



DEATH OF WOLFE. — Vol. vi. 46.

THE POPULAR  
HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

BY  
CHARLES KNIGHT.

VOLUME VI.

FROM THE DEFENCE OF THE COUNTRY BY FOREIGN TROOPS,  
1756, TO THE ASSASSINATION OF MARAT BY  
CHARLOTTE CORDAY, 1793.

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## CONTENTS.

### CHAPTER I.—A.D. 1755 to A.D. 1757.

Dread of invasion.—Defence of the country by foreign troops.—French fleet at Minorca.—Admiral Byng.—Surrender of St. Philip, in Minorca.—Popular rage against Byng.—Commencement of the Seven Years' War.—Successes of Frederick of Prussia.—Household of George, prince of Wales.—Changes of Ministry.—Newcastle retires.—Administration of the duke of Devonshire and Mr. Pitt.—Altered tone of the king's speech.—Militia Bill.—Foreign troops sent home.—Subsidy to the king of Prussia.—Trial of Byng.—His execution.—Pitt and Legge dismissed from their employments.—National feeling.—Coalition of Newcastle and Pitt.—Affairs of India.—Black Hole at Calcutta.—Surajah Dowlah occupies Calcutta.—It is re-taken by Clive and Watson.—The battle of Plassey.—Surajah Dowlah deposed and killed.—Meer Jaffier Subahdar of Bengal.—Establishment of the British ascendancy in India.

Page 13—33

### CHAPTER II.—A.D. 1757 to A.D. 1760.

The Administration.—Pitt's sole conduct of the war and of foreign affairs.—Frederick's second campaign.—Victory of Prague.—Defeat at Kolin.—Failure at Rochefort.—Convention of Closter-Seven.—Failure of expedition against Louisbourg.—Riots about the Militia Act.—Frederick's victory of Rosbach.—Subsidy to Prussia.—Cherbourg taken, and its works demolished.—St. Maloes.—Operations on the African coast.—Successful expedition against Louisbourg.—The turning point in Pitt's Administration.—Frederick's third campaign.—Zorndorf.—Hochkirchen.—Wolfe appointed to command an expedition to Quebec.—The battle of Minden.—Canada.—Operations in North America.—Wolfe in the St. Lawrence.—His desponding letter.—Heights of Abraham.—Death of Wolfe.—Quebec surrendered.—Hawke's victory in Quiberon Bay.—Death of George the Second. . . . . 33—49

### CHAPTER III.—A.D. 1760 to A.D. 1763.

Accession of George III.—His education and character.—Lord Bute.—The king's first speech.—Policy of the new reign.—Independence of the Judges.—The new Parliament.—The king's marriage.—Coronation.—Negotiations for peace.—Warlike operations.—Affairs of the Continent.—Frederick of Prussia.—Negotiations broken off.—The Family Compact.—Resignation of Mr. Pitt.—His pension.—Debates in Parliament.—War declared against Spain.—Conquest of the Havannah, and other successes.—Preliminaries of peace signed.—The Peace of Paris.—Conclusion of the Seven Year's War.—The cost of the war, and its uses. . . . . 50—69



## CHAPTER IV.—A.D. 1763 to A.D. 1765.

Lord Bute Prime Minister.—Policy of the Favourite.—John Wilkes.—Lord Bute resigns.—George Grenville's Ministry.—"North Briton," No. 45.—Arrest of Wilkes.—Negotiations for Mr. Pitt's return to power.—The king's desire to govern.—The Wilkite agitation.—Hogarth, Wilkes, and Churchill.—Wilkes ordered to be prosecuted.—Expelled the House of Commons.—Great Debates on General Warrants.—Officers dismissed for votes in Parliament.—Restrictions on the American Colonies.—Grenville's Resolution on American Taxation.—The Stamp Act passed.—Resistance in America.—Motives for passing the Stamp Act. . . . Page 70—86

## CHAPTER V.—A.D. 1765 to A.D. 1768.

Illness of the king.—The Regency Bill.—Overtures to Pitt.—He declines office.—Grenville and Bedford.—The Rockingham Administration.—Disturbances in America.—Parliament.—Debates on the Stamp Act.—Pitt contends for its Repeal.—Examination of Dr. Franklin.—Declaratory Bill as to rights over the Colonies.—Repeal of the Stamp Act.—Weakness of the Rockingham Administration.—They quit office.—Pitt created earl of Chatham.—His loss of popularity.—His plans for great measures.—Embargo on Corn.—Chatham's illness.—Disorganization of his ministry.—Parliament dissolved. . . . 87—102

