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VOL. 129

HISTORY OF ENGLAND
1688-1815

BY E. M. WRONG, M.A.

LONDON

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HISTORY OF ENGLAND

1688-1815

BY

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LONDON

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HISTORY OF ENGLAND

CHAPTER I

SETTLEMENT AND WAR

With the Revolution England entered a period of her history more sober and continuous, if less inspiring, than the two centuries past. It was an age of foreign, no longer of civil, war; for over sixty years in the next century and a quarter France and England fought for ascendancy in Europe and for dominion beyond the sea. England generally had Continental allies, but at times she battled alone; of coalitions she was the surest member and the pivot. In the struggle she doubled the Empire begun by the Stuarts and Cromwell, lost most of her early gains, and on the ruins built a second empire wider than the first. The Industrial Revolution slowly gathered force after the foundation of a national bank to meet war-time needs, and by the year of Waterloo was changing the face and mind of the country far faster than its political sense could realise or regulate. In thought the age between James's flight and the downfall of Napoleon was more a time of digestion than of new ideas. The conflicts whose roots lie in the Reformation found at last, so far as political expression was concerned, a national settlement, and the fury and brilliance that had made England the most unstable of European countries faded gradually into the cold light of accepted compromise. The Constitution, once the principles of the Revolution had been worked out, saw no cataclysms, but many adjustments. The ascendancy of Parliament became clearer as the financial and military necessities of the government grew; Scotland, and a century later, Ireland, were brought into this Parliament. There the most ambitious and eloquent members of a well-educated aristocracy fought for mastery: they shared the prejudices of their class, but their views differed widely in detail, and represented more closely than is often allowed the conscious political desires of the nation, even when they ignored its unspoken wants. Law and tradition grew in force, until unconstitutional methods lost nearly all their appeal. We begin the age with an England embarked on a limited revolution meant to conserve, not to destroy, but doubtful of its own mind, feeling herself menaced by a centralised and far stronger neighbour in France, threatened at home by parties still without the restraint that was to make them a fairly efficient means of government. We end it with a United Kingdom that is the firmest state in Europe, burdened with taxes and mutinous, yet nearer to being the arbiter of Europe than ever before or since.

1688 is small fry as revolutions go, but it marked a change in the political character of England. She had gained an unsavoury reputation for swinging between violent extremes, from Tudor despotism based on popular consent to the autocracy of Charles I., thence to presbyterian dominance of the House of Commons, from that to the rule of the sword, and back through a restoration of the monarchy made by Calvinistic parliamentarians to the twin supremacy in Church and State of parson and squire. Recently the pendulum had oscillated still more rapidly, from Whig to Tory reigns of terror. Every party aimed at the destruction of its enemies, or at least at their permanent exclusion from Office. There were few events of the last half-century in which all could take pride, for victories had been won either over part of the nation or while part was proscribed. Must the pendulum swing again through a shortening arc? Temporary unity against the Catholic-absolutist policy of James had brought William to London, but alliances easy to weld in Opposition break down when something constructive must be done. Who was to rule and on what conditions? Even if England, a proud and quarrelsome nation, set the crown on William's head, could she keep it there, accept a king whom many must regard as a conqueror, who came from a nation that she had fought thrice in the last forty years?

The immediate need was for some government. James's second flight eased the problem: it deprived the Tories, who had mainly acquiesced in rather than favoured William's adventure, of the keystone of their creed and the natural head of their party. It made slightly plausible the idea that he had resigned his rights, not been deprived of them. The day after James landed in France, William, at the request of an impromptu assembly, assumed the government. A convention to settle Crown and Constitution was called for January; it was to be in every respect a parliament save that no king bade it meet.

When the Convention gathered on January 22 it showed at once that the apparent unanimity of the autumn had gone. Few wanted James back in power, but the Church party, led by Nottingham and the bishops, hoped to keep him as titular King, vesting the government in Mary or William as regent, and half the Lords upheld this view. Danby proclaimed Mary's right to be full queen; Halifax and the Whigs argued for William—Halifax because he thought this the most practical course, many Whigs hoping by omitting the children of James to slay hereditary right. The Commons swiftly agreed to a portmanteau resolution that James had violated the original contract between King and people (an inaccurate popular version of Whig political theory), had broken the nation's fundamental laws, and finally had abdicated, so that the throne was vacant: "abdication" conciliated some Tories who disputed the nation's right to depose its prince. The Lords

debated this resolution, and the next, who should rule, for a week; barely rejected a regency, denied a vacancy in the Crown, and finally, when William let it be known that he would be neither regent nor prince consort, agreed with the Commons. William and Mary were nominated as joint rulers, but the government was given to William alone.

Meanwhile the Commons had drawn up a declaration that condemned various acts of James, and denied the Crown's power to suspend laws or to keep an army without Parliamentary consent. On February 13, 1689, William and Mary accepted this, and were proclaimed. The Convention declared itself a parliament, and turned to settle the nation's problems. But this attempt to legalise revolution did not make it secure. War with France was certain: Ireland was aflame for Catholicism and James: none could say how Scotland would go. In England the Anglican clergy, who since 1660 had preached the duty of non-resistance to Government in a crescendo, doubted that they could accept a monarchy based on rebellion. The Whigs hoped to revenge the last seven years on the Tories, and the Tories, normally the larger party, might abandon a settlement based on Whig principles.

Nor was William's character a source of political strength. It was easier to admire than to love him; he was in thought and tastes a foreigner, who found little in England to his liking. He treated the frequent disloyalty of English ministers with a cold magnanimity that sprang more from policy than from kindliness. He was often peevish if seldom cruel, and it was only to a few friends or in battle that his manners became frank. His dislike of court gossip, joined to asthma unbearable in London smoke, made him shut himself off from society at Hampton Court or in Kensington fields, and alienated those who liked to flutter in Whitehall. He was the best diplomatist of his time, but never understood English political ideas. He wished to retain for the Crown all the powers of Charles II. save those forfeited in the Declaration of Right. But the Whigs, his natural allies, aimed at more than a change of king; they wanted to define unsettled constitutional points in a parliamentary sense and to make William a channel for their exercise of patronage. Tories, though better friends of monarchy, were reluctant to see him use powers they would have left unquestioned to a Stuart. The new King had been created in men's sight by man, not by God, and coronation without birthright could make him at best a candle that tried to replace a sun. Moreover, the Tories were very English, and everything Dutch about William jarred them into opposition; they were soon fighting harder than the Whigs for an English parliament's supremacy. William felt criticism as a slight, could not see that constitutional change was in the nature of things, and thought each new limit on his power another piece of ingratitude to the nation's liberator. But he had a saving sense of reality that kept him from resisting to the end: he gave way where Charles I. would have tried evasion, James II. force.

The most critical time came swiftly. In March, 1689, James landed in Ireland; on the same day two Scottish regiments mutinied at Ipswich; five days later Dundee fled from the Presbyterian Convention at Edinburgh to raise the Highlands for James. In April James was before Londonderry, the only place in Ireland save Enniskillen that resisted his authority. A Grand Alliance of Austria, Spain, Holland, England and Savoy took arms against the threat of French ascendancy, and a struggle began that was to last, with a short interlude, for twenty-four years. Prospects were so uncertain that Danby, who had rallied the north and many Tories to William, and Halifax who had helped to crown him, thought the odds were against his triumph.

Protestant dissent needed attention, for James had made the Church bid for its support, and the Clarendon code was no longer enforceable. The Lords agreed to widen the establishment and to comprehend in it moderate Nonconformists. The Commons feared the suggestion, and chloroformed it by leaving Convocation to take the first step. That body met in November, and its lower house, more conservative than the bishops and less political, refused to consider the plan. It was too late or too early for such a measure: the extreme Dissenters must have been omitted, and feared that comprehension would strengthen a persecuting Church; the moderates clung to independence, the clergy to their monopoly of endowments and authority. But toleration could not be shelved, and a bill legalising Nonconformist worship under narrow limitations passed unopposed. It was the only part of James's policy that the Revolution adopted, though he had offered dissent a share in government, not bare tolerance only. Its importance lay in the future, for, narrow as it was, it reversed the policy of twenty-five years, recognised that uniformity was unattainable, and moved towards the separation of Church and State.

William was as well inclined to toleration as his father-in-law, and asked Parliament to modify the Test Act so as not to exclude any Protestant from the royal service. He found few supporters, and indeed such a change would have set half the nation's pulpits thundering denunciation, but the Whigs retaliated on the victorious Church by enacting that all beneficed clergy and officials must take an oath of allegiance by August, 1689, on pain of suspension for six months and deprivation after if they were still recalcitrant. The great majority swore, though not all happily; but about four hundred, including Archbishop Sancroft and seven bishops, refused and were eventually ejected. Thus began the Non-juring schism, which lasted for over a hundred years. Most of those turned out would have done no mischief, and neither

preached nor intrigued against William, but they would not vow obedience to an order based on a right of resistance that they denied.

The war, William's chief care, went badly at first. France devastated the Rhine palatinate; a French squadron repulsed an English in Bantry Bay and landed troops in Ireland, where a Parliament that contained only fifteen Protestants in both houses was busy undoing the Cromwellian land settlement, attainting some 2500 persons, and declaring full independence. Kirke failed in June to relieve Derry; Dundee had swept such clans as hated the Campbells into an army that could not last, but might overrun half Scotland. Prospects brightened in July. At Killiecrankie Dundee smashed Mackay's force but fell in victory, and four weeks later his army dispersed. Derry was relieved in the same week, and an allied victory eased French pressure in Flanders.

William found Parliament increasingly troublesome as the year wore on. It voted him supplies, but not, as was the custom, for life; this was natural, since the Commons wished to ensure frequent sessions, but William thought it showed unjustified distrust. In fact, there was no danger of an attack on Parliament's life; two securities had unwittingly been created. The Mutiny Act, passed after the Ipswich mutiny had been crushed by Dutch troops, was one, for it legalised a standing army for seven months only, and if it expired military law must cease and soldiers become liable only to a civil court and for civil offences. The second was the war, certain to make annual votes necessary whatever permanent supplies were given to the king: the expense of government was steadily rising, and even peace would not make the monarchy independent.

Parliament turned the Declaration into the Bill of Rights, but most of its time went in disputes between the Houses and in party struggles of increasing bitterness. A Tory reaction had begun. This might seem a reason for Whig moderation, but the instinct then was to meet rising opposition by hastening the pace. The nation wanted an indemnity for those who had connived at James's arbitrary acts; none wanted it more than William, who wished to be king over both parties, not to see one harrying the other into extremes. The Whigs admitted that indemnity there must be, but lingered over exceptions till the bill became a proscription as well as a pardon. At length to a measure restoring the corporations packed by James, they added, while Tory members kept Christmas holiday, a clause making all concerned in the late surrender of charters incapable of corporation office for seven years. This would drive all prominent Tories from local councils, making these, and the seats in Parliament they filled, Whig preserves. The Tories mustered and removed the clause; the Whigs delayed indemnity still longer. William dissolved Parliament, and increased the Tory element in his ministry.

The House of Commons elected in March, 1690, was less Whig than the Convention; it accepted from the Crown an Act of Grace pardoning all save a few supporters of James. This Parliament lasted till October, 1695, and during its life the Tory party accepted the Revolution, and came to represent closely the ideas, prejudices and fears of an insular countryside. Dislike of moneyed and manufacturing interests and of dissent, suspicion of the Court's power to bribe members of Parliament with office, hatred of a standing army, the belief that all wealth came from the land, love for the Church, fondness for country sports and rustic paternalism—these were the chief articles in the Tory creed, at bottom more social than political. In many it was based mainly on fear and dislike, but in some it rose to genuine passion for England's past and a love of the ancient order; it was instinctive more than philosophical. Naturally such a party frequently disobeyed its leaders.

Against it stood the Whigs, weaker numerically but better drilled. They saw the world changing, finance growing in importance, they believed in toleration for Nonconformists, since these were amongst their strongest supporters, and they were not so distrustful of a court that they hoped to control. They feared the army less than did the Tories and admitted its necessity. The Tories often forgot Europe, the Whigs England; they seldom allowed for the grievances of a landed interest on whom taxation bore heavily. They disliked democracy, but at rare intervals party war forced them towards it. When at the end of William's reign a Tory House of Commons stood against King and electorate, the Whigs claimed that Parliament was but a trustee of the people's rights. With a Whig majority this idea vanished, but the constitutional programme of each party shows the Whigs nearer than their opponents to modern British ideas of government. The Tories wanted a Place Act, to prevent any member of the Commons holding office under the Crown. This would have diminished Government influence in the Lower House and made more irresponsible the most powerful body in the country; it would have left members of Parliament free to criticise the Ministry without the restraint imposed by the prospect of having to put their views to the test. The Whig demand was for a Triennial Act—no Parliament to last for more than three years. Toryism had more sense of the past than Whiggery, and probably the more genuine religion, but it was blinder to the future. Though one party shaded into its rival through a centre block of fluctuating opinion, each was intolerant of the other and aimed at its destruction, not at temporary victory only. The idea that a country's oscillation between parties would help to keep politics pure and ideals fresh had not arisen. Nearly all men thought their opponents

a dangerous faction, and such as belonged to no party held this true of both.

Prominent men were often vague or neutral in their party views. Clarendon and Rochester, Mary's uncles, were more Jacobite than Tory, dissatisfied with the Revolution and distrusted by the Court; Nottingham was industrious and honest, a consistent defender of the Church, loyal to William, whose rights he doubted, a Tory but a Churchman first. Danby, now Marquis of Caermarthen, and soon to be Duke of Leeds, was too deeply committed to the Revolution to draw back, too much hated by the Whigs to leave the Tory party that he had built; he worked himself to the bone when in power, sulked when other advice prevailed, was unscrupulous but true to William. Seymour, a violent Tory, carried great weight with the back-benchers: he was more dangerous in opposition than useful in office. On the Whig side, Somers had emerged, Montague was rising. Somers gave an impression of magnanimity and moderation not wholly deserved; he was a fine lawyer and had few enmities, but often put party above national interest. Montague was adroit in finance, overbearing with success, and bore ill the inevitable reversals of political fortune. These two, with Wharton and Russell, the admiral, were the chiefs of the Whig Junto. Wharton was dissolute and unscrupulous, a political organiser of ability; Russell's personal ethics stood higher, his political consistency not so high, and though his services to the Revolution were great they were amply rewarded and often grudgingly given.

Halifax, the acutest critic of politics in England, was of no party. His tendency to rally to the weaker side and his indecision in office robbed him of the importance that his ability promised. Separated from him and never wholly of any party stood a group of four men, Shrewsbury, Godolphin, Marlborough, Sunderland. Shrewsbury was the most partisan, an accepted Whig, but he hated office, was sensitive to responsibility, and left his party when it began to plunge. Godolphin and Marlborough were nominally Tories, but could work with either side. Godolphin, a skilled financier, proved indispensable to any Ministry. Marlborough, the ablest man in England, was rightly suspected of treachery and was known to be grasping; his serenity and cool judgment were unique, and when the nation's interests and his own coincided his services were invaluable. But for much of the reign he was in disgrace, for his patron Anne waged feud with Mary, and William distrusted him, Sunderland returned from flight abroad in 1690 the best-hated man in England; for he had betrayed every cause in turn. His cynical insight steadily increased his influence with William, and though he held it safer to work behind the scenes, his hand is visible in many temperate readjustments of policy. These four were ever in close contact, almost a third party by themselves.

Most of these men at one time or another assured James that they bewailed the Revolution and were secretly working in his interest. The fact that despite words they seldom or never did anything to restore the exiled king only palliates their treachery by making it double. In truth constant revolutions are fatal to political morality. When system after system falls in ruins every man of note finds almost overwhelming the temptation to insure life and estates by verbal treason. He must have a friend in each camp, else another reversal will mean certain loss of office, probable forfeiture of lands, perhaps the scaffold. Some stability is necessary for honesty in business or honour in politics. The men of this generation had not been bred to heroism; their political lessons had been learnt after the Restoration.

During 1690 and 1691 England achieved the reconquest of Ireland. William risked a French invasion by sweeping England of troops, and in June, 1690, led a powerful force to Ulster. He caught James's smaller army in retreat and broke it at the Boyne. Dublin fell, and he pressed westward, but was repulsed at Limerick and had to leave his victory half won. Marlborough captured Cork and Kinsale in the autumn, cutting from the Irish the best bases for French support. James hoped to return to London at the head of a French army, for the French won a naval victory off Beachy Head, and the Channel was at their mercy, but they wasted a chance that never recurred. Next year Ginkell stamped out Irish resistance; he swept into Connaught, took Athlone, crushed an Irish army at Aghrim, and at Limerick forced a final surrender. The terms were those of fair amnesty, and William strove to honour them, but the restored Irish Protestant Parliament threw moderation overboard. Catholic Ireland lay crushed and powerless but was not won to loyalty.

From 1690 to the peace the war in Flanders moved in a slow rhythm. William went to Holland every spring, and spent the summer on campaign. When the forces had dispersed into winter quarters, he returned to England. Parliamentary sessions were crowded into the winter months; he never suffered one when he was abroad. His military fortunes improved as the war dragged on and France felt the exhaustion of struggle on four fronts—Flanders, the Rhine, Savoy and Spain. In 1691 the French captured Mons, but failed at Liège. In 1692 they won their greatest success in the Netherlands by taking Namur, and followed this by defeating William at Steinkirk. Next year Luxembourg again beat William at Landen, and late in the year took Charleroi. Despite these defeats a balance had been reached; 1694 was a year of stalemate, but with the allies on the offensive. In 1695 William re-captured Namur and it was clear that the tide had turned; French finance was breaking under the strain. The allied advantage was not pressed in 1696 for two reasons: Montague's reform of the English coinage caused a shortage of cash that paralysed the army, and Savoy made a separate

peace with Louis, which freed thirty thousand French for service elsewhere. Peace negotiations, desired by all parties save Spain, the most incapable of the allies, began in May, 1697; in July France and England agreed on terms and the others followed in a few weeks.

The ebb and flow of war was less clear outside Flanders. A Jacobite plan for invasion in 1691 was conditional on Louis offering religious toleration in France and on James dismissing his Catholic advisers, and these terms would have wrecked it even had it not been discovered. In 1692 Louis made ready a full-dress expedition, and James launched a declaration that came as near to repentance for his acts as anything he ever penned, but the English and Dutch fleets ruined the French navy off La Hogue. In 1693 the French scattered a huge convoy destined for the Eastern Mediterranean and took part of it. England retaliated in 1694 by effective use of sea-power: she sent her main fleet to the Mediterranean for the first time, and preserved Barcelona from the French. But an attack on Brest was decisively beaten and coastal raids achieved little. The battle fleet remained abroad for nearly two years, maintaining Spanish resistance and holding Savoy to the Alliance. Its pressure stung France in 1696 to an attempted invasion of England, coincident with a Jacobite rising and a plot to murder William, the last so badly framed that men who condemned assassination were brought into the secret, and three of them gave information to the Government.

By the peace of Ryswick of 1697 Louis recognised William as king. It was a temporary settlement only, for Louis had been held, not beaten, and he still hoped to dominate Europe. He had lost his English catspaw in 1688, but a prospect opened of a safer though less vigorous satellite in Spain. Her king, Charles II., was childless, feeble-minded, decrepit; when he died Louis could hope to get part of his empire, perhaps even to seat one of his own family on the empty throne. It had three claimants, Austrian, Bavarian, Bourbon. All Europe saw the danger, and William planned to meet it by agreement with France.

The Partition Treaty of September, 1698, promised Spain and the Indies to the Bavarian claimant, Naples and Guipuscoa to the French Dauphin, Milan to the Austrian candidate. Spain heard of it, and to keep her empire united made the Bavarian prince heir to the whole. But he died of smallpox in February 1699, and all was to do again with the claimants reduced to two. A second Partition Treaty in February, 1700, gave Spain, the Indies and the Netherlands to the Austrian Archduke; and to France, Lorraine, Naples, Sicily, Guipuscoa and some Tuscan ports. Austria rejected this, and asked for more. Parliament knew of neither treaty, and would have denounced the second, which promised France a Mediterranean predominance thought perilous to English trade. A dangerous constitutional precedent had been given in the first pact, when Somers, the Lord Chancellor, sent sealed powers in blank to William: if ministerial responsibility meant anything, Somers was responsible for a deed of which he was ignorant. Both treaties were the work of William himself, not of his ministers.

They brought a storm in 1701, but were not its only cause. Relations between Government and Commons were growing more difficult. Parliament was jealous and irresponsible; no man could pledge its action with certainty. The best remedy for the tendency of any assembly to increase its powers is responsibility; the nation holds the Commons to account, and the Commons act through leaders they must follow or replace. But this can work only under certain conditions. It presupposes a confident national sense; rules of fair play binding on all so that a defeated party will not appeal to arms nor a victorious one make its triumph immortal by legislation; as much agreement on means as dispute about ends. The rules that keep party politics from becoming faction had not yet been framed, so when the Commons asserted themselves it was less to control than to hamper the Government.

Charles II. had weakened opposition by patronage. This was now being systematised but was still incomplete, uncodified, and provoked spasmodic assault. Attacks were made on placemen that if successful would have turned the British Constitution into something more like the American. One Place Bill was beaten in the Lords in 1692, a second vetoed by the Crown in 1694. William resisted other less dubious changes. An attempt to make judges independent of the Crown and dismissable only at Parliament's request failed to get his assent in 1691, for he saw in it an attack on his influence. He vetoed a Triennial Bill in March 1693, against the wishes of his ministers. But next year he accepted it, for he wanted Shrewsbury as Secretary of State, and Shrewsbury made this a condition. At the same time the censorship of the press, which hung by a temporary act, expired not so much from belief in free expression, as because no censor pleased both parties. The result was an increase in pamphlet war and the beginning of newspapers.

An election in the autumn of 1695, designed to use the popularity won by William's success at Namur, returned a Parliament less docile than he had hoped. In 1696 lavish grants of Welsh lands to favourites raised a storm: for the first time a king's right to give away Crown property was successfully attacked. Mary had died of smallpox in December, 1694, and her loss was expected to increase friction between court and people. The needs of war and the murder plot of

1696 postponed trouble, but it came on the heels of peace. Parliament wished to cut down drastically forces which had reached nearly 90,000 soldiers and 40,000 seamen. In December, 1697, they fixed the army at about 10,000, with 10,000 sailors, and 3000 marines; this was an issue of country against court on which both parties were agreed. William evaded the full reduction, and kept some 15,000 soldiers in England, with rather more on the Irish establishment. A general election in the summer of 1698 strengthened the opposition. Parliament attacked vigorously, voted an army, besides the Irish establishment (then 12,000 strong), of only 7000 men, none of whom should be foreigners—a direct attack on William's Dutch guards. Partly because he thought peace unstable, partly because, king-like, he resented Parliamentary control of the army, William felt this bitterly, and talked of retiring to Holland. Twice before he had threatened this, soon after the Revolution and when he was indispensable, but now the threat was vain. He asked for his Dutch guards, but his earlier refusal to suggest a moderate establishment had cost him his chance, and he had to yield.

A second storm soon followed. In 1690 William had promised to consult Parliament before he granted away the lands to be forfeited in Ireland once the rebellion was crushed. The war was over, the debt great, and Parliament thought the sale of these lands would reduce taxation, but large tracts had been alienated by the king. By a clause in a money bill which it was impossible to reject the Commons appointed a commission of inquiry, and in 1700 it reported that William had divided a quarter of a million acres between Albemarle (Keppel) and Portland's son (Bentinck), besides making other large gifts. A Bill was drawn up to resume the lands, and the Commons forced it through the Lords by coupling it to the land tax. Another revolution seemed possible, so high did party feeling run; the Whig Junto was forced from office, and the Government became more Tory than it had been since 1688.

Three deaths in a few months altered the situation. In July, 1700, the Duke of Gloucester, last of Anne's seventeen children, and after her the only heir to the throne provided by the Bill of Rights, died of smallpox. In November with Charles II. the Spanish Hapsburgs expired. September, 1701, ended the life of James. Spain had to find an immediate, England an ultimate royal house. Parliament easily decided that future kings of England must be Protestant; this ruled out the Pretender and House of Savoy, and made Sophia of Hanover, granddaughter of James I., inevitable. She was seventy, wanted the Crown neither herself nor for her children, and only under pressure withdrew her suggestion that the Pretender would make a better ruler than a German prince. Charles II. of Spain was found to have bequeathed his realms to Philip of Anjou, grandson of Louis, as the one chance of holding them together. Louis accepted the bequest and tore up the Partition Treaty: this meant war with Austria but not necessarily with England, where public opinion preferred a French king for the whole Spanish Empire to such direct aggrandisement of France as the treaty had promised. At this point, with war certain in Europe, William humiliated in England, Parliament was dissolved, and three thousand candidates contested the bitterest election yet known. Victory went to the peace party, the Tories.

French aggressiveness swung the nation back to William. Louis recognised Philip's conditional claim to the French throne, in violation of earlier pledges. In February, 1701, French troops occupied seven of the fortresses in the Spanish Netherlands, which William hoped to see garrisoned by the Dutch. France claimed a monopoly of non-Spanish trade with the Spanish colonies, and this threatened English prosperity. War feeling grew through the spring of 1701. Parliament was prepared to stand by Holland, but its investigation of diplomatic events since the peace made it rage at the way England's action had been secretly pledged in the partition treaties, and at the Whigs who had then been in power. Somers, Orford (Russell), Halifax (Montague), and Portland, William's chief agent in foreign affairs, were impeached. At the same time the Act of Settlement, which gave the crown after Anne's death to Hanover, was passed by Tory votes. As far as an Act could it slew the former Tory theory of divine right, by ignoring the nearer Stuarts in favour of a remote Protestant. As a price for this the Act made any dismissal of judges depend on Parliament, banished placemen from the Commons, forbade the monarch to leave England without parliamentary approval, and closed Privy Council and Parliament to all save Englishmen: councillors were individually to sign and be responsible for their decisions.

The Act touched William in several tender places, but he agreed to it since he lost none of his own powers: it was only to come into force on Anne's death. Had it done so unamended the constitution would be different to-day. The Tory theory, as expressed in it, was that ministerial responsibility was individual, not collective, enforceable by prosecution of the minister, not by defeat of his party. Coupled with a prohibition on royal officials being members of the Commons, this would make a Cabinet as we know it impossible. The years of Anne's reign gave time for second thoughts, and these clauses were repealed.

The Commons became bellicose slowly, the nation quicker. A petition from Kent, in May, 1701, criticising Parliament for spending its time on prosecuting ex-ministers instead of preparing for war, was treated as a libel, and its presenters jailed. The Lords stood by the impeached peers and acquitted them all. During the summer William made his last effort

for peace, but France rejected his proposals. War began in Lombardy, and in August Marlborough negotiated the Grand Alliance with Austria and Holland: a few days later James II. died, and Louis made one of his worst blunders. He recognised the Pretender, James Edward, as King of England, a flat insult to a country that only a few months before had regulated its succession otherwise, and so made the Tories as ready for war as the Whigs.

William broke off relations with France, dissolved Parliament and obtained a House more amenable than the last. In February, 1702, a fall from his horse broke his collarbone; it was too much for his worn-out body. He sank rapidly; a fortnight after his fall he assented to acts that raised the armed forces of the nation to 80,000 men and attainted the Pretender. Next day, March 8, he died, aged 51, and Marlborough stepped quietly into the direction of affairs. One of William's last wishes had been union with Scotland; that and the defeat of Louis XIV., which had been the chief aim of his life, were to be the greatest achievements of the next reign. France, the most powerful state in Europe, its accepted leader in fashion and thought, seemed likely to become supreme by land, where her chief rival was the disorganised Empire, now an appendage of Austria. But fruitless European struggle was to deflect French energies from sea and colonies, and to leave England dominant in these twin fields.

