have entered with much alacrity into the vote for so large and expensive an army, if they had been very sure that they were to continue to pay for it. But hopes of another kind were held out to them." He then traces in this speech the policy of Mr. Grenville, and the peculiarities of his character, which led him to think "better of the wisdom and power of legislation than in truth it deserves;" to believe "regulation to be commerce, and taxes to be revenue." The Navigation Act was Grenville's idol. The commerce of America "had filled all its proper channels to the brim." He "turned his eye somewhat less than was just towards the incredible increase of the fair trade; and looked with something of too exquisite a jealousy towards the contraband." The result was, that "the bonds of the Act of Navigation were straitened so much, that America was on the point of having no trade, either contraband or legitimate." The Americans, Burke says, "thought themselves proceeded against as delinquents, or at best as people under suspicion of delinquency." They were irritated enough before the Stamp Act came. They adopted such counter measures as appeared efficient to a people that had not yet begun to feel their own strength, and understand their own resources. They agreed amongst themselves to wear no English manufactured cloth; and to encourage the breed of sheep that they might manufacture cloth from their own wool. They protested against the English monopoly; and they devised, feebly enough, such measures as they thought might overcome it. At last what Burke calls "the scheme of a regular plantation parliamentary revenue" was established—"a revenue not substituted in the place of, but superadded to, a monopoly; which monopoly was enforced at the same time with additional strictness, and the execution put into military hands." It was one of the misfortunes of Mr. Grenville's scheme that his Stamp Act was popular. "Great was the applause of this measure here. In England we cried out for new taxes on America, whilst they cried out that they were nearly crushed with those which the war, and their own grants, had brought upon them." Such was the commencement of a struggle which ended in the independence of the American colonies, and thenceforward in the establishment of an empire which has shown how quickly, in one vast region, might be realised the probable future contemplated by Adam Smith;—when "the inhabitants of all the different quarters of the world may arrive at that equality of courage and force which, by inspiring mutual fear, can alone overawe the injustice of independent nations into some sort of respect for the rights of one another."*

* "Wealth of Nations," book iv. chap. vii.

CHAPTER V.

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.—Disorganisation of his ministry.—Parliament dissolved.

During the progress of the Bill for the taxation of the American Colonies, the king was attacked by a serious indisposition. On the nature of that illness the greatest secresy was maintained. "The king's illness," says Walpole, "had occasioned a general alarm; but, though he escaped the danger, his health was so precarious, and he had such frequent disorders in his breast on taking the least cold, that all sober men wished to see a Regency settled by Parliament in case of his death."* The real nature of the king's malady was not suspected by the politicians of that day, or by the general public. "His majesty had a serious illness—its peculiar character was then unknown, but we have the best authority for believing that it was of the nature of those which thrice after afflicted his majesty, and finally incapacitated him for the duties of government." This is the statement of a gentleman whose means of information, and whose diligence in penetrating into the secret passages of the past, were of more permanent value than his adroitness in the use of the facts he ascertained for the advancement of his own party views.† The family of George III. at that time consisted of George, prince of Wales, born on the 12th of August, 1762; and of Frederick, duke of York, born on the 16th of August, 1763. The differences of opinion between the king and his ministers upon the Regency Bill are of minor importance in a view of public affairs at this distance of time, and require no elaborate detail. The king wished that the power of nominating a Regent should be vested in himself. The Ministry thought it desirable that a Regency during the minority of the successor to the throne should be distinctly named. On the 24th of April, his majesty, in

* "George III." vol. ii. p. 95.
† Mr. Croker, in "Quarterly Review," vol. lxvi. p. 240.

a speech from the throne, proposed, whether, under the present circumstances, it would not be expedient to vest in him the power of appointing, from time to time, by instrument in writing, under his sign-manual, either the queen, or any other person of his royal family, usually residing in Great Britain, as guardian of the person of his successor and as regent of these kingdoms. When a Bill to this effect had passed the Commons, a doubt arose in the Lords, whether the princess-dowager of Wales was included in the term "My Royal Family." Lord Halifax, one of the Secretaries of State, went to the king, and said that the matter ought to be cleared up; but that if the name of his majesty's mother appeared in the Bill, the House of Commons would probably strike it out. The king reluctantly acquiesced, and then the Royal Family was defined as "all the descendants of the late king." Grenville refused to introduce the name of the princess-dowager, as he was urged to do by her friends; and upon this, a member, unconnected with the ministry, made a proposition to that effect. The name of the king's mother was decided to be introduced into the Bill, by the vote of a large majority. The king was now indignant at the conduct of his ministers; sent for his uncle the duke of Cumberland; and commissioned him to negotiate with Mr. Pitt for a return to power. It was an embarrassing time in which to contemplate a change of ministry. America was getting into a flame of anger at the Stamp Act. London was terrified by riots of Spitalfields weavers, upon the rejection of a Bill which would have prohibited the importation of foreign silks. What Burke calls "the vertigo of the Regency Bill" produced changes which an untoward aspect of national affairs might have failed to effect.

