

CHAPTER III.

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 Years' War.—The cost of the war, and its uses.

It is related that on the morning of the 25th of October, George, prince of Wales, taking an early ride in the neighbourhood of Kew, where he was residing, a messenger came to him, bearing a note from a German valet-de-chambre who was about the person of George II., which note bore a private mark, as previously agreed, that declared the king was dead. The prince, suddenly become George III., showed no surprise or emotion; dropped no word to indicate what had happened; but, saying his horse was lame, turned back to Kew; and, dismounting, thus addressed his groom:—"I have said this horse is lame; I forbid you to say to the contrary." This is Walpole's relation, and this his comment:—"The first moment of the new reign afforded a symptom of the prince's character; of that cool dissimulation in which he had been so well initiated by his mother, and which comprehended almost the whole of what she had taught him.* We place this gossip of the servants' hall at the commencement of our narrative. It is quoted by lord John Russell as a trifling incident which showed the power which the young king had acquired over his countenance and manner.† It is referred to by Mr. Massey, to show that George III. "was not always scrupulous on the point of veracity."‡ Our readers will form their own opinion of this symptom of the royal character. Princes, as well as others of the higher orders of society, have been immemorially trained not to exhibit emotion; and the artifice by which the pupil of an adroit mother desired to conceal his irregular knowledge of a great fact may be paltry

* "Memoirs of the Reign of King George III. Now first published from the original MSS. Edited by Sir Denis Le Marchant, Bart." 1845. Vol. i. p. 6.

† "Bedford Correspondence."

‡ "History of England during the reign of George III." vol. i. p. 5

enough, but yet not a manifestation of habitual unverity. Lord Waldegrave, who had unusual opportunities for studying the character of the prince, assigns to him, in his twenty-first year, qualities which may certainly be traced in his maturer life: "His parts, though not excellent, will be found very tolerable, if ever they are properly exercised. . . . He is strictly honest, but wants that frank and open behaviour which makes honesty appear amiable. . . . His religion is free from hypocrisy, but is not of the most charitable sort. . . . He has spirit, but not of the active kind; and does not want resolution, but it is mixed with too much obstinacy. . . . He has great command of his passions, and will seldom do wrong, except when he mistakes wrong for right; but as often as this shall happen, it will be difficult to undeceive him, because he is unusually indolent, and has strong prejudices. . . . Whenever he is displeased his anger does not break out with heat and violence, but he becomes sullen and silent, and returns to his closet; not to compose his mind by study or contemplation, but merely to indulge the melancholy enjoyment of his own ill-humour. Even when the fit is ended, unfavourable symptoms very frequently return, which indicate that on certain occasions his royal highness has too correct a memory. . . . Though I have mentioned his good and bad qualities, without flattery, and without aggravation, allowances should still be made, on account of his youth, and his bad education.* With regard to the education of the prince his mother told Doddington that it "had given her much pain. His book-learning she was no judge of, though she supposed it small or useless; but she hoped he might have been instructed in the general understandings of things." Speaking of Mr. Stone, the sub-governor, the princess-dowager said, "she once desired him to inform the prince about the constitution; but he declined it, to avoid giving jealousy to the bishop of Norwich."† The bishop had the title of Preceptor. These instructors, according to lord Waldegrave, though men of sense, men of learning, and worthy good men, "had but little weight and influence. The mother and the nursery always prevailed." The partizans of lord Bute, Walpole says, "affected to celebrate the care he had taken of the king's education. . . . His majesty had learned nothing but what a man who knew nothing could teach him."‡ It has been, we think, hastily assumed, that this king, in his maturer life, added nothing to his scanty stores of knowledge.

Burke has described, in emphatic words, the state of the coun-

* "Memoirs," p. 8.

† "Diary," August 17, 755.