CHAPTER II

VICTORY AND PARTIES

Anne sat more firmly on the throne than William. She owed this not to her brain, but to her sex, family and tastes. She was a devout Anglican and the last Protestant Stuart; most Jacobites saw in her a plausible imitation of a legitimist monarch, and since the alternative was a boy whose claims could wait, they lay quiet. Unlike William, Anne had no international aims, to her England was an end, not a means, and it dimly felt the difference. In politics she was incapable of a judgment that did not turn on her liking or distaste for the sponsor of a cause, so she left foreign policy, which could not be determined in this way, to her ministers and kept Church patronage for her particular sphere. She was stupid, obstinate, lavish with confidence once given and reluctant to recall it, but never a complete tool of her favourites—the Duchess of Marlborough at the beginning, Mrs. Masham at the end of her reign. Her prejudices frequently coincided with the nation's and increased her popularity. She had three chief aims, to be Queen, to favour the Church's right wing, to give her husband, Prince George of Denmark, offices he was incompetent to fill. More troublesome to her ministers than Anne's wifely devotion was her refusal, like Elizabeth's, to contemplate her successor; she would have no Hanoverian visit England nor any Jacobite mention her half-brother's claims.

The reign saw a succession of victories such as England had never known, the formation of Great Britain, and a rising party warfare that reached its climax just before Anne's death. The nation was Tory at heart, though for a time the Whigs prevailed through their discipline and whole-hearted support of the war. Behind the Tories stood the rank and file of the clergy, with enormous though often latent power, increasingly vocal, intolerant, and hating a Presbyterian even more than a Roman Catholic. The Whigs drew support from the power of money, for a time from moderate Tories, also from the slow and un-remarked tendency of the time, which gradually undermined the extreme Tory position. With free printing, men of letters became a power no Government could neglect; Addison and Steele wrote for the Whigs, Swift for the Tories, Defoe on behalf of moderation. Party coloured everything, the coffee-houses, literary and dining clubs, commissions in the forces, theology. But despite its fury a softening of manners had begun, fallen ministers went less in fear of their lives than before, and the ablest controversialists found sarcasm a better weapon than mere abuse.

On William's death Marlborough became generalissimo and virtual Prime Minister. He and Godolphin, the Lord Treasurer, began one of the most effective partnerships of history. They put the war above party triumph, and drew support first from the Tories, their own party, who gained a majority in the election of 1702, then from the moderates of either side, finally from the Whigs alone. Marlborough saw to diplomacy and strategy, Godolphin to finance and control of Parliament. Their partnership lasted for eight years, in which Scotland was brought into Union and Bourbon ascendancy over Europe permanently destroyed.

France seemed a more dangerous enemy than in the last war. Then her only foreign help came from Turkey, now she had the Spanish dominions and Bavaria in alliance, with Hungary ready to flare into revolt behind the Emperor. Flanders, where William and Luxembourg had manœuvred indecisively, was in her hands. But her position was weaker than appeared. Spain was little more helpful as an ally than dangerous as an enemy, vulnerable and as much a drain as a support. England's military tradition, begun by the Ironsides, had revived under William, and her troops were no longer the undisciplined recruits of 1689. Marlborough and Eugene stood far above their opponents: Marlborough's chance had come late, for he was fifty-two—Napoleon's age at death—but he had a triumphant genius for war, where he was a Shakespeare opposed by mediocrity. Besides commanding the chief allied army he set the main lines of naval strategy.

His designs were to clear Flanders and make Holland secure, to use naval pressure on south France, and, with Austria and Savoy furnishing the army, to encompass and destroy Toulon. The first he achieved himself; Rooke's capture of Gibraltar in 1704 and Stanhope's of Minorca in 1708 made the second possible, but the third depended on allies who failed at the critical moments. Marlborough agreed with the Whigs, that England was in the war as a principal, and must seek a joint victory. When Holland and Austria began to weaken under the strain, England increased her own effort, and was able to do this because after 1704 her fleets rode the sea unchallenged. But the heavier burden stimulated Tory opposition, present from the beginning, and was only made endurable by constant victory. The Tories held more and more forcibly that England should confine herself to naval and colonial war, leaving land campaigns to Continental states. They feared that growth of the army might menace the nation's freedom.

In 1702 Marlborough took Liège, and twice would have wrecked a French army but that the Dutch vetoed a battle. Next year, though Marlborough won the valley of the Meuse, things went badly. Austria had to evacuate Italy, Vienna was

threatened by a Franco-Bavarian attack. English dissensions were growing, the extreme Tories, under Rochester, Nottingham and Seymour, wished to limit war liability, to expel all Whigs from county lieutenancies and commissions of the peace, and to drive Dissenters from public life. Many of these took the sacramental test but regularly attended their own chapels; high Churchmen thought impious this natural result of turning a sacrament into a civil qualification, and pressed a Bill to fine and eject any official who went to a Nonconformist service. "Occasional Conformity" had been a cry in the election of 1702, and to destroy it remained a fixed point in Tory policy through the reign. But to pass the Bill would dry up dissenting subscriptions to Government loans and paralyse the army, so Marlborough connived at its defeat in the Lords, and turned for support to Harley and the moderate Tories. In the spring of 1704 they replaced the extremists in the Ministry.

That year was the most critical of the war, and the most successful. Marlborough's design was to lead his army to Bavaria and save Austria, while Rooke's fleet contained the French forces in Savoy, Catalonia and Sicily, and threatened Toulon. This proved impossible, but Rooke turned to a scheme first planned by Cromwell, and took the obsolete fortress of Gibraltar; to keep an easy conquest he fought an indecisive naval action off Malaga. Meanwhile Marlborough's own campaign, secretly prepared for months, moved perfectly. The Dutch agreed that he might go to the Moselle, from there he struck up the Rhine, marched two hundred and fifty miles to the Danube, and reached it with his army in perfect condition. He destroyed the Bavarian forces at Donauwörth in June, in August, and with Eugene's help, the French at Blenheim. By October he was back on the Rhine, Austria safe, Bavaria forced to make peace, the French plans of conquest shattered.

Blenheim beat the Tories as well as Louis. It made the war popular, but they again obstinately attacked Occasional Conformity, and to force the measure through the Lords an extremist section tried to make it part of a money Bill. This split the party and failed. An election in 1705 returned a Whig majority, despite the cry, raised by the clergy, of "the Church in danger." Anne thought this cry a reflection on her orthodoxy, and became less reluctant to see Whigs in power; during the next two years they were admitted to office piecemeal.

A coalition Ministry of moderates had now to face a problem important as the war though less dramatic: the future of Scotland. The Revolution had given the Scottish Parliament powers it had never known, while by establishing Presbyterianism it had broken the close connection between religion and politics on which for over a century Scottish history had pivoted. The clans gradually ceased active resistance, the dominant Lowlands turned part of their attention from politico-theological dispute to material prosperity. Scotland was an independent nation, sharing a joint king with England; but she had no colonies, no fleet, little commerce; where her interests clashed with England's they were ignored. William never visited her, and his neglect had allowed Stair in 1692 to plan and execute the massacre of Glencoe. Scotland tried oversea expansion, and in 1698 launched an expedition to colonise the isthmus of Panama. This meant war with Spain, England's ally: before Spanish arms and tropical fever the colony failed. England kept her colonial and Indian trade to herself, and Scotland, who had been ready to consider full union, lay almost bankrupt and impotent but for one weapon. The House of Hanover had been promised the English, but not the Scottish, throne. If her Parliament set up a different monarch after Anne's death, England would again have a northern enemy, border war would revive, France might rebuild her traditional alliance with Scotland, and English Jacobites find there a refuge and base for revolt.

In 1704 the Scottish Parliament forced royal assent to the Act of Security, which left the succession in its own hands. England retaliated with the Aliens Act, a suggestion of union and a threat of trade war if Scotland had not accepted the Hanover line by the end of 1705. Reasonable men in both countries saw that the union of crowns was inadequate, there must be political amalgamation or a full breach. The problem was soluble because Whigs dominated either Parliament: commissioners were appointed who quickly drafted a treaty. By it Scotland gained her chief desire, access to English markets, also forty-five members in the united House of Commons, and guarantees that her laws and Kirk should continue. Jacobites and Covenanters opposed union, the first because it made a restoration improbable, the second because it tied Scotland to an episcopal nation. But they could not unite, and in 1706 the Bill passed the Scottish Parliament. The chief opposition in England came from Church hatred of Presbyterianism, which at the moment was out of favour. On May 1, 1707, the Union came into force.

This, the greatest piece of statesmanship of the reign, was popular in neither country. Scottish nationalism was waxing and resented the loss of its political shell. Much support given to the Jacobite risings of 1715 and 1745 sprang from the feeling that under a Stuart Scotland might regain her separate status. English dislike was more material in origin. There were fewer than a million Scots, poorer than as many Englishmen; they offered no new market, but competed in trade hitherto jealously guarded. England furnished careers to many Scots, Scotland almost none to Englishmen, and dislike of

the clannish northerners reached a high pitch in London during the next sixty years. The forty-five members from the first voted in a block for whatever Government held power: they gained rewards in office and preserved Scottish interests by doing so, but their action disturbed the party balance and made them unpopular with every Opposition. Gradually the Union gained moral strength. Scottish agriculture, shipping, manufacture, developed under the spur of new markets, and nationalism found for itself non-political channels. The proudest Englishmen came to see in the Union a triumph for their system of government, and long wars showed that the nation was stronger than before.

While Union was making, war continued victorious. In 1705 Marlborough returned to the Meuse and was again robbed of success by the Dutch commissioners' veto. Next year he won Ramillies, and Flanders from Ostend to Antwerp fell into his hands. 1707 was a year of disappointment, for a plan of invading France simultaneously from north and south failed through Dutch opposition, Austrian concentration on Naples, and French success near the Rhine. In Spain, where a joint force was operating, the tide turned against the allies and the Austrian claimant lost all but Catalonia, which had solidly declared for him and against French Philip. Incomplete victory helped to open a split in the Ministry that ended in Whig triumph and in one-party cabinets, though these ran counter to the preferences of Anne and of most moderates. Both parties were factious, neither could be trusted to put the country's obvious interests above its own immediate success. But party could not be ignored; coalition ministries replaced open struggle by closet intrigue, nor did they bring the full sense of responsibility needed for parliamentary government.

The Whigs thought their support of the war justified a larger share of office, while Harley with his personal following worked secretly against them and Godolphin. Early in 1708 the breach came to a head; Marlborough, still indispensable, stuck by Godolphin, and Harley with his followers, St. John and Harcourt, was forced to resign. Apparently it was a victory for "the great twin brethren," actually for the Whigs, now their only support. The Queen accepted a Government that she disliked, almost solidly Whig and buttressed by an election held in the reaction after a Jacobite attempt to invade Scotland.

Marlborough was ill, but he was victorious at Oudenarde, marched into France and took Lille. No French army could stand against the wizard of victory, and Louis made ample peace offers. He would abandon his grandson in Spain, cede fortresses to Emperor and Dutch, expel the Pretender, renounce any claim to Newfoundland. The original demands of the allies were fully met, but Austria and the Whigs wanted more: France must disarm and with her own troops help to put Austrian Charles on the Spanish throne. Louis refused conditions that would leave him helpless and called on France for a last effort. In August, 1709, Marlborough won a murderous battle at Malplaquet and took Mons; he hoped that another campaign would lay France prostrate.

He was tired of politics, uneasy in his dependence on the Whigs, and Mrs. Masham had replaced his duchess in Anne's affections. He asked to be made Captain-General for life so as to be above fluctuations. This annoyed Anne and stirred Tory cries that here was a would-be Cromwell. The Ministry followed his blunder by one of its own. The clergy were in growing revolt against a Government that had guaranteed Presbyterianism in Scotland, welcomed foreign Nonconformists to England, and prolonged a costly war. Non-resistance, which implicitly condemned the Revolution, was being cried higher each year. At the end of 1709 Sacheverell, a noisy parson with small grasp of Christianity and an itch for the public eye, preached and printed an offensive sermon. The Commons voted it a libel, the Cabinet decided to give its author the dignity of impeachment.

On a long view the decision may have been wise, for it gave the Whig party a chance to record its principles, to justify the Revolution, and to define the right of resistance to Government. But though Sacheverell was condemned to three years' silence, the storm his trial raised brought down the Ministry sooner than was inevitable. There broke out the first of those ebullitions of mob fervour that came at intervals through the century, when the populace went mad for an unworthy martyr or against a fancied oppression. One reason for these furies was that, feeling themselves vaguely aggrieved and powerless to control Parliament, even by the ultimate threat of adverse vote, the people at intervals seized the nearest catch-word and raged against the Government: now it was "Church and Dr. Sacheverell," later the name of Walpole's Excise or "Wilkes and Liberty."

Shrewsbury reappeared in politics after years of retirement and joined Harley, Anne finally broke with the Duchess of Marlborough. Sunderland, Godolphin, Somers, were got rid of between April and September, 1710; Marlborough was still indispensable and there were hopes of winning him. An election, like the others of the reign in that it did not bring but confirmed ministerial changes, left the Whigs hopelessly inferior.

The Tory party was now firm in the saddle, to remain there for four stormy years. Its numerical strength came from Church prejudice, popular dislike of taxation, instinctive conservatism; its weakness from indiscipline and division.

Extremists made a large part of it, but could produce no leadership nor read the political barometer; they were ready to follow any one who offered them strong courses. The leaders of the party, with one or two exceptions, were quondam Whigs or, moderates, men who used, but did not like a party system. Its platform had two main planks; Church and King, and the King should be legitimist. These cries held together under Anne, but when the choice had to be Hanoverian Anglican or Catholic Stuart, they broke asunder, and the party was rent into Whimsicals and Jacobites.

Harley was the admitted head of the Government. He was a moderate, adroit in managing Court or Parliament, where he had thrice been Speaker, a lover of books, tolerant and an ex-Whig. His weaknesses were drink, unnecessary secrecy, and indecision. Defoe's defence of him states his view of a Ministry's proper tactics, "their business was to preserve themselves in the Administration where they were," not to follow a definite policy. St. John, first Harley's lieutenant, then his rival, had a far different temper. He was thirty-two and the best debater in Parliament, a dissipated free-thinker of great ability, the Alcibiades of English history. Bold measures attracted him, for he had none of that reasoned moderation that was to become during the next century the hall-mark of English statesmanship. He was, indeed, more Latin than British in his views, and certain to quarrel with his leader's inertia.

The first task and greatest achievement of the Ministry was peace. They invited France to make overtures, in violation of the alliance which forebade separate negotiations; a necessary step if the war were to end, for at no time would all the allies agree that their aims had been won. In April, 1711, Archduke Charles became ruler of Austria; there was no reason for Britain to insist that he should have Spain also, and so replace a Bourbon by a Hapsburg danger. Despite peace negotiations war continued: an ill-found expedition tried to capture Canada and failed; Marlborough won his last success by penetrating the French lines, though outnumbered, and taking a fortress in sight of the enemy.

Peace preliminaries were signed in September, 1711. When Parliament met in December the Whigs attacked heavily on the ground that no Bourbon must rule Spain. They gained a majority in the Lords by allying with Nottingham, and offering to carry, against their principles, his Bill against Occasional Conformity. The Ministry replied by dismissing Marlborough, accusing him of peculation, and by creating twelve Tory peers; a precedent for the threatened creations of 1832 and 1911.

The peace conference began at Utrecht in January, 1712, and continued with adjournments for over a year; military operations were not stopped by its meeting. Ormond, the British General, was ordered by St. John not to fight, nor to let his allies know that he would not fight, though the French had already been informed. The British contingent therefore deserted the allies, who in consequence suffered a reverse. France spun out negotiations till the spring of 1713, when peace was made by all save the Empire. Britain received Acadia and Hudson Bay from the French, from Spain, through her abandonment of Austria's claim to the kingdom, Gibraltar, Minorca, the right to supply slaves and a limited commerce to Spanish America. A trade treaty with France, that would have given Britain a new market, was rejected in Parliament by an alliance of Whig and Tory protectionists. The Peace of Utrecht became at once a prime article of party faith, condemned by all Whigs, but it was a reasonable peace, long overdue, and marred by two points only. The first was the desertion of the allies in the field without notice, the second the abandonment of Catalonia to Philip's vengeance. But the Catalans were a minority for whose independence Britain could not fight indefinitely, and she secured them some paper guarantees. Their would-be king, Charles of Austria, deserted them as completely as did Britain.

The domestic measures of the Government were more partisan than its foreign policy. A high landed property qualification for English members of Parliament was imposed in 1711; it lasted till 1858, but was soon found evadable. Occasional Conformity was forbidden, newspapers burdened with a stamp tax. In two particulars the terms of the Scottish Union were somewhat infringed: by restoring private patronage in the Kirk and by imposing a tax on malt. Scotland in consequence demanded separation, and the Whigs from party zeal supported the destruction of their own achievement. Finally, in 1714, the Schism Act gave promise that Nonconformists would soon again be persecuted. They had access neither to public schools nor to universities, so had built an educational system of their own which the Act tried to destroy: it forbade any one to teach without episcopal licence. From closing schools to closing chapels was a short step, but Anne died before it could be taken.

A breach in the Government had opened soon after its formation. All looked to Harley—Earl of Oxford from May, 1711—Whigs and centre Tories for moderation, extremists for measures that would crush Whiggery and Nonconformity together. He satisfied neither and tried to wed irreconcilables. St. John might have been a moderate had he been supreme, but moderation would not help to oust Oxford, the Lord Treasurer, so he turned to the Tory right wing, left leaderless by Rochester's death in 1711. He had none of their narrow religious faith, little of their affection for the Stuarts, but they were his handiest weapon. Vanity led him to blunder: he asked for an earldom so as to be Harley's

equal, instead of relying on his power in the Commons, and he was aggrieved at becoming only Viscount Bolingbroke. He considered the peace to be his work, though in fact it was mainly Oxford's; he won Lady Masham to his side, and fought his leader in Council and Court. For long each was too strong to be driven out, too weak to expel the other.

A Ministry paralysed by their dispute and opposed by a disciplined minority had to face what was then always critical, now trebly so, the impending death of the monarch. A Tory Parliament had in 1701 made Sophia the heiress of Anne, but since then legitimism had grown, and Jacobites had gained strength by abandoning rebellion for politics. Despite the Act of Settlement the question, Sophia or James Edward, seemed open, and in 1713 it replaced the peace as the chief issue, a change which hampered the Government and favoured the Whigs. They were united for Hanover, and had the law on their side. They hoped for nothing from Anne save her death, so did not mind raising the subject to her most distasteful, her successor. The Ministry dared not take measures on either side, for that would annoy the Queen and break the party. Oxford was no Jacobite, but his hesitation and reluctance to make the extreme Tories still more hostile than they were, stopped his boldly outbidding the Whigs at Hanover, while Bolingbroke's associates and actions belied any overtures he could make there. Both he and Oxford were deep in intrigues with the Pretender's court, though they had emissaries at Hanover as well.

Had the Pretender turned Protestant, most Tories might have declared for him, but he steadily refused to simulate conversion, and the Church party could not unite for a papist. So it drifted, paralysed by the hardening division between Jacobite and Whimsical (or Hanoverian) Tories, as well as by the disputes of its leaders. An election of 1713 strengthened the Whigs but left them still a minority. At the end of that year the crisis leapt suddenly nearer, for Anne fell ill, and though she recovered, her death seemed a question of months.

Bolingbroke redoubled his attacks on Oxford, and in May, 1714, launched the Schism Bill to win all Tories from their notoriously tolerant leader, who had himself been bred at a Nonconformist academy. It passed, Parliament was prorogued, and the struggle shifted to the Council, where at last Anne turned against Oxford. He was dismissed on July 27. But Bolingbroke's victory was a Dead Sea apple, for the Queen sank into lethargy and died early on Sunday, August 1.

Later he claimed that, given six weeks of unquestioned power instead of three days (for he lost control even before Anne's death), he would have altered history. His plan, it seems, was not unconditional restoration: he cared much less for James Edward than for the Tory party. He would have manned all posts with Tories on whose obedience he could rely, so that he could swing the nation by a word. A free-thinker himself, he never understood the Pretender's religious scruples, and might have baited conversion with a crown. If he chose Hanover, he would do so on his own terms, exacting a pledge from George, heir since Sophia's death in May, 1714, that he would keep the Tory party in office. He might know that a promise would not bind that prince for long, and yet count on his own charm to win the new King in a few months to a party he at first must regard as his enemy. Even given weeks or months Bolingbroke would probably have failed, for the Tories were too undisciplined to hold the succession in abeyance till their terms were met. The army would have followed Marlborough, an unconditional Hanoverian, the Whigs would have risen in support of the law. Their plans were more complete than Bolingbroke's; on the day Anne died they proclaimed George, and not a sword was drawn against him. The struggle had raised fears high, turned many Tories Jacobite, branded the whole party as enemies of the new dynasty. Now it fell into permanent ruin, for when under George III. a new Tory party again became important, it had neither the creed nor the personnel of the old.

CHAPTER III

THE CENTURY AND THE COMMONS

Till recently it was difficult to appreciate the full sweep and life of the eighteenth century. Either men lamented a vanished world, or more commonly, for every age tends to dislike its predecessor, they revolted against its inequalities, its manners, its restraint of expression. This was not one of the great leaping times of history, when the world makes itself anew, when the ideas and aspirations of a people are crystallised by genius so that we still feel them as we read or look. No single author will show us the best of the century as Dante shows us Mediævalism, Milton Puritanism, or Shakespeare Elizabethan England. We must turn to the writings of more ordinary men, see their pictures, buildings and handicrafts, watch their political ideas at work, before we can understand the time. Then we discover an age of contrasts, but with a central theme running through many of them.

Of abstract political speculation it produced little that was new. The seventeenth century had seen a surfeit of theory, and much variety of practice; the eighteenth settled down to the sober task of working a machine already there, and avoided radical changes. It produced in Burke a philosopher of historical continuity: one without desire for change except when convinced that the existing order brought grave injustice; the greatest political thinker of the age, who gave the maxim of its greatest political manager, Walpole, "Let sleeping dogs lie," a solid and reasoned support. Yet if the century brought few new ideas into politics, it completed something like a revolution in the form of political thought. The old method of arguing from Scripture ceased to attract, the modern one of arguing from expediency swept the board. In Bentham it found its most complete disciple, and he, in a static and restrained time, prepared a great outburst of reforming legislation for the next century.

Social contrasts were violent. In the towns there moved, ready to foam to the top in crises, a drunken, brutal, illiterate mob. Gin was an increasing scourge during the first half of the century; it offered the cheapest and quickest oblivion. The crowd, drunk or sober, was less good-tempered than most English crowds to-day; ready to burn a house, loot a chapel, or harry a Wesleyan preacher. The law, it felt, was an instrument of the rich for their protection, and riot and robbery roused little widespread condemnation. Highwaymen could ply their business even in London's outskirts, secure in bad roads, the absence of police, and friendly innkeepers. While the poor killed themselves with gin, the rich got fuddled on heady Portuguese wines, cheapened by the terms of alliance of 1703; many politicians died prematurely old, and their potations made gout the typical disease of statesmen.

Despite these excesses, it was generally an age of increasing balance, restraint, criticism. Society could tolerate drunkenness, but it enforced a code of manners none the less. Religion, prose, conduct, were all being formalised. Tired of enthusiasm which had proved itself subversive, and now lingered chiefly among Jacobites, men came to prize restraint above sincerity, ethics above fervent belief. Deism grew stronger and flourished openly, while theology shed much of its dogma. The educated classes arrived at toleration largely by the road of indifference; the uneducated cherished old animosities against Catholics and Jews, but more from prejudice than conviction. Until Wesley's revival stirred the nation once more, its religious sense cooled rapidly, turning to philosophy among those capable of it, to torpor in the rest.

Letters flourished, but not in the form perfected earlier, the lyric; the century's best work was done in prose. The balance and neatness of the rhymed couplet appealed to the time, and this measure was made to carry thoughts that before or since would not have been forced into verse. It was an admirable instrument for satire and epigram, but less successful in conveying emotion, and the beat of a single metre conventionalised its epithets. The age left a more enduring mark in the novel and the essay. It has been held a prosaic time, but it produced in *Robinson Crusoe* a plain romance of detail piled on detail that still bewitches the schoolroom, in Gibbon England's greatest historian, in Burke perhaps her first writer of prose. Defoe, Fielding, Smollett, Richardson, started the English novel on its path. The essayists make less appeal to us now, for their balance and poise have neither the raciness of the seventeenth century nor the individuality prized to-day, but they brought their form to perfection within the limits allowed by their taste.

The savage penal law, the loose morals at both ends of society, the self-satisfied lassitude of Universities that did little for learning or education, the increasingly systematic corruption of politics, once made the century's progress towards softer manners and greater honesty neglected, now in turn themselves tend to be overlooked. Savage sports like bull-baiting still drew an audience, but there were more innocent amusements. Thousands flocked to Handel's Oratorios, as was natural in a country that less than a century before had been the most musical in Europe. Gay's *Beggar's Opera*

wedded satire to harmony, and was as popular when written as now. The public conscience was wakening, if slowly. Oglethorpe, a politician and soldier, spent the best years of his life founding a pauper colony in Georgia, and was only the most prominent of those who devoted themselves to intelligent philanthropy. A prosperous and restrained middle class grew up from the professions and trade, and gradually modified the balance of power in the State. Evidence of their rise is to be seen in the new rush for sun and health: Weymouth and Scarborough became England's first sea-side resorts; Bath, Epsom, Tunbridge and Cheltenham rose to fame for their waters.

The contrasts of the time were more superficial than its unity. Never since the Reformation had the nation been so agreed on ideals and principles as now. The political tenets of 1688, codified by Locke, were accepted as the basis of free government by men of all parties, and there was little disagreement on fundamentals. In both art and politics the canons were thought to be universal and binding. This, it might be thought, makes the age a dull one, but it is not so. Those epochs when the world is breaking ground in new values, throwing out a hundred ideas, trying novel forms each of which is left for another before it has been developed, have their thrill, but so, too, has a time of digestion. When society, agreed on theories that satisfy its conscience and brain, devotes itself not to the discovery of new doctrines, but to applying its maxims to changing facts, there comes in history a rich pause, a time of leisure that is not vegetable. Men walk at home in a sane and orderly world; they are free because of their certainty, unhastening because their views must (they think) triumph since they are so reasonable. The art of such a period will be poised and balanced, but not weak. Such a time was the eighteenth century; its thinking not always profound, but honest, its activity orderly but intense. The comfortable crafts of architecture, furniture, painting and china flourished on agreed conventions. In Wedgwood's pottery, Chippendale's furniture, Reynolds' portraits, there is the glow of harnessed fire.

None could claim that the age did not produce bad work, and much of it. Wild tales of horror flourished near its end, flamboyant decoration throughout. With this, as with other periods, only when its best themes are built into its arts do these still move us. Then we find here not the sweeping imagination of the Elizabethans, but restraint and serenity. If a century is to take pride of place by its best, this can hold its own in philosophy, painting, architecture, and is near supremacy in eloquence and the handicrafts. Its achievements are highest, in fact, as they approach the business of daily life.

It was a time of good talk, from Arbuthnot, the wittiest Tory of Anne's reign, to Johnson, the sanest subject of George III. He shares with Pepys the distinction of being the best-known Englishman of all time, and is probably unrivalled as the best loved. His luminous honesty and encyclopædic reading made him almost a literary dictator, but he lives less through his writings than by his actions and words. From him we derive an impression of the century in one way misleading; though he went nearly every year into the country, and often far afield, he had an urban soul and was at his best in or near London. This was not typical of the period, London was a great city, with near a million inhabitants when Johnson lived, but the heart of the nation was still rustic. Not only were the smaller towns—Norwich, Lichfield, Bristol—real centres of thought and society, but though politics and fashion drew rich men to the capital, most of them spent much of the year on their country estates, and many gave their best attention to sport and agriculture.

