see him and give him encouragement. Your duty and affection for my person, your own honour, call on you to make an effort : five minutes' conversation with you would raise his spirits, for his heart is good ; mine, I thank Heaven, wants no rousing : my love to my country, as well as what I owe to my own character and to my family, prompt me not to yield to faction. Be firm, and you will find me amply ready to take as active a part as the hour seems to require. Though none of my Ministers stand by me, I cannot truckle. . . .¹

2nd June 1767.

. . . The resignations pointed at are the Lord President and Lieutenant-General Conway ; besides the Duke of Grafton finding it impossible to bring himself to undertake the forming a temporary administration ; so that the present one will infallibly fall into pieces in less than ten days, unless you point out the proper persons to fill up the vacancies that may arise. Indeed, Mr.

¹ The latter part of this letter has already been quoted in the text. See p. 173.

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Townshend may be added to the list of those retiring, unless additional strength and ability be acquired.

Upon the whole, I earnestly call upon you to lay before me a plan, and also to speak to those you shall propose for responsible offices. You owe this to me, to your country, and also to those who have embarked in administration with you. If after this you again decline taking an active part, I shall then lie under a necessity of taking steps, that nothing but the situation I am left in could have obliged to.

GEORGE R.

25th June 1767.

. . . The Duke of Grafton, though full of zeal for my service, is unwilling to trace a plan for my approbation. I therefore once more call upon you for that purpose, and with the more earnestness, as I look upon the success as certain if you take part, the majority in both Houses being now very handsome. I am thoroughly resolved to encounter any difficulties rather than yield to faction. This is so congenial with your ideas, that I am thoroughly persuaded your feelings will force you to take an active part at this hour; which will not only give lustre and ease to the subsequent years of my reign, but will raise the reputation of your political life in times of inward faction, even above it in the late memorable war. Such ends to be obtained would almost awaken the great men of this country of former ages, therefore must oblige you to cast aside any remains of your late indisposition.

GEORGE R.

To LORD NORTH

25th April 1768.

Though entirely confiding in your attachment to my person, as well as in your hatred of every lawless proceeding, yet I think it highly proper to apprise you that the expulsion of Mr. Wilkes appears to be very essential, and must be effected; and that I make no doubt, when you lay this affair with your usual precision before the meeting of the gentlemen of the House of Commons this evening, it will meet with the required unanimity and vigour. The case of Mr. Ward, in the reign of my great-grandfather, seems to point out the best method of proceeding on this occasion, as it will equally answer whether the Court should by that time have given sentence, or should he be attempting to obtain a writ of error. If there is any man capable of forgetting

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his criminal writings, I think the speech in the Court of King's Bench, on Wednesday last, reason enough for to go as far as possible to expel him; for he declared "Number '45" a paper that the author ought to *glory in*, and the blasphemous poem a mere *ludicrous production*. But I will detain you no longer on this subject, and desire you will send me word, when the meeting is over, the result of what has passed, and also how soon you mean to despatch a messenger with an account of it to the Duke of Grafton, as I will by the same person send a letter to him.

GEORGE R.

3rd February 1769.

Nothing could be more honourable for Government than the conclusion of the debate this morning, and promises a very proper end of this irksome affair this day; I cannot help at the same time expressing some surprise at the very inconsistent part of some of those who opposed on this debate who had supported the day before.

To VISCOUNT WEYMOUTH

Your caution in renewing the former directions for the peace of the town is most seasonable, as the parties might otherwise have fallen into their usual state of negligence. The Attorney-General's letter makes me imagine that Mr. Wilkes will not surrender himself; therefore your having afresh insisted on the utmost being done to seize him, seems absolutely necessary. I cannot conclude without expressing my sorrow that so mean a set of men as the sheriff's officers can, either from timidity or interestedness, frustrate a due exertion of the law. If he is not soon secured, I wish you would inquire whether there is no legal method of quickening the zeal of the sheriffs themselves.

To LORD NORTH

16th April 1769.

The House of Commons having in so spirited a manner felt what they owe to their own privileges as well as to the good order of this country and metropolis gives me great satisfaction, and must greatly tend to destroy that outrageous licentiousness that has been so successfully raised by wicked and disappointed men; but whilst I commend this, I cannot omit expressing my

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thorough conviction that this was chiefly owing to the spirit and good conduct you have shown during the whole of this unpleasant business.

23rd February 1772.

The account I have just received from you of the very handsome majority this day gives me infinite satisfaction. I own myself a sincere friend to our Constitution, both ecclesiastical and civil, and as such a great enemy to any innovations, for, in this mixed Government, it is highly necessary to avoid novelties. We know that all wise nations have stuck scrupulously to their ancient customs. Why are we, therefore, in opposition to them, to seem to have no other object but to be altering every rule our ancestors have left us? Indeed, this arises from a general disinclination to every restraint; and, I am sorry to say, the present Presbyterians seem so much more resembling Socinians than Christians that, I think, the test was never so necessary as at present for obliging them to prove themselves Christians. I think Mr. C. Fox would have acted more becomingly towards you and himself if he had absented himself from the House, for his conduct cannot be attributed to conscience, but to his aversion to all restraints.

4th November 1773.

It is melancholy to find so little public virtue remaining in this country; it is to the want of that, not to the strength of faction, that I forbode no hopes of restoring that order which alone can preserve this constitution; but men seem to think, provided they do not join in tumult, that they do their duty, and that an indolent indifference is not worthy of blame; indeed Mr. Long and Mr. Payne appear of this mould, for when they are told they would succeed, a grain of love of decency, without the strong incentive of that to their country, ought to call them forth. I hope Mr. Beachcraft and Mr. Peckham are not so cold members of society; I am sure the merchants of London are as much interested in restoring order in the City as any member of the community, and therefore their private interests, which generally they do not omit, should make them particularly desirous of being useful.

4th February 1774.

Since you left me this day, I have seen Lieutenant-General Gage, who came to express his readiness, though so lately come from America, to return at a day's notice, if the conduct of the

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Colonies should induce the directing coercive measures. His language was very consonant to his character of an honest, determined man. He says they will be lions, whilst we are lambs; but, if we take the resolute part, they will undoubtedly prove very meek. He thinks the four regiments intended to relieve as many regiments in America, if sent to Boston, are sufficient to prevent any disturbance. I wish you would see him, and hear his ideas as to the mode of compelling Boston to submit to whatever may be thought necessary; indeed, all men now seem to feel that the fatal compliance in 1766 has encouraged the Americans annually to increase in their pretensions to that thorough independency which one State has of another, but which is quite subversive of the obedience which a colony owes to its mother country.

11th September 1774.

The letter from the Quakers of Pennsylvania to some of the chiefs of that persuasion in London shows they retain that coolness which is a very strong characteristic of that body of people; but I was in hopes it would have contained some declaration of their submission to the mother country; whilst by the whole tenor they seem to wish for England giving in some degree way to the opinions of North America; the die is now cast, the Colonies must either submit or triumph. I do not wish to come to severer measures, but we must not retreat; by coolness and an unremitted pursuit of the measures that have been adopted I trust they will come to submit; I have no objection afterwards to their seeing that there is no inclination for the present to lay fresh taxes on them, but I am clear there must always be one tax to keep up the right, and as such I approve of the Tea Duty. . . .

3rd February 1775.

I am much pleased at your information of the very respectable majority in favour of the address moved by you on the present rebellious state of America. I should imagine that, after the veryagrant outrage committed by the province of New Hampshire, some notice ought to be taken of it, for whatever difference prudence may devise between the New English Governments and those of the rest of North America, this cannot extend to New Hampshire.

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21st February 1775.

I never doubted of the zeal of the House of Commons in support of the just superiority of the mother country over its colonies; but the debate of yesterday is a very convincing proof of it; no one can be more sincerely of that opinion than myself, though thoroughly approving the resolution taken, which certainly in a most manly manner shows what is expected, and gives up no right.

11th April 1775.

Having obtained a sight of some notes relative to affairs in America made by M. G. Burgoyne, I took the enclosed copy; and think them so worthy of attention that I transmit them to you, and have no objection to Mr. Brummel's copying it. I wish, without taking notice of your having seen this, you would send for the General and hear his ideas, as I think you might from them suggest some additional thoughts to Lord Dartmouth that might enable him to give G. Gage on some subjects more full instructions. I am sorry Howe seems to look so much on the command in New York as the post of confidence, as I think Burgoyne would best manage any negotiation; but a full conversation will send the later in good humour, who at present feels a little hurt at not having been enough let into the views of the Government; and if he remains at Boston he may be able to suggest what falls in conversation to the Commander-in-Chief, which may prove of great utility.