‡ "Memoirs of George III." vol. i. p. 55.

try at the period of the death of George II. "He carried the glory, the power, the commerce of England to a height unknown even to this renowned nation in the times of its greatest prosperity; and he left his succession resting on the true and only true foundations of all national and all regal greatness; affection at home, reputation abroad, trust in allies, terror in rival nations." * These triumphs of the last four years of George II.'s reign are thus pointed out, to contrast with the change that had taken place in ten years after the accession of George III. Junius, in the first of his celebrated Letters, holding that "to be acquainted with the merit of a ministry we need only observe the condition of the people," proceeds to say that, if "we see an universal spirit of distrust and dissatisfaction, a rapid decay of trade, dissensions in all parts of the empire, and a total loss of respect in the eyes of foreign powers, we may pronounce, without hesitation, that the government of the country is weak, distracted, and corrupt." † Making every abatement for the party griefs of Burke, and the virulent hostility of Junius, we cannot doubt that during the first decade of the reign of George III. the times were "out of joint;" that a great change in the relations of the Crown to the Aristocracy had been effected; that a change of equal importance in the exercise of the power of the Sovereign, as distinguished from the power of a Ministry, had also been partially accomplished; and that the popular element in the House of Commons had been greatly diluted by the preponderance of the courtly element. Without entering minutely into the vast details which time has accumulated for the history of this period, we shall endeavour to present an impartial view of the events which indicate the policy systematically acted upon from the day of George III.'s accession—not passionately or inconsistently, but with a calm determination which showed that if Mr. Stone had neglected to teach the prince of Wales something about the Constitution, lord Bute had laboured to supply the deficiency. That policy, as set forth by Doddington, was "to recover monarchy from the inveterate usurpation of oligarchy;" and, further, to get rid of the necessary result of that domination, which was expressed in the lamentation of George II. to his Chancellor, "Ministers are the king in this country." These conceptions could not be realised without difficulty and danger. Perhaps the greatest danger was in that partial success which made the House of Commons more odious to the people in its subserviency to the Crown, than was the Crown itself at any past period of its conflicts with the House of Commons.

* "Thoughts on the cause of the present discontents." 1770.

† January 21, 1769.

In these early struggles of his reign, the character of the young prince, as indicated by lord Waldegrave, comes out with tolerable clearness:—an intellect not deficient, but not highly cultivated—honesty without frankness—resolution, approaching to obstinacy—indolence, soon overcome by a strong will—violent prejudices, liable to mistake wrong for right—sullen anger—enduring animosity. But we must not on the other hand forget that the party hostility, and even national dissatisfaction, which George III. provoked in many circumstances of his long reign, did not alienate from him the personal loyalty and even love of his people. They respected the example of his private life—his strong domestic affections; his simple tastes and unostentatious habits; his manly piety, of which no one doubted that it was "free from hypocrisy." We respect these qualities now; and knowing how much good was effected by the influence of his example, we may speak of his political errors with compassion rather than with virulence. Those errors, as far as the king's personal character was concerned, were more the subject of animadversion in the first twenty years of his reign, than in the subsequent period in which he exercised the regal authority. That he might possess the power as he advanced in life of correcting some of the original defects of his character, was anticipated by lord Waldegrave, in a passage which is omitted in the printed edition of the "Memoirs," and which neutralises in some degree the generally unfavourable opinion which the governor had formed of the pupil. "When the prince shall succeed his grandfather, there may possibly be changes of greater consequence." Lord Waldegrave refers to the confidence in lord Bute which had succeeded the authority of the nursery. "He will soon be sensible that a prince who suffers himself to be led, is not to be allowed the choice of a conductor. His pride will then give battle to his indolence; and having made this first effort, a moderate share of obstinacy will make him persevere." The pride and resolution of George III. subdued his indolence in a remarkable degree. Never did any ruler work harder, certainly too hard, in the endeavour to understand and influence public affairs. He did his best within the limits of his ability. Lord Waldegrave adds, "His honesty will incline to do what is right; and the means cannot be wanting, where a good disposition of mind is joined with a tolerable capacity; for a superior genius does not seem to be a *sine qua non* in the composition of a good king." *

The king for some time did "suffer himself to be led," and was not "allowed the choice of a conductor." The earl of Bute pre-

* First given in the "Edinburgh Review," vol. xxxvii. p. 17.

pared his Majesty's first Address to the Privy Council. The earl of Bute, the Groom of the Stole, was not only named by the king as a member of the Privy Council, but also of the Cabinet.* To Mr. Pitt this nomination must have been especially offensive; for in the king's speech to the Council he alluded to "a bloody and expensive war." The great minister, who had conducted that war to an issue which redeemed even its cost of blood and treasure, by raising England out of her abject prostration to a height which was her safety as well as her glory, was indignant at this tone; and insisted that the passage should go forth to the world as "an expensive but just and necessary war." But the duke of Newcastle and Mr. Pitt continued their alliance as ministers under the new sovereign. They were not very cordial. The influence of Bute was recognized in the smothered cry of "No Scotch favourite;" and the uncertainty of the final preponderance of the rivals for power was expressed in the joking question, whether the king would burn in his chamber, Scotch-coal, Newcastle-coal, or Pit-coal.