To the man of means and position, the century offered a fuller life than has any time since. He could be moderately secure of a seat in Parliament, did he desire it ardently, and politics might open any door. His estates repaid care; he could farm and breed scientifically, multiplying his own income and at the same time enriching the nation. If he wanted military glory, wars were frequent enough; if he cared for art, the spoils of Italy were open to his purse, the first great English school ready for his commissions. He could game, hunt, read, talk and write, sure of companionship and audience. It was an intense life, and most men of note lived intensely. Burgoyne was a good soldier, a politician and a fashionable playwright; Chatham bred cattle and planned landscapes in the intervals of politics. Nearly every admiral save Nelson, and many generals, sat in Parliament, and when peace ended one activity they turned to another. Country-house libraries show that the intelligent squires of the day both bought books and read them.

It is true that only a few knew the best the age could offer. Those born in the circle, or who made their way into it by trade, political success, genius in some art—these could taste freedom, choose their activities, turn from house-building to picture-collecting, from war to letters; they could fight, enjoy, govern. Men without means or opportunity could but live, marry and die; march to their superiors' orders, find in gin or law-breaking a temporary freedom and rapid end. But this, in some measure, is true of most times and places: social contrasts were no more pronounced under the Georges than under Victoria. Despite formal manners, and largely because of the recognised system of classes, there was much free intercourse between man and man, for the gulf was so clear that no one, encouraged by familiarity, would try to cross it. We find a country vicar who goes rabbiting with his servants and then dines with the squire, a village tradesman who is made drunk by the parson one day, preached at by him the next.

In politics a great part of the nation had no direct voice. But even the unenfranchised took part in elections by processions, cheers and occasional riots, and followed, more closely than we often think, the proceedings of Westminster. Their voices had no formal place in the Constitution, but they could weaken a Government and often stop a Bill. In all classes there beat a proud and conscious nationality, that exulted when France, the national enemy, was humbled. Men accepted the class into which they were born or had risen as a natural phenomenon, knew their place and were satisfied with it, though ready to resent any interference from above or below.

It is probably in its politics that the eighteenth century is most remote from us. Political writers to-day see the essential feature of the British constitution in its flexibility. Time has shown it thriving on change, shifting the relative weights of crown, lords, commons, electorate, but persisting none the less, so that no complete breach with the past allows one year to be hailed as the start of a new epoch. It was not in this, but in the opposite constitutional quality that the men of the eighteenth century took pride. They toasted their system not because it was Protean, but because it was, or seemed to be, rigid. It was mixed, not flexible; settled by the wisdom of ages as it ought always to remain. The King had his sphere, to select ministers; within reason he must have wide latitude; he could not keep a Government in power indefinitely, but might give his preference a chance. The Lords were nearly as essential as the Commons and represented the same ideas. Blackstone defines them as an assembly of landowners, the Commons as those landowners who have not seats in the Lords: between such bodies there was small chance of conflict. Freedom was to be found not in democracy, then denounced as the tyranny of the mob, but in balance, and the nation cared more for individual liberty than for strong government. The face of the country altered as population grew in the north, as manufacturing caught up with agriculture, but most people thought it unwise to recognise these changes in constitutional adjustment: the equipoise might be broken and the Constitution go with it.

We now consider legislation one chief task of a Government. Every party demands new laws, and appeals to the people on its past record of achievement and promises of new change. It was far different in Hanoverian England, when foreign policy furnished half the problems of a Ministry, and of home policy there was little. The Cabinet's duty was to control patronage, to distribute favours to its supporters, to arouse as little opposition as might be. It was not the State's business to provide schools, nor to control conditions of work. Its task was more limited: defence, diplomacy, order, the use of colonies for British interests, maintenance of such customs duties as seemed to favour the home merchant. Other matters were best left to private enterprise and charity. Parliament was not a machine for altering the nation's life, but for providing the country with government. It had none of the modern rush of work to cope with, and was a theatre for displays of debating skill rather than a house for the rapid transaction of business.

That Parliament made no attempt to represent the people numerically was admitted, but an age that did not hold democratic dogmas thought none the worse of it. The House of Commons had 558 members, of whom 45 sat for Scotland and 24 for Welsh constituencies. Of the 489 English members, 82 represented 41 counties, 4 the two universities, the remaining 403 were sent by 203 boroughs. The Scottish members supported every Government; they represented a tiny electorate (in 1815 only 3,625 out of some two million inhabitants of the country), and were generally mere voting machines. Wales was rather more liberal, rather less important, its electorate was larger and fairly honest, but its members had smaller influence than the Scottish, because they were not a united cohort. It was to the English members that Government and Opposition appealed, for there only could a majority of the whole house be found.

In the English counties the franchise was uniform, fixed in 1430 at freehold land worth forty shillings a year, widened by custom so as to include schoolmasters, parsons, pew-holders, and owners of rent-charges or mortgages. This electorate was of fair size, and it might be thought that here the voice of the people would prevail. But in most counties some family or alliance of families was too strong to be challenged, and these divided the representation between themselves. They could be fought only at ruinous cost, for the poll could be kept open for fifteen days if one voter an hour were produced, and the voters' expenses to the county town and back was often high. In 1803 a contest between three candidates for the two Yorkshire seats cost nearly half a million pounds, and it was natural that the powerful local families were seldom opposed.

The 203 boroughs provided more frequent contests, and were the heart of the system. In them the franchise varied from place to place, fixed by accident, precedent, or local struggle for supremacy, and in most of them crystallised by decision of the House of Commons, who from 1604 to 1770 decided disputed returns. Some forty boroughs had their members returned by their corporations, generally co-opting bodies; such towns frequently sold their seats to the Government or to some magnate, but were not always docile. In about eighty boroughs the freemen were the electorate, often honorary and non-resident freemen were included; frequently the corporation could make freemen and so turn the poll. A freeman franchise varied in width: in 1832 Bristol had 6000 freemen, the City of London nearly 17,000, Rye but

6. Burgage boroughs, where the vote was attached to certain lands and buildings, numbered nearly forty. In a few of them residence was necessary, but not at Old Sarum, where no houses remained, and the tenants of a few ploughed fields returned two members. It was seldom that these places were the absolute property of one owner, for competition to possess such valuable holdings made family bid for them against family.

There remained over fifty places with a moderately wide franchise, most of them "scot and lot" boroughs, their voters the rate-payers. In a dozen any one, not receiving poor relief, who could prove himself possessed of a hearth by coaxing a kettle to boil—"pot-walloping"—had the vote. Before an election men could be seen repairing a doorway—for a door was evidence of householding—lighting a fire, spreading a table in public, to prove their electoral qualification. In Preston till 1786, any man who had slept there the night before was a voter, after 1786 any resident for six months. Some of these boroughs were entirely rotten: Gatton had but six houses and at one time one elector. They could be corrupt: at Stockbridge the 57 electors were known to have asked £60 each for their suffrages. As voting was open, the result of bribery could be ascertained. Westminster, with an electorate that finally reached 17,000, was the most important of "scot and lot" boroughs, and became early in the nineteenth century the home of radicalism.

The cost of elections rose greatly during the eighteenth century and fell again before the Reform Bill as corruption declined. The large freeman boroughs were dearest, for voters were often scattered through England, and had to be gathered by the candidate. Thus to contest Barnstaple where the freemen were mostly non-resident, might cost £13,000. The big "scot and lot" boroughs were also expensive; in 1788 Townshend spent £50,000 in fighting Westminster, after that the parties agreed to divide its representation.

Most members returned by wealthy patrons were allowed by them considerable independence. The absolute sale of seats, regardless of the constituency's preference, was always rare. Very few individuals had more than three or four in their gift—Lord Lonsdale with nine was unique—and they liked to find men of note to represent them, when their own family could spare a place. An able man with money or influential friends made his way into Parliament more easily than he does now. The system secured a house of skilled debaters, representing the various shades of opinion of a governing class. It could not produce a chamber anxious to reform and reorganise the nation, but few men desired such a body. Apologists claimed that it was truly representative, though not numerically, taking each man as one, but so that no important section of the country was left dumb. Through Westminster and Preston democratic views could be heard, trading interests spoke through many towns, agriculture through others and through the counties. For a society that held itself complete, for a country whose constitution needed only minor adjustments, such a house was well enough.

It could not deal efficiently with a world of large-scale manufacture, of crowded, growing towns, with a press of change needing constant detailed regulation. Naturally it was conservative, for its members lost by change. But this age, though it wished to be static, produced so many changes that its balance and order began to vanish, its comfortable paternalism to disappear. What is called the industrial revolution, a change in the methods of production that in some measure has gone on since the dawn of history, gathered increasing speed as the century wore to its end. Beside it moved an agricultural revolution, changes in the production of food; country and town altered at the same time. Farming, indeed, was being revolutionised before England had recognised a future in its factories.

The seventeenth century had brought England new grasses, new roots, and an interest in science. After Anne's death many landlords took their vocation seriously, some hoping for greater revenue from their estates, some seeing no chance of political success, some from innate energy. Most of England still lay unenclosed: the large fields round a village divided into quarter and half acre strips, and a number of these scattered far and wide making a farm. In one field wheat might grow, in another barley, the third might lie fallow: cattle grazed together on the common or in the meadow when the hay had been cut. Under such conditions no one could breed stock scientifically or cultivate land much better than a sluggish neighbour, whose weeds spread harm in all directions. A man of enterprise must needs hope to enclose, to replace his scattered roods by a compact fenced farm, where he could grow his own choice of crops, rear his own beasts, and no longer march at the pace of the slowest.

Enclosure, a re-shuffling of holdings to save time and labour, did not necessarily harm any one. But an Act of Parliament was necessary to give it full legal sanction, and Acts were costly. Inevitably a House of Commons composed of landed gentlemen looked first to the needs of the squire; naturally he gained most by enclosure. Account was taken only of those with legal right to land: any who had squatted without title could claim no compensation. The new farms had to be fenced: a small man could seldom afford this, and must sell his fields for what the squire would give. The lord of the manor often claimed and frequently secured the whole or most of the common for himself, and so a small holder lost his share of pasture. Finally, the new agriculture paid better when on a fairly large scale. Market-gardening, which now

provides a career to the small-holder, had not yet developed. So in the process of a century most, though not all, of the small owners in England disappeared, tenant-farmers increased, for men would pay a good rent for enclosed land, and the landless labourers became steadily more.

The change increased enormously England's production of foodstuffs. She was able to remain a wheat-exporting country till late in the century, and her breeds of cattle grew renowned through the world. Some such change there had to be if she was to carry the burden of her wars, and to maintain her increasing population. But the methods of change were often harsh and unjust, those who gained most were already well-to-do, the dignity and independence of the average land worker were reduced. It has been maintained that no man of enterprise suffered, for the new farming and the rising towns gave him better openings than he had before. "Enterprise" is an elastic word; to deny it to all hard-working labourers, who felt themselves lost as their world crumbled beneath their feet, is to narrow it unduly.

The revolution in manufacture started more doubtfully than that in farming but travelled faster at the end. England's chief industry had for long been wool. It could be spun and woven in the home, where a farmer's wife and children supplemented the earnings of his fields. Now inventions increased the rate of production and replaced hand by water-power; factories set by rivers began to displace home production. Spinning changed first, then weaving; finally steam replaced water as the source of power. Gloucestershire and Norfolk, where wool manufacture had thriven, gave way to Yorkshire. Meanwhile cotton, for long thought a dangerous enemy to the nation's woollen riches, made its way through public favour, and passed wool in importance: it centred itself in Lancashire by Pennine streams. Coal-mining increased, first for smelting iron, and then to raise steam. Factories and mines needed labour, and took it where possible: workhouse children made one source of supply, Irish immigrants another.

By the time that England was equipping itself with modern roads—that is, by about 1780—unregulated child labour had become a regular part of the industrial machine. It was not thought a duty of the State to prevent children being misused, men underpaid, women worked for hours incredible to-day. There were many good employers, but the pace was perforce set largely by their bad competitors. Only after Waterloo, in the slump following the war, did the evils of the new order become fully apparent. The nation had won industrial supremacy, its exports went to all continents, its collective wealth was greater than ever before. It had bred more mechanical genius than the world had yet seen, and was on the road to perhaps its greatest material achievement in the railway. All this had been won at a cost. Health, beauty, individual workmanship, had suffered, and the seeds of class hatred were in the ground.

Yet a word of caution is necessary. The idea, which lingers in many histories, that industrialism had replaced a golden time, is unsound. Conditions of life in London steadily improved after 1750: it was in the northern towns where a new population was hived that they lagged behind. By 1830 the public conscience had awakened sufficiently to examine and dislike the results of uncontrolled industrialism, though not enough to prevent them. From its inquiries we know the horrors of the early nineteenth century, and find it hard to believe the truth, that they were in many ways no worse, in some much better, than those which had gone before.

The eighteenth century is not a rigid unit. Many of its chief characteristics began before it, and lingered after its end. Politically and socially it can be held to run from 1714 to 1830, constitutionally from 1688 to 1832. The century was one of growth and change for all its static ideas, and it was broken in its middle by a double revolution as decisive as those already described, though less obvious. Wesley in religion, the elder Pitt in politics, brought a renewal of enthusiasm and started forces that far outlived them. From Wesley's revival there sprang modern Nonconformity, an evangelical stirring inside the Church, and at last, partly in reaction from evangelicalism in the Church and liberalism in the State, the Oxford Movement. Pitt was the first politician since 1688 to look beyond Parliament for support, and to be strong in the Commons mainly because of his popularity outside. "Walpole," said Dr. Johnson, "was a minister given by the King to the people: Pitt was a minister given by the people to the King." His example and his appeal helped to break down political corruption and to destroy the ascendancy of a class. A man brought up in the early part of the century would, if moved to the later half, have felt himself at home in its buildings, its books, its art, but the spirit that was moving in public and private life might have seemed to him strange indeed.

CHAPTER IV

THE AGE OF WALPOLE

Half a century and two reigns had to pass before the Hanoverians won popularity in England. They were foreigners of bad manners and, for three generations, of loose morals, obstinate and plain-spoken, with none of the intermittent grace that gave the feckless Stuarts a devoted following. By a family tradition that lasted a hundred years each son of the new house quarrelled in turn with his father: George II. with George I.; Frederick, Prince of Wales, with George II.; finally George IV with George III. They retained the throne because Britain needed them, and because they had certain qualities of survival value. They shared the nation's religion, they could bow to the times; never having known the Crown at its height of power, they did not hanker after lost prerogatives. They had a blunt sort of honesty and the wit to trust themselves to expert advisers. The first two Georges were never the puppet kings that legend sometimes makes them, for they had strong prejudices and no adviser could sway them at will. But their heart was in Hanover, and they did not seek to control all details of Britain's government. This was especially true of George I., fifty-four at his accession, and without personal friends in England. He never learnt English, and as German was a rare accomplishment of politicians, he had to carry on business in French or dog Latin: with such means autocracy is impossible. Like William III. he spent his summers abroad, which favoured the ascendancy of ministers. Another cause working the same way was that now, for the first time since 1688, the monarch did not aim at a balance of parties in the Cabinet. He relied only on the Whigs, so party ministries came into fashion, and proved stronger than the coalitions hitherto favoured.

The policy of the Whigs was simple: to label the Tories Jacobites, to develop their own electoral machinery so that a defeat at the polls was impossible, to avoid rousing the latent animosity of the Church, and abroad to maintain the peace they had condemned until quiet and prosperity should let the Hanoverian line take root. A new dynasty can fortify itself by foreign conquest or by sitting still: Henry V. tried the first method, and it broke in his son's hands; Henry VII. and James I. took the less showy but safer course. The Whigs were of their mind, and he of them who saw clearest, Walpole, more strongly than any. Their power rested on three pillars: Crown, great lords, trading interests; against them were a majority of the English squires and the Church. Peace would strengthen trade and weaken the gentry's chief grievance by lowering the land tax.

Leadership of the Whig party passed rapidly to a young group who had learnt politics under Anne. Wharton and Halifax died in 1715, Somers next year, and two paralytic strokes in 1716 left Marlborough only a name. The new men were Townshend, Sunderland, Walpole and Stanhope. Stanhope, a soldier, scholar, and diplomatist, was their chief, though Townshend had nominally the higher position. Walpole, Townshend's brother-in-law, was not at first in the Cabinet, but became Chancellor of the Exchequer and first Lord of the Treasury in October, 1715, and proved supreme in finance. Sunderland, the son of James II.'s minister, was older in political experience than his fellows, but less full-blooded: a theoretical republican and an honest but bitter Whig.

A party is crushed not by defeat but by division, and despite an election in 1715, when all the powers of Government were extended to secure Whig victory, Toryism might yet have rebuilt itself. The Whigs feared this, and planned to ruin its leaders. A party committee inquired into the negotiations for the Peace of Utrecht, and on its report, in June, 1715, Oxford, Bolingbroke and Ormond were impeached. Bolingbroke had already fled, and in July, when he joined the Pretender, Ormond followed him; they were condemned by Acts of Attainder. Oxford spent two years in the Tower, till his impeachment was dropped in 1717. By that time the Tory disruption had been completed by the Jacobite rising of 1715.

That rebellion might have had a chance of success had the Pretender's court not been riven by personal jealousies, but it was badly planned, badly led, and deprived of open French support by the death in September of Louis XIV. George, with his two German mistresses and a Hanoverian clique, had been in England long enough to win dislike, which was increased by the prosecution of the Tory leaders. Jacobite mobs and attacks on dissenting chapels showed the current of opinion. But the Government intelligence was good and their action firm. Stanhope concentrated his forces in the Western counties, where a rising under Ormond was feared; Mar raised James's standard prematurely in Scotland, and by inertia threw away a slim chance of success. The Pretender joined him late in December when all hope was over, sailed again in February 1716, and once back in France dismissed Bolingbroke, his only capable adviser. There is small room for regret that James Edward did not oust the less romantic Georges. He was like enough to his father in character to disprove the legend of his birth, and he had a full measure of James II.'s inability either to learn or to forget.

The crushing of the rebellion cemented the Whigs in power, and their reprisals were not immoderate. A few half-pay officers were shot as deserters, two peers and twenty-six commoners executed, and a large number of prisoners so lightly guarded that they escaped. Nottingham and his relations, the only Tories in the Government, were dismissed, and the life of Parliament altered from three to seven years. This made for stability at home and in foreign policy, which for long remained a party issue; it also strengthened the House of Commons against both the Crown and the peerage, but for Parliament to prolong its own life by four years savoured of sharp practice against the electorate.

The next three years brought schism in the Whig party, Swedish and Spanish attempts to put the Pretender on the throne, and a new system of alliances to keep peace in Europe. Hanover complicated Britain's position. Here were two states independent of each other, one parliamentary, the other autocratic; they were joined only by a single ruler in whose name the wars of either were fought. England and Scotland had been in this position, but their kings had perforce gone the English, not the Scottish road; George I. balanced the interests of Britain and Hanover with remarkable fairness. The Electorate had assisted in spoiling Sweden of her German lands; now Charles XII. was planning their recovery, and to support the Pretender against the British King was his readiest way to coerce the Elector. Spain was learning unaccustomed efficiency from Alberoni, and hoped to recover her lost possessions in Italy: these were the storm-centres of Europe.

Stanhope's policy was to prevent war by a network of alliances. In 1716 he made a treaty with France, which the Netherlands, and finally Austria, joined; by this the position in the Mediterranean was assured. His actions in Northern Europe proved successful, but split the Whigs. A visit to Hanover in 1716 threw George into Stanhope's and Sunderland's hands. They were more adventurous than Townshend and Walpole, and less insular in outlook; Walpole moreover, the guardian of the Exchequer, had already clashed with Hanoverian favourites, who wished to dip their hands in Government money. Townshend was dismissed in 1717, Walpole promptly resigned, and with a strong following they went into Opposition. Charles XII., a confirmed disturber of Europe, was killed next year, and with him died the chance of a Swedish invasion. In 1720 Spain accepted peace, after her fleet had been destroyed by an English squadron, her army cut off in Sicily, and a Jacobite expedition from her shores wrecked in a storm. A complicated system of treaties guaranteed the British succession and trade and the integrity of Hanover.

Walpole when supreme in office showed more moderation than any convinced party man before him, but in Opposition at this time he could be as factious as any. In 1715 he was foremost in impeaching the Tory leaders, in 1719, contrary to his own convictions, he fruitlessly opposed the repeal of the Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts. He had a better case against a Government attempt to standardise the peerage at its existing size by preventing more than six new creations: this would have made the Lords independent of both Crown and people, but Walpole roused the Commons and rejected the Bill. In 1720 a quarrel between George I. and the Prince of Wales, round whom the Opposition had clustered, was patched up, Walpole and Townshend resumed office, and in a few months were borne to supremacy by the South Sea Bubble.

The South Sea Company had been formed in 1711 by Harley, to exploit markets in the new world and to reduce the national debt. It took over Government obligations with revenues earmarked for their interest, and issued its own shares in their stead. In 1715 and in 1717 more liabilities and more income were transferred to it, and in 1719 came a plan of assigning it the whole remaining debt of fifty-one millions. The Government was to pay 5% on this till 1727, then 4%; over £7,500,000 of debt was to be cancelled by the Company, which hoped to borrow more cheaply than could the State. Profits were looked for from trade, but mainly from a rise in the price of shares, for Government creditors exchanged at the market quotation, so £100 of stock might wipe out a far greater amount of national securities. The capitalisation of the Company was too high, but a craze for speculation, endemic for twenty-five years, now broke out fiercely. In August, 1720, South Sea shares rose to 1000%, in September they slumped, other mushroom companies went down in the storm, and Parliament met in December raging against directors who had promised too freely, and ministers who had been bought or deceived.

All looked to Walpole to restore credit. Stanhope died from a burst blood-vessel in February, 1721; Aislabie, Chancellor of the Exchequer, had stolen and was broken; Sunderland had lost money and repute. In April Walpole and Townshend re-made the Ministry, and Sunderland's death next year left them with but one rival, Carteret, a brilliant disciple of Stanhope's, and the only minister who could speak German to the King. He favoured a bolder policy abroad than they wanted, but in 1724 he was driven from the Secretaryship of State to the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland. Walpole concentrated on home matters till 1725, when he extended his interest to foreign affairs. By parliamentary management, mastery of business, and a sanity that was almost genius, he became the one indispensable man in the Government.

This Norfolk squire governed England for over twenty years, riveted the new royal house to the nation, did more than any other to create the office of Prime Minister (a title deprecated both by him and by his successors), and kept the nation at peace till near his fall, even through a European war. His services have been variously estimated, and are generally placed highest by men who themselves have had political experience. He is accused of systematising and increasing the corruption of his day, of rejecting lofty ideals, of being unable to work for long with any men who showed marked ability. In the last there is some truth; Pulteney, an able debater, and Carteret were both driven from the Ministry and organised a Whig schism, and Walpole forced Townshend to retire (much to the benefit of Norfolk farming) in 1730. Walpole, in fact, was working out the principle of a homogeneous Cabinet, which should stand for a clear-cut policy at home and abroad, and he preferred colleagues who would fall in with such a system to men who refused to sink their own ideas in a humdrum course approved by the whole. This forced him, in the prevailing views of ministerial responsibility, to use those who were definitely his inferiors. He did not improve the political code of his day, and he was sceptical of acclaimed ideals. He governed through influence in Court and Parliament, holding the magnates who controlled seats by giving them a share in office and appointments for their nominees. There is no evidence that he increased corruption, which was already well known; he systematised it, but carried it certainly no further than did George III. a generation later. He provided for his own family by sinecure posts, but took no illicit money himself, and died comparatively poor.

His aim was to keep peace abroad, and at home to avoid rousing Church feeling that might turn Jacobite. Stanhope had ceased summoning Convocation, and Walpole did not revive it. He opposed the repeal of the Test Act, lest a waning clericalism should break out again, but from 1727 he helped dissent by annual acts of indemnity which let Nonconformists hold office without penalty, a practice followed for a century. In one subject only, finance, did he show real zest for reform. In 1721 he abolished many export taxes on manufactured goods, many import duties on raw materials. In 1733 he aimed at sweeping fiscal improvements, of which the first step was to be the erection of bonded warehouses for tobacco and spirits. This would have diminished the frauds consequent on charging high import duties refunded on export, by which evasions less than a fourth of the gross tobacco revenue reached the Exchequer. But the name "excise," played on skilfully and unscrupulously by the Opposition, roused fury, and Walpole withdrew his plan, for he hated bloodshed more than waste. Pitt, who was his bitter opponent, later admitted that the scheme had been unjustly attacked.

Things went placidly for some years. A small Jacobite plot, Irish disturbances over the supply of copper coin, and the impeachment in 1725 of the Lord Chancellor for stealing money, were the chief episodes. Abroad, Stanhope's treaties kept the peace, till Spain took a new tack, allied with her arch-enemy, Austria, and demanded Gibraltar from Britain. Townshend floated a rival alliance, and though Spain attacked Gibraltar peace was assured in 1727. Fleury, who was as pacific as Walpole, governed France from 1726, and the two kept Europe quiet.

George I. died suddenly in 1727, and after a day of doubt Walpole was confirmed in power. For the next ten years he governed with the help of Caroline, the ablest Queen of England since Elizabeth. George II. was irascible, petty, and jealous, a smaller man than his father; his wife had taste and humour, and ruled her husband through suggestions that he took for his own ideas. From now on Walpole had to face harder opposition in Parliament than before. About half its strength came from the Tory remnant, the rest from Whigs in schism; the whole was animated from outside by Bolingbroke, who had been pardoned and restored in estate, but was still debarred his seat in the Lords. It agreed on little save that Walpole should be turned out, and in its attacks was perhaps the most unscrupulous Opposition of British history.

For six years more there was quiet. The state of the prisons caused a scandal, Carteret was ousted from the Cabinet, English replaced Latin in legal proceedings, Georgia was founded as a refuge for paupers, and the land tax reduced to a fourth of what it had been: these are the chief features of an easy time. In 1733 a double storm broke. Walpole's tobacco excise, skilfully misrepresented, caused one; he withdrew it, and disciplined his party by dismissing even from military commands those who had opposed him. The elective kingship of Poland started a wider convulsion, for France supported one candidate, whom Russia, with Austrian connivance, expelled. France allied with Spain, the two attacked Austria, and drove her armies from Italy: she demanded British help. Walpole, victorious in an election in 1734, became the peacemaker of Europe. He restrained France by hinting that Britain might fight, and Austria by asserting that she would not. The court wanted war but bowed to his judgment, and in 1735 he and Fleury rebuilt the peace. Walpole had saved British lives and British money, but his refusal to join either European group left Britain somewhat dangerously isolated.

The Opposition now centred round Frederick Prince of Wales, who was at open feud with his father, and inevitably it

grew stronger from year to year, for it was joined by all who had a grievance. Queen Caroline died in 1737, a loss to both nation and Ministry; next year began the agitation that was to pull Walpole down. Treaties sanctioned a small British trade with Spanish America, but smugglers ignored its limits; Spain searched their ships when she caught them, even outside her territorial waters, and English sailors maintained that, save when taken red-handed, they were immune from inquiry or capture. Grievances arose on both sides and in 1738 came to a head, clustered round an ancient, and unproved, outrage to an English Captain Jenkins. Walpole negotiated with Madrid, and nearly reached agreement on financial claims, but Spain refused, as Britain would have done in her place, to disclaim the right of search on the high seas. Passion in either country brought war. It began in 1739, with British enthusiasm, for Walpole was almost alone in the now accepted opinion that the war was both unjust and unnecessary.