9th November 1775.

The very handsome division on the voting of the Army last night hath given me much pleasure, as it shows the sense of the House of Commons that we must with vigour pursue the means of bringing the deluded Americans to a sense of their duty.

14th November 1775.

I sent last week orders to the Regency and to Field-Marshal Sporken that Scheither should be permitted to contract with Colonel Faucitt for raising 4000 recruits for Great Britain, and that Stade and Nienburgh should be the two garrisons where the recruits should be closely kept. These orders are certainly arrived this day; but to prevent any mistakes, I will have a fresh copy sent by the messenger this night. The laws of Germany are so clear against emigration, that I certainly in

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going thus far have done as much as I possibly can in my Electoral capacity; the giving commissions to officers, or any other of the proposals that have been made, I can by no means consent to, for they in plain English are turning me into a kidnapper, which I cannot think a very honourable occupation.

To LORD WEYMOUTH

QUEEN'S HOUSE, 24th November 1775, past 11. A.M.

Lists of successions from Ireland of so old dates must rather surprise you, and I think it right therefore just to mention the cause of the delay. Major Dundas, of the 15th Light Dragoons, having applied, on the number of Lieutenant-Colonels to the Regiments in Ireland proving unfit for service when called upon to go with their corps to America, I directed that he must be recommended to one of the Regiments, unless (by) Lieutenant-Colonel Meadows exchanging from the 12th Light Dragoons for one of those Lieutenant-Colonelcies Dundas could be recommended to succeed him. Lord Harcourt has never explained that affair, till the letter you communicated to me the day before yesterday; therefore the delay comes from Ireland. I have drawn the lists that you may order the Commissions to be prepared. As some of the lists come to be notified by the Secretary at War, the Regiments being now on the British Establishment, I have therefore sent those to him, consequently the whole proposed by the Lord-Lieutenant has been consented to.

Lord Barrington does not object to his recommending Ensigns for the additional companies of the 53rd, 54th, and 27th Regiments, as proposed in the Lord-Lieutenant's letter of the 2nd November.

The lists of successions transmitted on the 14th of November are perfectly regular. The Commissions must therefore in consequence be prepared.

To LORD DARTMOUTH

(No date)

I return the letter you communicated some time since to me. It contains many very useful lessons to a young man; but I could have wished that the author had put before his young friend the only true incentive to a rectitude of conduct; I mean the belief in a Supreme Being, and that we are to be rewarded

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or punished agreeably to the lives we lead. If the first of all duties, that to God, is not known, I fear that no other can be expected; and as to the fashionable word *honour*, that never will alone guide a man farther than to pursue appearances. I will not add more, for I know that I am writing to a true believer, one who shows by his actions that he is not governed by the greatest of tyrants, Fashion.

To LORD NORTH

28th November 1775.

I can scarcely find words expressive enough at my astonishment at the presumption and imprudence of bringing forward in Ireland a matter of such great delicacy without having had the fullest directions from hence, and the very mode and words of the message, if that had been judged right, approved of from hence. If this kind of conduct is continued in Ireland, one can scarcely sleep in quiet from apprehension, of being daily drawn into difficulties. I know men that will act boldly when authorised, but I highly disapprove of those who, like quacks, engage in all matters from not knowing the magnitude of the undertaking.

24th April 1776.

The hearing that the loan and taxes have passed this day the House of Commons without a division gives me infinite satisfaction. That Opposition debated at large on American measures instead of objecting to the business is a convincing proof that your proposals were just, and that there was nothing for them with the shadow of justice to attack.

17th November 1776.

Sir Guy Carleton gives sufficient reasons for his not earlier attempting to pass the Lakes; I never doubted that the Commission would give him some uneasiness; but the directions sent by Captain Le Maistre will fix the bounds of his command, consequently prevent any mischief that might have arose to the service from want of explanation.

13th December 1776.

What I should suggest is to let all the invectives against him [Germain] be thrown out to-morrow, without other answer than it is impossible to send out any orders at present; that consequently

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there is time for maturely considering what is right to be done; that when all the members of the Cabinet are in town the subject shall be again resumed.

I have also been considering of the General's application for 4000 men as an addition to his force, which I do not think quite unreasonable, for in the present posture of affairs 3000 men at least must be left in Canada; part of the army must proceed on the lakes to Ticonderoga, and another by the Mohawk River; they having a sufficient force this spring will undoubtedly greatly shorten the business. Foreigners are the only forces we can raise, and at a reasonable charge, for they do not cause an additional half-pay when the business shall be completed; besides, the 2000 Highlanders raised last winter totally has defeated the usual recruiting of the regiments in Scotland.

Burgoyne may command the corps to be sent from Canada to Albany, and Phillips must remain with Carleton in Canada.

These hints I have set down merely as heads for you to consider on previous to the attack of to-morrow.

24th February 1777.

. . . The accounts from America are most comfortable. The surprise and want of spirit of the Hessian officers as well as soldiers at Trenton is not much to their credit, and will undoubtedly rather elate the rebels, who till then were in a state of the greatest despondency. I wish Sir W. Howe had placed none but British troops in the outposts; but I am certain by a letter I have seen from Lord Cornwallis that the rebels will soon have sufficient reason to fall into the former dejection. . . .

19th September 1777.

From delicacy I take this method of opening to you an affair that dwells much on my mind, but that I can more easily express on paper to you than in conversation. I have now signed the last warrant for paying up the arrears due on my Civil List, and therefore seize with pleasure this instant to insist on doing the same for you, my dear Lord. You have at times dropped to me that you had been in debt ever since your first settling in life, and that you had never been able to get out of that difficulty; I therefore must insist you will now state to me whether £12,000 or £15,000 will not set your affairs in order; if it will, nay, if £20,000 is necessary, I am resolved you shall have no other person concerned in freeing them but myself. Knowing now my determination, it is

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easy for you to make a proper arrangement, and at proper times, for to take by degrees that sum. You know me very ill if you do not think that of all the letters I have ever wrote to you this one gives me the most pleasure, and I want no other return but you being convinced that I love you as well as a man of worth as I estsem you as a Minister. Your conduct at a critical minute I never can forget, and am glad that by your ability and the kindness of Parliament I am enabled to give you this mark of my affection, which is the only one I have ever yet been able to perform, but trust some of the employments for life will in time become vacant, that I may reward your family.

28th October 1777.

The letter to Lord Howe is very proper; I trust it will make him turn his thoughts to the mode of war best calculated to end this contest as most distressing to the Americans, and which he seems as yet carefully to have avoided. To me it has always appeared that there was more cruelty in protracting war than in taking such acts of vigour which must bring the crisis to the shortest decision.

4th December 1777.

MY DEAR LORD,—I cannot help just taking up your time for a few minutes to thank you in the most cordial manner for your speech; the manly, firm, and dignified part you took brought the House to see the present misfortune in true light, as very serious, but not without remedy; it may very probably, on due consideration, which I trust all in my service will be willing to give, in the end prove the wisest step in our present situation, to act only on the defensive with the army, and with great activity as to the troops. Canada, Nova Scotia, the Floridas, New York, and Rhode Island must probably be the stations, but those who have served in those parts, particularly Lord Amherst, must be consulted, and will be able to point out what is best. I shall only add that I can never forget the friendship as well as the zeal you have shown to me by your conduct yesterday.

GEORGE R.

13th January 1778.

. . . What I have now to propose is, that without loss of time the mode of conducting the American war be deliberated upon, that Lord Amherst be examined at the Cabinet on the subject;

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he is clear that after the disaster of Burgoyne not less than an additional army to what is there at present of 40,000 men can carry on with any effect an offensive land war; that a sea war is the only wise plan; that the preventing the arrival of military stores, clothing, and the other articles necessary from Europe, must distress them, and make them come into what Britain may decently consent to; that at this hour they will laugh at any proposition. . . .

31st January 1778.

. . . You will remember that before the recess I strongly advised you not to bind yourself to bring forward a proposition for restoring tranquillity to North America, not from any absurd ideas of unconditional submission my mind never harboured, but from perceiving that whatever can be proposed will be liable not to bring America back to a sense of attachment to the mother country, yet to dissatisfy this country, which has in the most handsome manner cheerfully carried on the contest, and therefore has a right to have the struggle continued until convinced that it is in vain. . . .