On the 18th of November, the king opened the parliament. Lord Hardwicke prepared the Speech, of which he sent the draught to Mr. Pitt. When it was to be settled in the Cabinet, the words were inserted in the king's own writing which were long treasured up in loyal memories: "Born and educated in this country, I glory in the name of Briton; and the peculiar happiness of my life will ever consist in promoting the welfare of a people whose loyalty and warm affection to me I consider as the greatest and most permanent security of my throne." The House of Commons voted a Civil List of 800,000*l.*, upon the king surrendering the hereditary revenue. The annual subsidy to the king of Prussia was renewed. Supplies were given to the extent of twenty millions. The enthusiasm with which the king was greeted by his subjects was in striking contrast with the coldness that had attended the appearance in public of George II. At the play, the whole audience sang "God save the king" in chorus. The few remaining Jacobites gave up their hatred to the House of Hanover, and flocked to St. James's.

How short a time this happy calm was to last may be inferred from the revelations in Bubb Doddington's Diary. This ancient intriguer was now intriguing with Bute against the king's ministers. On the 20th of November they had "much serious and confidential talk." On the 29th Doddington pressed Bute to take the

* Sir Denis Le Marchant has pointed out that this nomination to the Cabinet, and not that to the Privy Council, was the subject of animadversion at the time.—Note to Walpole's "George III."

Secretary's office, and get rid of lord Holderness. On the 20th of December, "we had much talk about setting up a paper." Their great object appears to be embodied in the following passage regarding the ministry, which has especial reference to Pitt: "I think," writes Doddington, on the 2nd of January, 1761, "they will continue the war as long as they can; and keep in, when it is over, as long as they can; and that will be as long as they please, if they are suffered to make peace, which will soon be so necessary to all orders and conditions of men, that all will be glad of it, be it what it will, especially if it comes from those who have all the offices and the powers of office. All which can never end well for the king and lord Bute." How it would end for the nation was not a matter to be considered. Amongst the weapons which this pair devised to damage Pitt in popular estimation, they "agreed upon getting runners," hawkers of pamphlets and bills. Their desire also to return to one of the practices of the good old times is thus indicated: "We wished to have some coffee-house spies, but I do not know how to contrive it."* The habit in which Bute already indulged of using the name of the king as an authoritative recommendation of any political action—even of the nomination of a member for a borough under government influence—must have excited strong doubts of the wisdom of his majesty's constitutional training. Bute informed Doddington, on the 2nd February, "that he had told Anson that room must be made for lord Parker; who replied, that all was engaged; and that he (Bute) said, 'What, my lord! the king's Admiralty boroughs full, and the king not acquainted with it'—that Anson seemed quite disconcerted, and knew not what to say." Within a week after the accession, Walpole wrote, "The favourite took it up in high style." Three months later, the favourite could even venture to proclaim the policy of the new reign, in an insolent message to Pitt. "Mr. Beckford, dropping in conversation that he wished to see the king his own minister, he (lord Bute) replied, that his great friend Mr. Pitt did not desire to see the king his own minister, and he might tell him so, if he pleased, for that it was very indifferent to him (Bute) if every word he said was carried to Mr. Pitt." † One of the consequences of Mr. Beckford's wish was manifest when, in 1770, he, being lord-mayor, harangued the king on the throne in words which assumed that, although the constitutional principle holds that the sovereign can do no wrong, no ministerial responsibility was recognized to shield that sovereign from the reproof of a subject. The lord-mayor had a constitutional right,

* "Diary," January, 9, 1764.

† *Ibid.*, February 21.

which he had exercised, to present the Address of the City to the Sovereign. To that Address the king had read a reply, which reply was the act of his ministers. When Beckford added his personal remarks upon what the king had replied, he forgot that the king could not answer him, according to the theory and practice of the Constitution.