Nor was it justified by success. The West Indies, its chief sphere, took their usual toll of life by fever. The Opposition, who a few years before had demanded a more aggressive foreign policy, coupled with a reduction in the army, now successfully resisted Walpole's effort to meet a shortage of sailors by the registration of seamen. British success at Porto Bello was followed by disastrous failure at Carthagena. A separate European War broke out and devoured this limited struggle: the Emperor died, and Frederick, the new ruler of Prussia, snatched at Silesia. The treaties on which peace rested were torn up; France joined Prussia, Spain was bound to France, and Austria appealed to Britain. In the welter of 1741 came a general election, in which Scotland and Cornwall (equally important in Parliament) turned against the Government—Scotland because Walpole a few years earlier had tried to punish Edinburgh for an organised lynching, Cornwall because he had offended some of its magnates. Parliament met in December, and after two months of hard fighting Walpole accepted defeat, resigned, and went to the Lords as Earl of Orford.

With Walpole there vanished for a time a united Cabinet. The idea that room should be found in that body for most sections of importance, a kind of proportional representation in ministries, had been one motive for opposing him, and now in some measure it prevailed. Carteret at first dominated the Government, but Walpole's supporters, the brothers Henry Pelham and the Duke of Newcastle, balanced his influence with the Crown by a growing strength in the Commons, and places were found for one or two Tories, in the hope of ending what Pulteney called "these unhappy distinctions of party." Carteret knew Europe better than any other Englishman, but he was too neglectful of Parliament to find for his policy the necessary backing, and he roused suspicion that he put Hanover's interests above England. In 1744 he was forced to resign, and the Pelhams ruled Britain for the next ten years, buying off possible leaders of Opposition by subordinate office.

The war of the Austrian Succession is a confused story of opportunities wasted on either side, of fruitless victories, of strategy smothered by allied disagreement. Britain drifted into the war uncertain of purpose and at no clear-cut moment. Her aim was to support Austria, to whom she was pledged by treaty, but to avoid a breach with Prussia, Austria's most dangerous enemy. Gradually Britain and France became principals in a struggle which they had begun as associates, for Prussia was content with the conquest of Silesia, while Spain and the Italian states found themselves immobilised by British naval power. The war shifted from Germany to Flanders, where France undid the work of Marlborough, won three great victories, over-ran all that is now Belgium, and stopped only when Holland lay open to her troops.

The first serious campaign in which Britain was involved was in 1743, when George II. led an allied "Pragmatic" army into Germany with no definite objective, was cut off by the French, and won the victory of Dettingen by enemy blunders and hard fighting. Next year the French planned to invade England, but a naval squadron and a storm scattered their fleet. In the fruitless campaign that followed, the last chance of allied victory was thrown away by inertia, for in 1745 the French attacked in overwhelming strength. At Fontenoy they won a victory that gave them all Western Flanders.

Fontenoy touched off the '45. Though France had abandoned plans of invasion, Charles Edward, the son of James, hoping that defeat might change British sentiment, tried his luck alone. He sailed to Scotland, and six weeks after his landing was in Edinburgh, for the raw troops who opposed him broke before a Highland charge. He pushed on south, and by rapid marching reached Derby without a battle. Beyond that the Highlanders would not go, for the regiments of Fontenoy were now back in England, and there was no sign of the mass rising on which alone success could depend. Some still claim that a swift move on London might, since the Prince had evaded Cumberland's army, have brought the Stuarts again to the throne; but the probability is that had the clans agreed to go on they would have arrived less than five thousand strong before a hostile capital and double their numbers of raw levies, with their sole chance victory over both city and army in the one or two days before Cumberland's veterans took them in the rear. Not Derby but thirty years of Hanoverian rule settled British history: the rebellion merely showed that in England Jacobitism was a spent force.

The Prince made good his retreat, and won another victory at Falkirk before the inevitable end. It came in April, 1746, at

Culloden, the last battle fought on British soil. By military occupation, road-making, and Acts of Parliament the Highlands were pacified, though somewhat brutally, and in a generation the Stuart cause had become a theme for song instead of an active political creed. In 1750 Charles Edward came to England in disguise, and as a last hope joined the Anglican Church. Conversion to Protestantism might have helped him earlier, but by then it was too late.

Meanwhile France used the diversion of this revolt to extend her conquests. By the end of 1747 she had won two more victories and was pressing into Holland. She had been defeated in Italy, in India had taken Madras, in America had lost Louisbourg: Britain could boast of two small naval victories. At the Peace Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1748, the return of conquests was decided, greatly to the advantage of Britain. Nothing was settled about the right of search which had started the war, nor about the limits of French and British dominion in America, over which in a few years a greater and decisive struggle was to arise.

CHAPTER V

WESLEY AND PITT

Walpole's mastery over his own following had solidified the Cabinet, while the resentment stirred by his long rule gave Opposition a temporary rallying cry. With his fall Cabinet unity diminished and the party character of politics almost disappeared. The Jacobites had struck and were broken; Shippen's death in 1743 removed their parliamentary head, while the rebellion proved that they could not triumph by unconstitutional means. Toryism had little in the way of programme or leadership. Some four-fifths of the members in either House dubbed themselves Whig, which meant that they stood by Revolution principles, now threatened by no one, that they wished government to be in the hands of an aristocratic clique, and for no radical changes in the national organisation. There was room for a struggle between individuals or over foreign policy, none for a party programme in the modern sense.

Henry Pelham was a disciple of Walpole, with the same interest in economy but a less forceful character. He minimised Opposition by calling its possible leaders to office. William Pitt, though he had a tiny personal following, was strong in his eloquence and had a rising reputation for honesty: he became Paymaster of the Forces. Henry Fox, a master in the arts of patronage, was made Secretary at War. The Government was a coalition or "broad-bottomed" one, with even a Tory or two in its minor posts, and it endured until Pelham's death in 1754, giving Britain a quiet time of recovery before the great struggle with France. Such Opposition as there was clustered round Leicester House, where Frederick, Prince of Wales, held his court. For him, the most worthless Hanoverian till George IV, Bolingbroke wrote the *Patriot King*, and advocacy of non-party government became the new party's cry. But few trusted Frederick, and his followers made a habit of piecemeal desertion when they were offered posts in the Ministry. Frederick's death was celebrated by a jingle:

> Had it been his father, I had much rather; Had it been his brother, much better than another;
> Had it been his sister, no one would have missed her, Had it been the whole generation, still better for the nation; But since 'tis only Fred, who was alive and is dead—there's no more to be said.

Pelham's achievements were useful but prosaic. He funded the national debt on a three per cent. basis, and lowered the land tax, the country's reserve for war, from four shillings in the pound to two. He legislated with fair success against the national evil of gin. Halifax in Nova Scotia, was founded in 1749 to provide a career for discharged soldiers; a London police force, "the Bow Street foot patrol," was set up in 1753; and the British Museum was created out of the proceeds of a public lottery. Hardwicke, the Lord Chancellor, stiffened the marriage law of England by an act requiring banns or licences before a wedding, which discouraged the elopement of persons under age. Chesterfield, though out of office, introduced the modern calendar. England had clung to the mediæval year which began on March 25 and provided a leap-year at the end of each century, so she was now eleven days behind most of Europe, where the Gregorian calendar prevailed. In September, 1752, "the style it was changed to Popery," and the supervening days were omitted. This gave the people an unanswerable cry against the Ministry, "give us back our eleven days"; their sense of humour is still taken for ignorance by many historians.

More important than the politics of these years was a religious revival that after 1738 proceeded apace. John Wesley, a High Churchman, had with his brother Charles formed in Oxford a small society of men with austere principles, nicknamed "Methodists," and into this Whitefield, an undergraduate, had been received. John Wesley in 1735 went to Georgia, the new pauper colony, as a missionary. He was a failure there, too quarrelsome and narrow for success, but the journey made him acquainted with the Moravians, an evangelical German sect, and so weakened the exclusiveness of his Church views. He returned to England in 1738, and after a spiritual struggle became convinced that the individual's salvation depended on his faith alone. With Charles and Whitefield he organised inside the Church small groups of persons who read the Bible together, had no secrets from the society, and cross-examined each other on their belief and deeds. Some chapels were built, and in 1739 Whitefield began a campaign of open-air preaching in and near Bristol.

The tendency both of the Church and of Nonconformity had so far in the century been towards a relaxation of dogma, and an increase in the emphasis laid on practical ethics. Christianity seemed to be becoming a code of behaviour, less doctrinal than ever before, and with a smack of secular philosophy about it. There was much learning in the Church of England and much indifference, most of the old controversies were dead, and even those that sprang up over the Trinity and the divinity of Christ, left many cold. The age was moving, especially in its upper ranks, towards more toleration,

restraint, comfort; but this tendency hardly affected the submerged classes, whose emotions were stronger than their reason, and who found small gratification in chilly exhortations to live honourably. Part of Puritanism had been absorbed into the national character, other parts had burned themselves out, and there was room for something new, to use that side of man which was now largely ignored. Signs of a revival had come before Wesley, for mission societies had been founded in 1697 and 1701, and Methodism succeeded because many individuals were already groping their way in its direction. But the Wesleys, with Whitefield, led the movement, organised it, built a new Nonconformity, and gave the Church of England a different and less easy temper.

By the end of 1741 John Wesley had broken with the Moravians, and partially with Whitefield. He held by free-will, Whitefield by predestination, and the two conducted separate, though not yet antagonistic, campaigns of field preaching. Naturally they found most churches closed to them, for their followers and even they themselves accused the clergy of slackness, while every revival left behind it a parish torn and excited. At first the Wesleyans were suspected of popery, and this, with their zeal, which the age distrusted, and their denunciation of popular pleasures, exposed them to attacks from the crowd. They held on through dislike and torpor till they found enthusiasm. Their labours were tremendous: Whitefield preached 18,000 times, made seven campaigns in America and twelve in Scotland; Wesley spoke 40,000 sermons and travelled a quarter of a million miles. They did more than found a new sect; they made the Church of England rather less decorous, rather more enthusiastic.

The effects of their work were various. They caused religious dementia, they preached a personal devil and much hell fire, they believed in witchcraft and revived a waning intolerance. They condemned explicitly all dancing and theatres, implicitly all arts except music, and though they did something for elementary education, as regards humanistic studies and higher learning, they were more an obstacle than a help. Catholic Emancipation would have come quicker without them, and many problems of the nineteenth century would have been met more scientifically and dispassionately. Against these debits can be set the vital fact that they brought a personal religion to hundreds of thousands, a feeling of God's presence that could give a rare exaltation and an unworldly happiness. Many of their converts were pathological cases, epileptics and persons inclined to melancholia, but these were only a small minority of the whole. The Bible became again what it had been in the seventeenth century, the nation's chief literature, and Methodism stressed the Old Testament less heavily than had Puritanism. It had not the same hard core of theological reasoning, and largely because of that produced different political results.

It made for conservatism, not for struggle: men looked for happiness in their inner world, not in externals. Abominable conditions of life and labour were tolerated either as mysteriously ordained by God, or as a prelude to heavenly joy. When the French Revolution broke over Europe, England survived partly through the spread of Evangelicalism inside and outside the Established Church. Wales, Cornwall, and all the parts where an increasing mining population toiled in conditions we can now hardly credit, had learnt to find solace in an inner light and in hopes of another world, rather than in forceful change on earth. Revolutionary ideas might win support from the skilled artisans of a few towns and from some of the aristocracy, but their agnostic tendency alienated the thousands whose rising would have made the nation totter.

Prince Frederick died unregretted in 1751, leaving George, a boy of twelve, heir to the Crown. The stage was clearing for a new troupe of actors: Walpole had died in 1745, Bolingbroke followed his successful rival in 1751. When Henry Pelham died in 1754 his brother, the Duke of Newcastle, gathered the strings of Government into his hands. He provoked much criticism in his own time, and still draws contempt from many historians; he had learnt party management, in which he showed great skill, from Walpole; he was not a man to ride the whirlwind, nor the fool he is often painted. He had a fussy manner, was timid of opposition, and said silly things, but he had a shrewd knowledge of European politics, and in his own line, the control of elections and Parliament, was unsurpassed. He loved power, thought it the first business of every department to help maintain his majority, and reduced his own fortune by three-fourths in buying support, proving his personal integrity by refusing a pension when he left office in 1762. So secure did he now seem, even with his abler brother gone, that in the election of 1754 only forty-two places were contested. It needed a storm to displace him, but a storm was blowing up in America.

There the problem was the old one, undefined boundaries. France had ceded Acadia to Britain in 1713, but its limits were undetermined. She claimed the west of the continent, controlled both the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi, its Eastern and Southern gates, and planned to bind New Orleans to Montreal by a chain of forts in the Ohio valley; if she could establish her claim the English colonies would lie pinned between the Alleghany Mountains and the sea. The French weakness lay in her scanty American population, for less than 100,000 subjects other than Indians owned her rule, while the English dominions held about a million and a half. But the French marched in unison, while half the

English colonies lay to the south or had no backwoods frontier, and therefore felt little interest in the issue. Even those open to border war were paralysed by intercolonial jealousies, and by disputes between their governors and their assemblies. The French farmer was half a soldier, he held his land on condition of military service, and followed his seigneur to war; the English farmer was an individualist who resented discipline. In time the natural increase of population must burst the French chain, but at the moment it could not do so without British leadership and British troops.

In 1754 a colonial attempt to build a fort in the disputed territory, near what is now Pittsburg, was defeated by a French force. A century later this would have meant war, but then local reprisals were taken more lightly. Each nation strove to occupy the Ohio country; and Britain sent Braddock with two battalions, France Dieskau with six, to America. Braddock marched to defeat and death in July, 1755. War was brought nearer by British naval action, for a squadron sailed under orders to stop Dieskau even by force, and failed to do more than capture two of his ships. Britain seized French shipping and France in return broke off diplomatic relations.

Newcastle's aim was clear and his main policy sensible. War with France was almost inevitable, and if it could be confined to the high seas and to America, Britain must win through her fleet and colonial strength. Complicated alliances in Europe made such a limited war difficult but not impossible. The family treaty between France and Spain was moribund, and unless Britain were openly the aggressor, the Spanish fleet and ports might be neutral. The British alliance with Holland was defensive, and could not be invoked unless Britain were the party assailed; this again indicated American reprisals, and the occupation of the back country, which might sting France into a declaration of war. Above all Britain had in Europe two vulnerable points that only an army could defend: Flanders and Hanover. No British Government that tolerated French expansion by the Narrow Seas could retain power, and whatever American victories were won, if France took Antwerp all must be given back at the peace. The same applied to Hanover, a royal, not a British possession; elementary decency forbade that the King should lose it in a purely British dispute. Newcastle strove to protect these two essentials of colonial success by diplomacy, and turned to the traditional alliance with Holland and Austria. But Austria wanted a war of her own, to recover Silesia, and in this Britain could not help. Frederick, who felt a coalition gathering against him, offered to guarantee Hanover for a subsidy, and a treaty in January, 1756, bound Britain and Prussia together, to fight two wars that began almost simultaneously.

Pitt, though he was one of the Ministry, attacked Newcastle on the ground that overmuch attention was paid to Hanover, and was naturally dismissed. France joined a coalition of Austria and Russia against Prussia, threatened England with invasion, and sprang on Minorca. Its fall, followed by news from India, that Calcutta had been lost, brought down Newcastle in November, 1756. Pitt took office in response to public demand, though he had hardly a party in either house. He increased the army, reformed the militia, and planned the conquest of Louisbourg. Three wars had established a traditional strategy against France, by which a confederate army struck at her frontier, while minor offensives nibbled oversea. Pitt revolutionised the system. America was to him the true theatre of war where Britain's great effort must be made, Louisbourg was to be a prelude to Quebec. Hanover needed only enough defence to prevent her becoming a French counter at the peace negotiations; this was provided by a Hessian and Hanoverian force in British pay, by subsidies to Frederick, by diversions on the French coast, and finally, when all these proved inadequate, by a strong British contingent to stiffen a German army. But the Continental war was always secondary in Pitt's eyes; it was merely an indispensable condition of success elsewhere.

The Court disliked Pitt, who had attacked a Hanoverian policy violently, and George, seeing his parliamentary weakness, ventured in April, 1757, to dismiss him. The result was disastrous. The nation fell into uproar, war preparations were delayed, Fox and Newcastle, fearing disaster followed by impeachment, refused to form a Ministry, while Russia and Austria moved against Prussia. Not till the end of June did Britain again have a Government. Then Pitt, the country's choice, joined forces with Newcastle, whom he despised, but who could provide a safe majority, and a coalition began that was to bring victory and endure for over four years. Newcastle had civil patronage and supply for his department; navy, army and diplomacy were swayed by Pitt. None has ever ruled Parliament and Cabinet as decisively as he, whose power came from no nice jockeying for support, but from confidence, willingness to bear the heaviest responsibility, and a voice that stirred the whole nation.

In India Clive won Plassey and made Britain supreme in Bengal, but elsewhere this year saw failure. A French naval concentration at Louisbourg prevented the British attack, while Montcalm, the French general in Canada, broke over the border, stripped to provide troops for Cape Breton, and took Fort William Henry. Cumberland's Hanoverian army was beaten and forced to a partial capitulation, and a raid on Rochefort, made to divert French energies from Germany, failed through the indecision of its generals. George II. disliked young officers, and refused to the end of his life to allow Pitt a

free hand in selecting commanders, though he gave less trouble after 1758 than before it. But though this year did not bring success, it marked the turning point. In fleet and army there breathed a new spirit of confidence; from Pitt's study, where he worked himself to the bone co-ordinating plans of war for two continents, waves of energy spread through the nation. Pitt's labours were enormous and almost single-handed. Each autumn, when the results of the previous summer were fully known, he had to draw instructions for, and arrange action between, military and naval commanders in America, the West Indies, and at home. All had to be ready by February, when the troops and ships for the next campaign must sail, if the next American campaign were to begin in time.

Victory began in 1758. Amherst besieged and took Louisbourg, though too late in the year for an attack on Quebec to follow. Despite a French victory at Ticonderoga over a column advancing on Montreal, the out-works of Canada were reduced. From a camp in the Isle of Wight raids were launched against St. Malo and Cherbourg, and British troops reinforced the Hanoverian army under Ferdinand. It was a prelude to 1759, a year of victories whose only British parallel is the hundred days of 1918. Pitt struck at the West Indies, and Guadeloupe fell. He launched Wolfe and Saunders against Quebec in the greatest combined expedition Britain had ever dispatched: perfect harmony between fleet and army let Wolfe snatch a victory and die with the key to Canada in his grasp. In Germany, Minden made Hanover secure, and a French design to cancel defeat by an invasion of England was shattered in a gale at Quiberon by Hawke's guns. 1760 made the American victory complete by the surrender at Montreal of all Canada; while in India the Carnatic fell into British possession.

George II.'s sudden death in the autumn of 1760 weakened Pitt's domination, but not immediately. The new King was twenty-two, and had none of the German leanings that had made Parliament suspicious of his grandfather, but he had a double dose of Guelph obstinacy, and many unrelenting prejudices. Spain was becoming uneasy at the changed balance of power in the new world, and resented British interference with her shipping. In England the feeling that Britain might overload herself with conquests, and establish a maritime ascendancy that would unite Europe against her, was growing vocal, supported by doubt that her finances could long stand the strain of war. The Duke of Bedford led a group who thought that there were already too many colonies, and that to hold Canada would weaken American loyalty. 170,000 soldiers (60,000 of them Germans) were in British pay, while 80,000 men served in the navy. So peace negotiations began, though war continued vigorously. Belleisle was taken in 1761 and also Dominica; then the Cabinet crisis came to a head. Spain had been drawn by France into an alliance, and was on the verge of declaring war against Britain, so Pitt demanded an immediate rupture and an instantaneous blow at Spanish commerce. His colleagues decided against him and he resigned. The energy he had inspired remained for a time; Martinique was captured in 1762, and Spain paid in the same year for her French alliance by the loss of Havana and Western Cuba.

Pitt in many ways was the greatest statesman of the century, unsurpassed in the eloquence that was then almost indispensable for high office, and beyond doubt the greatest war minister England has ever known. He was scrupulous about public money, and as Paymaster had made a breach with custom by refusing to treat the balances in his hand as his own property, with which he could buy depreciated Government paper and pocket the proceeds on redemption. Henry Fox, who followed Pitt in that office, made a fortune by reverting to the legal but corrupt custom: and paid for it in complete loss of national approval. Pitt always saw clearly the essential points of a situation, and could not be turned aside by panic in the country or division in the Cabinet. But by his nature he was sure to split any Government sooner or later. He considered himself trusted by the nation with supreme power for making war, and his fellow ministers often found themselves called to councils that were not expected to deliberate, but merely to ratify decisions he had already made. Britain had been marvellously fortunate to find first Walpole, then Pitt, each the right man for widely different needs. But the Constitution would not endure many Pitts if it were to grow along the lines already laid down. "I will be responsible for nothing that I do not direct," Pitt said, just before he resigned, a claim to dictatorship subject to the people's will that is incompatible with Cabinet government, for in a Cabinet each member must be responsible for much beyond his control. Pitt was a difficult colleague in a second way also. He appealed to the nation directly, treating Parliament as a public forum and a machine for voting supplies. He had shattered the organisation that Newcastle controlled, had weakened such party solidarity as there was, and, as the event proved, had prepared the way for George III. to destroy the Whig ascendancy.

Bute, one of George's tutors, took Pitt's place. He drew some parliamentary backing from what was left of the old Leicester House opposition, was popular at Court, had a handsome presence, fair courage and small ability. He aimed at a quick peace and discontinued the annual subsidy to Prussia, at which Newcastle, loyal to the alliance he had made, followed Pitt out of office. Anxious negotiations went on through 1762 (Bute remembered how the authors of the Peace of Utrecht had been impeached), and at last terms were agreed which gave to Britain Canada, Florida, some small West

Indian islands, and Senegal, while the other British conquests were restored to France and to Spain. The peace was unpopular, for still better terms could have been obtained, and the way it was made seemed, though in fact it was not, a betrayal of Prussia. Pitt denounced it in the Commons, and the country agreed with him, but Henry Fox, Pitt's old rival, prepared a majority for Bute. He used all the resources of a ministry: threats, promises, favours, and carried the treaty through Parliament.

This peace of Paris, though it abandoned many conquests that could have been held, yet gave Britain a higher position in Europe than even Marlborough had won. For the first time in history she had fought France virtually single-handed and with success; her fleet was supreme everywhere, her army had won a reputation in two continents. All North America save New Orleans and the unpeopled country west of the Mississippi was now British, while the East India Company had supreme power in Bengal and the Carnatic. British subsidies had enabled Prussia to survive a triple attack. Spain had ventured to question British victory, and her army had been hurled back from Portugal, her richest colonial city taken and despoiled. It was no wonder if Englishmen were intoxicated, and carried themselves more haughtily than before. But there were dangers in the position that a few years would reveal. Europe felt Britain to be, in a different way, nearly as grave a menace as France had seemed under Louis XIV., and it would need skilled diplomacy to avoid a coalition against this new sea empire if Britain fell into difficulties. France had been humiliated but not crushed, her fleets were destroyed and many colonies lost, but the peace had left her, against Pitt's wishes, the cradle of a new navy in the right to fish off Newfoundland. Frederick of Prussia had been estranged not by the peace, but by Bute's secrecy in making it. Holland resented British claims in time of war to search her ships and to confiscate all enemy goods they bore. Britain, in fact, was the strongest power in Europe, but she had no friends there, and it is arguable that she had done too much or too little.

In her acquisitions she had to face new problems, for which her past experience offered her little help. In Canada she had won a country alien to her in law, creed and tradition; was it to remain French or be made English by a blending of settlement and coercion? The Company had now great power in India but no responsibility; it was a profit-seeking enterprise whose interest was trade, but it soon became clear that it could not shirk administration. Parliament alone could control it, but Parliament had for long neither the will nor the knowledge to do so effectively. In America there was a possibility that the acquisition of a new empire might weaken the allegiance of the old. Travellers years before had predicted that a British conquest of Canada would, by removing the one foreign menace felt by New England, start her moving towards independence. The American colonies had bowed to a commercial code which impeded their manufactures in the interests of British industry, because it was obvious that Britain gave them some genuine protection from a foreign enemy: would they accept the code any longer now that there was no enemy to fear? Even during the war the colonists had murmured when troops for their own defence were billeted on them, and many had supplied the French West Indies with necessaries while their own troops were operating against the French both north and south. Save for Pitt, nearly all Englishmen whose opinions counted regarded Americans not as fellow citizens but as their own subjects, while Americans saw in England a claim to political and social superiority that they might endure but could not love.

The Empire needed a flexible but strong reorganisation to allow for its increasing complexity. That could be provided by Parliament only if it were led by a strong Ministry whose thoughts were not chiefly concerned in keeping its place. It would involve, sooner or later, the resignation by Parliament of some of its powers. Assemblies do not willingly clip their own wings, and the Commons had of recent years carried their views of privilege higher than ever before, claiming that to kill Lord Galway's rabbits, to poach Mr. Jolliffe's fish (both these gentlemen being members), violated the privilege indispensable to free debate. The new King was not a man to lead in wise abdication, but was intent on breaking down such party solidarity as remained. If the political energies of the nation were to be spent in uneasy struggles for office, if it were to enjoy the advantages neither of real party government nor of intelligent absolutism, there was small chance that it would keep the place won by Pitt's labours.

CHAPTER VI

GEORGE III

George III., who succeeded in October 1760, was twenty-two, and the first of his line with an English upbringing; as he insisted on telling Parliament in November, he gloried "in the name of Britain." That he cared little for Hanover gave him immediate popularity, and freed British foreign policy from the anxious balancing necessary before. He had every prospect of a long and successful reign, for the dynasty was at length firmly established, Jacobitism little more than a romantic regret, and Britain was riding on the crest of victories spread wider than any she had ever known.

George had been indifferently educated under the thumb of Augusta his mother, a domineering German who knew little of English constitutional rules and conceived that ministers should be in fact as well as in name the servants of their monarch. She had kept him from mixing with youths of his own age, had taught him to distrust his grandfather, his uncle Cumberland, and the Whig magnates, and had drilled into him her own merely personal view of politics. He emerged from her training with strict morals, sincere religion, and far more courage than his grandfather, who had been a political coward despite his military experience. He was to prove himself good at the details of business, an ardent farmer, and one whose simple tastes gained middle-class approval even if they provoked aristocratic scorn. Had George been born a country gentleman he would have been respected if obscure: in a king his defects were more noticeable. He was stubborn, uncharitable to opponents, sullen when displeased, convinced that all who differed from him had unworthy motives. He lacked the gifts of loyalty which his predecessors had had in marked degree, and he felt that while he might confer an obligation on his ministers he incurred none towards them. His stubborn attempt to realise political aims that were not in full harmony with the tendency of the last forty years drove him at times to the methods of a second-class brain, secrecy and deceit.

These aims were simple, and in a strict sense constitutional. George had none of that passion for scientific and centralised absolutism that had its votaries on the Continent. He looked back not to Strafford, but at furthest to William III., who had been his own prime minister and had selected his own advisers. George sincerely believed that "connections" were a curse, that they distorted the constitution, and that a king could do what was possible to no magnate, shake himself free from the selfish groupings of party. He wished to fill the position intended for the Crown by the Revolution Settlement, and he made no attempt to advance a step beyond this. That position had gradually altered in the last two reigns, though less drastically than is often claimed: twice only, in dismissing Carteret and accepting Pitt was George II. forced to part with a minister he liked or accept one of whom he disapproved. He and his father were nearly always consulted on the minutest details of government and patronage; but both liked to visit Germany in the intervals between sessions, when the Government following concerted its tactics at Walpole's Houghton or Newcastle's Claremont, and this, together with the fact that neither king cared for the hard work involved by party management, had diminished the appearance and to some extent the reality of royal control. The monarchy had vast influence in Parliament, through titles, offices, pensions, for at times more than two hundred and fifty members of the Commons held place or pension from the Crown, and most of the Lords would do much for a further step in the peerage. But the first Georges opened these resources to ministers whom they trusted, and so made any united Government safe from attack, except when a national crisis turned the fear of dismissal into a secondary consideration.