2nd February 1778.

. . . Though Lord Chatham's name (which was always his greatest merit) is undoubtedly not so great as formerly, yet it will greatly hurt Lord Rockingham's party with many factious persons to see that he disavows the unjustifiable lengths they would go in favour of America, and will therefore prove a fortunate event to the introducing into Parliament the proposal you intend to make of new arranging the Commission, increasing the power of the Commissioners, and getting rid of some Acts of Parliament that are in the present state of affairs a bar to forming any solid reconciliation with that country. . . .

3rd March 1778.

. . . Carleton was highly wrong in permitting his pen to convey such asperity to a Secretary of State, and therefore has been removed from the Government of Canada; but his meritorious defence of Quebec made him a proper object for a military reward, and as such I could not think of providing for any other general till I had paid the debt his services had a right to claim.

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6th March 1778.

The intelligence from Mr. Thornton of the discontents among the leaders in America, if authentic, will not only greatly facilitate the bringing that deluded country to some reasonable ideas, but will make France reconsider whether she ought to enter into a war when America may leave her in the lurch. . . .

16th March 1778.

I am fully convinced that you are actuated alone from a wish not to conceal the most private corners of your breast in writing the letter you have just sent me; but, my dear Lord, it is not private pique but an opinion formed on an experience of a reign of now seventeen years, that makes me resolve to run any personal risk rather than submit to Opposition, which every plan deviating from strengthening the present administration is more or less tending to; therefore I refer you to the genuine dictates of my heart which I put yesterday on paper and transmitted to you; and I am certain, whilst I have no one object but to be of use to this country, it is impossible I can be deserted, and the road opened to a set of men who certainly would make me a slave for the remainder of my days; and whatever they may pretend, would go to the most unjustifiable lengths of cruelty and destruction of those who have stood forth in public office, of which you would be the first victim.

26th March 1778.

. . . The many instances of the inimical conduct of Franklin towards this country makes me aware that hatred to this country is the constant object of his mind, and therefore I trust that, fearing the rebellious Colonies may accept the generous offers I am enabled by Parliament to make them by the Commissioners now to be sent to America, that his chief aim in what he has thrown out is to prevent their going, or to draw out of administration an inclination to go farther lengths than the Act of Parliament will authorise, that information from him may prevent America from concluding with the Commissioners.

Yet I think it so desirable to end the war with that country, to be enabled with redoubled ardour to avenge the faithless and insolent conduct of France, that I think it may be proper to keep open the channel of intercourse with that insidious man.

As to my entering at present into the specific terms that may or may not be admitted, that is impossible until the whole is drawn up in some degree of method, after another interview of the agents

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employed in this dangerous business ; but I will never consent that in any treaty that may be concluded a single word be mentioned concerning Canada, Nova Scotia, or the Floridas, which are Colonies belonging to this country, and the more they are kept unlike the other Colonies the better, for it is by them we are to keep a certain awe over the abandoned Colonies, where good garrisons must be constantly kept.

To LORD WEYMOUTH

Kew, 31st May 1778.

As it is necessary that you should, as early as possible, be acquainted with every political transaction, I enclose you a letter I received last evening from Lord Suffolk, the copy of the Solicitor-General's letter, which I thought too material to return without receiving that, and my answer in consequence, which was meant to be civil, and, in the present unexplained situation, to be cautious. You will return them when you come to Court.

QUEEN'S HOUSE, 5th April 1779.

Lord Weymouth's draft to Sir Joseph Yorke, I would fain hope, must open the eyes of the States-General, or at least convince them that it is worthy of mature consideration whether the town of Amsterdam, at the instigation of France, is not plunging them into a very untoward scene, and for which they are by no means prepared.

To LORD NORTH

27th March 1778.

I have read the proposed Bill for a provision for my six youngest sons and five daughters whenever it shall please the Almighty to end my life, and for the two children of the Duke of Gloucester whenever he shall die. I have no objection to any part of it, and have only corrected the name of my second daughter and filled up the blank left for that of my youngest daughter.

I cannot at the same time help expressing my concern at your recurring in a letter of this evening to a measure I have repeatedly told you I never will submit to, as I look upon it as disgraceful to me, and destruction to my kingdom and family ; but your never quitting this subject, and your vowed despondency, which is highly detrimental to my service, obliges me to ask the three following questions, to which I expect explicit answers in writing :—

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1. Do you think it possible to strengthen the present administration by an accession of some men of talents from Opposition?

2. If that cannot be effected, will you consent to continue, and try to exert yourself, and co-operate with me in putting vigour and activity into every department?

3. If you decline continuing, you cannot I suppose refuse presiding at the Treasury and finishing the business of this session of Parliament, and not be surprised at my employing that short space of time in taking such steps as I may judge necessary in strengthening my service, the first of which will be my giving the Great Seal to the Attorney-General.

14th November 1778.

It has been a certain position with me that firmness is the characteristic of an Englishman, that consequently when a Minister will show a resolution boldly to advance that he will meet with support. . . . Lord North's report that the gentlemen who attended the meeting in Downing Street last night will cordially support during the next session is what I expected; and if on the opening of the session the speech from the throne is penned with firmness, and shows no other end is sought but benevolence to all the branches, provided the Empire is kept entire, and invite all who will cordially unite in that point and in a resolution to withstand the natural enemies of the country, and the Ministers in their speeches show that they will never consent to the independence of America, and that the assistance of every man will be accepted on that ground, I am certain the cry will be strong in their favour. . . .

12th February 1779.

I am sorry Lord North takes so much to heart the division of this day: I am convinced this country will never regain a proper tone unless Ministers, as in the reign of King William, will not mind being now and then in a minority, particularly on subjects that have always carried some weight with popular opinions. If it comes to the worst, the Bill will be thrown out in the House of Lords. The day of trial is not the honourable one to desert me; keep the merit of having stepped forth when I was in distress by staying till the scene becomes serene. If you will but act with vigour you cannot fail of support. On the rectitude of a man's intentions alone must every man trust for real firmness; I am certain, therefore, that on consideration you will, like a man, go on with spirit, and that alone will get you a thorough support.

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22nd June 1779.

. . . I own the Chancellor's language yesterday did not please me; Lord North's explanation does not amend it. The protest shews that independency of America is still aroused by the Opposition: it is no compliment when I say Lord Gower would be a poor substitute to Lord North. I cannot approve of such a measure. What I said yesterday was the dictates of frequent and severe self-examination; I never can depart from it. Before I will ever hear of any man's readiness to come into office I will expect to see it signed under his hand that he is resolved to keep the Empire entire, and that no troops shall be consequently withdrawn from thence, nor independence ever allowed. . . .

22nd February 1780.

Lord North cannot be surprised at my having read with some astonishment that the majority was so small this morning in a question which, if it tended to anything, was to circumscribe the power of the Crown to show its benevolence to persons in narrow circumstances; it shows what little dependence can be placed on the momentary whims that strike popular assemblies. . . .

7th April 1780.

The whole tenor of Lord North's conduct, from the hour he accepted the post he now fills, is a surety to me that he will not expect an immediate answer on so very material an event as the one he alludes to in his letter that I have just found on my table. I cannot help just adding that the resolution come to in the Committee last night, and already reported to the House, can by no means be looked on as personal to him; I wish I did not feel at whom they are *personally levelled*.

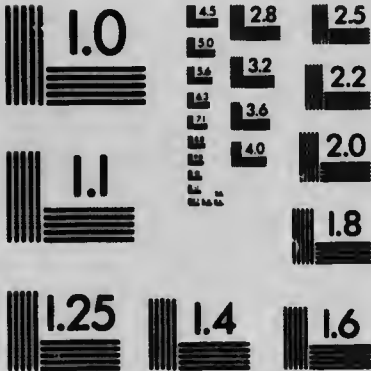
11th April 1780.

It is clear that had the five members arrived in time last night, the strange resolution of the Committee would have been rejected; consequently Lord North must see things begin to wear a better aspect. A little time will I am certain open the eyes of several who have been led on farther than they intended, and numbers will return; for it cannot be the wish of the majority to overturn the Constitution. Factious leaders and ruined men wish it; but the bulk of the nation see it in that light. I therefore shall undoubtedly be assisted in preserving this excellent Consti-



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tution by a temperate, but at the same time firm, conduct. It is attachment to my country that alone actuates my purposes, and Lord North shall see that at least there is one person willing to preserve unspoiled the most beautiful combination that ever was framed.