When the king went to Parliament on the 3rd of March, to recommend an alteration in the tenure of office by the judges, he did not assume that the measure then proposed was more than supplementary to a far greater measure of the period of the Revolution. His majesty said: "In consequence of the Act passed in the reign of my late glorious predecessor king William III., for settling the succession to the crown in my family, their commissions have been made during their good behaviour; but notwithstanding that wise provision, their offices have determined upon the demise of the Crown or at the expiration of six months afterwards, in every instance of that nature which has happened." The king recommended that "further provision may be made for securing the judges in the enjoyment of their offices, during their good behaviour, notwithstanding any such demise;" and that their salaries "should be absolutely secured to them during the continuance of their commissions." Lord Hardwicke, on moving the Address of the Peers in reply to the king's Speech, gave that tone of somewhat extravagant eulogy in which it has been customary to speak of this measure. But the great lawyer treated the proposed change, not as the remedy of a crying evil, though admirable as the assertion of a principle—"The judges were sworn to one king, and depended upon a future king in expectancy;—his majesty demonstrated his wisdom in choosing to shut this door." In reviewing historically the operation of the laws affecting the judicial independence, he dwelt upon the evils of the three reigns before the Revolution, when the judges held their office *durante bene placito*. Compared with these times, his majesty found the law in a happy state. Upon the accession of queen Anne, "three judges were left out, and all the rest had new commissions. Upon the demise of George I., the like happened, but only one left out." "A cloud," lord Hardwicke truly said, "might arise *in futuro*."*

On the 21st of March, the Parliament was dissolved by proclamation. Previous to the close of the Session, the Speaker Onslow, who had filled the chair for thirty-three years, announced his intention of retiring. The Commons united in a vote, asking the

* Parliamentary History," vol. xv. col. 1008. Notes of Lord Hardwicke's Speech.

Crown to bestow upon Onslow some signal mark of its favour. He received a pension of 3000*l*. There were changes in the ministry. Legge ceased to be Chancellor of the Exchequer. Holderness was removed from his office of one of the Secretaries of State. The earl of Bute was appointed in his place. That change was made without the knowledge of Pitt, the other Secretary. He bore the neglect patiently. He still directed the conduct of foreign affairs, and of the war. He was listening to overtures made by France to negotiate for peace. But he was also meditating some further enterprises that might result in a success that would give greater weight to the terms upon which he desired to insist. The General Election took place. Venality was never carried further. Mr. Hallam says, "the sale of seats in Parliament, like any other transferable property, is never mentioned in any book that I remember to have seen of an earlier date than 1760."* Bribery, in the approved form of selling a pair of jack-boots for thirty guineas, and a pair of wash-leather breeches for fifty pounds, was notorious enough to be laughed at by Foote. Dr. Johnson maintained that "the statutes against bribery were intended to prevent upstarts with money from getting into parliament." He held that "if he were a gentleman of landed property, he would turn out all his tenants who did not vote for the candidate whom he supported."† The struggle between the "upstarts with money"—the commercial interest—against what Johnson called "the old family interest," was fast becoming a formidable one. Bribery was the readiest weapon in the hands of the weaker of the political combatants of a hundred years ago. The weapon was too powerful to continue in the exclusive hands of one party. It was more efficient even than the intimidation of the owner of "permanent property," which Johnson thought was a proper restraint upon "the privilege of voting." A century of legislation has done little beyond exhibiting the character of the evil. It has probably only lost its shamelessness to become more dangerous.

The intended marriage of the king to the princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz was announced in an Extraordinary Gazette of the 8th of July, detailing the communication to the Privy Council of his Majesty's choice of a consort. In the "Annual Register" this document is given; and it is observed, that although the people were desirous of seeing their young sovereign united to a princess worthy of his affection, "a few thought he might find in a subject one every way qualified to wear a crown, and made no difficulty of pointing her out." Lady Sarah Lennox, the sister of

* "Constitutional History," chap. xvi. † Boswell, under date of April 5, 1775.