Possibly George III. was influenced by the programme Bolingbroke had sketched for his father in the *Patriot King*. Bolingbroke preached no corruption and the break-up of parties: the King was to stand at the head of the nation, choosing ministers for their efficiency, not for their influence, and changing them and his policy at the country's request. George may have been attracted by an ideal which shirked the chief problems of government, but in practice he made little attempt to realise it. He did nothing to decrease corruption, and instead of destroying parties he increased the confusion of the time by building an additional one of his own. Where law or custom had settled the constitution, he accepted their decision. He made no attempt to revise the recently extinct practice of the King's presiding over Cabinet meetings. His chief demands were that he himself should control patronage, and through it Parliament, that he could dismiss a Ministry still supported by the Commons, and that, if forced for a time to endure a Government he disliked, he could intrigue freely against it. By the theory of the time he was entitled to each of these claims. He practised them fully, and acquired great power during the first half of his reign, but never tried to use it to construct any permanent system: that would have been contrary to his principles and beyond his vision. He had in fact the same end as the Duke of Newcastle, more courage, more obstinacy, and an inferior brain.

Two things played into his hands. The first was that Pitt, as he himself said, had "contributed to annihilate parties." He

had appealed beyond the Commons to the politically conscious classes of the nation; Newcastle's organisation had been made for a time unnecessary and his ascendancy was never fully regained. Before the end of the war, instead of one strong party behind the Government, opposed by a fluctuating coalition, which had become the normal state of affairs, several groups in varying degrees of unity were apparent, each too weak to maintain a Ministry by itself. There were the scattered Tories, no longer a party; there was the Leicester House faction, remnants of Frederick's admirers, and now led by Bute. The more regular Whigs were atomised into sections. Newcastle, with Cumberland in the background, led the best organised of these, but the Duke of Bedford could at times muster a strong following; the Grenvilles had another, now split between Temple and his brother George, and Pitt had a few able supporters in either House. Whig solidarity was gone, and George, to strengthen his influence, had merely to attract some of the fragments.

The second thing favouring the King was the financial system that prevailed. It is often assumed that the Commons had complete control over money; in fact they had nothing of the kind. Army and Navy estimates were passed annually, but only in the most general form, with no real information in detail; expenditure on these services was subject to audit, but only several years after it had been incurred, and even then the audit was regarded as purely for Exchequer purposes, and not for the information of the Commons. There were no civil service estimates at all, they are an invention of the nineteenth century. The King had a gross income of about a million sterling, out of which he kept himself and family, and provided most of the cost of civil government. He was voted the bulk of this as a "civil list" at his accession, and thereafter no one could question his use of it. True, most was earmarked, and there was theoretically no unlimited fund for pensions and bribery, but in fact George could do what ministers under his three predecessors had been doing, overspend and then invite the Commons to pay his debts without producing detailed accounts. Such a request, when the money had already been dispensed, was almost certain to be granted, and the system gave enormous power to the Crown. The Whigs might have abolished it on Anne's death, but had liked financial methods that put a Government's resources above parliamentary criticism. While they and the monarch agreed they were secure, but now the royal influence was directed to other ends than the preservation of a Whig majority.

George's designs have been much canvassed, much exaggerated, and till recent years generally condemned. Victorian party ideas have been read back into an age where parties as they came to be hardly existed. Whig triumph in 1832 over Parliamentary reform, followed by Tory disruption on the Corn Laws, made Liberalism for half a century the dominant theme in British politics. Liberal historians cast back seeking an ancestry for their views, and found in those Whigs who followed Newcastle and then Rockingham their spiritual progenitors. These had opposed George more consistently than any other group, they had condemned the policy of taxing America, they had cut down royal patronage in 1782, and fifty years later, purged by a split during the French Revolution, and slightly tinctured with Bentham's radical views, they had widened the suffrage: obviously they must always have been Liberals at heart. Against these potential democrats the argument ran, George prevailed, since snobbery and treachery detached a large part of their following: he was victorious at home, and on the verge of destroying British liberties, when he tried to extend his victory beyond the sea, and to tax America through Acts passed by a corrupt Parliament. Had he succeeded there personal government would have been riveted upon the nation, but George Washington saved two countries from tyranny, for the royal defeat in America made a crushed Opposition triumph at Westminster.

Admirers of George III. should support a legend which makes him a greater man than he was. Not only had he no desire for absolutism, but he was quite incapable of attaining it, or of using the royal power he temporarily increased for any such impersonal end. Even had he possessed Napoleonic ideas, he was to spend the last years of his life insane: a bad preliminary to the bequest of despotic powers. Against the Whig interpretation of the reign has grown up another almost equally distorted. Its supporters see that the Whigs were struggling not for democracy but for privilege, using (as all politicians then did) the catchwords of freedom and Revolution principles, while aiming at monopoly. Disraeli, who denounced their "Venetian oligarchy," discerned this clearly. Since the Whigs were corrupt—that is, since they, like nearly all others in politics, expected to be rewarded by place, power or money—it has been held to follow that any attempt to weaken their dominance was statesmanlike, and George is made a patriot opposed by faction, the enemy of a narrow clique, the founder of honest government. It is established that he was business-like, brave, pious, and chaste: were the verdicts of history allotted by the family virtues he would stand fairly high. But a King who tries to leave his own stamp on events demands a different scale than is used for a country gentleman, and when we weigh George in the balance of statesmanship he kicks the beam. Judged by results he failed; for though the policy that made the American war was not his in origin, he clung to it in all its futility, while later he held back from the Irish union any chance of success. Judged by methods, he was little better than Newcastle: if corruption was the great evil of the day, he did nothing to abate it. Judged by his choice of men, he preferred Bute to Chatham, found his perfect, because pliant, minister in North, and gave high office to Lord George Sackville, who had done his best to lose Minden, and was to do much

towards losing America. George had a general preference for mediocrity, for only over mediocrities could he rule unchallenged. In his own interest, more than in that of the nation, he made war on the Whigs, and in their own interest they resisted. Yet in George's favour two things can be said: that he restored to the monarchy, and indirectly to politics, some of the dignity that had been lost under his predecessors, and that he became increasingly popular as his reign drew on. People felt that the King had overthrown a narrow, privileged class, and they generally shared his prejudices—now heavily condemned—against American and Catholic claims.

The Whig system was government by connection, not government by party in its modern sense. A party adopts a policy to be realised by law-making and administration. The business of a connection was different: to survive, to use patronage so as to assure its majority in Parliament, to offer careers of dignity and influence to members of the governing ring. It did not make for efficiency, as politics guided the appointment of admirals and generals, the placing of contracts, the allotting of loans; and it was because of this, and partly because he lacked the qualities needed to control such a system, that Pitt denounced the connections that were then labelled parties. George III.'s aims were those of the Whigs: to build the machine of government round himself, to substitute for the ruling families of Pelham, Grenville, Russell, men who had not sufficient independence to stand on their own feet, but must look to the Court for guidance and career. That was the result of his purpose, which was better than Newcastle's in intention, a little better in execution in that it was more national, yet in one way worse, inasmuch as a King is more immune than a subject against criticism and public opinion, and however discredited can be ousted only by a revolution, not by a mere adverse vote.

George began his campaign by forcing Bute, his ex-tutor, a showy mediocrity, into the Cabinet, and gradually made him the channel by which the royal will was conveyed to its other members. The election of 1761 effected practically no change in the parliamentary balance. Bute did not try to assume the reins at once: he was only in a small degree responsible for the Cabinet's rejection of immediate war with Spain, which led in the autumn to the resignation of Pitt and Temple. But Pitt once gone he could deal with Newcastle, and in 1762, by stopping the Prussian subsidy, he forced him to resign. Bute allied himself with the Duke of Bedford, who wanted to end the war, became Prime Minister, and made the Peace of Paris, which Henry Fox, a deserter from Newcastle, carried through Parliament by lavish bribery, and which was followed by a proscription of all who would not support it. Then Bute retired, in April, 1763, the most unpopular man in England, having achieved his double task of finishing the war and increasing Whig divisions. He selected the Ministry that followed him, a coalition of George Grenville, Halifax and Egremont, and for a time tried to control them from outside.

This Government lasted for two years, and started two disturbances that its successors could not quell. The greater of these was in America, and brought by Grenville's zeal for economy. The King was himself mainly responsible for the less, of which John Wilkes was the storm centre: it lasted intermittently for eleven years, helped to define the Constitution in several points, and left behind it the first popular agitation of the century for parliamentary reform.

Wilkes was a witty adventurer who followed Temple, Pitt's brother-in-law; he sat for Aylesbury, and hoped to be made minister at Constantinople or Governor of Canada. He attributed his disappointment to Bute, who controlled a paper, *The Briton*. To attack the favourite and his Scottish following, Wilkes founded *The North Briton*, and in April, 1763, published in it a denunciation of the royal speech at Parliament's prorogation: he treated this speech, quite properly, as the work of ministers. But George thought his remarks were personal criticism and ordered a prosecution: a warrant against unnamed persons was issued, and fifty men, including Wilkes, were arrested. Wilkes pleaded privilege of Parliament, was released till his trial, and immediately became a popular hero. With other sufferers he brought suits for unlawful arrest, and Pratt, who heard the cases, ruled that general warrants were illegal. With cheerful truculence Wilkes accused the Secretaries of State of stealing his papers, and reprinted *The North Briton*. When Parliament met in November it declared that privilege did not cover seditious libel—a desirable reduction in the swollen immunities of members. A courtier wounded Wilkes in a duel, a mad Scot tried to murder him, and he retired abroad; when his trial came on he was condemned in absence, outlawed, and expelled from the Commons.

In 1768 Wilkes returned to London, surrendered to the law, stood for Middlesex and was elected. He spent nearly two years serving his sentence in prison; from there he denounced the Government's use of troops during a riot. This led to his second expulsion from Parliament, repeated when Middlesex re-elected him; finally, when he had been chosen for the fourth time, the Commons declared Luttrell, who had a fourth of Wilkes' votes, duly returned. The City took up Wilkes and made him an alderman, and by his magisterial powers he protected printers of parliamentary debates from arrest for breach of privilege. In the election of 1774 he was again chosen for Middlesex, and took his seat. He had established that a Government servant is liable to prosecution for obeying illegal orders, that the House of Commons cannot by resolution disfranchise a constituency, and he had brought nearer the authorised reporting of parliamentary

proceedings. On the surface his struggle had been with an irresponsible and autocratic House of Commons, but everyone knew that it was largely the King who had at last been beaten on all the points at issue. Wilkes was satisfied with his victory and became a supporter of George III. and the younger Pitt against the Whigs.

The Grenville Ministry was weak from the start. George invited Newcastle to join it, but he refused unless his whole connection were brought in. When Egremont died in August, 1763, reconstruction became urgent, and on Bute's advice Pitt was approached. He insisted to the King that the chief Whigs, but not Bedford, must be included in any Government led by him. George, whose practice was to provoke confidential remarks and then repeat them to others, rejected such drastic changes, and conveyed Pitt's views to Bedford, who was stung into a coalition with Grenville. They proved anything but docile servants of the King; they forced Bute to leave London and chose their own course. George submitted for eighteen months, till his illness in 1765 made necessary an Act to set up a regency if he died. The Government mishandled the Bill, and George once more approached Pitt.

A chance offered of forming, under the most popular statesman in England, a Ministry strong enough to check the King's rising influence, for George had not yet attained his later mastery in group management. Newcastle and Rockingham, who was now the accepted leader of the Pelham connection, were to be in the Government, and its policy was to be repeal of Grenville's Stamp Act, restoration of the officers dismissed in 1763 for their politics, an alliance with north European states, and an Act forbidding general warrants. But this Government was never formed. Pitt thought Temple necessary to lead it in the Lords, and Temple had healed a quarrel with his brother Grenville, he upheld the Stamp Act, and hoping for a mainly Grenville administration, refused to play second fiddle to Pitt. Pitt thought it impossible to go on without him, and the King turned to Rockingham, who in July, 1765, built a weak Government out of his own group and a few of Pitt's followers. Pitt himself would not join nor cordially support what he considered a party connection, even though such policy as it had was of his own creation.

The Rockingham Whigs have been posthumously fortunate, for the greatest political philosopher of the time, Edmund Burke, became their apologist. They had public spirit and honesty, for years they offered unsuccessful opposition to an American policy that failed, and so they left a tradition of statesmanship greater than their deserts. At this time they showed themselves divided, inert, and too exclusive a connection to win either popular or royal support. Till his death in October, 1765, they were dominated by the King's uncle, Cumberland, and after that their divisions widened. They restored the dismissed officers and abolished general warrants, but the burning issue of colonial taxation they left alone till American reports became alarming; then they took the line that Parliament was omnipotent, but should not impose a hated tax on colonies which were not represented in it. They repealed the Stamp Act, and to get this done passed a Declaratory Act asserting Parliament's sovereignty over the whole Empire. But everyone knew that the repeal was Pitt's work more than theirs, and both King and nation felt that the Ministry could not endure without him. Pitt would not come in save as head of the Government; Rockingham would have him only as equal in a coalition. In July, 1766, George cut the knot by dismissing Rockingham and sending for Pitt.

So began his third, and disastrous, Government. Temple would not join as a subordinate, some of Rockingham's party took office, others refused, and the Ministry was later described by Burke as a "tesselated pavement"—brilliant patches of ability, but the whole without design or balance. Pitt had been an admirable dictator in crisis, but he was never an easy colleague. Now he made a serious mistake: thinking that opposition would be strongest in the Lords, and that his young lieutenants Grafton and Shelburne were too raw to face it, he became Earl of Chatham. This shocked the nation, which had thought him above titles and misread his motive, while it left nominal leadership in the Commons to Conway, the bravest soldier of his time, but a nervous and irresolute politician. It weakened Pitt's own powers: through the Commons he could speak to England, in the Lords he was caged. His own office, Lord Privy Seal, freed him from departmental cares, and he made the Duke of Grafton take the post, which was becoming traditional for the Prime Minister, of first Lord of the Treasury.

For some months, though most of the Rockingham Whigs seceded in the autumn, Chatham controlled his Ministry. It had to face a Franco-Spanish alliance, hoping for a war of revenge; the regulation of India, where a company aiming at profits was proving itself unable to furnish good government; and American unwillingness to furnish quarters for British troops. Before any solutions could be reached its chances of success vanished with Cabinet unity in 1767, for Chatham fell desperately ill. The strain of his labours during the war, diffused gout, and tortured nerves, made him unable to see a colleague and generally even to write a letter. The diverse elements in the Cabinet began to break up, and the King, who had loyally supported Chatham's attack on parties, reasserted gradually his personal control. Charles Townshend, Chancellor of the Exchequer, saw his Budget threatened by a Grenville-Rockingham alliance in the Commons, which insisted on reducing the land tax, and he jumped at the opportunity of getting a small revenue from American duties.

When he died in the autumn of 1767 Lord North, an able leader of the House and a pliant tool of the King, succeeded him. The Ministry that had begun as above "connections" became dominated by the newest connection of all, that of George, while the Opposition, which was split into three sections under Rockingham, Bedford and Grenville, could agree neither on policy nor on the distribution of office should they drive out the Government. The Bedford group finally allied with the Ministry, and in 1768 Chatham recovered enough to resign from a Cabinet that had ceased to be his for more than a year.

It was under the leadership of Grafton, once Chatham's disciple, that Parliament drifted into more and more open dispute with America, and that the Wilkes affair reached its last folly, the annulment of the Middlesex election. The Opposition grew steadily weaker, sapped by individual desertions, for at this time, as Horace Walpole had written on his fathers fall, "a good majority, like a good sum of money, soon makes itself bigger." The King improved his technique of parliamentary and borough management till he was the best electioneer in the country, and his strong personality gave the law first to Grafton and then to Grafton's successor, Lord North.

In the election of 1768 the price of boroughs soared higher than before, for nabobs from India were now competing for seats. As usual, the Ministry retained its majority, though it seemed threatened for a time by the Wilkes agitation and by its own blunders. Over the decision that Luttrell should sit for Middlesex, agitation in London became greater than ever since Walpole's excise; petitions that it be reversed poured in from the shires, and a Bill of Rights Society, advocating annual parliaments and the exclusion of pensioners and placemen, sprang up, the ancestor of organised radicalism and of Chartist demands. Abroad there was a small crisis, for Genoa sold Corsica, where chronic rebellion prevailed, to France, and Grafton, unwilling either to disclaim all concern or to protest forcibly, sent arms to the Corsicans and remonstrated feebly at Versailles, but suffered the French annexation to pass unchallenged. *Junius* poured vitriol on King and Cabinet. America had united against Townshend's duties, and the decision to repeal all of these but that on tea, made in 1769 and carried out next year, though it lessened American agitation did not stop it. A war with Spain threatened, for she had expelled a British garrison from the Falkland Islands, and at first seemed ready to stand by her action. As a further trouble to the Ministry, Chatham in 1769 recovered his health and joined forces with the Opposition.

The Ministry that had to face these troubles owned no real head and was divided both on American policy and on the treatment of Wilkes. Its chief, Grafton, was constantly outvoted in his own Cabinet. Camden, the Lord Chancellor (formerly Pratt), shared his views, as did Conway. North was becoming the King's mouthpiece: he was an acute debater and good man of business, with tact and humour such that he made few personal enemies even among his bitterest opponents, but he was constitutionally behind the times; he thought it was the function of a minister to be the King's servant rather than the King's adviser, and he bowed to the royal judgment on both men and measures. Against this Government stood, for a time, an Opposition that disagreed on American taxation, but was united in condemning the annulment of the Middlesex election. Temple and George Grenville were in harmony, Chatham joined them, and since Newcastle, whose desertion in 1761 he had never forgiven, had died in 1768, a personal barrier no longer cut him off from the Rockinghams. A general attack on the Government was launched in January, 1770, and revealed the Cabinet dissensions: Camden turned on his colleagues and was dismissed, Grafton resigned, and others followed him. North became Prime Minister, but it seemed doubtful that he could survive an attack led by Chatham and backed by the popularity of Wilkes.

Yet North was to remain Prime Minister for twelve years. It is often assumed that his tenure of office depended on the "King's Friends," the royal party begun by Bute, now led by Jenkinson, and composed of men who looked direct to the Court for instructions, and on whose votes no minister who was opposing George's will could count. But this party was always a small minority in the House, able, if the Opposition were already strong, to pull a Government down, but quite incapable of maintaining one by itself. Wider support came from the numerous members who belonged to no regular connection, but in tiny groups of three or four tended to vote for any Ministry that seemed reasonably permanent, and so to dip for themselves and their friends into the rich treasury of patronage. With these, the Bedford following, and the King's Friends, North had a legion, against which all but the strongest attack must beat in vain. The Opposition scored one success in 1770, when Grenville carried a bill transferring the decision on disputed elections from the whole House to committees of fifteen, who were sworn to decide on the evidence, and to ignore the affiliations of each candidate. That done, it fell to pieces and the Government majority steadily increased.

There were several reasons for this unexpected success. Gradually America took the place of Wilkes as the chief ground for attack on the Ministry, and the American cause was popular neither in Parliament nor in the country. Parliament would not admit that it was not sovereign over the whole Empire, and the colonies seemed to the ordinary man to be claiming that they should pay nothing towards a war fought largely in their interest, and nothing towards their own

defence; that they should be entitled to break the law by wholesale smuggling and organised riot, and to have all the advantages of a British connection with none of its burdens. But the chief weakness of the Opposition was internal. On America they could not agree: the Grenvilles thought taxation both legal and expedient; the Rockinghams held it legal but inexpedient; Chatham maintained that any taxation not incidental to the regulation of imperial trade ran counter to the Constitution. When George Grenville died at the end of 1770 several of his followers went over to North. Above all, the popular feeling in the country was never used so as to bring success; the Ministry was safe against anything but a national outcry, and that never came.

Opposition and Government were both chiefly drawn from an oligarchy that kept its eyes turned backward to the last two generations, and could neither understand the present nor guess at the future. A growing middle class was inventing, building, trading; its economic power grew stronger year by year, yet in politics it had no regular place, nor could it be moved to active interest in what it considered a mere battle of cliques. Brindley had cut a canal, Wedgwood had set up his pottery, Hargreaves invented his Jenny, and Watt his steam-engine;—these were to make the struggle between George and the Whigs seem battles of kites and crows, while the England for which they fought was changing her shape and taking her own course. George conned the division lists, Rockingham was earnest that the Government must be opposed only in Parliament and with moderation and restraint; neither saw the change that would make victory for either impossible; neither looked beyond the class that to both seemed the nation. "The generality of people," wrote Burke, "are fifty years, at least, behindhand in their politicks," and this was as true of his own party as of his opponents. Chatham, whom each year was making more radical, had some feeling of what was coming, and if well supported might have made the middle classes more vocal, and have marched at their head to such a reform of the electoral system as would have crippled George's power. But he was too infirm and too isolated to do this by himself, and the Rockinghams would have none of it. They were Conservatives, mistrustful both of popular agitation and of royal influence; they offered nothing to the nation, and would fight only with weapons against which the Government was triple-proofed. An agitation for parliamentary reform that would win the trading and manufacturing interests in the nation might have succeeded, but the Whigs held to the principles of 1688, which were not threatened, and discouraged methods and aims that would lessen the ascendancy of their class.

Save for Chatham, nearly all the figures prominent under George II. had now gone into retirement or the grave. With them had vanished the strength of the old connections, and a stream of individual desertion to the Ministry set in. The nation had little reason to believe that a Government other than North's would show much more ability or much more vigour than his, and it would almost certainly be less united. Whatever North's blunders in American policy and in the war that was drawing nearer, his handling of several other problems showed fair statesmanship. In 1771 he took a firm line on Spain's action in the Falklands, and secured its disavowal. In 1773, by his Regulating Act, ultimate control in India was transferred from the Company to the Crown, and some of the worst abuses of trading rule were abolished. Next year the Quebec Act gave Canada a constitution on lines approved by the majority of those who had studied the problem dispassionately: freedom of worship, French civil law, and a nominated legislature; the Whigs denounced a measure that withheld English institutions from a French population that did not desire them. No further attack was made on Wilkes, and the Government rode on supreme until an unsuccessful war brought North down, as it would have brought down any other Ministry of whatever complexion.

CHAPTER VII

AMERICA

The American Revolution had deep roots in social, political and economic facts visible before ever the House of Hanover mounted the throne. Of the thirteen colonies all but Georgia were seventeenth-century creations, founded when religion and politics were in England still closely tangled, and before Parliament's supremacy had been assured. Though North and South differed widely, both preserved the ideas of their birth, diverging more and more from eighteenth-century England, for no great waves of emigration came to harmonise the axioms of each country. Education in America kept a legal tinge that it had lost at home, and political argument in New England wore a theological dress largely discarded, since 1688, by Britain. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, conducting an active proselytising campaign, found itself hampered by the lack of an American Episcopate, which forced all ordinands into a long voyage to England, but its suggestions for a local bishop were denounced in the northern colonies as if Laud still ruled the Church. America grew in men and wealth, but for long retained some characteristics of a frontier society: great individual enterprise, intense particularism, a feeling that the public will can legitimately act outside and above the law. The average colonial was better educated in public affairs than his English fellow, but he had a different background, for England thought of politics in terms of parliamentary discussion, and Massachusetts in terms of direct democracy and town meeting. This made in New England for intensity, parochialism, simplification of difficult issues into catchwords, and intolerance of opposition.

The political system of the colonies reproduced English conditions of the previous century. In Britain the constitution had moved far towards parliamentary government, but in America, where assemblies were more democratic than the House of Commons, there had been much less change in their ideas and position. It was their business, as it had once been Parliament's, to obstruct the executive rather than to control it. The Governor, who in most colonies was appointed by Britain, was theoretically subject to Whitehall, tied by his instructions, but dependent for his salary on annual votes of an assembly with much power but little responsibility. With tact he might get some of his recommendations carried out, but his views were often suspect as coming from outside, not arising from the colony's own needs. If he were pliant he might be recalled; if he resisted, he might be starved into submission. Friction was the normal state of any colonial Government, for the device of setting up a local cabinet responsible to the Assembly had not yet been discovered, and would have involved a partial abdication of parliamentary sovereignty, too recently established in Britain to be parted with lightly. England conceived of colonial government as subordinate and municipal in nature, subject to Parliament's supervision: Americans thought their assemblies as supreme in their own spheres as the legislature of Great Britain.

There was no American Government that could speak for or bind America as a whole. The lack of it had been disastrous in war, enabling 70,000 French in Canada to resist over a million British, and was later, by throwing on Britain the responsibility for American defence, to ruin a polity built on the superficial maxim *divide et impera*. In 1754, when hostilities threatened, the weakness of division became apparent, and an intercolonial congress at Albany recommended the union of eleven provinces in a Grand Council, its members chosen by the different assemblies. It would have been a loose confederation, it was supported by the best American opinion of the day, but it proved too much for the prejudices of the colonies: they rejected the plan which never reached Parliament. Of American as opposed to Virginian or Massachusetts patriotism there was little till the Revolutionary War forged its beginnings. More than once boundary disputes brought open hostilities between neighbours, and even after 1770 observers predicted that any shattering of the British connection would be followed by a struggle for supremacy between state and state.

For England the colonies had some affection, for Englishmen other than Pitt, who had stirred their imagination, very little. Such personal contacts as there were did not make for love. Governors, trying to uphold their waning authority; officials, jobbed by their connections into posts for which they had no competence; officers, who might be right in their criticism of poorly disciplined colonial militia, but who themselves wasted thousands of lives by refusing to try new methods in forest warfare;—such were the Englishmen oftenest seen. No British statesman of the first rank had crossed the Atlantic. By most Englishmen the colonials were considered subordinates rather than equals, an unconscious attitude that stirred resentment, and that in many Americans roused an inferiority complex which increased their assertiveness. When an American visited England, he was genuinely shocked by the extravagance and corruption of political society, and he inclined to the belief, always popular in western communities, that the east was decadent.

These causes for disagreement might have been overcome but for a system of trade regulation so rooted in British economic theory that even Adam Smith never abandoned it completely. Mercantilism, as it is called, sprang from war

conditions, and was the natural creed of an age when war was nearly as common as peace. Its ideas were simple, its applications various, and every European state with dependent colonies held its main tenets. The difference, indeed, between the British and other empires was that Britain gave her settlements a triad of liberties unknown elsewhere—trial by jury, Habeas Corpus, and representative institutions—not that she bound them tighter than did France or Spain. Over commerce she, like they, retained control and aimed at making her dominions self-contained, and at confining their internal trade to British subjects. To achieve these simple ends an elaborate code had been reared, which in one part of the Empire failed to meet the hard facts of climate and population.

That part was the northern colonies. Britain could draw Oriental products from India; rum, sugar and chocolate from the West Indies; cotton and rice from the Carolinas; tobacco from Virginia; she could give these regions a monopoly of her market and so largely atone for any restrictions on their commerce. With the middle colonies and New England things were not so easy. England herself produced articles like theirs, save for timber and furs. Exports such as these could not satisfy an agricultural and trading population who were steadily driving the game further back, and who in clearing their fields were felling the tall pines that the navy wished to reserve for future masts. England wanted no farm products from America and dreaded colonial competition in manufacture. So the idea had grown that she must give naval protection, necessary and real in the eighteenth century, should assist in land defence, though the chief burden of this would remain colonial, and in return might prohibit such local industries as she thought dangerous to her supremacy. She paid bounties on some products and forbade others: the export of hats even from one colony to another was made illegal in 1732, the manufacture of steel in 1750. One chief weakness in the system was that Britain was judge in her own cause, and decided which colonial manufactures must be checked, which encouraged. The age was highly commercial in spirit—more so than the next century—and British traders had far more influence in Parliament than any colony.