## CHAPTER VI.—A.D. 1768 to A.D. 1770.

New Parliament.—Non-publication of Debates.—Wilkes returned for Middlesex.—Riots.—Sentence upon Wilkes.—His expulsions from Parliament and re-elections.—Debates on the privileges of the Commons.—The letters of Junius.—Personalities of Junius.—His attacks on the duke of Grafton.—Private letters of Junius.—His attack on the duke of Bedford.—Address of Junius to the king.—Opening of Parliament.—Lord Chatham.—Chatham's speech on the Address.—Schism in the Ministry.—Lord Camden disclaims their measures.—Resignation of the duke of Grafton. . . . 103—122

## CHAPTER VII.—A.D. 1768 to A.D. 1771.

Lord North's Administration.—Retrospect of Colonial affairs.—Opposition to the Revenue Act.—Debates in Parliament on American proceedings.—Measures of coercion proposed.—Lord Hillsborough.—Virginia.—Outrages in Boston.—Repeal of duties, except that on teas.—Encounter with the military at Boston.—Renewal of the conflict regarding Wilkes.—Remonstrance of the City of London.—Beckford's Address to the King.—Printers arrested for publishing Debates.—Released by the City authorities.—Riots.—The Lord Mayor and an Alderman committed.—Officers of State. . . . 123—140

## CHAPTER VIII.—A.D. 1770 to A.D. 1773.

Foreign affairs.—Cession of Corsica to France.—The Falkland Islands.—First Partition of Poland.—War between Turkey and Russia.—Acquisitions of Russia.—Suppression of the Jesuits.—Home Politics.—Subscription to Thirty-nine Articles.—Test Act.—Thirtieth of January.—Repeal of laws against forestalling.—The queen of Denmark.—Death of the Princess Dowager.—The Royal Marriage Act.—Retrospect of Indian affairs.—East India Company's Regulation Act.—Teas, duty free, to the Colonies. . . . 141—154

## CHAPTER IX.—A.D. 1773 to A.D. 1775.

Destruction of Tea in Boston Harbour.—Franklin before the Council.—Boston Port

Bill.—Burke's speech against taxing America.—Chatham's speech.—Sentiments of the Americans.—State of Parties in America.—Leaders of the House of Commons.—Reception of the Boston Port Bill.—Military preparations.—Chatham's and Burke's efforts for conciliation.—Rapid growth of America.—English feelings on the American question.—Hostilities commenced at Lexington.—Ticonderoga and Crown Point taken.—Washington's view of civil war.—Principles involved in the struggle.

Page 155—172

## CHAPTER X.—A.D. 1775 to A.D. 1776.

Franklin's return to America.—Meeting of Congress at Philadelphia.—Washington elected Commander-in-chief.—Events at Boston.—Battle of Bunker's Hill.—Washington blockades Boston.—Public opinion in England.—Petition from Congress to the King.—Mr. Penn, the bearer of the petition, examined in the House of Lords.—Lord North's Prohibitory Bill.—Invasion of Canada.—Silas Deane sent to Paris.—Declaration of Independence adopted by Congress.—Note: The Declaration. 173—188

## CHAPTER XI.—A.D. 1776 to A.D. 1777.

Lord Howe, as the British Commissioner, addresses a letter to Washington.—The letter refused.—The British on Long Island.—Battle of Brooklyn.—Washington retreats.—His exploit at Trenton.—His success at Princetown.—Franklin dispatched by the Congress to Paris.—Underhand proceedings of France.—John the Painter, the incendiary.—Manning the navy.—Defences of the country.—Chatham appears again in Parliament.—Steuben.—LaFayette.—Kosciusko.—Battle of the Brandywine.—The British in Philadelphia.—Burgoyne's army enters the United States from Canada.—The convention of Saratoga.—Parliament meets.—Chatham's speech on the Address.—On the employment of Indians.—Washington in winter-quarters at Valley Forge.—Steuben re-organizes the army. . . . 189—205