(The following is apparently a draft of part of a letter of June 1780, to be shown by North to the Opposition leaders.)

His Majesty, ever desirous of promoting the welfare and happiness of his dominions, thinks it behoves every one actuated by any attachment to his country to cast aside all private pique and animosity and cordially unite in the service of the State.

He therefore is willing to blot from his remembrance any events that may have displeased him, and to admit into his confidence and service any men of public spirit or talents who will join with part of his present Ministry in forming one on a more enlarged plan, provided it be understood that every means are to be employed to keep the Empire entire, to prosecute the present just and unprovoked war in all its branches with the utmost vigour, and that his Majesty's past measures be treated with proper respect.

26th September 1780.

The messenger having received orders when I had read the letters to carry this box to Bushey Park, I chose to accompany it with a few lines for Lord North's information of the state of my mind on the receipt of Sir. H. Clinton's despatches, which are certainly of a very gloomy cast; but in this world it is not right alone to view evils, but to consider whether they can be avoided, and what means are the most efficacious. Undoubtedly this island has made greater exertions to keep its station among the considerable Powers of Europe than perhaps could have been expected. The number of troops sent to America has been prodigious, and the Colonies have given no assistance; but is that new this year? has it not been the case for the greater part of the struggle? The giving up the game would be total ruin; a small State may certainly subsist, but a great one mouldering cannot get into an inferior situation, but must be annihilated. . . .

19th July 1781.

I have received Lord North's boxes containing the intercepted letters from Mr. Deane for America. I have only been able to read two of them, on which I form the same opinion of too much appearance of being concerted with this country, and therefore

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not likely to have the effect as if they bore another aspect. I return them, and hope when the copies have been taken to be able to read them at my leisure, for it is impossible in a hurry to form any solid opinion concerning them. The extract from Franklin is very material; should France not supply America amply, I think it has the appearance that this long contest will end as it ought, by the Colonies returning to the mother country; and I confess I will never put my hand to any other conclusion of this business.

3rd November 1781.

. . . I feel the justness of our cause; I put the greatest confidence in the valour of both navy and army, and, above all, in the assistance of Divine Providence. The moment is certainly anxious; the die is now cast whether this shall continue a great Empire or the least dignified of the European States. The object is certainly worth struggling for, and I trust the nation is equally determined with myself to meet the conclusion with firmness. If this country will persist, I think an honourable termination cannot fail, for truth is ever too strong for such a conduct as France has held; and if we have any material success, she will become sick of the part she has acted. Duplicity can never withstand any disasters, but those who act on other motives ought ever to support any misfortune from the consciousness of the rectitude of intentions.

26th December 1781.

. . . The appointing a Commander-in-Chief in North America is a measure of a complicated nature, and requires thorough consideration before I can form any opinion enough digested to be able to state my thoughts to Lord G. Germain. He may rest assured that it shall be uppermost in my thoughts.

18th April 1782.

The list of pensions paid by Sir Grey Cooper requires no further explanation, and I shall therefore draw out a list of it for the present head of the Treasury.

But I must express my astonishment at the quarterly account-books of the Secret Service being only made up to the 5th April 1870; consequently that two years are as yet not stated. I cannot help saying it is the most shameful piece of neglect I ever knew. No business can ever be admitted as an excuse for

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not doing that. If every sum received had instantly been set down, as well as every article paid, this could not have happened. The Duke of Grafton never let a month elapse after the quarter without getting the book finished and delivering it.

I shall make out also the list paid by Mr. Robinson to Peers, and shall give it to the First Lord of the Treasury; but I cannot answer whether under the idea of influence there will not be a refusal to continue them. Those to members of the House of Commons cannot be given; they may apply, if they please, to Lord Rockingham; but by what he has said to me I have not the smallest doubt he will refuse to bring their applications, as well as those of any new solicitors, in that House. This is a natural consequence of the total change I have been driven to. I foretold the measures that would be expected, but Lord North, as well as the rest who advised my treating with Opposition, would not credit my assertions.

Sir James Cockburn's pension I will set down in the name of his wife, and Mr. Bowlby's in that of Lady Mary. As to Mr. Selwyn, I do not see a possibility of its continuing. He must view it like the loss of a place, and must look to better days. His memorandum will be kept by me.

I must add that Lord North, knowing for some weeks that the Ministry would be changed, it is strange he did not make up his accounts and bring the payments up to the time, for his successor will certainly not think himself obliged to pay up the arrears. I see some have three quarters, some a year, and Lord Northampton ten quarters due.

As to the immense expense of the general election, it has quite surprised me; the sum is at least double of what was expended any other general election since I came to the throne, and by the fate of the last month proves most uselessly. Certainly the £13,000 due to Mr. Drummond I shall by degrees pay off; but I cannot bind myself any further. I think it is most likely that, on the reduction of the expenses of the Civil List, I shall be obliged to see my Privy Purse diminished the £12,000 per annum. If that should happen, I have no means of satisfying the remainder you unexpectedly put to my account of £19,754, 18s. 2d. Had Lord North thought it necessary, he ought during the arrangements to have had Secret Service money to have defrayed that sum; now that is impossible. I cannot conclude without saying that I am sorry to see there has been such a strange waste of money. The letter I wrote the day Lord North resigned must have showed him that I should think myself bound to satisfy no farther save the £13,000 to Mr. Drummond.

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To WILLIAM PITT

14th February 1784.

Mr. Pitt is so well apprised of the mortification I feel at any possibility of ever again seeing the heads of Opposition in public employments, and more particularly Mr. Fox, whose conduct has not been more marked against my station in the Empire than against my person, that he must attribute my want of perspicuity in my conversation last night to that foundation; yet I should imagine it must be an ease to his mind, in conferring with the other confidential Ministers this morning, to have on paper my sentiments, which are the result of unremitted considerations since he left me last night, and which he has my consent to communicate, if he judges it right, to the above respectable persons.

My present situation is perhaps the most singular that ever occurred, either in the annals of this or any other country; for the House of Lords by not a less majority than near two to one have declared in my favour; and my subjects at large, in a much more considerable proportion, are not less decided; to combat which, Opposition have only a majority of twenty or at most of thirty in the House of Commons, who, I am sorry to add, seem as yet willing to prevent the public supplies. Though I certainly have never much valued popularity, yet I do not think it is to be despised when arising from a rectitude of conduct, and when it is to be retained by following the same respectable path which conviction makes me esteem that of duty, as calculated to prevent one branch of the legislature from annihilating the other two, and seizing also the executive power to which it has no claim.

I confess I have not yet seen the smallest appearance of sincerity in the leaders of Opposition to come into the only mode by which I could tolerate them in my service, their giving up the idea of having the administration in their hands, and coming in as a respectable part of one on a broad basis; and therefore I, with a jealous eye, look on any words dropped by them, either in Parliament or to the gentlemen of the St. Albans tavern, as meant only to gain those gentlemen, or, if carried further views, to draw Mr. Pitt, by a negotiation, into some difficulty.

Should the Ministers, after discussing this, still think it advisable that an attempt should be made to try whether an administration can be formed on a real, not a nominal, wide basis, and that Mr. Pitt having repeatedly and as fruitlessly

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found it impossible to get even an interview on what Opposition pretends to admit is a necessary measure, I will, though reluctantly, go personally so far as to authorise a message to be carried in my name to the Duke of Portland, expressing a desire that he and Mr. Pitt may meet to confer on the means of forming an administration on a wide basis, as the only means of entirely healing the divisions which stop the business of the nation. The only person I can think, from his office as well as personal character, proper to be sent by me is Lord Sydney; but should the Duke of Portland, when required by me, refuse to meet Mr. Pitt, more especially upon the strange plea he has as yet held forth, I must here declare that I shall not deem it right for me ever to address myself again to him.

The message must be drawn on paper, as must everything in such a negotiation, as far as my name is concerned; and I trust, when I next see Mr. Pitt, if under the present circumstances the other Ministers shall agree with him in thinking such a proposition advisable, that he will bring a sketch of such a message for my inspection.

9th March 1784.