Under the Navigation Acts no colonial products could be carried to any part of the Empire save in ships Empire-built, Empire-owned, and Empire-manned, and certain "enumerated" articles—the list changed often—must, if carried to Europe, be landed in Great Britain or Ireland. American shipping grew under the protection of this code, but neglected the limits set to its activities. A long coast-line with infrequent customs officers encouraged smuggling, so much that at one time the revenue collected in America produced only a fourth of the cost of collection. Even through the Seven Years' War trade with the French West Indies went on briskly; it retarded victory and made naval and military officers feel, with many Americans, that the ship-owners of Rhode Island and Pennsylvania had no thought but for dollars. Revision of the revenue machinery was overdue, and had been postponed by the war: when peace came Grenville took it up, and decided to use the navy, which had been called in against this contraband trade, to help stop smuggling: he extended the Admiralty Courts in America, increased the "enumerated articles," and imposed new duties on sugar.

These measures offended a strong American smuggling interest, but they were in accordance with theories long accepted, and could not be denounced as a new departure. But Grenville's Stamp Act of 1765 raised a different question: could Britain levy money from her colonies for their own military protection? His plan seemed to the ordinary British politician reasonable and fair. The French war was barely over when the widest Indian rising ever seen had been organised by Pontiac, nearly all posts in the back country had fallen, and but for British troops havoc might have spread far into the settlements. It seemed that, even with Canada in her hands, Britain must still organise colonial defence or there would be none worth the name. A standing army of 10,000 men was planned, at a cost of over £300,000 a year, and, to provide a little more than one-third of this sum, stamp duties, long used in Britain, were to be imposed on newspapers and legal documents; about half their yield would come from the West Indies, but all and more would be spent in America. A year's warning of the suggested tax had been given, and no alternative method of paying for their protection had been suggested by the colonies.

There had been warnings enough in the last half-century that such a measure would rouse opposition, and now resistance gathered at once. The American Whigs did not hold, with the Whigs in England, that Parliament was sovereign; like many seventeenth-century Englishmen they thought of it as bound by a compact violated by this Act. Many argued, as Pitt did in England, that Parliament could levy "external" or indirect taxation, but that it could not tax the colonies "internally" or directly. Pontiac's war was now over and the standing army seemed unnecessary. To British eyes the money involved was trifling, to American large, for colonial budgets were almost incredibly small, and taxation much lighter than in Europe. The colonies suspected a conspiracy against their liberties in what was only a rather pedantic design for economy and organisation. Nine of them drew together in a Congress at New York, and learnt the beginnings of co-operation, while crowds tasted the joys of unpunished riot. The Act could not be enforced, and was repealed next year: since Parliament in debating it had followed its usual practice of refusing to hear petitions against revenue Bills from interested parties, and had rejected American protests, this seemed a victory mainly won by force. The tax had led

to a denial of Parliament's supremacy that could not permanently stop at the condemnation of "internal" taxation, and it had forced Parliament and the colonies to consider the nature of the imperial tie and its defects. If statesmanship is largely the co-ordination of means to ends, of effort to result, if one of its aims is to promote reason and discourage passion, Grenville's measure stands condemned, for it had angered both Parliament and the colonies, and had raised a storm out of all proportion to any benefits that it might bring. America had found a weapon in organised boycott of British goods, and had shown that the colonial executives were powerless to stop mob outrage.

To strengthen the governors, to meet the objection to "internal" taxation by Parliament, Townshend in 1767 imposed his customs duties. They were the smaller part of a general economy design, of which the more important was thought to be the withdrawal of troops from the posts in the unsettled west: duties were to be levied at the ports on glass, paints, paper and tea, and their proceeds devoted to paying the salaries of judges and governors. This would free these men in part from assembly control. The purpose of the taxes, and the fact that they were imposed not for trade regulation but for revenue, set the fire ablaze again, and started the cry "no taxation without representation." The boycott of British goods revived, riots impeded customs officers even from executing laws of long standing, and a few New Englanders, seeing that there was no logical stopping place between parliamentary sovereignty and full separation, began secretly to work for independence. It became impossible to bring a civil action in a Massachusetts court, and even judges were tarred and feathered when they found for Crown officials or criticised American claims. While lynch law grew during the next two years, Townshend's duties produced less than £16,000 and brought military expenditure of £170,000.

The decision to repeal all the duties save that on tea was made in the summer of 1769 and carried out in 1770. Repeal did much to lessen disturbances, but came too late to stop a collision in Boston, where some troops were stung into firing on a crowd that attacked them. The tea duty was kept on merely to assert a principle proved barren: to resist this principle, not because of any real oppression, American agitation went on. Old arrangements, such as the presence of British troops, were now denounced. The repeal of the duties quieted New York and the south, but roused the advanced party in Massachusetts to further exertions: in December, 1773, a party of disguised Bostonians destroyed three cargoes of tea. This safe achievement was hailed by extremists as a great victory for liberty, while to England it seemed an unpardonable violation of private property.

This "tea-party" gave the British Government a chance of success, for it made many Americans feel that Boston had gone too far, and must make good the damage. But the Ministry were more angered than perturbed; they did not realise how deep lay the resentment of parliamentary claims, and they thought that strong measures with a mere show of force would crush opposition. So far British policy had been foolish, clinging to a threepenny duty on tea as if the empire hung by it, but no impartial observer could label it tyrannous. Now in response to organised outrage Parliament struck at American liberties, passed an Act closing the port of Boston, revised the charter of Massachusetts, and allowed capital offences to be tried in Britain if a fair hearing seemed impossible in the colony. It was these measures that caused the war. American feeling swung back again on seeing such penalties inflicted for the action of a few citizens. Twelve colonies met in the Continental Congress during the autumn of 1774 and asked for the restoration of all rights infringed since 1763.

This negative policy, which Burke supported in two famous speeches during 1774 and 1775, would have eased but not solved the problem. Congress showed clearly that it would not long rest content under the existing commercial code, and the colonies, if they were to remain willingly inside the empire, must have full political and fiscal autonomy. Even so the troubles of American disunion would remain, and might again lead Parliament into unpopular courses. Two plans reaching deeper than Burke's were put forward in America and England. Galloway, a Pennsylvania loyalist, tried to carry through Congress a scheme for American federation in a central Council, with powers to tax and legislate subject to revision by Parliament, the Council itself to be able to veto any British proposals touching the colonies: Congress rejected his suggestion by one vote. The second plan was Chatham's, and was prompted by Benjamin Franklin. In February, 1775, Chatham introduced a Bill to recognise Congress as an American parliament, to abandon all British claims to levy taxation that was not incidental to trade regulation, and to throw on Congress the responsibility of military defence. He was too radical for British sentiment, and this, the last chance of peace, and probably already too late, died after a single reading in the Lords.

A sudden dissolution in the autumn of 1774 had renewed North's majority. Though war was every day drawing nearer, he and his advisers rated its chances so low that they reduced naval strength from 20,000 men to 16,000, and fixed the army at 17,547 effectives, besides 15,000 in Ireland and 6,000 to garrison Gibraltar and Minorca. George III., had he been a Machiavel aiming at the destruction of British liberties, would have taken the chance of playing off America against England, Congress against Parliament; but he held the view of an ordinary Englishman, that the Americans were

unruly and unreasonable but not to be feared. The garrison of Boston was increased, while elsewhere the patriots, or American Whigs, were busy establishing their ascendancy, terrorising Loyalists or Tories, driving out officials, and building a kind of government by revolutionary committees. Rhode Islanders seized forty guns, New Hampshire a fort, and for months before the first skirmish a state of war virtually existed in the northern colonies. American feeling was changing fast towards the repudiation of all parliamentary control, not merely of taxation, and to the assertion that the sole bond of Empire was in the Crown. Once convinced that none rated Parliament's claims higher than did George III., it was an easy step to the proclamation of independence.

Bloodshed came in April, 1775, and with it open war. A double American offensive was made against the British in Boston and into Canada. Boston was gradually beleaguered till in 1776 it became untenable and was evacuated by Howe: the Canadian invasion promised well, for Carleton, who governed there, had sent all his troops but 850 to Boston, but he held Quebec through the winter, and when reinforced next year drove the badly disciplined invaders back in ruin. Both sides learned that victory would not be swift; feeling hardened in each country, and Congress in 1776 took the inevitable step of proclaiming the British connection at an end.

Had America been strongly united for independence the war must have ended quickly with her success. Her population was now between two and three million, and though England had nearly three times her numbers, she could not maintain more than some fifty thousand men in a field of war three thousand miles away, nor could she develop that force at once. With her fleet she could ruin American sea commerce and raid small ports, with her army she might hold one or two colonies, but American life was not so highly organised that the capture of a few towns would bring it to a standstill, and the country could not be starved. But America was not unanimous, and in that fact lay any British chance of success. About a third of her citizens were prepared by 1775 for active resistance; about a fifth, Loyalists or Tories, clung to the British connection. It was not that they liked Parliament's actions, but with Burke they believed them legal though inexpedient, and they were not prepared to destroy the Empire because Parliament had been unwise. Since they looked for leadership to the colonial executives, and these were powerless or inert, most Loyalists were harried into silence or exile before the war opened, yet they raised over 30,000 troops for the British cause, and when peace came 40,000 of them migrated north, gave Canada an English-speaking population and founded the colony of New Brunswick. The rest of the people in the colonies, nearly half of the whole, took as little share in the war as they could, and sold their products indiscriminately to either army, but gradually, as the war became more and more national, and American feeling rose against the British through their customary use of German troops, they threw in their lot with their neighbours.

The British attempt to hold Massachusetts had failed against an insurgent population and it was resolved to move the war south, since New York and Pennsylvania were more divided in sentiment than New England. Howe offered peace and pardon on submission, which was naturally refused; he took New York in September, 1776, and made it the British base till the end of the war. With energy he might twice have destroyed Washington's army, but though he won several victories, he never pursued them hard, hoping, apparently, that his offers of amnesty would bear fruit.

The design for 1777 was to capture and hold the line of the Hudson river, Burgoyne marching from Canada, Howe from New York; thus New England would be severed from the other colonies and the war might be trampled out in the south. This strategy had been determined in London, where George III. and Lord George Germain (formerly Sackville) drew the plans; but they allowed Howe to attack Philadelphia first. He took it, but left Burgoyne unsupported, with the result that his army was surrounded and forced to surrender at Saratoga in October. So far nearly every engagement had been a British victory, but this defeat atoned for all, raised American flagging hopes, and in a few months brought France, eager for revenge, into the war.

With French intervention in March, 1778, the chance of Britain's success was almost gone, for her communications were now threatened. Hopes that Chatham would join the Government and again bring victory were defeated by George's opposition, and Chatham in any case was too old: he died in May. North offered the colonies conciliation: abandonment of all taxes save for the regulation of trade, and politically anything short of independence. Three years earlier this would have stopped war; now it was too late. North himself, who had never liked coercion, tried again and again to resign, but George would not part with him. The Opposition, where Charles Fox was becoming prominent, demanded peace, but the unprovoked French attack had roused public feeling to strong support of the war.

French intervention at once hampered British strategy, and forced the evacuation of Philadelphia through danger to Howe's communications by sea. The war became largely maritime: France had built a new navy since 1763, while the British fleet had been inefficiently maintained and was rotted by corruption. An attempt was made to reduce the southern

colonies where the Loyalists were believed to be half the population. It was largely successful, for Georgia and South Carolina were overrun, but the Loyalists there had been left unaided too long to be able now to hold these colonies by themselves. Spain joined France and the revolting colonies in 1779, and put Britain in a definite minority at sea: the allied fleets rode the Channel unquestioned in that year and threatened a landing on the south coast.

Despite foreign help, it still seemed possible that America might tire of the war. Washington's army of regulars fought well but was ill-found, Congress was riven by personal jealousies, the militia of the different colonies proved undisciplined and untrustworthy. Even though British reinforcements had to be deflected to the West Indies, where France spent her main effort, there was little hope of Washington capturing New York, and British successes in the south were for a time continuous. But by 1780 Britain, like America, was growing weary and coming rapidly to the view that her strength depended on commerce and fleet, not on oversea possessions. The Opposition gained strength and demanded an economical reform that would weaken the Government's power to buy a majority; some even preached annual elections, manhood suffrage, and redistribution. An Act to repeal some of the Catholic disabilities in England stirred riots under the cry of "No popery," and for three days, till the soldiers were called out, London was in the hands of a mob. France threw 5000 troops into America, and Holland joined the coalition against Britain. A single decisive success either way might finish a struggle in which both sides were weakening.

It was the French fleet that brought the end in sight. Cornwallis moved up from the south and after hard fighting occupied Yorktown, where as long as Britain commanded the sea he was secure. Two French squadrons and a Franco-American army surrounded him and forced his surrender. There seemed little use in prolonging the struggle. Though Britain had repelled a Spanish attack on Gibraltar, she had lost Florida to Spain and would soon lose Minorca, her dominion in India was threatened, and France and Spain seemed on the verge of capturing every British possession in the West Indies. Public opinion became strong for peace; North's majority in Parliament, apparently untouched by an election in 1780, fell rapidly, and in March, 1782, he resigned. With him vanished much of George III.'s power, for he could never again find a minister who combined North's pliancy with his parliamentary skill.

A last success came just before peace negotiations were opened, when Rodney defeated a French fleet that was intended to convoy an army to the conquest of Jamaica. Britain had been fighting everywhere against superior numbers for three years, almost entirely on the defensive. Her leadership had been bad, for she had scattered her forces in an attempt to cover every part of a vulnerable empire, instead of concentrating on essentials and there making a vigorous attack. There had been brilliant feats, but a low sense of public duty and party animosities had hampered her almost as if Pitt had never breathed a new spirit into both services. George and his instruments, in fact, had shown themselves no better than Newcastle at waging war.

The new Government was a coalition under Rockingham, of his party and Chatham's followers led by Shelburne, and between its two sections there was little sympathy. The Rockinghams had given up America for lost early in the war, the Chathamites more reluctantly, and personal differences separated the two wings. Fox, who had begun parliamentary life as a follower of North, had been foremost in Opposition since 1774, and had recently joined the Rockingham section, though his own views never fully tallied with the aristocratic Whig creed. Shelburne, like him, was more radical than the old Whigs, but was separated from Fox by a family quarrel, personal dislike and the marked preference for him of George III.

Fox became Secretary for foreign, Shelburne for home, Irish and colonial affairs, and a breach between the two opened at once. Peace had to be made with France, Spain, Holland and America: the first three were in Fox's department, the last, till American independence was recognised, in Shelburne's. This prevented the centralisation of negotiations in one hand, and made the peace less favourable to Britain than it need have been. In July, 1782, before its details had been arranged, Rockingham died, Shelburne became head of the Government, and Fox resigned. Peace was concluded with American independence and the cession of Minorca and Florida to Spain, Tobago and some African posts to France. Franklin, the American negotiator, asked for the surrender of Canada, but at that Shelburne balked, and a northern frontier for the independent colonies was vaguely drawn.

So England lost the greater part of her first empire, after a hard struggle of which she had little reason to be proud. But she had virtually lost it before the war began, and even had she conquered, any peace must have recognised in Congress the central organ of the colonies, and must have transferred to it, at latest in a few years, such powers as Parliament had itself tried to exercise. The alternative to this was to govern America by force, which North neither intended nor desired. The best friends of the empire in America had been driven into exile, scattered, or silenced, before the end of 1775, and they could never have made their way back into political control: the cry of independence would probably have been

raised again when Britain found herself next in difficulties. That the Revolution came as it did is deplorable, for it left behind it animosity, a legend of British tyranny defeated, and distrust on either side. But that separation would have come sooner or later is probable, for its chief cause was an unconscious feeling of American nationality, that needed political expression, and could hardly be satisfied within an empire ruled on commercial principles. Peaceful separation would have been better than war, and might by early concessions have been postponed for some years, but not indefinitely unless both countries went through a revolution of opinion. The analogy of the modern Empire hardly holds, for it is more agreed on political fundamentals than were America and Britain in the eighteenth century.

George III. and North have been regarded as conspirators against freedom who were personally responsible for the disaster. Their worst mistakes were made before 1775, and it is doubtful if any Government, in the existing state of British opinion, could have avoided all of them. The Ministry could not resign the claim of British sovereignty on the first news of American riot, nor could it desert its agents and supporters in the colonies. The chief weakness of the Government was that it, like the nation, willed the end but not the means: wished to maintain parliamentary supremacy without paying for it in money or in adequate force. The Boston tea-party could have been more tactfully dealt with, but there had been grave provocation, and once the penal acts were passed no Government could have repealed them on the mere threat of resistance, and still endured. Peaceful separation was at the moment impossible; Britain had to fight for the empire once it came to a choice between war and surrender.

Those who regret separation should remember two things. First, that George III. and George Washington liberated Britain as well as America. Inside the Empire the colonies would have grown nearly as fast as they did outside, the balance of power would have shifted across the Atlantic, and the elasticity that the constitution was to reveal in the nineteenth century, which kept Britain from revolution, would have been harder to discover with America fast becoming a predominant partner. Secondly, if the old empire had endured, most of the new could never have been founded. The loss of the American colonies brought two problems to the front: where to compensate the Loyalists, and what to do with convicted felons, of whom some 50,000 had been dumped during the last sixty years in the southern plantations. Canada offered a home for most of the first, who unless impelled by defeat would never have left their southern homes to become pioneers of colonisation, and Cook's discoveries were used in a few years to house the second. From the settlement of Australia sprang fifty years later the annexation of New Zealand; both owe their origin to the American Revolution. There are many things in that Revolution to regret, but loss of territory is not one of them, for British man power was insufficient to people both North America and the Antipodes. The new empire was to be more scattered than the old, and for long apparently weaker, but it expressed a higher degree of political agreement; it had no roots in seventeenth-century struggles over Church and State, and its political development has been flexible largely because it was built on the thesis resisted by America, the sovereignty of Parliament.

CHAPTER VIII

PITT AND FOX

Between 1780 and 1784 British politics passed through a time of confusion and uncertainty, from which emerged at length two parties, the ancestors of those that dominated the nineteenth century. Before the new division was clear five Governments had succeeded each other in less than two years. There were in 1780 four chief groups in Parliament: the King's, Lord North's, the old Whigs under Rockingham, and the Chathamites: North's Ministry was built on the first two. Its opponents seemed likely to triumph early in the year, for against the Government they bore through its first stages a bill to exclude state contractors from the Commons, and another, drafted by Burke, to reduce the civil establishment and therefore the places in the royal gift; while in April they carried a resolution "that the influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished." A rising cry through the country for shorter Parliaments and redistribution might, some thought, be organised by a united Opposition to bring them into power and let them end the war.

Disagreement hampered their attacks. The Rockingham party was conservative save for one aim; it wished to limit the royal power but shrank from the most effective way of doing so, parliamentary reform. With them went Fox, the best debater in the Commons, more radical than his Whig colleagues but cut from the Chathamites, whose views he generally shared, by personal dislike. Their leader, Shelburne, perhaps the ablest practical thinker of the time, believed in free trade and reform both of the public offices and of the Commons: he was too advanced for Rockingham, and left an impression of treachery on all but a few intimates. Defeat in America brought the two sections into uneasy union, but their quarrels soon drove them apart again, let the King regain much of his influence, and, since the French Revolution was in a few years to give new life to the established order, postponed parliamentary reform till 1832.

North fell, Rockingham died after three months in office, Shelburne became Prime Minister, and Fox led most of the old Whigs into secession. Fox linked himself with North in a famous coalition, turned out Shelburne early in 1783, and was himself turned out next December by George, and replaced by a combination of the royal party with the remnants of Chatham's followers under Chatham's son. All these changes were made during the life of the Parliament elected in 1780. They show how independent were members, how slack party bonds, for each of the five Governments in turn had a majority.

The Rockingham Ministry began negotiations for peace, but its chief achievement was Burke's economic reform. This limited the royal control of expenditure, set a limit to pensions, and abolished many offices: its most important part was the order it set for charges on the Civil List. Salaries, other than those of judges, ambassadors, and menials, were placed low to stop the creation of rich sinecures, while those of Treasury officials were put last of all to give their recipients a personal interest in economy. It was made harder than before for the King to exceed his income, and the principle of Commons' control was established. Thus began a reform continued intermittently until in Victoria's reign complete parliamentary supervision of expenditure was set up. Burke's Act saved only about £72,000 a year, and left most vested interests untouched, but it stopped the public service from becoming more and more a milch cow for men with political influence, and it considerably hampered royal patronage. At the same time internal reform of the departments was begun. They were in an abominable state: during the last months of the war underlings promptly sold Government decisions to the enemy, while a stockbroker stood by in the Treasury, to make immediate use on the Exchange of any intelligence that might arrive. Shelburne, first as Home Secretary, then as Prime Minister, warred on such abuses and so made for himself many enemies.

Shelburne completed the peace preliminaries, getting good terms from France and Spain, less good in America than the military situation made necessary. He fell in February 1783, after trying to draw either North's followers or Fox to his support. Fox had been loud in his denunciations of North during the war, though the two remained friendly in private. Now they joined forces in an ill-starred coalition that is commonly alleged to have hurt the public conscience and that made George very angry indeed.

The reasons for their junction were simple. North had held it his duty to take orders from the King, and to carry on a policy he himself disliked; that policy had failed and his views changed. "The appearance of power is all that a King of this country can have," he wrote to Fox: he wished to show himself more than a mere royal tool, and since George would have none of him after his resignation, his only hope of office was to build a party strong enough to defy the Court. Fox wished above all to oppose royal power; he thought, mistakenly, that Shelburne might, if given time to strengthen his

Government, prove as pliant and hard to dislodge as North had been; he knew that he himself was hated by George, who would only employ him if compelled to do so by a large majority in the Commons: such a majority he and North possessed between them. Their alliance is said to have shocked the nation, but it is hard to believe that England had suddenly become so squeamish. It annoyed some Whigs, such as Richmond, who had hoped himself to succeed Rockingham, and never forgave Fox for not pressing his claims; it alienated the Chathamites, who looked for a union with Fox's party that was impossible after Fox's treatment of Shelburne, and it deeply angered the Court. If the country thought that Fox had abandoned his views it was misled, for he had merely borrowed North's party for his own policy, as the elder Pitt borrowed Newcastle's in 1757. That coalition succeeded, this failed and is condemned; it may have been a mistake but was in no way immoral.

For nearly six weeks after Shelburne's resignation George made frantic attempts to form a Government that should not include Fox, and when he at last surrendered, he obstructed his new ministers by every possible means: would make no peers on their advice and let all men know that he disliked them. Such an attitude taken by a King as stubborn and unscrupulous as George was certain in time to destroy the Ministry, and did so in December. The government of British India admittedly needed reform. Fox and Burke designed a Bill which put the Company under a Commission of seven men named by Parliament, who were to have full control of patronage and policy: after four years the Crown was to appoint these Commissioners; a Council of Directors chosen by Parliament from the Company's larger shareholders was to manage trade and property. The theme of the Bill, that the government of India was Parliament's concern, was later fully adopted, but since the proposed Commissioners were all supporters of the Ministry, the Opposition saw in the plan an attempt to set up a huge mass of patronage with which to buy support. On this ground, and not because the Bill did not meet the worst abuses of the past, criticism in Parliament fastened. The Company was thoroughly alarmed and raised a cry of spoliation, while other corporate bodies took fright at a precedent of state control that might later on extend to themselves. The Bill passed the Commons by large majorities, but George let it be known that any peer who voted for it in the Lords would be his enemy; it was beaten there, George dismissed the Government and asked Pitt, whom he had already approached in the spring, to form a Ministry. His action on the Lords was probably unconstitutional, but on other points he was within his rights as they were then understood.

For the next ten years British politics were a duel between Pitt and Fox, two great men whose views were often alike, but whose characters differed so widely as to make harmony between them impossible. Pitt was only twenty-four when he took office, but very mature for his years; he had been carefully trained by Chatham for public life and had always more poise and restraint than his rival Fox, though Fox was by ten years the older. Pitt was a consummate tactician in Parliament, a better economist than nearly any of his contemporaries, a reformer of administrative details, and at first, till years of office dulled his zest, prepared for reform on a large scale. He never shrank from responsibility, and gradually asserted his dominance over a Cabinet that at the beginning was more the King's than his; he made himself as indispensable to the nation as any man could, he trained a school of young politicians who carried on the Government after his death for more than twenty years, and he re-established the office of Prime Minister, almost dormant since Walpole's time. He had, in an even higher degree than his father, a fastidious sense of financial honour, and under his Government corruption became steadily less. He seemed almost the statesman incarnate, for he had few interests outside office, and he could unbend only to two or three intimates or with children.

Charles Fox was nearly his antithesis. His father, Lord Holland, had done his best to spoil him as a boy, and had encouraged him to become a gambler and a rake. Fox had the knack of throwing himself energetically into whatever he did—racing, gaming, politics, literature—and a greater capacity for hard work than those could believe who only saw him at Newmarket or losing money at Brooks's club. The British habit of judging a man's capacity for statecraft by his private life was growing, and damaged Fox in the eyes of many, especially of George III., who had none of Fox's vices and few of his numerous virtues. In two short terms of office as Foreign Secretary, Fox showed himself capable and sober, but without immediate responsibility to steady him he leant to extremes. Till 1774, when he broke with North's Government, he had been violent in its defence, later he was equally violent against both North and his master. He was a greater orator than Pitt and a worse tactician, and was frequently out-manœuvred by his rival. Pitt was a solitary soul, while Fox had a genius for friendship, even with those who, like Dr. Johnson, disagreed with him on nearly every issue. No man ever inspired warmer love among his followers. He was less calculating than Pitt and had wider interests, he could console himself for political failure with the classics or his garden; as he grew older he shed his early failings, but not his generosity nor his charm.

Fox was nearly always out of office, Pitt in, and had their positions been reversed they might have left a different impression on history. Pitt's defects were those of a minister, readiness to abandon an unpopular cause, over-eagerness

to retain his place, and in 1784, over Fox's election for Westminster, an ungenerous desire to ruin his opponent. The faults of Fox were those of Opposition, overstatement and extravagance. Pitt reorganised the Government, led the nation in the darkest days of the most desperate war it had ever fought, and welded a new Tory party from the Court following, from the many Whigs who joined him, from old Tory families who for seventy years had shared little in office or titles, and from banking and commercial interests. Fox guided the Whigs towards Liberalism, carried a remnant of his party through the reaction of the French wars, and left it aristocratic still, but no longer as narrow a clique as it had been. Pitt's achievements can be weighed, Fox's are more imponderable. From the rivalry of the two, British politics became again an affair of parties more than of connections: each as a practical statesman stood high above his followers, and each recognised greatness in the other.

Pitt took office as the leader of a minority, and since he was the only member of the Cabinet who was not a peer, while the abilities of the Opposition leaders far exceeded those of his own followers, he had at the beginning to carry his Government almost single-handed. But he knew that if he could keep his place for a few weeks a dissolution would turn the scale. Even before the India Bill's defeat in the Lords he had interviewed Robinson, manager of the last two elections, and had learnt from him that Court influence and the expenditure of less than £200,000 could assure a Ministry, if he formed one, of victory at the polls. Fox eased his path by not demanding an immediate dissolution before the Government's influence could be felt in the boroughs; instead of forcing a prompt appeal to the country (then an untried novelty), he obstructed the Ministry and relied on his union with North to eject Pitt. North held firm, but his followers began to desert, for they were uneasy in opposing a King whose orders they were accustomed to obey. Before the end of March, 1784, the Opposition majority had melted, the Government was ready, and a general election shattered the Whigs. Pitt's name, a reaction in favour of the King, the influence of the East India Company, and the usual methods of the time, combined to give Pitt and George in alliance a decisive victory.