the duke of Richmond, was the lady thus glanced at. The king's passion for her was notorious. The mother of the king, and lord Bute, are held to have turned him aside from this beautiful object of his love, to accept a bride chosen from some petty German court. Colonel Græme, a Jacobite, was employed by the princess dowager "to visit various little Protestant courts, and make report of the qualifications of the several unmarried princesses."* On his representation, the princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg was chosen. There was a testimony of more importance to the character of the princess than that of this ambassador, who was congratulated by David Hume "in having exchanged the dangerous employment of making kings for the more lucrative province of making queens."† Frederick of Prussia had sent a letter to George II., which the princess Charlotte, then a girl of sixteen, had addressed to him, when his troops were over-running the territory of her cousin, the duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. The letter is bold and eloquent. Even conquerors, she says, would weep at the hideous prospect before her. The husbandman and the shepherd have forsaken their occupation; the towns are inhabited only by old men, women, and children. The rival armies insult and oppress the people, even those to whom they might look for redress. She can scarcely congratulate the king of Prussia on his victory, when it has covered her country with desolation. On the 8th of September, the princess arrived at St. James's, and the marriage was celebrated that afternoon. She, who for fifty-seven years was Queen-Consort, and, in many important matters, influenced the destinies of the country, was not to be compared in personal appearance with lady Sarah Lennox, or with another object of early passion, whose name lingered on the lips of the blind and aged king, when his distempered brain called up the ghosts of buried fantasies.‡ Of the queen, as she appeared on her bridal night, Walpole says, "she looks very sensible, cheerful, and is remarkably genteel." Her good sense and cheerfulness appear to have been the characteristics of queen Charlotte through her long and anxious life. We greatly doubt whether she can fairly be described as "of narrow and uncultivated understanding."§ In the experiences of Fanny Burney we may trace many evidences of her quick capacity and her shrewd judgment; with a kindly nature, often breaking through the restraints of courtly etiquette, to be considerate and unaffected. In our own early days at Windsor we heard many anecdotes of queen Charlotte to confirm this view of her character:

* Walpole—"George III.," vol. p. 65.

† *Ibid.*

‡ See Note in "Quarterly Review," vol. cv. p. 477. § Massey, vol. i. p. 118.

with not a few stories of her majesty's economical habits, not altogether of a royal complexion.

The Coronation of the king and queen took place on the 22nd of September. More serious considerations were coming upon the government than the omissions in the ceremonial of the banquet—omissions of which the king complained to the Deputy Earl Marshal, and the provident functionary replied, that he had now given such directions that the next coronation would be perfectly well regulated. The negotiations for peace with France were at an end. A more extended war was imminent.

At the beginning of 1761 the foreign affairs of France were under the direction of the duke de Choiseul, who had been first elevated to power by the influence of madame de Pompadour. Louis XV. at that time was still disturbed by those apprehensions of personal danger which had preyed upon him since the attempt of Damiens upon his life in 1757. The country was in a state of great misery, which presented a striking contrast to the extravagance of the Court. France, upon the verge of a general national bankruptcy, was humiliated by the extraordinary successes which had accompanied the administration of Pitt. The duke de Choiseul had proposed a general negotiation for peace, and plenipotentiaries had been named by England and Prussia to treat at a congress at Augsburg. But he also suggested a previous negotiation between France and England. M. de Bussy arrived at London as the French minister; and Mr. Hans Stanley was sent to Paris as the English negotiator. The despatches of Stanley to Pitt detail the progress of these conferences at Paris. The basis of pacification proposed was the *uti possidetis*—the continued possession of whatever territory each of the contracting powers might hold upon a day named;—in Europe, for example, on the 1st of May ensuing,—or an equivalent to such possession. The instructions which Mr. Stanley received were, that he should contend that the *uti possidetis* should date from the day when the treaty was signed. Pitt, as we have said, was looking to further conquests, which would give England a claim for larger equivalents. On the 9th of June, Choiseul told the English minister that Belle-Ile was taken; and "he did not express much concern or any resentment." The capture of Belle-Ile, an island near the mouth of the Loire, on the west coast of France, could not be regarded by the English government as a conquest of any permanent value. But Pitt, never relaxing from a vigorous conduct of the war until peace was absolutely secured, did not hesitate to send an expedition of nine thousand men to attack the fortresses of these rugged shores, where a