## CHAPTER XII.—A.D. 1777 to A.D. 1779.

Public opinion on the American War.—Measures of conciliation proposed by lord North.—France concludes a treaty of amity with America.—Chatham's last speech in Parliament.—His sudden illness in the House of Lords.—His death.—Propositions of lord North rejected by Congress.—French fleet under d'Estaing arrives in America.—Attack on Rhode Island impeded by fleet under lord Howe.—Admiral Keppel takes the command of the Channel Fleet.—Engagement off Ushant.—Court-martial on Keppel.—Burgoyne's defence of himself in Parliament.—Destruction of Wyoming.—Spain declares war against Great Britain.—Apprehensions of invasion.—The national spirit roused.—Enterprises of Paul Jones.—Military operations in America in 1779. . . . 206—220

## CHAPTER XIII.—A.D. 1780.

Associations for redress of grievances.—Meetings in Yorkshire and other Counties.—Burke's proposals for Economical Reform.—Dunning's motion on the influence of the Crown.—Decreasing strength of the Opposition.—Protestant Associations in Scotland.—They extend to England.—Lord George Gordon.—Procession to Parliament.—Roman Catholic chapels burnt.—Newgate set on fire.—Lord Mansfield's House sacked.—The library burnt.—Continued riots.—A council called.—Wedderburn's opinion on the employment of military.—The riots stopped by military force.—Naval affairs.—The war in America.—Charleston taken by the British.—Lord Cornwallis.—His severities.—French armament under Rochambeau.—Treachery of Benedict Arnold.—Major André seized.—Verdict of a Council of Officers.—His execution. . . . 221—239



## CHAPTER XIV.—A.D. 1780 to A.D. 1781.

Elections of 1780.—Burke rejected for Bristol.—War with Holland.—French attack upon Jersey.—Capture of St. Eustatius by Rodney.—Privateering.—Action off the Dogger Bank.—Difficulties of Washington's army.—Mutinies.—Cornwallis in the Carolinas.—He is defeated at Cowpens.—His victory at Guilford.—Cornwallis marches into Virginia.—Fleet of De Grasse arrives in the Chesapeake.—Washington's march to Virginia.—Cornwallis fortifies York Town.—He is besieged, and his supplies cut off.—He capitulates.—Surrender of the British army.—The disastrous news received in London. . . . . Page 240—256

## CHAPTER XV.—A.D. 1781 to A.D. 1782.

The king announces to Parliament the capitulation of Cornwallis.—Debates on the Address very hostile to the ministry.—Strong expressions of Fox.—More prudent language of Pitt.—Differences in the Cabinet.—Lord G. Germaine retires.—Losses of West India Islands and Minorca.—The government in a minority.—Lord North announces that his administration is at an end.—The Rockingham ministry.—Rodney's victory over De Grasse.—Breaking the Line.—Capture of the Ville de Paris.—Change of costume in the House of Commons.—Burke's Bill for Economical Reform.—Bills on Revenue Officers and Contractors.—Pitt's motion for Parliamentary Reform.—Arming the People.—Retrospect of the state of Ireland.—Irish Parliament.—Grattan.—His efforts for legislative independence.—The Volunteers of Ireland.—The king's message to the British and Irish Parliaments.—The Statute of George I. asserting the dependence of Ireland repealed. . . . . 257—278

## CHAPTER XVI.—A.D. 1782.

Overtures for Peace between Franklin and Shelburne.—Rival negotiators from England.—Death of Lord Rockingham.—Resignation of the Secretaryship by Mr. Fox.—The Siege of Gibraltar.—Naval affairs.—Lord Howe.—Loss of the Royal George.—Howe's relief of Gibraltar after the first bombardment.—Negotiations for Peace concluded.—The Preliminaries laid before Parliament.—Parliamentary censures of the terms of Peace.—Lord Shelburne being defeated, resigns.—The king and the American minister.—Washington's farewell to his army, and his retirement. 279—295