Mr. Pitt's letter is undoubtedly the most satisfactory I have received for many months. An avowal at the outset that the proposition held forth is not intended to go further lengths than a kind of manifesto, and then carrying it by the majority of one, and the day concluding with an avowal that all negotiation is at an end, gives me every reason to hope that by a firm and proper conduct this faction will by degrees be deserted by many, and at length be forgot. I shall ever with pleasure consider that by the prudence as well as rectitude of one person in the House of Commons this great change has been effected, and that he will be ever able to reflect with satisfaction that in having supported me he has saved the Constitution, the most perfect of human formations.

Mr. Pitt will consider of the declaration that my answer may meet every assertion, as I trust it will be the last visit on this unpleasant business.

To LORD HOWE

St. James's, 20th October 1785.

It cannot give Lord Howe more pleasure in having found the guardships and Marines at Plymouth in perfect order, than it

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does me in being able to authorise him to express to the Vice-Admiral, and to the commanding officer of the Marines, my satisfaction at so favourable a report.

G. R.

WINDSOR, 28th January 1786.

On returning from hunting at six this evening, the Queen desired to speak to me before I went to dinner. It was to communicate to me the arrival of William.¹ I find it indispensably necessary to remove him from intercourse with the Commissioner's house at Portsmouth, and therefore desire either the *Hebe* may be removed to the Plymouth station, or William placed on board the 32-gun frigate that is there. I merely throw out what occurs on a very unpleasant and unexpected event. The only thing I am resolved on is that he must return on Monday to his ship. I desire Lord Howe will be here between nine and ten to-morrow morning. If he cannot conveniently be here so soon, I desire he will then come by half (an) hour past twelve, when I shall be returned from church. This will be delivered to you by Captain Ephinstone, who *says* he had the approbation of Captain Thornborough and Commissioner Martin for coming with William.

G. R.

To WILLIAM PITT

20th March 1785.

I have received Mr. Pitt's paper containing the heads of his plan for a Parliamentary Reform, which I look on as a mark of attention. I should have delayed acknowledging the receipt of it till I saw him on Monday, had not his letter expressed that there is but one issue of the business he could look upon as fatal; that is, the possibility of the measure being rejected by the weight of those who are supposed to be connected with Government. Mr. Pitt must recollect that though I have thought it unfortunate that he had early engaged himself in this measure, yet that I have ever said that as he was clear of the propriety of the measure he ought to lay his thoughts before the House, that out of personal regard to him I should avoid giving any opinion to any one on the opening of the door to Parliamentary Reform except to him: therefore I am certain Mr. Pitt cannot suspect my having influenced

¹ Prince William, afterwards William IV. The Commissioner, Sir H. Martin, Bart., had four youthful daughters, who proved a sore temptation to the royal sailor.

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any one on the occasion; if others choose for base ends to impute such a conduct to me, I must bear it as former false suggestions. Indeed on a question of such magnitude I should think very ill of any man who took a part on either side without the maturest consideration, and who would suffer his civility to any one to make him vote contrary to his own opinion. The conduct of some of Mr. Pitt's most intimate friends on the Westminster scrutiny shows there are questions men will not by friendship be biassed to adopt.

12th October 1787.

I cannot return to the Secretary of State's Office the very material papers on the plans of France with regard to India without sending Mr. Pitt a few lines. I should hope he will acquaint the Cabinet to-morrow that I am forming four regiments for that service, and that he will push on a negotiation with M. Boers to make the two companies understand one another, and take efficient measures to secure us against our insidious neighbours. Perhaps no part of the change in Holland is so material to this country as the gaining that Republic as an ally in India. I recommend that no time should be lost in bringing this to bear, and our Company ought to be liberal in its offers to effect it.

6th March 1788.

It is amazing how, on a subject that could be reduced into so small a compass, the House would hear such long speaking. The object of Opposition was evidently to oblige the old and infirm members to give up the attendance, which is reason sufficient for the friends of Government to speak merely to the point in future, and try to shorten debates, and bring, if possible, the present bad mode of mechanical oratory into discredit.

20th October 1788.

I have not been able to answer Mr. Pitt's letter sooner this day, having had a very indifferent night; but the medicine which Sir George Baker found necessary to be taken to remove the spasm has now greatly relieved me. Indeed I think myself nearer getting rid of my complaint than since the attack. If I should have a good night, I will write and desire Mr. Pitt to come here previous to the meeting of the Cabinet.

We happily got through the business last year, but then our enemy was weak indeed, and the Prussian arms succeeded beyond

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expectation. In the present scene it is the contrary. The King of Sweden seems to have what often go together—great want of courage, and as little good faith. The sentiments of his subjects are not known here; for Mr. Elliot's despatches are, I believe, yet to be composed, and the Danish troops have advanced much farther than any one supposed; even Bernsdorf owns it in a letter, I believe, drawn up for our inspection. All I mean by this is, that we must try to save Sweden from becoming a province of Russia; but I do not think this object can only be obtained by a general war, to run the risk of ruining the finances of this country, which, if our pride will allow us to be quiet for a few years, will be in a situation to hold a language which does not become the having been driven out of America.

To speak openly, it is not the being considerably weakened by illness, but the feelings that never have day or night been at ease since this country took that disgraceful step, that has made me wish what years I have still to reign not to be drawn into a war. I am now within a few days of twenty-eight years, having been not on a bed of roses. I began with a successful war; the people grew tired of that, and called out for peace. Since that most justifiable war any country ever waged—there is few campaigns from being popular—again peace was called for. After such woeful examples, I must be a second Don Quixote if I did not wish, if possible, to avoid falling again into the same situation. The ardour of youth may not admire my calmness, but I think it fairer to speak out thus early than by silence be supposed to have changed my opinion, if things should bear a more warlike appearance than I now expect, and if I should then object to a general war.

I am sure Mr. Pitt will perceive I am not quite in a situation to write as usual, but I thought it better even to write as loosely as I have done, than to let the box return without an answer to his letter.

21st April 1789.

The despatch of the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland on the intended resignation of the Lord Chancellor of that kingdom is a matter of too much consequence and requires too much deliberation for me to wish to keep it unnecessarily from the inspection of the Lord Chancellor and of Mr. Pitt. Besides, I must candidly confess that though now without complaint, I feel more strongly the effects of my late severe and tedious illness than I had expected; though but what had been insinuated, I mean a certain lassitude and want of energy both of mind and body, which must

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require time, relaxation, and change of scene to restore any energy. Indeed, I have among other blessings the advantage of having in the Lord Chancellor and Mr. Pitt two men thoroughly fit to conduct the business of their two Houses of Parliament, whose attachment to my person and to the true constitution of this realm is undoubted, and who must see the necessity to my ease, as well as the real stability of the State, requires their cordially acting together, and they must acknowledge the utility of early conferring together on matters of importance, that their opinions may be as it were mutually formed, and that no difficulties may arise from having separately arranged their opinions. . . .

15th May 1792.

Mr. Secretary Dundas has acted very properly in postponing the publishing an extraordinary *Gazette*, if there is the smallest doubt of the authenticity of the news he received this day; but I own I cannot willingly give up crediting the good account. If it is a forgery, it has been ably conducted.

I trust he will follow up the idea of showing Mr. Pitt that he has a real victory over the Chancellor if he keeps his temper, and that my service requires his resisting any warmth, and that however improper the language may have been, public reasons ought to prevent his taking any step; though I think Mr. Secretary Dundas ought to speak some truth to the Chancellor on this occasion, and point out how much his conduct on this occasion, if such as has been stated, is detrimental to my affairs and those of the nation. I cannot but think that the Chancellor must be ready to own that it is unbecoming in the highest degree to be wasting the present hour in personal disputes, and I trust an explanation will be made that will heal any present uneasiness.

13th July 1793.

I return to Mr. Pitt the warrants, having signed them. By my orders Lord Amherst has directed the ditch at Walmer Castle to be stockaded, and a picket of twenty-five men to be posted there to prevent any surprise, which will enable Mr. Pitt to go safely there whenever the public business will permit. I did not choose to mention it till I had given the necessary orders.

17th May 1794.

The conduct of the Opposition on the present occasion seems most unwise. The attention of the public at large is awakened at the present crisis, and certainly must see with horror and disdain

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any set of men trying by mere chicane to clog the measures of Government. After what has passed in the House of Commons, I have not the smallest doubt but that Lords Lansdowne, Lauderdale, Stanhope, and Derby will hold a similar conduct this day in the House of Lords. . . .