few thousand fishermen obtained a precarious livelihood. There was a great sacrifice of life; and it was two months before the garrison of Palais capitulated. About the same period, the West Indian island of Dominica had been captured; and the French dominion in the East Indies had been finally destroyed by the surrender of Pondicherry. These successes gave some additional force to Pitt's demands. He required that Minorca should be restored in exchange for Belle-Île. He demanded other concessions, which France was unwilling to yield. With a consistency and firmness highly honourable, he insisted that in making a separate peace with France, England should not be restrained from lending her aid to the king of Prussia. Frederick was truly in a condition to require her aid. The Austrians were in possession of the most important posts in Silesia. In Pomerania the Russians had overpowered his commanders. All his resources were fast failing, except his own indomitable energy. In a remarkable letter which Frederick wrote to Pitt about this time, he declares his resolution to take for his examples, Hannibal after the battle of Cannæ; Elizabeth, at the time of the Spanish Armada; Gustavus Vasa, when he drove Christian from Sweden; the prince of Orange, who founded the republic of the United Provinces. The king of England said Frederick, has to choose one of two courses; to think only of the interests of England, and forget those of his allies; or to unite the interests of his own nation with theirs, and thus uphold his good faith and his glory. "I am persuaded," he added to Pitt personally, "that you think like me. All the course of your ministry has been one series of noble and generous actions, and the minds that heaven has made of this temper never belie themselves."* Pitt gave Frederick the assurance of "the constancy of the king my master." Pitt was compelled to leave to others the interpretation of that assurance. The British, the Hanoverians, and the Prussians had been fighting together as allies, in the campaign of 1761. The result of the campaign left the war without any decisive results; but the skill of prince Ferdinand, and the valour of the British under the Marquis of Granby and general Conway, were signally displayed through a series of difficult operations, and especially in the battle of Kirch-Denkern, on the 15th of July.

As the negotiations advanced between Great Britain and France, the demands of the duke de Choiseul were enlarged and his attitude became more firm. M. de Bussy delivered the *ultimatum* of his court on the 5th of August; in answer to which Pitt complained that France had not scrupled to interpose new perplex-

* "Chatham Correspondence," vol. ii. p. 107.

ties in opposition to the blessing of peace, "by intermixing, too late, matters so foreign to the present negotiation between the two crowns, as are the discussions between Great Britain and Spain." He had previously written to Bussy in a tone of high indignation that France should "presume a right of intermeddling in any differences between the two crowns." The motive for this intermeddling was soon apparent. On the 15th of August, the duke de Choiseul and the marquis of Grimaldi, the Spanish ambassador at the court of France, signed the treaty known as "The Family Compact;" by which the two branches of the House of Bourbon agreed to consider the enemy of either as the enemy of both; to guarantee each other's territories; to give each other mutual succours by sea and land. Pitt obtained early and precise information upon the subject of this ominous alliance. He broke off the negotiations with France, recalling Mr. Stanley and dismissing M. de Bussy. He contemplated a bolder measure. He could scarcely hope for the cordial approbation of his colleagues when he proposed an immediate declaration of war against Spain; for a considerable number of the Cabinet had been adverse to the strong language he had held to M. de Bussy. But he trusted to the possibility of infusing his own spirit into the temporizing policy which Bute and others advocated. In a debate in the House of Lords in 1770, on the seizure of the Falkland Islands, Lord Chatham alluded to his conduct towards the Spanish ministers in 1761: "After a long experience of their want of candour and good faith, I found myself compelled to talk to them in a peremptory, decisive language. On this principle I submitted my advice to a trembling council for an immediate declaration of a war with Spain."* The scene before that "trembling council" has been recorded by Burke, who had especial means of accurate information. Pitt called upon his colleagues to strike the first blow against Spain, instead of waiting for a joint attack upon Great Britain by Spain and France; he maintained that no new armament was necessary; that the time was propitious for seizing the Spanish treasure-ships, before their arrival in port. Temple was the only minister who stood by Pitt. His proposal, Bute contended, was rash and unadvisable. Newcastle saw that his great coadjutor would be in a minority, and he supported the favourite. Pitt had to succumb, or to quit office. He thus declared himself: "This was the time for humbling the whole house of Bourbon; if this opportunity were let slip, it might never be recovered; and if he could not prevail in this instance, he was resolved that this was the last time he

* "Parliamentary History," vol. xvi. col. 1094.