## CHAPTER XVII.—A.D. 1760 to A.D. 1783.

Political despondency at the close of the American War.—Supposed decay of Population.—Its real increase.—Development of the productive power of the country.—Agriculture extended and improved.—Agricultural condition of the Eastern, South Midland, North Midland, and South Eastern, counties.—Norfolk.—Mr. Coke.—Suffolk.—Essex.—Buckinghamshire.—Oxfordshire.—Northamptonshire.—Bedfordshire.—Francis, duke of Bedford.—Improved breeds of sheep and oxen.—Robert Bakewell.—Consumption of animal food in England.—Cambridgeshire.—Lincolnshire.—The Great Level of the Fens.—Lincoln Heath and the Wolds.—Nottinghamshire.—Derbyshire.—Surrey.—Middlesex.—Kent.—Sussex.—Hants.—Berkshire.—Windsor Forest. . . . . 296—317

## CHAPTER XVIII.—A.D. 1760 to A.D. 1783.

Agricultural condition of the South Western Counties.—Wiltshire.—Dorsetshire.—Devonshire.—Somersetshire.—Cornwall.—Wales.—The West Midland Counties.—The North Midland.—Yorkshire.—Improvers of the Moors.—James Croft, an agricultural collier.—Northern Counties.—Durham.—Northumberland.—Westmorland.—The

Lake District.—Agricultural condition of Scotland.—The Lothians.—Sheep flocks.—Ayrshire.—Burns.—Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire.—North-western parts.—Agricultural condition of Ireland.—The potatoe cultivation. . . . . Page 318—339

## CHAPTER XIX.—A.D. 1760 to A.D. 1783.

Revolution in the peaceful Arts.—Great captains of Industry raised up in Britain.—The duke of Bridgewater and Brindley.—Canals first constructed in England.—The Cotton manufacture.—The fly-shuttle of Kay.—Cotton-spinning machines.—The spinning-jenny of Hargreaves.—Cotton spinning ceasing to be a domestic employment.—Richard Arkwright.—His water-frame spinning machine.—The first water spinning mill.—Samuel Crompton.—His Hall-in-the-Wood wheel, known as the mule.—General rush to engage in spinning cotton.—Rapid increase of Lancashire towns.—Dr. Cartwright.—His power-loom.—Dr. Roebuck.—First furnace at Carron for smelting iron by pit-coal.—Wedgwood.—Potteries of Staffordshire.—Commercial treaty with France.—Watt.—Progress of his improved steam-engine.—Its final success. . . . . 340—363

## CHAPTER XX.—A.D. 1760 to A.D. 1783.

State of Art in the reign of George II.—Inferiority of native artists.—Formation of an English School of Painting.—Academies.—First Exhibition of Works of English Artists.—Exhibition of Sign-paintings.—Foundation of the Royal Academy.—Early Exhibitions.—Reynolds, Gainsborough, Wilson, and West.—Engraving.—Strange and Woollett.—Mezzotint.—MacArdell, &c.—Boydell and commerce in English engravings.—Sculpture.—Banks, Bacon, and Flaxman.—Architecture.—Sir William Chambers.—Bridge-building. . . . . 364—382

## CHAPTER XXI.—A.D. 1737 to A.D. 1783.

Manners as depicted in the Literature of the period.—Changes in the commerce of Literature.—Samuel Johnson the link between two periods.—Literature of George the Second's time.—The Novelists.—Richardson.—Fielding.—Smollett.—Sterne.—Goldsmith.—Literature of the first quarter of a century of the reign of George the Third.—Manners.—Stage Coaches.—Highwaymen.—The Post.—Inns.—Public refreshment places of London.—Ranelagh.—Vauxhall.—The Pantheon.—The Theatre.—Garrick.—Bath.—Gaming Tables. . . . . 383—402

## CHAPTER XXII.—A.D. 1737 to A.D. 1783.

View of manners continued.—The Duke of Queensberry.—Club-life.—Excessive Gaming.—Excesses of Charles Fox.—Dress.—Conversation.—The Squires of England.—The Country Justice.—The Clergy of England.—The Universities.—Professional Classes.—The Mercantile Class.—The Lower orders.—The Rabble.—Mobs.—Police of London.—The Prisons.—Social Reformers.—Howard.—Coram.—Hanway.—Raikes.—Education.—Rise and Growth of Methodism. . . . . 403—426

## CHAPTER XXIII.—A.D. 1773 to A.D. 1784.

Retrospect of Indian affairs.—Hastings Governor-General.—Rohilla war.—New Council at Calcutta.—Hastings and the Council opposed to each other.—Nuncomar.—His execution.—Dissentions at Madras.—Mahratta war.—Capture of Gwalior.—Hyder Ali.—The Carnatic ravaged.—Hyder defeated by Coote.—Death of Hyder.—Succeeded by his son Tippoo Saib.—Benares. Oude.—The Begums.—Committee of the Houses of Parliament on Indian Affairs. . . . . 427—438



CHAPTER XXIV.—A.D. 1783 to A.D. 1788.