To COUNTESS HOWE

I have delivered the letter to the Queen and explained the mistake by which it had been opened, but cannot pretend that any eloquence of mine was necessary to convince the Queen that no disrespect was meant by Lord Howe; for we both think we know him too well ever to harbour such an idea, even where appearances could give room for doubt. Indeed, honesty is the best policy; and where uniformity of conduct is to be found, that gives due reason to guess at the motives of action.

To WILLIAM PITT

6th February 1795.

Having yesterday, after the Drawing Room, seen the Duke of Portland, who mentioned the receipt of letters from the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, which, to my greatest astonishment, propose the total change of the principles of government which have been followed by every administration in that kingdom since the abdication of King Charles the Second, and consequently overturning the fabric of the wisdom of our forefathers esteemed necessary, and which the laws of this country have directed; and thus, after no longer stay than three weeks in Ireland, venturing to condemn the labours of ages, and wanting an immediate adoption of ideas which every man of property in Ireland and every friend to the Protestant religion must feel diametrically contrary to those he has imbibed from his earliest youth.

Undoubtedly the Duke of Portland made this communication to sound my sentiments previous to the Cabinet meeting to be held to-morrow on this weighty subject. I expressed my surprise at the idea of admitting the Roman Catholics to vote in Parliament, but chose to avoid entering further into the subject, and only heard the substance of the propositions without giving my sentiments. But the more I reflect on the subject, the more I feel the danger of the proposal, and therefore should not think

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myself free from blame if I did not put my thoughts on paper even in the present coarse shape, the moment being so pressing, and not sufficient time to arrange them in a more digested shape previous to the Duke of Portland's laying the subject before the Cabinet. . . .

English Government ought well to consider before it gives any encouragement to a proposition which cannot fail sooner or later to separate the two kingdoms, or by way of establishing a similar line of conduct in this kingdom adopt measures to prevent which my family was invited to mount the throne of this kingdom in preference to the House of Savoy.

One might suppose the authors of this scheme had not viewed the tendency or extent of the question, but were actuated alone by the peevish inclination of humiliating the old friends of English Government in Ireland, or from the desire of paying implicit obedience to the heated imagination of Mr. Burke.

Besides the discontent and changes which must be occasioned by the dereliction of all the principles that have been held as wise by our ancestors, it is impossible to foresee how far it may alienate the minds of this kingdom; for though I fear religion is but little attended to by persons of rank, and that the word *toleration* or rather *indifference* to that sacred subject has been too much admitted by them, yet the bulk of the nation has not been spoiled by foreign travels and manners, and still feel the blessing of having a fixed principle from whence the source of every tie to society and government must trace its origin.

I cannot conclude without expressing that the subject is beyond the decision of any Cabinet of Ministers—that, could they form an opinion in favour of such a measure, it would be highly dangerous, without previous concert with the leading men of every order in the State, to send any encouragement to the Lord-Lieutenant on this subject; and if received with the same suspicion I do, I am certain it would be safer even to change the new administration in Ireland, if its continuance depends on the success of this proposal, than to prolong its existence on grounds that must sooner or later ruin one if not both kingdoms.

9th April 1797.

. . . Before I enter upon the serious subject that has been this morning brought before me, one natural reflection occurs—the lamenting the mode, but too often adopted of late years, of acting immediately on the impulse of the minute, consequently not giving that cool examination which, perhaps, in more instances than one, might have been beneficial to the service.

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I think this country has taken every humiliating step for seeking peace the warmest advocates for that object could suggest, and they have met with a conduct from the enemy, bordering on contempt, that I hoped would have prevented any further attempt of the same nature, from my fear of destroying every remaining spark of vigour in this once firm nation. . . .

11th November 1797.

It is impossible to receive more satisfaction than I have experienced at the receipt of Mr. Pitt's note, as it contains an assurance of the spirit expressed by the whole House of Commons on the subject of the address, which undoubtedly promises the most active exertion in every measure that may be required for the public safety. I hope these will be cautiously considered before they are brought forward, for to some of those of the last year I fear may be in great measure attributed the mutiny of the navy, and the total failure of recruiting the army. I own I am still sanguine, if we will profit by the experience we have had, and act firmly, that the resources of the enemy are so totally exhausted, and the enmity now arising between Bonaparte and the Directory of France so likely to occasion incalculable events, that with the attempt now making towards Russia and Prussia, there is a foundation to expect a more honourable conclusion of the war and the prospect at a proper time of a more lasting peace than the last year had promised.

15th December 1798

Considering the kind of clamour Opposition is attempting to make against the Bill respecting the Assessed Taxes. I think the division of last night of 175 to 50 very favourable. I hope Mr. Pitt will be cautious not to admit any modifications in the Committee on Monday that can possibly lessen the value of the measure; for experience has fully taught me that when Government have from too much candour greatly weakened the effect of any proposition it never renders it more palatable, and constantly destroys the value of it.

No one can dissemble that the occasion requires heavy contributions, but the cause is so great; it is to save everything that is dear to men, and therefore must be met with firmness, for I believe the mode adopted is the most equal that could have been devised.

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23rd January 1798.

I am ever sorry when any proposition is made to me on which I cannot give a decided answer; the one now brought to me by Mr. Pitt is certainly of that nature; but, as I have no secret on the occasion, I shall certainly state the matter so fully to him that he can as easily as me point out what *ought* to be done; for if there is no means of effecting what is suggested, the appearance will certainly be ridiculous when attended with an application to Parliament for the means.

My income is certainly, in proportion to the greatness of the country, inadequate to my station, for my Privy Purse at £60,000 and the expense of my Household is the only real income I possess. As to the former, I have some debts, of which the sum borrowed for the late elections makes the most considerable part, which I am by instalments paying off. As to the Household, Mr. Pitt knows how much that is in debt. I have no other fund in the world. I never drew a shilling from my Electorate when in its greatest prosperity, but regularly paid off the debts that were incurred in the Seven Years' War by the very unjust manner in which the just demands of this country were withheld. I thought it prudent to call in a large mortgage, the interest of which was affixed on the keeping part of my Electoral troops; this I placed in trustees, the German Regency, to be placed in the Funds here, the interest of which goes regularly to Hanover, and I have never touched one sixpence of it, but let it answer its disposition, the payment of those regiments. Now I have been forced to borrow above two millions in Germany for my part of the army that forms the cordon, and Mr. Pitt knows I have a large sum owing to me for the German troops whilst in English pay, that is as yet kept back here: with this he must see that whatever I could nominally subscribe can be but little, and must be again repaid me. I state this truly, and therefore leave him to judge what can be done. So far I can say, it must be out of my Civil List, to which my Privy Purse can give a small proportion. I am sorry to say the King of England is not so rich a man, and that every shilling taken from his Privy Purse must fall on the indigent; for if he has not the means, his workmen and the poor cannot but feel it to their sorrow.

6th May 1800.

The information of the last night from Mr. Pitt that all the resolutions on the Articles of Union with Ireland had been agreed to by the House of Commons, and ordered to be communicated to the House of Lords with an address laying them before me, gives

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me sincere satisfaction; I therefore trust there can now be no doubt that either on Thursday, or at latest on Friday, I shall receive the joint address of the two Houses, which will, I trust, effect one of the most useful measures that has been effected during my reign, one that will give stability to the whole Empire, and from the want of industry and capital in Ireland be but little felt by this country as diminishing its trade and manufactures. For the advantages to Ireland can only arise by slow degrees, and the wealth of Great Britain will undoubtedly, by furnishing the rest of the globe with the articles of commerce, not feel any material disadvantage in that particular from the future prosperity of Ireland.

28th November 1800.

It gives me infinite pleasure to find by Mr. Pitt's account that Mr. Tierney's motion for a Committee on the State of the Nation was rejected by 154 to 37, which cannot but be of use both at home and abroad; indeed, I have not the smallest doubt of the good sense of the country at large, and that however the weight of taxes may be felt, that every one judges that in the present state of France no secure peace can be made, and that consequently the continuance of the war is highly necessary.

The strange conduct of the Emperor of Russia in a second time laying an embargo on the British trade from his dominions loudly calls for the measure of a prohibition from the Privy Council to the merchants trading with Russia from answering any bills of exchange from that empire, which Lord Grenville proposed the last night to me, in consequence of which I have desired him to give notice that I will hold a Privy Council here at as early an hour as may be convenient, that the merchants may acquaint their correspondents by this night's post of the injunction under which they are placed.¹

To LORD ELDON

May 1801.