should sit in that council. He thanked the ministers of the late king for their support; said he was himself called to the ministry by the voice of the people, to whom he considered himself as accountable for his conduct; and that he would no longer remain in a situation which made him responsible for measures he was no longer allowed to guide." Lord Granville (Carteret), the President of the Council, thus replied: "I find the gentleman is determined to leave us, nor can I say I am sorry for it, since he would otherwise have certainly compelled us to leave him; but, if he be resolved to assume the right of advising his majesty, and directing the operations of the war, to what purpose are we called to this council? When he talks of being responsible to the people, he talks the language of the House of Commons, and forgets, that at this board, he is only responsible to the king. However, though he may possibly have convinced himself of his infallibility, still it remains that we should be equally convinced before we can resign our understandings to his direction, or join with him in the measure he proposes."* On the 5th of October, Pitt resigned the seals of Secretary of State; and Temple followed him in his retirement. When Pitt waited on the king to give up the seals, his majesty testified his regret at losing so able a servant; offered him any reward in the power of the crown to bestow; but expressed his concurrence in the decision of the Cabinet. The reply of Pitt was marked by that reverential demeanour with which he always approached the royal person: "I confess, Sir, I had but too much reason to expect your majesty's displeasure. I did not come prepared for this exceeding goodness. Pardon me, Sir,—it overpowers, it oppresses me." He burst into tears. † The immediate popularity of the great minister was seriously damaged by his acceptance of a pension of 3000*l.* a year, and of a peerage for his wife, who was created Baroness Chatham. Burke says that a torrent of low and illiberal abuse was poured out on this occasion. Pitt, for a little while, became the object of lampoons and caricatures, ascribed to persons "in the interest or pay of Bute." ‡ Great was the rejoicing at the fall of the man who had rescued his country out of the hands of venal and incapable tricksters, to replace her in the position which had been lost by their imbecility and corruption. "The Court," says Walpole, "impatient to notify their triumph, and to blast his popularity at once, could not resist the impulse of publishing, in the very next night's Gazette, Mr. Pitt's acceptance of their boons—the first instance, I believe, of a

* "Annual Register," 1761, pp. 43, 44.

‡ Wright—"House of Hanover," vol. i. p. 395.

† *Ibid.*, p. 45.

pension ever specified in that paper."* Bubb Doddington wrote to congratulate Bute "of being delivered of a most impracticable colleague, his majesty of a most imperious servant, and the country of a most dangerous minister." If Bute, in addition to the announcement in the Gazette of the pension and the peerage, had published the letter in which Pitt acknowledged the court boons, would the public of that day have seen in the "imperious servant" what in our times has been with some slight injustice regarded as an imitation of "the fulsome prostration of queen Elizabeth's courtiers?" † The time was not yet come when even those who rejected and despised the doctrine of the Crown being held by divine right, thought themselves free to regard the constitutional wearer of the crown as only the first civil servant of the state—as any other than as "our sovereign lord the king." What may appear sycophancy to us was the decorum of a century ago. We are inclined to believe that Pitt—who is said to have knelt when he was with George II. in his closet, and to have bowed so low at the *levée* that his hooked nose was seen between his legs—adopted this style systematically and upon principle, to make the compatibility of his strongest objections to the measures of the Crown, with the profoundest reverence for the wearer of the Crown. He might be "prostrated with the bounteous favour of a most benign sovereign and master" ‡ without surrendering the opinions which had compelled him to leave the service of that master. Earl Temple, who carried his political independence to greater extremes than Pitt, said that his brother-in-law would have been the most factious and insolent man living had he waived the offer of his sovereign's favours; that their acceptance bound him to nothing "but to love and honour his majesty . . . He is as much a free man as myself." §

The popularity of Pitt did not sustain any lasting damage by his acceptance of the king's favours. Gray might exclaim, "Oh! that foolishness of great men, that sold his inestimable diamond for a peerage and pension!" || Walpole might talk of the giant who "stalking to seize the Tower of London, stumbled over a silver penny, picked it up, and carried it home to Lady Hester." ¶ But the multitude saw more clearly than the secluded poet or the fashionable satirist. Alderman Beckford wrote to Pitt to entreat him

* Walpole—"George III.," vol. i. p. 83.

† "Quarterly Review," vol. cv. p. 469.

‡ "Chatham Correspondence," vol. ii. p. 149.

§ "Grenville Papers," vol. i. p. 404.

¶ Letter to Wharton.

¶ Letter to Countess of Ailesbury.