Had the political situation in the next years resembled that of 1765, George might have found Pitt too strong for his liking, and have worked for his downfall. Pitt kept off the King's strongest prejudices though he was never a royal puppet, but his chief value in royal eyes was that he was the only man who could stand against Fox, whom George loathed both for his qualities and for his defects. The Hanoverian family tradition had revived: there was again an heir at feud with his father, and round him clustered a shadow Whig Government. This accentuated the growing party division and really told against Fox, for the Prince had all his father's self-will but none of his morals: he won for the Whigs enmity from the Court, and no popularity in the country. Pitt was from the beginning supreme in the Government, though not for some years in Parliament: as late as 1788 the Commons were said to contain 52 Pittites, 108 "independent or unconnected members," 185 who would support any Government "not peculiarly unpopular," while 138, the largest party in the House, followed Fox. From the first three groups there grew in the French Revolution the Tory party of the nineteenth century, which was swelled beyond its natural strength by the junction with it of the more conservative Whigs, led by Portland and Burke, on the issue of war with France. Until this Whig schism the death or prolonged insanity of George would have brought Fox into power.

The years between 1784 and 1793 were a time of recovery from the war, and of administrative and financial reform detailed rather than sweeping. Manufactures developed apace, canals and good roads crept through the country, and trade, which had suffered during the last two years of war, grew so rapidly that the loss of the colonies seemed almost a bagatelle. Hargreaves, Arkwright and Crompton had made inventions that now came into general use and ruined the domestic industry of spinning. Many country labourers, whose spindles had supplemented their wages, were impoverished by the factories that spread along Lancashire streams, and made the Irwell the hardest worked river in the world, even though these factories might increase the total wealth of the nation. The hand-loom weaver found a short-lived prosperity as thread fell in price, until power-weaving in turn drove him the same road as the hand-spinner. England became more supreme in cotton manufacture than she had ever been in wool, once her chief economic strength. To feed a growing population the movement to enclosure accelerated, until open fields became the exception instead of the practice.

Political change came more slowly than economic. From his father Pitt had learnt to believe in parliamentary reform, and in 1782 he had tried for it, supported by Fox, beaten by North and Rockingham. In 1785 he made another attempt His Bill would have disfranchised thirty-six rotten boroughs, buying out their owners voluntarily for £1,000,000, and giving their members to the counties, to London, and to Westminster; the county franchise was to be extended to copyholders and the borough franchise to householders. The nation showed small interest in his plan and the Commons rejected it by a large majority; from then on Pitt dropped the subject. He showed more zeal in finance. The debt had nearly doubled in the American War, for a smaller proportion of the cost of that struggle than of any ever fought by Britain had been met by

increased taxation, and the country's credit stood low. Pitt imposed new taxes, funded the floating liabilities, reduced smuggling by lowering the duties on tea and spirits, and in two years, helped by growing trade, made revenue equal expenditure. In 1786 he introduced a sinking fund scheme, which gave commissioners £1,000,000 a year with which to buy up Government stock. What they bought was not to be cancelled, but to go on drawing interest with which more debt should be purchased, and so the fund would mount up until the magic of compound interest should put the whole debt, or a great part of it, in the commissioners' hands. Either Pitt failed to see that the dividends on stock, whether publicly or privately held, were paid out of taxation, or he thought that the refusal to cancel debt as it was acquired would keep the nation from realising how large was its actual surplus, and so would weaken the demand for lower taxes. Though it rested on the fallacy that there is a third way, besides repudiation and saving, of wiping out national indebtedness, his plan worked smoothly for a time, while peace swelled the revenue, and before the commissioners had bought so much stock as to raise the price of the rest against themselves. Pitt's mistake came later, when to maintain the sinking fund he borrowed dear in war time, to buy in debt that carried a much lower interest.

Pitt gave less attention to colonial possessions than his father had shown, but past events forced a development of the imperial remnants. The American Loyalists were voted money compensation for their losses, and most of those who had left their homes settled in New Brunswick, a part of Nova Scotia that was now made for them into a separate colony. A few thousand migrated thence and from New York to the western parts of Quebec, and in 1791 Canada was cut in two by an Act of Parliament, on the idea that Upper Canada should be English-speaking, Lower Canada mainly French. Each of these provinces received what had already been given to New Brunswick and to Nova Scotia, a constitution of the traditional type: three-decker legislatures of Royal Governor, nominated Council, elected Assembly; but not self-government, for the lesson that British officials had learnt from the American Revolution was that colonial assemblies must be restrained in power and the Governor kept independent of their control, not that they should be made responsible for administration. Pamphleteers, who thought with most Americans that Canada must in time merge with the former southern colonies, urged that the Loyalists should be shipped to Australia, whose eastern coast had recently been explored by Cook. At length, in 1787, the Government took up the plan of colonising the little-known continent, not with Loyalists—it was too late for that—but with some of the convicts who, through a harsh penal law, swarmed in British prisons and hulks. So at Sydney began the British occupation of what was later called "the fifth, or pickpocket, quarter of the globe;" Australia was meant to be a reformatory and safety-valve, but there were dim ideas that it might in time help British trade.

Pitt adopted a part of Fox's India Bill, in an Act that asserted the Government's mastery over general policy, while it left patronage to the Company: a system of divided control that lasted till 1858. The national conscience was awakening, partly under Burke's guidance, partly from the spread of Wesleyanism and humanitarian ideas, to the view that the government of politically backward peoples was a trust to be used in the interests of the governed. Little attempt was as yet made to apply this doctrine to the Africans. Though a growing opinion condemned the slave trade, and though Mansfield had already pronounced that slavery was so contrary to natural law that any slave landed in Britain was automatically freed, the shipping and plantation interests were strong enough to preserve the traffic in black flesh from parliamentary attack. Indian abuses were more closely felt, and none could maintain about them, as many did about the slave trade, that naval supremacy depended on their continuance. Warren Hastings returned from Bengal in 1785, after an administration troubled by the Company's demands for revenue, by underpaid officials who had to trade and take bribes or starve, and by Councillors who thought opposition to the Governor their chief duty. He had surmounted enormous difficulties and had done his best for both India and Britain, but his situation had forced him into some actions more in accordance with the oriental tradition of government than with English ideas of law. Burke demanded the prosecution of Hastings; the Whigs followed Burke, some from conviction, some to embarrass the Government; the case for Hastings was badly presented, and Pitt turned against him. In 1787 the Commons resolved on an impeachment, which was begun in February 1788, and lasted till 1795. It ended in Hastings' acquittal and impoverishment: he had been made a victim of Parliament's earlier neglect to reform an impossible system of government; he had mitigated, but had been unable to destroy the iniquities that it bred.

In his Indian views Pitt was mainly guided by Burke, in his trade measures he followed Adam Smith and his own earlier leader, Shelburne. In 1787 he negotiated a commercial treaty with France, that increased British exports, and that might have weakened a deep national enmity had it not perished a few years later in the Revolution. In the same year he simplified the tariff and amalgamated the customs and excise. The old cumbrous method of voting specific revenues to meet the interest on each loan was swept away and the Consolidated Fund set up.

Near the end of 1788 George III. became insane, and a Government hitherto successful suddenly tottered. The Prince of

Wales must be made regent. He hated Pitt, who had refused without the King's leave to ask Parliament to pay his debts, and, though he had lied to Fox over his secret marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert, a Roman Catholic widow, he was close friends with the Opposition. Pitt out-generalled Fox on the question whether Parliament could limit a regent's power, but whatever bounds might be set to his authority, everyone knew that the Prince's first act would be to change his Government. Fox once in office would draw quite as strong support from the Commons as did Pitt, but before the Regency Bill had passed the Lords, George recovered and Pitt's ascendancy over him was henceforth stronger than before.

Foreign relations were comparatively tranquil till 1791. France was drifting from bankruptcy into revolution, and an attempt to make a French party dominant in the Netherlands collapsed before British and Prussian opposition. Joseph II., a reforming doctrinaire, in trying to unite the Hapsburg dominions, drove them further asunder, and dowered Austrian influence in Europe. Russia seemed to Pitt a coming danger, and he was prepared in 1791 to stop her attack on Turkey by intervention in alliance with Prussia, but the nation would not follow him, and he was badly rebuffed. The French Revolution in its beginnings strengthened Pitt's Government doubly, for it paralysed French foreign policy and split the Opposition in Parliament. Fox rejoiced at the outbreak, Burke denounced it, and the long friendship of the two began to dissolve. A war threatened in 1790 with Spain, who seized British ships off Vancouver Island, and claimed that the western coast of America was hers by prior discovery, but her family alliance with France broke down, and realising her impotence she gave way. Early in 1792 Pitt told the Commons that there had never been a time when "we might more reasonably expect fifteen years of peace than at the present."

It was an unfortunate prediction, when every courier from Paris brought word of increasing strain, and when Burke was voicing national horror at "the red fool-fury of the Seine." A year later and a war was to begin that lasted, with two short intermissions, for over twenty-three years, and that swung England from moderate reform to strong conservatism. Already, indeed, that change had begun. A general election in 1790 had made Pitt rather more independent of the Court than before: now he might have been able to carry his scheme of five years earlier, to abolish the rottenest boroughs and to widen the franchise. But he had come to see merit in a system that ensured his power during George III.'s life, and in 1791 he opposed a bill that had been copied from his own earlier scheme, recanting his views on the plea that though change was needed, this was not the time. Another, even more pressing cause, the abolition of the slave trade, suffered from the alarm that spread outward from Paris. Wilberforce, a devoted follower of Pitt, had become its spokesman in Parliament, where Pitt, Fox and Burke supported him. All the great men were for abolition, most of the little, including the King, against it, and the Government was sharply divided. Vested interests beat Wilberforce in 1791, and thereafter the tide ran strongly against any threat to even the worst kind of property.

It was natural that Britain should recoil at the news of French outrage and massacre. Not only was France the national enemy, and suspect in all her doings, but the last fifty years had set England on an insular path, self-contained, rather self-complacent, and hostile to foreign ideas. Europe had for some time been moving towards a storm in which the world of the eighteenth century would vanish. Her moderately amiable despots prepared revolution by doing what they could to abolish provincial barriers, to weaken clericalism, to make subjects equal under a state sovereignty that was personified in themselves. Centralised autocracy seemed, on the Continent, such a reasonable form of government that it could afford to be liberal. French thought, which set the pace for Europe, had taken the tone of free criticism and the development of first principles to their logical end, almost unimpeded by a Government which did not realise that in time criticism would extend to it, and might eventually lead to action. The English movement had been in the opposite direction: Johnson and Wesley had both preached authority, Burke the sanctity of institutions. The dominant ideas in Britain by now were humanitarianism, which was shocked by the news from France, and a Christian revival which made for conservatism in politics, for it turned men's eyes inward to their own sins rather than outward to current abuses. National prejudice, commercial interests, sectarian ideas, were too strong to let men think in the abstractions popular in France. The Church, still privileged and powerful, now combined some of Wesley's evangelical zeal with its old hatred of Dissent, and was steadily becoming less latitudinarian than it had been a generation before. In matters of taste England was moving away from classical models, and France, full of theoretical admiration for the republics of the old world, towards them. An ugly revival of Gothic architecture had begun in Britain, and forms of poetry and art that had for long been accepted were now questioned. Though a few radicals preached political and even social equality, they were chiefly evidence of a growing national instinct to throw up minorities. Whether or no France violated old treaties, the philosophies of Burke and Rousseau, each typical of a nation, must some time clash.

So each despatch from Paris confirmed Englishmen in a growing repulsion, made them feel more friendly towards a fallen system of government that they had lately denounced, while the French catchwords of the day left them hostile.

Liberty, in the sense of little Government interference, they understood, but did not see in France; fraternity seemed a forced and impossible ideal; equality shocked them in nearly every social and political belief. War was almost inevitable if France gave any provocation, and when her troops poured into the Netherlands no Government could have kept the peace.

CHAPTER IX

FRANCE AND IRELAND

By 1793 the French Revolution had survived its first external danger, a combined attack from Austria and Prussia, and had itself taken the offensive against Europe. In November, 1792, the Convention proclaimed that France would everywhere assist malcontents against existing Governments, and declared, in violation of Holland's treaty rights, that the navigation of the Scheldt was free to all nations. Both these decrees offended Britain, while the execution of Louis XVI. in the following January broke off diplomatic relations between London and Paris. A French attack on the Netherlands, who appealed to the ancient alliance with Britain, was the final cause of war. In England three opinions showed themselves at once, led respectively by Burke, Pitt, and Fox. Burke wished to crush the Revolution and to restore as much of the ancient order in France as was possible: the King's execution and later the Terror gave him a strong following. Pitt disclaimed concern in French domestic matters, held to the sanctity of treaties violated by France, and was prepared to fight in the interests of British security against drastic changes in the balance of Europe. Fox suspected any alliance with Prussia and Austria, who had already tried to break the Revolution; he thought these powers selfish and tyrannical, and held that the underlying reason for war was not Holland, but a reactionary desire to attack the new liberties of France. By January, 1793, it had become clear that only some of the Whigs shared his sympathy with the Revolution, and in July, 1794, the greater part of the Opposition led by Portland seceded to Pitt.

Some of the Cabinet held Burke's view, some Pitt's, and the difference between them made for divided strategy. Burke wished to disclaim any plan of conquest, to fight France till she repented of her errors, but then to leave her intact. Other powers were not so magnanimous as he wished Britain to be, and though to renounce territorial gains in advance might have weakened French resistance, the other half of his programme, to stand openly by the Bourbons, meant that the British Government must take sides in French internal politics, assisting *émigré* attacks and royalist insurrections. To do this heightened French zeal against foreign interference, and the exiles, since they showed the usual characteristics of exiles, violent faction and wild optimism, hampered British strategy more than they helped it. Pitt's view was more sober and practical, but he did not see as deep as Burke; he did not perceive that this war was something new, not merely another eighteenth-century dispute. Pitt thought that by sweeping up her colonies and taking a few of her towns he would drive France to accept reasonable terms of peace. He did not realise that this was a war of nations and ideas, not merely of governments, that France had a new religion, and that bankruptcy, a potent weapon against courts, who even when their territories were narrowed had still much to lose, would not stop an armed and frantic people.

On Pitt lay the chief responsibility during the first eight years of war. He expected a short contest and framed his early measures on that assumption, raised taxation but slightly and borrowed to meet the growing expenses. By 1798 he abandoned this policy, increased taxation and so lessened the burden thrown on posterity after that year, with the result that by 1815 nearly half the cost of the war, which came to nearly £900,000,000, had been met from revenue. He did little to improve the army organisation or to train reserves so that campaign after campaign might be fought with undiminished numbers, for he expected the Continental powers to provide most of the land forces necessary, and thought that one big effort of a coalition would bring France to her knees. His belief that the war must end soon was natural if incorrect. There were ranged in alliance with Britain, Russia, Prussia, Austria, Sardinia, Spain and Naples, and had these allies developed half their force and kept their pledges they could have marched to Paris in 1793 or 1794. But they, still less than Pitt, thought the war a matter of principle, they lacked his confidence and determination, they had vulnerable frontiers and private aims: all except Austria abandoned the cause when they saw immediate profit in doing so. Prussia and Russia were more intent on carving up Poland than on fighting the Jacobins, and Prussian manœuvres eastward drew off Austrian troops from France in 1794, when a vigorous attack might have brought victory. Spain was incompetent; in 1795 she and Prussia made peace, while in 1796 she became France's ally, which so altered the naval situation that Britain evacuated the Mediterranean. Russia was too remote to develop her full strength at first, and after 1795 her policy was tortuous. Through the poor cohesion of her enemies France was given time to turn the welter of revolution into a new order more efficient than the old, and at length, under Napoleon's superb organising and military genius, she made half Europe her vassal. But even at Napoleon's zenith he could have been successfully resisted had the powers struck together and relied on each other; their failure to do this prolonged the war from 1793 to 1814.

Pitt, "the pilot who weathered the storm," had two great virtues as a war minister, courage and determination. Not till just before his death did he lose hope, and in the darkest year of all, 1797, he kept the nation firm. In other respects he was for long a bad campaigner. In peace time his finance had been admirable, but now he clung to methods that no longer

applied, borrowed too much and at too high a cost, while the strategy that he approved wasted British forces without material result. He modelled his policy on that of his great father, which did not fit the new conditions. Chatham had managed a colonial war, and rightly struck at its main theatre, the colonies, fighting a defensive action in Europe with the help of a subsidised ally. Marlborough, not Chatham, was the true model for Pitt, for Marlborough had fought an unlimited war against French ascendancy, not like Chatham for a colonial and maritime victory. Now, as in 1702, the colonies were side-shows; success there would not shorten the war, while a strong assault on France with the help of allies and her rebellious provinces might have brought an end. Only some 20,000 British troops were at first available, barely enough for a single operation, and Pitt scattered them in raids on French colonies, in an expedition to Belgium, and in an attempt with Spanish aid to hold Toulon, which had revolted against Paris. From lack of support, which only Britain could have given, a widespread rising in La Vendée was crushed in 1795, after holding out for two years; Toulon was inadequately reinforced and fell to Bonaparte late in 1793; and in the winter of 1794-5 a small British army was driven in ruin through Holland and nearly destroyed; Holland then became a republican dependency of France. Had all the force possible been used in Brittany, in Flanders or in the South, something might have been achieved, but everywhere detachments were sent too weak or too late, and they served mainly to goad French enthusiasm to increased exertions. Pitt scattered subsidies among allies who had not the motives for loyalty that kept Frederick staunch in the Seven Years' War: the coalition broke down after sectional defeat, and in 1795 only three of its members—Russia, Austria, and Britain—remained in alliance.

Dundas, Pitt's chief lieutenant, was largely responsible for the military policy of these first years. He was Home and Colonial Secretary, President of the India Board, and Treasurer of the Navy: indispensable in Parliament, for his control of Indian patronage kept the representatives of Scotland faithful to the Ministry. He held too many offices for efficiency, and in July 1794 Portland became Home Secretary and Dundas took a new Secretaryship of State for War. Even after this change he was overworked, and like Pitt he envisaged the struggle in terms of the past age, as a contest of governments rather than of nations. Influenced by trading interests, and hoping for a quick victory, he turned to the West Indies, and before the end of 1793 had begun to pour troops across the Atlantic. Such a war policy was traditional, and the temptation to revert to it great, for in 1791 the French negroes, inspired by Parisian talk of equality, revolted against the white planters, and these turned to Britain for help. Hayti was wealthier than all the British West Indies combined, and seemed an easy prey. There and in Guadeloupe and Martinique British troops won some victories, but the negro insurgents kept up a guerrilla war that made large garrisons necessary, and the climate was fatal to white troops who had little idea of tropical hygiene. Guadeloupe was lost again and the battalions in the West Indies rotted to nothing, till by the end of 1796 about 80,000 men had died there or been permanently disabled—far more than Wellington's losses in the Peninsula. In that year France ceded Hayti to Spain, Britain evacuated the country, and took up the policy of using black regiments to hold islands that were a graveyard to white troops. This was a step towards abolition of the slave trade, even to the abolition of slavery, and was much disliked by the English planters, but it became necessary when once an army that might have turned the tide in Europe had been thrown away.

At sea Britain immediately took the offensive, for Pitt had kept her navy efficient, but, partly because many of the British admirals were past their best, sea-power was not at first used to the best advantage. The French marine lost its discipline in the Revolution, and took some years to recover its energy. On paper Britain was outnumbered in ships after 1795, for the combined French, Spanish, and Dutch fleets exceeded hers, but she had the same advantage on water that France had on land—interior lines and a single command, besides the tradition of maritime victory. Her nadir was the recall of British ships from the Mediterranean for eighteen months, which opened the road to Egypt for Napoleon. A time of grave peril came just before this British concentration in home waters, for in December 1796 only bad navigation kept 15,000 French troops from landing in Ireland, where they might have swept most of the country into revolt.

The Government's domestic measures were less disjointed than its strategy, but like it were built on misconception. From the beginning the Ministry was uneasy in facing a war of ideas, and feared to throw itself wholeheartedly on the nation. There was no police force and the civil service was inadequate to the growing strain, so some alarm at French propaganda was natural, but it spread beyond bounds. Though much discontent showed itself in England, most of it was due to rising prices, not to Jacobin ideas, and went little further than the agitation of 1779 and 1780. The Ministry sat on the safety-valve of public expression. Bad harvests in 1794 and 1795 raised a cry against the war and for parliamentary reform, which culminated in large meetings and popular outcry. Parliament passed acts against Treasonable Practices and Seditious Meetings by which almost any criticism of the existing order, made outside its walls, became an offence. Many prosecutions were launched against printers and advocates of reform, but most of them failed, for juries were less frightened than judges, and upheld the national habit of violent speech. In Scotland reaction went far and radical opinions were treated as a crime. Habeas Corpus was everywhere suspended for a time, and in 1799 the London Corresponding

Society was suppressed and many of its members arrested, while discussing whether they should volunteer to resist French invasion. Partly to house the army, partly to isolate it from the suspected views of the civil population, barracks were dotted about England. By 1804 over 200 of these had been built at a cost of £9,000,000, most of them so small as to be police-stations rather than training centres. Pitt, in fact, was too aloof and too-self-contained to realise that however the ordinary Englishman might grumble, he did not draw his political ideas from across the Channel.

The most dangerous year was 1797. Austria then gave up the struggle; Britain was isolated; she had poured out subsidies to allies until the drain caused a shortage of bullion and forced the suspension of cash payments at the Bank. France was preparing to attack Egypt under a threat of invading England that looked serious. In March the Channel fleet mutinied, having failed by less drastic means to get its pay increased beyond the rates of Charles II., or its rations issued at their nominal weight. The French Government rejected overtures for peace, as it had rejected them in 1796, unless Britain gave up all conquests while France retained all hers. From then prospects improved. The Ministry granted its moderate demands to the navy and crushed another mutiny in the North Sea fleet; the Dutch navy was broken at Camperdown, the Spanish off Cape St. Vincent; and in 1798, though Ireland broke into revolt, the war went better. Nelson won an overwhelming victory at Aboukir Bay and pinned a French army in Egypt; the Duke of York became Commander-in-Chief and began to reorganise the army, a good harvest improved the nation's temper and Pitt's Income Tax found a new source of revenue.

Napoleon would have done better had he sailed to Cork, not to Alexandria. Ireland was the weakest part of the British system, and an attack there between 1795 and 1799 might have paralysed England. The roots of Irish discontent lay in absentee landlordism, in the supremacy of the Anglican Church, in laws against Irish trade, and where these last had been removed, in the continued government of Ireland by a small clique who restricted patronage to their own members.

After the Revolution of 1688, Britain treated Ireland as a conquered nation to be exploited by the victor, and garrisoned by Church of England Protestants. Irish exports that competed with English were forbidden or impeded. About three-fourths of the population were Catholics with no voice in the Government, and held down by a stern penal code that was political, not religious, in its aim: built on class and racial ascendancy, not on hopes of extending Protestantism. Catholics could not vote, buy land nor inherit it, nor hold long leases: by confiscation or forced purchase most of the soil had fallen to Protestants, many of whom were absentees, and the laws were drafted to maintain their grip. Catholic schools were forbidden, and marriages between Catholics and Protestants, for it was the intention of the code to hold the religions separate, and to keep Catholics illiterate lest they challenge Anglican rule. A meagre Toleration Act in 1720 gave Ulster Presbyterians some rights, but even they were kept from office. The administration of the country depended on Britain, and its exclusively Protestant Parliament could not legislate against the wishes of the British Government. Irish pensions were used to reward political service in England, and took about £70,000 a year of Ireland's scanty revenue.

The Irish Commons had 300 members, of whom 216 were elected by boroughs most of which were the property of individuals. Yet even in this unrepresentative Parliament, and even among the Anglican garrison, a feeling of resentment against England grew. Swift was a Tory and a Churchman, but he denounced the restrictions on Irish trade. In 1768 the tendency towards greater freedom for Ireland began, with an Act that fixed eight years as the maximum life of an Irish Parliament; till then one House of Commons could span a king's life, Ulster agitated against the exclusion of Presbyterians from office and the sacrifice of Irish commerce to British interests, and in the American Revolution her emigrants gave Washington many of his best soldiers. That war offered Ireland an opportunity which she took. Religious animosity was declining fast, and the Protestants led a demand for freer trade that momentarily united the whole nation. When the troops in Ireland were reduced to 5000 men, Irish Protestants volunteered for home defence against a possible French invasion, and when once under arms, they compelled the British Government to relax its laws against Irish exports. By the end of 1780 Ireland had been granted free access to British colonial markets, a concession won by the show of force, for in 1778 North, who wished to give way, had yielded to British manufacturing protests, and had reluctantly declared for the existing restrictions. In 1782 the volunteers went further, and demanded legislative independence for their own Parliament; the Rockingham Government at once conceded it. So far nationalism in Ireland had been almost entirely Protestant, for the Catholics were still too subdued, too poor, too disorganised, to make their voices heard.

From 1782 to 1800 the constitutional position of Ireland bristled with difficulties and, failing radical change, government could be carried on only by steady corruption. The administration remained in the hands of those who disapproved of the revolution of 1782, and considered themselves the tools through which England managed a troublesome dependency. The Irish Parliament still represented Protestants only: it could legislate as it chose for the

whole island, but the Irish Government remained subject to the Cabinet of Britain. An irresponsible Parliament must breed deadlock or bribery. The Dublin executive had to secure a majority in the local Commons, and did so by the places and pensions in its gift, till in 1790 it was said that 110 out of 300 members drew emoluments from the State, amounting in all to £200,000, or one-eighth of the national revenue. Without such methods the administration would have been even more powerless in Ireland than it had been in an American colony: with them it was nearly supreme, so that Whitehall continued to decide most disputed points. A unified executive with separate legislatures was obviously unsound as a permanent arrangement. Ireland had to gain control of her own Ministry, or to give up her own Parliament in a union with Great Britain: either change would have made the system more workable. No one in England thought seriously of the first possibility, for colonial self-government had not yet been discovered, and as the executive was still thought to be primarily the King's business, it must necessarily be unified.

The difficult arrangement of 1782 lasted for nearly twenty years, and though under it Ireland never governed herself, she obtained several reforms of value. The worst anti-Catholic laws had been repealed in 1780, in the vain hope that this would weaken the demand for freer trade. From 1782 the benefits of England's revolution of 1688 were extended to Ireland: judges were made independent, a Habeas Corpus Act passed, a National Bank set up, and the country, with new markets and improving prices for its exports, became more prosperous than it had been for a century.

The ideas of the French Revolution roused greater sympathy in Ireland than in England, as was natural, for thousands of Irishmen had died in the French service. In 1791 Wolfe Tone founded the United Irishmen, who were to draw the two religions together, work for parliamentary reform and overthrow the governing clique: Tone himself wanted full separation from England. In 1792 mixed marriages were legalised, and only the opposition of Irish officials stopped the British Cabinet from encouraging a willing Irish Parliament to give Catholics the franchise. Next year most religious restrictions were removed. In 1778 Catholics had been allowed to inherit land and to take long leases; in 1793 they obtained the vote on the same terms as Protestants, they could hold commissions and many offices, and sit on juries, while wealthy Catholics were permitted to carry arms and to endow colleges. Parliament and Trinity College, Dublin, were still barred to them, but after this sweeping repeal of other prohibitions, it seemed that these last exclusions must soon vanish.