The King cannot allow any difficulty to stand in the way of his doing what may be most useful for the public service. He will therefore postpone his journey to Weymouth till the close of the session of Parliament, relying that the Lord Chancellor and Mr. Addington will bring it as soon as possible to a con-

¹ Stanhope's *Life of Pitt*, vol. iii., Appendix, p. xxii

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clusion. He will not therefore change any arrangement for removing the things necessary to be sent to Weymouth, but he and his family will remain at hand till that period.

His Majesty will be glad to receive at the Queen's Palace the Master of the Rolls and Solicitor-General on Wednesday, when he hopes to hear who may be most eligible to be appointed Solicitor-General to the Queen.

To WILLIAM PITT

5th May 1804.

. . . The King can never forget the wound that was intended at the Palladium of our Church Establishment, the Test Act, and the indelicacy, not to call it worse, of wanting his Majesty to forego his solemn Coronation oath. He therefore here avows that he shall not be satisfied unless Mr. Pitt makes as strong assurances of his determination to support that wise law, as Mr. Pitt in so clear a manner stated in 1796 in the House of Commons, viz. that the smallest alteration of that law would be a death-blow to the British Constitution.

The whole tenor of Mr. Fox's conduct since he quitted his seat at the Board of Treasury, when under age, and more particularly at the Whig Club and other factious meetings, rendered his expulsion from the Privy Council indispensable, and obliges the King to express his astonishment that Mr. Pitt should for one moment harbour the thought of bringing such a man before his royal notice. To prevent the repetition of it, the King declares that if Mr. Pitt persists in such an idea, or in proposing to consult Lord Grenville, his Majesty will have to deplore that he cannot avail himself of the ability of Mr. Pitt with necessary restrictions. These points being understood, his Majesty does not object to Mr. Pitt's forming such a plan for conducting the public business as may under all circumstances appear to be eligible; but should Mr. Pitt, unfortunately, find himself unable to undertake what is here proposed, the King will in that case call for the assistance of such men as are truly attached to our happy Constitution, and not seekers of improvements which to all dispassionate men must appear to tend to the destruction of that noble fabric which is the pride of all thinking minds, and the envy of all foreign nations.

The King thinks it but just to his present servants to express his trust that as far as the public service will permit he may have the benefit of their further services.

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To LORD CASTLEREAGH

22nd May 1804.

The King has no doubt that every possible attention, which can with propriety be shown to the Emperor of China, must be attended with indulgences on his part to our trade with his subjects. It were much to be wished for the advantage of this country that the territorial possessions of the East India Company were made over to this kingdom, and the Company alone be engaged in pursuing their commercial concerns.

The King takes this opportunity of assuring Lord Castlereagh with great truth, that he thinks it both highly advantageous to his service, as well as personally agreeable to himself, that Lord Castlereagh remains at the head of the Indian Board. It requires a man of talents, and above all a man of a calm temper, and not wanting of firmness, as the Directors are ever desirous of getting rid of a curb to their interested views.

23rd May 1804.

The King is so pleased with the handsome, and he may say attached, note he received the last evening from Lord Castlereagh, that he cannot refrain from expressing the satisfaction it has given him. His Majesty ever has looked upon the goodness of the private character as the only criterion of the utility or danger of the abilities of any man to the country. Lord Castlereagh's has ever been praiseworthy, and fortunately he has ever been bred up a friend to good government, and therefore he can hold up his head, having no former opinions to forget before he can take his true line, which evil hangs ever a weight round the neck, most inconveniently to some politicians.

The King has ever a great regard for the late Marquis of Hertford, which ever inclined him to see with a favourable eye the conduct of Lord Castlereagh, and makes him rejoice that Lord Castlereagh's services in the House of Commons are not precarious, as they would have been had the Earl of Londonderry been created a British Peer.

Nothing can be more proper than the conduct of that valuable man, the Earl of Camden, in his judicious choice of Mr. Croker as his Under-Secretary, a man whose political conduct and steady principles of government have ever been in Ireland conspicuous.¹

¹ *Jesse's Life and Reign.*

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To LORD SIDMOUTH

23rd May 1804.

The King is ever glad to mark the high esteem and friendship he has for so excellent a man as Mr. Addington, and will be truly gratified in seeing him this morning at ten o'clock in his usual morning-dress—the King trusts in boots—as he shall be glad to think Mr. Addington does not abstain from an exercise that is so conducive to his health and which will keep him in readiness with his Woolley yeomen to join his Majesty should Buonaparte or any of his savage followers dare to cross the Channel.

To LORD ELDON

8th June 1804.

The King, on returning from his walk in the garden, has found the Lord Chancellor's note, accompanied by the titles of the three Bills wherein the property of the Crown is affected.

His Majesty fully authorises his most excellent Lord Eldon to give his consent to the House of Lords proceeding with these Bills, and in particular approves of the one for laying open Westminster Abbey to Palace Yard. Whatever makes the people more accustomed to view cathedrals must raise their veneration for the Established Church. The King will with equal pleasure consent, when it is proposed, to the purchasing and pulling down the west side of Bridge Street and the houses fronting Westminster Hall, as it will be opening to the traveller that ancient pile which is the seat of administration of the best laws and the most uprightly administered; and if the people really valued the religion and laws of this blessed country, we should stand on a rock that no time could destroy.

To WILLIAM PITT

12th June 1804.

The King cannot refrain from expressing to Mr. Pitt that he thinks the increase of majority last night highly advantageous to the cause of good government; and that the more he reflects on Mr. Pitt's proposition, now framing into a Bill in the House of Commons, the more he sees the judiciousness of the measure.

He cannot think the line of conduct held by Mr. Addington is either wise or dignified. That of Mr. Yorke is open to more in-

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dulgence ; he having been the adviser of all the alterations made in the mode of defence from the time of Lord Pelham's retiring from the service, and the not being a little wedded to his own opinion.

26th August 1804.

. . . As to Mr. Pitt's inquiries as to the King's health, it is perfectly good, and the quiet of the place and salubrity of the air must daily increase his strength. By the advice of Sir Francis Milman, who is here, the King will bathe in the tepid bath, in lieu of the going into the open sea. His Majesty feels this a sacrifice, but will religiously stick to this advice, but does not admire the reasoning, as it is grounded on sixty-six being too far advanced in life for that remedy proving efficacious.

To LORD ELDON

16th December 1804.

The King, though he has banished every spark of irritation and impatience, from feeling truth and fair dealing is the honourable line to combat misapprehension, chicane, and untruth, has with stoical indifference waited the arrival of some information from his Lord Chancellor. The letter from him states that at length the Earl of Moira is summoned to town; consequently a quicker progress is soon to be expected.

The King will certainly be at the Queen's Palace on Wednesday at two o'clock, when he trusts the Lord Chancellor will bring him a copy of the Earl of Moira's paper of last July, wherein it is expressly offered that the King shall have the sole and exclusive care of the person and education of his dear grand-daughter; to which the Lord Chancellor was authorised to declare that his Majesty, in taking the superior direction, never intended to destroy the due inspection and parental rights of both parents.

5th January 1805.

The King authorises the Lord Chancellor to inform the Prince of Wales that he has received with satisfaction the answer to the paper which the Lord Chancellor sent to the Prince of Wales for his Majesty; and will in consequence proceed, with as little delay as the due consideration of so serious a concern requires, to state to the Prince through the same channel, for the Prince's consideration, the names of the persons that shall occur to his Majesty as

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most likely to suit the situations necessary for the care and instruction of his grand-daughter, the Princess Charlotte, who has every gift from nature to render her capable of profiting by that care and attention which may render her in future an honour to her family, and a blessing to those who, if it pleased the Almighty to preserve her life, must in a future day acknowledge her as their sovereign.

To WILLIAM PITT

5th May 1805.

Though the King is much hurt at the virulence against Lord Melville, which is unbecoming the character of Englishmen, who naturally, when a man is fallen, are too noble to pursue their blows, he must feel the prudence and good temper of Mr. Pitt's proposing his being struck out of the Privy Council; and it is hoped, after that, the subject will be buried in oblivion.¹

14th May 1805.

The King is not surprised, considering the enormous length to which gentlemen permit themselves to spin out their speeches, that it should have been necessary to adjourn the debate on the Catholic question from two this morning to the usual hour of meeting this day; it seems wonderful that the fatigue does not incline gentlemen to compress their ideas in a shorter space, which must ever be more agreeable and useful to the auditors, and not less advantageous to the despatch of business.

15th May 1805.