Coalition of Lord North and Mr. Fox.—Pitt's second Reform Bill.—Affairs of India.—Fox brings forward his India Bill.—The Bill carried in the House of Commons—Rejected in the House of Lords.—The Coalition dismissed from office.—Pitt the head of the government.—His struggle against a majority of the Commons—His final triumph.—Parliament dissolved.—Results of the elections.—The Westminster election.—Pitt's financial measures.—Commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland.—His third Reform Bill.—Disputes between Holland and Austria.—Pitt's Sinking-Fund.—Commercial Treaty with France.—Consolidation of Taxes.—War with France averted.—The prince of Wales's debts.—Mrs. Fitzherbert.—The king becomes insane.—Parliamentary conflict on the Regency Bill.—The king's Recovery. . . . . Page 439—462

CHAPTER XXV.—A.D. 1776 to A.D. 1787.

Symptoms of great changes in France.—Constant financial difficulties.—General view of the French social system.—Expectations of a Revolution.—The Parliament of Paris Meeting of the States-General.—The Three Orders.—The Tiers Etat demand that all the Orders shall unite.—Excitement in Paris, during this contest.—Tiers Etat assume the title of the National Assembly.—Their meeting in a Tennis Court.—The Royal Sitting.—Open resistance of the Tiers Etat to the king's orders.—The king yields.—Dismissal of Necker.—Destruction of the Bastille.—March to Versailles of a Parisian mob.—The Royal Family and National Assembly, removed to Paris. . . . . 463—489

CHAPTER XXVI.—A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1791.

Connexion of the French Revolution with English history.—The public opinion of England on the Revolution.—Views of eminent men.—The king of France visits the National Assembly.—Session of the British Parliament.—Divisions in the Whig Party.—The Test Act.—Nootka Sound.—War with Spain averted.—Fate of the Federation in Paris.—Burke publishes his "Reflections on the French Revolution."—Russia and Turkey.—Siege of Ismail.—Mirabeau President of the National Assembly.—His negotiations with the Court.—His death.—Parliament.—Breach of the friendship between Burke and Fox.—Clamour against the Dissenters.—The Birmingham Riots. . . . . 490—510

CHAPTER XXVII.—A.D. 1791 to A.D. 1792.

Flight from Paris of the king and his family.—The National Assembly after the discovery of the flight.—Hatred of Royalty.—Thomas Paine.—National, or Constituent, Assembly at an end.—Meeting of the Legislative Assembly.—The Declaration of Pillnitz.—French princes and emigrants at Coblenz.—Opening of Parliament.—Pacific Speech.—Pitt's display of British prosperity.—The Slave Trade.—Pitt's eloquence.—The Libel Law.—Attempts to form a Coalition.—Proclamation against Seditions.—Chauvelin and Lord Grenville.—Partition of Poland. . . . . 511—530

CHAPTER XXVIII.—A.D. 1793.

Deaths of the emperor and the king of Sweden.—The Girondin Ministry.—French declaration of war against the king of Hungary and Bohemia.—The Veto.—Roland, and two other ministers, dismissed.—Insurrection of the 20th of June.—The Country in Danger proclaimed.—Arrival of the Marsellais.—Proclamation of the Duke of Brunswick.—Insurrection of the 10th of August.—Attack on the Tuileries.—Royal family removed to the Temple.—Longwy taken by the Prussians.—The Massacres of September. . . . . 531—547

CHAPTER XXIX.—A.D. 1792 to A.D. 1793.