But concession stuck at this point. Reaction had begun in England, protestant, conservative, timid, and the small impulse that would have brought the Irish Parliament to give complete citizenship was not forthcoming. The result was that the wealthy Catholics, who were moderates, were unable to lead their co-religionists, while the peasants, holding their few acres on leases for life, and so counting for the vote as freeholders, came under the guidance of revolutionaries and Ulster republicans like Tone. By itself emancipation would not have been enough, without a redistribution of seats, to make the Parliament truly national, and seeing in it a prelude to such a reform, which would have destroyed their ascendancy, the governing set dug in their toes against any further change. Fitzwilliam, one of the Whigs who joined Pitt in 1794, near the end of that year was made Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. He was known to support further emancipation, and his appointment was held to mean that the British Government would make Dublin Castle swing its parliamentary legions from opposition to support of that measure. In February 1795, when Fitzwilliam was on the verge of carrying a Catholic Relief Bill, he was suddenly recalled, partly because Protestant opposition was rising in England, partly because he had dismissed Beresford, the head of the most influential family in the Castle set, whose powerful interest led Pitt to abandon him. Disorder grew, for Catholic hopes had risen high and were now rudely shattered, revolutionary ideas spread, there were outrages in many parts, and to these the troops in Ireland, who were badly disciplined, replied by sporadic reprisals against men whom they disliked. The British Government reversed its conciliatory policy of the last fifteen years, and told Fitzwilliam's successor to rally the Protestant interest and to oppose Catholic claims.

From 1795 a rising became inevitable, and it broke out in 1798. Its reasons were disappointed Catholic hopes, doctrinaire republicanism, despair of ousting the governing ring save by force, resentment at the fanning of old religious animosities, mob outrage and murders, conscious nationalism, and poverty. By playing off Protestant against Catholic, the Government kept Ulster, formerly the most disaffected part of Ireland, from revolt, but bred murders by both sides there and elsewhere. When the rebellion came, though many of its organisers were Protestant, it was predominantly Catholic and tinged with agrarian as well as with religious bitterness. The land system bore heavily on the peasantry as better farming and swelling population heightened rents. Most of the great landowners leased their estates in large blocks for long periods and on moderate terms to middlemen, who sublet at higher prices to others who again sublet, so when a peasant got land its cost was excessive, for he carried on his back the profits of several intermediaries. He also had to pay tithes to a Protestant Church of Ireland, and his economic position was enough, in the ferment of French ideas, to make him actively discontented even without the stimulus of creed.

The rebellion was not general and was more easily crushed than had seemed likely, after uncounted outrages on either side. From it came Parliamentary union. English opinion had for some time been moving towards this solution of the constitutional problem, but Ireland disliked the idea, fearing loss of nationality, an increase of absentee landlords, and a rise of Irish taxes to the English level. After 1798 some Protestants saw in union with Britain the best chance of retaining their ascendancy in Ireland, while many Catholics thought it the only safeguard against oppression by the newly formed Orange societies, and hoped that the Imperial Parliament could give them the full emancipation that since 1795 could not be carried through Dublin. The majority, probably of both religions, certainly of the Protestants, were against union, and even the venal Irish Parliament refused in 1799 to commit suicide. The Government bought seats in the Commons and scattered peerages among their owners, compensated all office-holders who would lose by the change, and paid £15,000, not as bribery but merely the market price, for each of 80 close boroughs that were to lose their members. After a hard struggle the Bill passed in 1800; Ireland received 100 representatives in the united House of Commons and 28 in the Lords—less than her proportion were that fixed by the number of inhabitants, more than her share were it fixed by her wealth and trade. The priests supported union, for they understood, though no definite promise was given, that Catholic emancipation would swiftly follow.

Pitt raised that question at once, and anticipated no difficulty in carrying it. He was soon undeceived; not only did a strong section of his party oppose the admission of Catholics to Parliament, but the King refused point-blank to agree to a Bill which, he asserted, would violate his coronation oath. He was serious in this absurd view, for he took his prejudice against Catholics for a scruple of conscience. When his objections became known, many of the Cabinet revoked their support of emancipation; Pitt had blundered in not securing the King's written assent before he carried the union. He had to choose between coercing the King, which he could only have done by alliance with Fox, or giving way, or resigning, and he chose the last, which satisfied his honour but did nothing for the Catholics. Thus, through the prejudice of a man nearly insane, the union came into force unaccompanied by the one boon that it was in England's power to grant, for the English market that it opened to Irish produce was then a small benefit, and Ireland had already gained access to imperial trade. The tithe burden and the land system remained unaltered and both were fertile in grievance. There was nothing to put in the scale against the hurt done to national feeling by the union; the Catholics felt themselves betrayed, and when twenty-eight years later they won emancipation, they did so by the menace of armed resistance, not as a concession freely granted.

Pitt left office in February, 1801, after being Prime Minister for over seventeen years. Addington succeeded him, a nonentity who saw no need for reform anywhere, and was popular with the country gentlemen, while Pitt promised to support the new Government from outside. From Nelson's victory at Aboukir in 1798 there had grown a second alliance against France, with Russia, Austria, Naples, Portugal and Turkey, and hopes of victory had revived. They collapsed in 1800 mainly through disputes between Russia and Austria, which Napoleon, who had become supreme in France before the end of 1799, was able to exploit. France seemed invulnerable, and Britain grew more inclined for peace.

Napoleon had made overtures at the end of 1799, Pitt rejected them, and launched an expedition against the French army in Egypt. Its success and the capture of Malta in 1801, after a long siege, destroyed French supremacy in the Mediterranean, and made Addington, who was not pledged as deeply as Pitt to fight for old treaty rights, willing to negotiate for peace. Austria was forced to a separate treaty with France in February, 1801; Russia swung to the French side, carrying with her Prussia and the Baltic States. Britain was left alone, and though Nelson shattered the Danish fleet at Copenhagen, he was powerless to damage Napoleon's ascendancy on land. In October 1801 preliminaries were agreed, and in March 1802 a peace was signed at Amiens. Britain was to keep Ceylon, which she had taken from the Netherlands, and Trinidad, which she had taken from Spain, while in return for her restoration of all other conquests, Naples, Portugal and Turkey were to remain integral. Through eight years of war France had expanded to the Rhine, had turned the Netherlands, Switzerland, and most of North Italy into vassal republics, and had resisted any attempt of Pitt's to restore a balance of power, while Britain had shown herself even more supreme afloat than was France on the Continent. Neither could break the other; so they made a peace that might have established a new system in Europe had not Napoleon regarded every treaty as a stepping-stone to further triumph.

CHAPTER X

BRITAIN IN VICTORY

The Peace of Amiens was based on misunderstanding. Britain considered it a compromise, and surrendered wide colonial conquests, assuming that France in return gave up aggression in Europe: the treaty did not guarantee the French satellite republics in the Netherlands and Italy, and Britain took no responsibility for their continuance, but she regarded the existing European frontiers as implicitly assured. Napoleon claimed that Britain had renounced any voice in Continental matters, for he considered the peace a French victory; even before it was signed he became head of the Italian republic, and a few months later he annexed Piedmont and forced a new constitution on Switzerland. Britain kept her troops in Malta, the naval key to the eastern Mediterranean, partly in protest, partly because the conditions agreed for evacuation could not be immediately fulfilled, and war began again in May 1803.

Now the nation was almost unanimous. This was not a struggle with revolutionary ideas, but against a centralising despotism more dangerous, because more efficient, than the old monarchy of Louis XIV. It was unlike the first war in its higher drama and greater intensity, and though confused by the gathering and disruption of alliances, in turn against France and Britain, it was throughout mainly a duel between the genius of one man and the spirit and tradition of a people, for Napoleon's conviction that his power and British independence could not co-exist, made national survival the prize. From 1803 to 1805 Britain's chief concern was Napoleon's menace of invasion. He had neither the transports nor the Channel harbours for a normal attack, so he built flat-bottomed boats by the thousand, to carry an army that he gathered round Boulogne. Flotillas of British cruisers hovered off the Picardy coast, ready to destroy his forces if they put out, while 300,000 raw volunteers drilled in England, and Martello towers sprouted along the south shore on the chance of their delaying a French landing. To drive off the British light squadrons Napoleon manœuvred to get his French and Spanish battle-fleets (for Spain was his ally from 1804 to 1808) into the Channel. They lay scattered in Toulon, Cadiz, Ferrol, Rochefort and Brest, while off these ports, to prevent a union of hostile navies, hovered Nelson, Collingwood, and Cornwallis, with forces sometimes outnumbered by their enemies but always better trained than they. The Admiralty thought lightly of invasion chances, suspecting that the threat marked a design on the West Indies or on Egypt, and it is doubtful if Napoleon himself expected success. His Boulogne army could be turned against Austria or Prussia without warning: at times he treated that as its real purpose, at others he claimed that command of the Channel for a few days would put London in his hands. Neither his troops nor his flotilla were ever ready, and an attempt at invasion would, barring countless accidents, have ended in French disaster. At sea Napoleon was steadily out-generalled; in the summer of 1805 he abandoned his venture and swung his forces eastward. A few weeks later, off Cape Trafalgar, Nelson destroyed his main fleets when they were trying to win command of the Mediterranean.

Eighteen months before Trafalgar Pitt resumed office. He had supported Addington's feeble Government for three years, and it fell as soon as he declared against it. Pitt wished to build a strong non-party ministry to fight the war, but the King, who parted with Addington reluctantly, proved an obstacle. George flatly refused to accept Fox as a minister, while Grenville, Pitt's former lieutenant, had allied with Fox, and refused to serve without him. In Parliament and Court, for the King never quite forgave his resignation in 1801, Pitt was weaker than he had been; his earlier supporters were now riven in three fragments, under Addington, himself, and Grenville, but he showed greater energy in war and better strategy than in his first Government.

In 1805 Pitt planned a coalition with Russia, Prussia, Austria and Naples, that could have checked and might have humbled Napoleon. This counter to the invasion threat failed through Prussia, who hoped to be given Hanover, and held aloof until Austerlitz forced Austria out of the alliance; Prussia was then left isolated to fall a prey to Napoleon next autumn. In January 1806 Pitt died of overwork and disappointment. He was succeeded by a coalition of Grenville and Fox, whom at last necessity forced the King to accept. This Ministry abolished the slave trade and tried to make a peace of compromise, but Napoleon would agree to no terms that set a limit to his ambition. Fox died in September, 1806, and the Government fell next year, when it tried to open commissions in the forces to Roman Catholics, and resigned sooner than give George a pledge never again to recommend that or any other concession to a religion he disliked.

In 1806 the war entered a new phase. France had failed dismally against the British navy, Pitt's coalitions equally dismally against France. Napoleon reverted to measures begun under the Directory, and shifted the fight from the high seas to the counting-house. To ruin the trade that was the basis of Britain's sea-power he declared her under blockade, forbade any traffic with her, and by alliance in 1807 with Russia sought to enforce his decrees through all Europe. England suffered by the closing of Continental ports to her ships, but Europe suffered more, for Britain retaliated by

stopping maritime commerce that did not pass through her own harbours. In manufacture she had outstripped all nations and her wares were so necessary that even Napoleon had to buy smuggled English great-coats for his army. British cruisers cut off coffee, sugar, tea, tobacco and cotton from France and her allies, except when carried under Government licence; Germany and Spain evaded Napoleon's edicts, and these were obeyed only when his troops were on hand to enforce them. Napoleon tried to stiffen his prohibitions, interfering more and more in the government of his allies, and so roused national feeling against the French.

The last stage of the war began in 1808, when Napoleon deposed the King of Spain, and replaced him by his own brother Joseph, who was to be, in fact though not in name, a feudatory of France. Spain and Portugal rose and gave Britain a base where, since the population was friendly, her few troops could contain two or three times their number of Frenchmen. The first army sent to the Peninsula won victories at Vimiero and Corunna, but was forced back into its ships. In 1809 Austria was once more, for the last time, conquered by Napoleon, while a British stroke at Antwerp failed disastrously; Portugal remained the one country on the mainland free from French control. Wellesley, who had won Vimiero, undertook to defend this, the last independent kingdom, with 80,000 men, and the Peninsular War began its four-year course. Napoleon had forces enough in Spain to crush resistance there and to overrun Portugal if they were left undisturbed; but to hold the Peninsula, even to exist, they must scatter, for the French fed their troops on the country they occupied, so if an army sat still it starved. Wellesley (he became Lord Wellington in 1809) forced his enemy to concentrate, and when this freed a district from the invader it flamed into revolt. The British built a commissariat service that made them independent of local crops, and stopped their becoming a hated burden to the Spanish peasantry. Wellington was always outnumbered by the French, but as these had also to deal with badly trained Spanish armies and with bands of guerrillas, they could never muster in full force to crush him. Napoleon would appoint no supreme commander for the whole Peninsula, and insisted on himself controlling his Marshals, each jealous of every other, from Paris. For these reasons Wellington's genius and toil at last gave him victory in a war that cost the lives of over 300,000 French troops.

Beyond Europe Britain was supreme. She re-occupied the Cape of Good Hope, and when Napoleon made the war commercial, she widened her markets and removed French privateering bases by capturing all the enemy islands in the West Indies. For lack of a rival the navy declined in efficiency after Trafalgar, but remained stronger than any possible combination. Its claim to search alien ships, and to confiscate any that violated British rules, angered other nations, though they were still worse treated by Napoleon, and only one, the United States, could strike at any British dominion by land. It became clear that if England kept her nerve she must in time win at least a peace of compromise, for her trade was less destructible than France's man-power.

Napoleon reached his zenith in 1810, when he forced Sweden to become his ally, and Austria to give him a bride, and when Massena drove back Wellington to his Torres Vedras lines covering Lisbon. From then Napoleon began to decline. He tightened his "Continental system" against British trade, seized vast quantities of smuggled goods in Germany, and so produced a financial crisis in England, but Russia began to revolt from his leadership and to open her ports. Napoleon made a supreme effort to dragoon her into subjection, and in 1812 flung away half-a-million soldiers between Moscow and the Vistula. France and her subject states had already been drained of men, French armies were now loathed as marauders, and in 1813 Germany rose against Napoleon in retreat. Europe had been schooled by adversity: this time a coalition, financed as usual by Britain, held together despite some reverses. Wellington had defeated each French Marshal who opposed him in the Peninsula, and now he tumbled Joseph Bonaparte from his throne, while Russia, Prussia and Austria drove the main French armies across the Rhine. France was invaded from east and south, and Napoleon fell because he would be content with nothing but supremacy. Again and again he was offered terms that would have left him master of the greatest military state in the world; again and again he gambled on victory and refused assent too long, till the allies had raised their demands. By the end of March, 1814, he had fallen, the allies were in Paris, and the Bourbons assured of restoration.

Britain had a second war on her hands from 1812 to 1814. The United States suffered both from French and from British interference with trade, and since Britain held the seas, which made her deeds the more apparent, and since she offered a vulnerable point in Canada, while no American attack could damage France, anger at the actions of both antagonists focused on Britain. The Cabinet suspended the Orders-in-Council that were the chief American grievance, but too late, for a war party had come to power in Washington, and expected an easy conquest over the Canadas while Britain's army was busied in the Peninsula. The United States won some single-ship actions at sea, but on land, though her troops far outnumbered the few regulars and militia in Canada, they failed completely. New England disapproved of the war and took little part, and in 1814, when some British veterans could be spared from Europe, a small force of them landed in

the Chesapeake and burnt the public buildings of Washington in reprisal for the destruction of Toronto by an American army. Peace was made at Ghent in December, 1814, too late to stop a severe British repulse in the Mississippi early next year.

At the Peace of Paris in 1814 Britain restored most of her conquests, for it was her cue to hold that not France but Napoleon, who was now in Elba, was responsible for the war, and she wished to keep France strong and contented lest Russia in turn prove a menace to the restored balance of power. Britain kept the Cape of Good Hope, compensating Holland for it with money, together with Malta, and several tropical colonies, some of which she would have surrendered had the nations that once owned them been willing to prohibit the slave trade: this had now become a cardinal point in British foreign policy. Both at Paris and at Vienna, where final arrangements for Germany, Poland, and Italy, were made, Castlereagh, who represented Britain, stood for moderation; he tried to draw the frontiers of Europe so that no country would feel threatened, and none be strong enough to threaten others. He had been forced into an alliance with Austria and France against Russian and Prussian demands, when Napoleon landed in France, hoping to be restored by the French people and tolerated by a divided Europe. Napoleon's old soldiers flocked to him and the Bourbons fled into Belgium. But the powers had seen too much of Napoleon to trust him, though he claimed now to be a friend of peace and liberty, and Wellington ended his military career by winning Waterloo with Blücher's aid. Even had Napoleon been victorious there he could not have prevailed; Waterloo was a final and bloody incident, but it did not alter history.

For twenty years after 1807 Government remained a Tory preserve. The permanent Opposition, a coalition of Grenville's following with the Foxites, was too weak in numbers, policy, and leadership to form a Ministry by itself, and even a personal schism in the Tory party did not bring them office in 1809, The Whigs' chief strength in Parliament depended on a handful of great families, the Percies, Cavendishes, Russells and Howards: for the most part they were as exclusive in spirit as ever, but none the less they committed themselves gradually to parliamentary reform, because the Tories were now so deeply entrenched in the existing boroughs that nothing less drastic would redress the balance. Long exclusion from office made Whig criticism amateurish and Whig views rather doctrinaire, while in all matters of finance the Tories had now an assured supremacy. A Radical group, contemptuous of both parties, appeared in the election of 1806, and Jeremy Bentham gave it a programme of tax-payers' suffrage, and sweeping reforms in law and economics, but it remained too small to effect politics materially till some years after 1815, when its ideas began to filter into the advanced sections both of the Whigs and of the Tories.

Pitt's death had substituted once more group for party government, since it left the Tories without an obvious head. They had four leaders, Liverpool, Perceval, Canning, and Castlereagh, all of about the same standing, and Canning was too ambitious to work harmoniously with the others. In 1807 these four combined under the Duke of Portland, once a colleague of Fox, as their nominal head, but in 1809 Canning tried to force Castlereagh from office, brought the Ministry down, and ruined his own chance of power for the next thirteen years. Perceval formed a Government that began weak but grew stronger on Wellington's victories. In 1810 the King went permanently mad and the Prince of Wales became Regent: he interfered in politics less than had been expected, and did nothing for his former clients, the Whigs. When Perceval was murdered by a lunatic in 1812, Liverpool stepped into his shoes, with Castlereagh as his chief lieutenant and Foreign Secretary. Castlereagh, more than any other man, brought the coalition to victory, for he held it together when it seemed likely, like its forbears, to break up and let Napoleon prevail over disjointed allies. At Paris and Vienna in 1814 he took a leading position, made Britain stand for reason and moderation, and did his best to build a durable peace on lines sketched by Pitt in 1805, and to restore "a just equilibrium" in Europe. For long his reputation suffered because he was in office during the blackest years after the war, and because he was too dumb and too proud to explain his aims to the public: since he was the strongest man in the Government he was blamed both for the reaction enthroned in Europe and for a domestic policy that grew increasingly unpopular.

The Tory Government was highly conservative in its political views, but little more so than the bulk of the nation. It had to fight Napoleon with the weapons to its hand, to join with monarchs who drew their ideas from a past age and feared any kind of constitutional liberty, but it never tried to apply the doctrines of its allies in Britain. It attempted not to put the clock back but to prevent its moving forward. Since the country was changing fast industrially, this meant that its political framework grew steadily out of date, but the old liberties of the nation were seldom threatened, and then only when used for new ends. The policy of the time has been judged by Bentham's tenets, which became the platitudes of a later age, and has been condemned because it was built on eighteenth-century conceptions that coincided less and less with changing facts. The political theory that still reigned held that it was the state's business to repress movements that are to-day considered inevitable, and to leave the citizen free in many things where now his actions are controlled—education, housing, conditions of work. Toryism grew more rigid after Pitt's death and opposed nearly all sweeping

reforms, though from time to time it tolerated some administrative readjustments. It was aristocratic, not absolutist, offered wide freedom to members of the governing class, and interfered little with others, provided that they kept the law, and did not menace what were thought to be the foundations of British society. Such repression as was used came from fear. Since 1800 one chief issue in politics had been Catholic emancipation, which was supported by the whole Opposition and on which the Government disagreed. Canning and Castlereagh desired emancipation, but the Church, Court and nation were against them, mainly through alarm at the possible results in Ireland. The Nonconformist sects by 1811 numbered about a fifth of England's population, and they were louder than Parliament in denouncing any concession to Rome.

The chief grievances of the time were more economic than political: high taxation, uncertain prices, and scanty foreign markets that easily became glutted. National expenditure had reached levels hitherto unprecedented. In 1814 the budget estimate for the army was £40,000,000, for the navy £20,000,000, for foreign subsidies £10,000,000, while interest on debt took £37,500,000 and civil administration cost a trifle over £4,000,000. The figures show how little the state was expected to provide for the ordinary man. To him its functions were confined to enlistment, taxation, the provision of a Post Office and of courts of law: roads, police, schools and the poor lay outside its scope, and were neglected or controlled by local or by voluntary bodies. During the war unemployment was eased by the retention of some 120,000 sailors and more than 30,000 marines in the navy, and by a regular army that in 1812 numbered over 250,000. When peace came most of these men were disbanded, and though Continental markets were then reopened to British wares, the factories could not absorb all of them, for it became apparent that, however much Europe needed England's goods, she could not pay their cost. The exchanges had gone increasingly against Britain, owing to the cost of maintaining her forces oversea, and to the drain, between 1792 and 1815, of nearly £60,000,000 in subsidies to the allies, while an inconvertible paper currency had raised prices at home. They fluctuated so widely as to make all business highly speculative. In August 1813 wheat stood at 112 shillings a quarter; four months later, after a good harvest it fell to 75 shillings—a drop that made farming, which was still by far the largest national industry, cry out for high protection.

Politically and economically Britain was a mixture of oligarchy and anarchy, of aristocratic feudalism and modern industry. The civil service retained a strong hereditary flavour, for the reforms begun in 1782 preserved vested interests, many of which still survived, and had not been carried so far as to throw appointments open to competition. Officials still had something like a freehold in their posts. The sale of administrative places was stopped in 1809, "reversions" having ceased to be marketable in 1806, but in 1812 the Lords rejected a Bill which had passed the Commons to abolish sinecures. The demand for executive reform grew during the last years of the war, when the Tories were to be seen defending the system that Bolingbroke had denounced, and the Whigs attacking a misuse of offices to which they had lost the key. When new industrial processes threw men out of work, it was not thought to be the nation's business either to diagnose the disease or to cure it. The state, in fact, was abdicating functions that in the seventeenth century it had tried to exercise: near the end of the war Justices of the Peace lost the powers of fixing wages given them by Elizabeth and now long dormant, for Parliament had absorbed much of Adam Smith's doctrine that interference with supply and demand was in itself an evil. In 1812 an outbreak of machine-wrecking, produced by the natural feeling that machinery was the enemy of the working man, was met by the execution of sixteen culprits after their crime had been added to the hundred others that were capital. Combinations, both of workers and employers, were made illegal in 1800, on the ground that they were obstacles to trade. This law could not be enforced against employers, who combined over the dinner table, and was seldom used against workmen except when a dispute arose, but it drove nascent trade unionism underground, and turned some innocent associations into unlawful conspiracies. Nothing effective was done to limit child labour, nothing at all to control the conditions under which men and women worked.

It is easy, by concentrating on those features of England in 1815 that most offend us to-day, to construct a horrible picture that is true and yet misleading. Miners lived in savagery eased only by Methodism, the weekly wage of agricultural labour tended to equal the price of a bushel of wheat, children of six and seven years toiled, stunted and miserable, for long hours in the dark. There were many acts of oppression; on the other hand, there was much liberty, more than in any other country in Europe. The Justices of the Peace had large powers, both judicial and administrative, and, except when frightened, they were mainly good-humoured and fairly popular. The Press was free; editors might be, but seldom were, prosecuted for sedition, and the 250 papers in England could generally print what they liked without fear of consequences. Enclosure increased rapidly between 1804 and 1814, and this actually raised the country population, though it stimulated the use of gang labour at harvest. The death-rate was falling steadily, even though the growing cities had neither sanitary nor housing by-laws. Factory conditions were often very bad, but the replacing of water by steam-power tended to cut down overtime, though a working day of eleven or twelve hours remained normal. Most industries were privately owned; there were but few companies, and often a feeling of comradeship bound master to men.

Material progress was evident; the road system had been improved out of recognition since 1780, and fast coaches made London only twenty-one hours from Leeds. 2,600 miles of canals, built in the last fifty years, cheapened traffic with the new northern towns and with many older boroughs east and south. Spiritual changes had come too, even if they were less apparent. The Church of England had in great part been deprived of its exclusive powers, though Oxford remained its close preserve. The Evangelical movement, which was the Anglican child of Wesleyanism, was growing fast from a base at Cambridge, and its political adherents, who clustered about Clapham, were rapidly gaining in political importance. Foreign missions were energetic and spreading, soon to overrun the south seas. The temper of society had become more biblical and less tolerant than it had been in the century past. Duels were now condemned by public opinion as well as by law. Voluntary societies took up the education of the poor, in which England had lagged far behind Scotland, and provided teaching for nearly 200,000 children at a time, while Sunday schools, begun by Raikes in 1780, did something for twice as many others. It was the business, men held, of individuals, and not of the state, to attempt moral and social reform, and private associations grew up to assume tasks now undertaken by Government departments. Romilly had begun to assault the barbarous penal code, and though he had achieved little by 1815, he gained the support of Wilberforce, the leader of the Evangelicals, and this gave a promise of later success.

One result of the long war was the disappearance of the old prejudice against the army. No one any longer proposed that Britain should rely for defence on a badly trained militia, officered by fox-hunters, and the Duke of York as Commander-in-Chief had changed that ancient force from being a rival of the regular army into its recruiting ground. The nation was proud of its military victories, though it did little for men incapacitated by wounds and tolerated a staff that was, except for a few individuals, about the worst in Europe. The navy, till the peace, was partly manned by petty offenders handed over to it by the Justices, and by the press gang, for without such sources of supply the competition of merchant shipping would have deprived it of full crews. Its higher command was less of an aristocratic preserve than was the army's: its officers tended to be Whig in politics, and both they and the men were strongly tinged with Evangelical piety; one complaint of the Nore mutineers in 1797 had been that they could not keep the Sabbath, and that fiddlers played on that day as on others. Disciplinary troubles had been endemic in the fleet for some years from 1797, but there was no recurrence of them after the Fox-Grenville Government in 1806 increased the sailors' pay.

If there was stagnation in political development there was none in thought. The Royal Institution for the Advancement of Science was founded in 1799, it engaged Davy in 1801; he employed Faraday, a still greater experimenter, in 1812, and these two, with others at work in similar fields, made Britain pre-eminent in widening the limits of knowledge. The *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Reviews* catered for a growing class of serious readers. Poetry was in revolt from the long reign of the heroic couplet and reverted to older forms now acclaimed as new. Blake's *Songs of Innocence* in 1789 marked a departure, and the *Lyrical Ballads* of Wordsworth and Coleridge in 1798 strengthened a tendency already clearly shown. Southey, Byron, Scott, were hard at work. Men of letters looked no more to great patrons for support, nor even to leisured Government posts, for an increasing public offered to those of them who could catch its taste, or create it, the hope of greater rewards than peer or Cabinet could give. Scott's poetry and Byron's found an immense audience, and Tom Moore was so well thought of in 1814 that he was paid £3000 for a long poem not yet written. The writer now prized above all other English novelists, Jane Austen, had published four books before Waterloo, one of them, *Pride and Prejudice*, having been rejected unread by a publisher in 1797. Cobbett, an ex-soldier of strong Conservative views, had turned radical, and was finding an immense sale for popular journalism. Nearly all the early and mid-Victorian giants had been born, and some had reached their nonage, by 1815, and the chief ideas of the nineteenth century could already be discerned, despite a Tory reaction that endured long but never ran deep.

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