The King is extremely rejoiced at the great majority with which Mr. Fox's motion for a Committee on the Catholic petition has been rejected, and he trusts that such decided majorities in both Houses of Parliament so strongly show the sense of the kingdom on this most essential question, which his Majesty is confident if the opinions of the people without doors could be known would prove still a larger majority on this occasion, that he trusts it will never be brought forward again.

¹ Earl Stanhope's *Life of Pitt*, vol. iv., Appendix, p. xxiv.

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To BISHOP HURD

10th June 1805.

The King being prevented by a complaint in his eyes from the great pleasure of visiting the Bishop of Worcester, on which he had placed the greatest satisfaction, though Lord Loughborough has written to explain the cause of this disappointment, yet his Majesty thinks that a scrawl from himself may be satisfactory to the good Bishop, when containing a promise that, should the Almighty permit the evil to be removed, the visit will be performed next summer.

The King cannot conclude without expressing his hopes then to find his excellent friend in as good health as he has now reason to think the case. His Majesty has collected some books for the library at Hartlebury Castle, and will order them to be sent to Worcester.¹

To WILLIAM PITT

12th June 1805.

The King has great satisfaction in having just learnt from Mr. Pitt the appearance of the House of Commons yesterday, on Mr. Whitbread's motion for impeaching Lord Melville, and on the amendment of Mr. Bond for a prosecution in lieu of it, both of which he thinks can most justly be resisted. No one more sincerely blames the incorrectness of Lord Melville's conduct, but no one can be more adverse to any further measures being taken against him. All that is necessary for example to futurity has been done, and anything more is a wanton punishing of a fallen man, which is not the usual conduct of an Englishman, who never strikes his enemy when at his feet.

To THE CABINET

27th November 1805.

The King should not do justice to his Ministers, if he did not trust that they have duly considered the very strong measure they are now recommending; but as he has by fatal experience seen former expeditions fail from being too harshly undertaken, he

¹ Bentley's *Miscellany*, vol. xxvi. p. 552.

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cannot but state that it occurs to him that, in the present much exhausted state of his Electorate, it will be impossible to find provision for so large an augmentation to the force now leaving there, and that without . . .¹ it will be impossible for the forces to proceed from thence, and that, till the French are driven from Hamelen, my Electorate is in a most dangerous situation, if the British and Russians leave that country to such a friend as Prussia or an enemy as France.

These ideas make me wish the measure may be calmly examined before final orders are given for an embarkation at so late a period of the year. But, should means be found to dispel these difficulties, the King cannot but think Lord Cathcart a very proper person to command such an expedition.

To LORD CASTLEREAGH

30th November 1805.

The King has just been informed of Lord Castlereagh's note, forwarding the bulletin from the Tyrol. It is impossible, even at so early a date, not recurring to the Austrian vapour that the fall of Vienna should not oblige their making terms with the French. His Majesty hopes no British money will be forwarded to those ignominious Courts.

The idea of sending any corps to Holland is quite out of the question. After this fatal event nothing can move from here to that quarter. It must be seen what part Russia and Prussia will pursue. If they have common prudence they will cordially join, and in the spring attack France and her new ally.

15th August 1807.

The King approves of the proposal, submitted by Lord Castlereagh, that the disposable force now in the Mediterranean should be withdrawn, with the exception of a garrison of 8000 men, to remain for the defence of Sicily. His Majesty, however, conceives that as this force is no longer required for offensive purposes in the Mediterranean, it would be far more advisable to bring home the brigade of Guards and some of the finest corps, than to station them for any time at Gibraltar, where they would suffer materially from crowded quarters and want of fresh provisions. It must also

¹ The words which are here omitted are illegible.

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be recollected that the garrison of Malt. has been more or less drained, and will require making up, and when the losses in Egypt, and other casualties, are adverted to, the numbers to be brought home, after leaving 8000 effective men in Sicily, cannot be very considerable.

The regiments may be much better completed, and prepared for any service at home, than in Gibraltar; and as the brigade of Guards are not applicable to colonial service, it would be useless to shut them up in Gibraltar, and equally unadvisable to leave so fine a corps for defensive purposes in Sicily.

To THE PRINCE OF WALES

["The King," says Lord Malmesbury, "sent his plan for the Princess in writing to the Prince by the Chancellor. It was not only a very judicious and wise one, but drawn up most admirably, and full of fine and affectionate feelings."]

The Prince of Wales, having through the Earl of Moira, expressed his wish that the education and care of the person of his daughter shall be placed under the immediate inspection of the King, his Majesty is willing to take this charge upon himself, and has prepared a house at Windsor for the reception of the Princess Charlotte. The sum now issued each quarter out of his Majesty's Civil List for the maintenance and education of the young Princess should in future be paid into the hands of the person who shall be named by the King to defray those expenses, and such additional charges as may arise from the change of establishment shall be defrayed by the King.

His Majesty proposes to name a Bishop to superintend Princess Charlotte's education, as it cannot be that alone of a female; but she, being the presumptive heir of the crown, must have one of a more extended nature. His Majesty also thinks it desirable that the Bishop should fix on a proper clergyman to instruct the young Princess in religion and Latin, and daily to read prayers. That there should be another instructor for history, geography, belles-lettres, and French, and masters for writing, music, and dancing. That the care and behaviour of the Princess should be entrusted to a governess; and as she must be both day and night under the care of responsible persons, that a sub-governess and assistant sub-governess should be named.

These seem to be necessary outlines to form such a plan as may make so promising a child turn out as it is the common interest of the King and his family—and, indeed, the whole

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nation—eagerly wish. It may not be improper to add that the conduct of the Dowager Countess of Elgin has been so exemplary that, though her age and weak state of health may make her retiring necessary, the King will give her a pension equal to her present salary.

The King's last autograph letter was to the Prime Minister Perceval in 1810.

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exemplary
make her
equal to her

Minister

APPENDIX B

HANNAH LIGHTFOOT

THE question of whether Hannah Lightfoot, "the fair Quakeress," was ever the mistress or the wife of George III. has been fully discussed by Mr. Thoms, who a good many years ago printed a brochure on the subject. The conclusion of his investigations was that Hannah was probably a myth, that not only was she not George's wife or mistress, but that she never even existed. I am bound to add that since Mr. Thoms wrote some very pertinent evidence has transpired. I will not say this evidence is convincing, but it is very plausible, and it is certainly very interesting, and as such I present it to the reader.

Some three years ago (in April 1904) Lord Sackville received from a lady in America, Mrs. Aline Shane-Devin, of Washington, D.C., an inquiry concerning Sir Joshua Reynolds's portrait of Hannah Lightfoot (Mrs. Axford) at Knole Park, and the following statement, which by his Lordship's permission I now make public:—

"My father's mother was Hannah Lightfoot Rex, daughter of George Rex, son of the third George of the Hanoverian line, and of Hannah Lightfoot, the Quakeress. My great-grandfather, George Rex, came to America during the Revolutionary War, and was from first to last a devoted Royalist. He married in Pennsylvania a woman of German birth, and by her had a large family. His oldest son was called George, his oldest daughter, my grandmother, receiving her grandmother's name. The origin of the family has always been known and accepted by its members, though the circumstances connected with it were felt to be of so discreditable a nature to *both sides* that it was very seldom mentioned, and then as something to be deplored and concealed.

"We of this generation, however, are far enough removed from the scandal to appreciate the romantic interest that in most minds attaches to the love affairs of a Prince, even when they reach their consummation 'without benefit of clergy': a conclusion which according to some authorities is in this particular case open to question.

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"The very little confirmatory evidence obtainable upon this point, however, does not seem to me to be of a convincing character, even though one may heartily wish to be persuaded. Therefore in asking for information concerning the reputed portrait of Hannah Lightfoot, I do so only to gratify a natural interest, which you will I hope appreciate in an ancestress whose charms are said to equal her misfortunes, as well as conduced to them and the mystery of whose fate must still arouse compassion."

How, one may ask, came this portrait at Knole? Was there any connection between the former proprietor of Knole, Lord George Germain, afterwards Lord Sackville, the friend and confidant of the King, and Mrs. Axford?

There are many points in Mrs. Shane-Devin's narrative which need clearing up: but I must leave the mystery of Hannah Lightfoot—if it may be called a mystery—to others to solve. At the same time I beg to express my warm thanks to Lord Sackville for his further kindness in permitting a reproduction of the Knole portrait to appear in the present volume.

APPENDIX C

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