Opening of the French National Convention.—The Prussian Army enters France.—Battle of Valmy.—Retreat of the Prussians.—Battle of Jemappes.—Opening of the British Parliament.—Disposition of the British Government.—Aggressive Decrees of the French Convention.—Mr. Pitt's continued desire for non-intervention.—Louis XVI. and his family prisoners in the Temple.—Louis brought to the bar of the Convention.—Anxiety for his fate in the British Parliament.—Political manoeuvres of lord Loughborough.—The Whig party broken up, and Loughborough made Chancellor.—Influence of this negotiation on Mr. Pitt's policy.—State of public opinion in England.—Trial of Thomas Paine for libel, as the author of the "Rights of Man."—The Alien Bill.—Correspondence with Chauvelin.—Trial of the king of France.—Votes of the Convention.—Execution of the king.—Proceedings of the British Parliament.—Note on the Dagger-Scene. . . . . Page 548—571

CHAPTER XXX.—A.D. 1785 to A.D. 1793.

Retrospect of Indian Affairs from 1785.—Lord Cornwallis Governor-General.—Declaratory Bill.—War with Tippoo.—Retreat of Cornwallis in 1790.—Capture of Seringapatam in 1791.—Peace with Tippoo.—The French West India Islands.—Retrospect of Discoveries in the Pacific.—Otaheite.—New Zealand.—New South Wales.—Canada.—Military and Naval Establishments of Great Britain.—France declares War. . . . . 572—581

CHAPTER XXXI.—A.D. 1547.

Resolutions proposed by Mr. Fox against war with France.—Commercial distress.—Parliamentary Reform opposed by Mr. Pitt.—Traitorous Correspondence Bill.—Pitt, Burke, Fox,—the diversity of their views of England's policy.—Sanguine expectations of warlike success.—Dumouriez in Holland.—Battle of Neerwinden.—Defection of Dumouriez.—Measures of the Jacobins.—Revolutionary Tribunal.—Committee of Public Salvation.—Excessive prices of Commodities in Paris.—Produced by the depreciation of Assignats.—Plunder of the Shops.—Law of Maximum.—Forced Levy of troops.—La Vendée in insurrection.—Mr. Fox's motion for Peace.—Insurrection against the Girondin Deputies.—Their arrest and flight.—Assassination of Marat by Charlotte Corday.—Note on the French Revolutionary Kalendar. . . . . 583—597

TABLE OF CONTEMPORARY SOVEREIGNS. . . . . 600  
TABLE OF TREATIES. . . . . 601  
PRINCIPAL OFFICERS OF STATE FROM 1770 TO 1783. . . . . 603  
GROWTH OF THE NATIONAL DEBT. . . . . 604



## POPULAR HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

### CHAPTER I.

Dread of invasion.—Defence of the country by foreign troops.—French fleet at Minorca.—Admiral Byng.—Surrender of St. Philip, in Minorca.—Popular rage against Byng.—Commencement of the Seven Years' War.—Successes of Frederick of Prussia.—Household of George, prince of Wales.—Changes of Ministry.—Newcastle retires.—Administration of the duke of Devonshire and Mr. Pitt.—Altered tone of the king's speech.—Militia Bill.—Foreign troops sent home.—Subsidy to the king of Prussia.—Trial of Byng.—His execution.—Pitt and Legge dismissed from their employments.—National feeling.—Coalition of Newcastle and Pitt.—Affairs of India.—Black Holé at Calcutta.—Surajah Dowlah occupies Calcutta.—It is re-taken by Clive and Watson.—The battle of Plassey.—Sarajah Dowlah deposed and killed.—Meer Jaffer Subahdar of Bengal.—Establishment of the British ascendancy in India.

IN a fortnight after his dismissal from office, Pitt, from his place in parliament, sent forth a voice whose echoes would be heard throughout the land. The nation was dreading a French invasion—sullenly trembling at the possible consequences of an assault upon the capital, and without confidence in the government to which the public defence was entrusted. Pitt seconded the motion of the Secretary of War, for an army of thirty-four thousand men, being an increase of fifteen thousand. He had wanted even a larger increase in the previous year. The king's speech of the preceding Session had lulled the nation into a fallacious dream of repose. "He wanted to call this country out of that enervate state, that twenty thousand men from France could shake it. The maxims of our government were degenerated, not our natives." An opinion had gone forth, which in 1757 was embodied in a book of extraordinary popularity, alluded to by Cowper:—

"The inestimable Estimate of Brown  
Rose like a paper-kite, and charm'd the town."\*

The nation was told, "We are rolling to the brink of a precipice that must destroy us."† Effeminacy, Vanity, Luxury, Rapacity

\* "Table Talk."

† "Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times," ed. 1758, p. 15.