The rumours that the king contemplated a change of ministers produced an opinion in one then unconnected with official life, but who looked upon political affairs, and public men, from a higher elevation than most observers of the shifting scenes of that time. Edmund Burke announced to a friend, with reference to Pitt, that "this crisis will show whether pride or patriotism be predominant in his character." To him, wrote Burke, is open "to come into the service of his country upon any plan of politics he chooses to dictate. . . . A few days will show whether he will take his part, or continue on his back at Hayes, talking fustian." The duke of Cumberland went to Hayes, and there learnt the "plan of politics" which Pitt chose "to dictate." There was no "fustian" in his sensible propositions,—that General Warrants should be repudiated; that dismissed officers should be restored; that Protestant alliances should be formed, to balance the Family Compact of the

Bourbons. There was some difference of opinion about appointments, but these might have been removed. Earl Temple was sent for; and although he was intended for the office of First Lord of the Treasury, he persuaded his brother-in-law to give up the negotiation. He was seeking a ministerial alliance with his brother, George Grenville, to whom he had become reconciled, and he conceived the plan of inducing Pitt to join them; in which union he fancied he saw a power that would enable them to stand alone without the support of ducal Whigs, or courtly Tories. The king was obliged to call back his ministers, Grenville and Bedford. They dictated terms to the king; and Bedford appears to have deported himself in a spirit which may have been grossly exaggerated by Junius, but which is not wholly removed from truth. "The duke of Bedford demanded an audience of the king; reproached him, in plain terms, with duplicity, baseness, falsehood, treachery, and hypocrisy; repeatedly gave him the lie; and left him in strong convulsions." A paper was read, according to Walpole, in which the king was told "that he must smile on his ministers, and frown on their adversaries, whom he was reproached, in no light terms, with having countenanced, contrary to his promise. Invectives against the Princess were not spared; nor threats of bringing lord Bute to the block." The king bowed to the ministers to retire, and said "if he had not broken out into the most profuse sweat he should have been suffocated with indignation." * Pitt was again applied to; and he again declined to take office without lord Temple, who persevered in his resolution, at an audience which both had of the king. The Whig families were again resorted to. The duke of Newcastle again obtained a post of honour in receiving the Privy Seal; the duke of Grafton became one of the Secretaries of State, with general Conway as the other Secretary; and the marquis of Rockingham was named First Lord of the Treasury. Untried colts and worn-out hacks were harnessed together, to drag the state-coach through the sloughs in which it was travelling. They pulled honestly side by side for a brief journey; and then came to a dead stop. This ministry had the lasting credit of bringing one man of extraordinary genius into public life, though in a subordinate situation. The eloquent gratitude of Edmund Burke to the marquis of Rockingham has made us think favourably of the head of this ministry, for "sound principles, enlargement of mind, clear and sagacious sense, and unshaken fortitude." † Such qualities were needed at such a crisis.

* "George III." vol. ii. p. 183.

† Speech on American Taxation.

The Rockingham Administration came into office on the 10th of July. Parliament had been prorogued previous to their appointment; and a few months passed on without any disturbing events. At last came intelligence which demanded grave and anxious consideration. In the autumn of 1765, various letters were received by Mr. Secretary Conway, from official persons in America, relating the particulars of riots at Boston and in the Colony of Rhode Island. At Boston, the effigy of the gentleman who had accepted the office of stamp-distributor was hung upon a tree, which was subsequently called "Liberty Tree;" his house was sacked, and he was compelled to promise to resign his office. These riots went on for a fortnight, with much wanton destruction of property. A letter from New York of the 25th of September, to Conway, says "the general scheme concerted throughout seems to have been, first by menace or force, to oblige the stamp officers to resign their employments, in which they have generally succeeded; and next, to destroy the stamped papers upon their arrival,—that, having no stamps, necessity might be an excuse for the dispatch of business without them." * But more important than the outrages of mobs were the solemn proceedings of a Congress at New York, comprising delegates from nine Assemblies. They continued their sittings for three weeks; and then passed fourteen Resolutions, in which they maintained the right of every British subject to be taxed only by his own consent, or that of his legal representatives and that their only legal representatives were those annually chosen to serve as members of the Assembly of each province.

The Administration was in a position of extreme difficulty. The strong opposition of the Colonial Assemblies was a reason for minsters re-considering the measures of their predecessors; but a submission to the violent resistance to the authority of the imperial legislature would be to manifest an unworthy fear, which might have the effect of encouraging other resistance to the law. But there were consequences arising out of the discontent and resentment of the colonists which were productive of immediate evils, at home, and threatened greater dangers for the future. A petition of the merchants of London trading to North America set forth, so that this commerce, so necessary for the support of multitudes, was under such difficulties that its utter ruin was apprehended; and that several millions sterling, due to the merchants of Great Britain, were withheld by the colonists, on the plea that the taxes and restrictions laid upon them had rendered them unable to meet

* "Papers laid before Parliament, in "Parliamentary History," vol. xvi.

their engagements. Scarcely seeing a way out of the difficulties that surrounded them, the ministers, on the meeting of Parliament on the 14th of January, after the Christmas recess, laid the papers before the two Houses which "give any light into the origin, the progress, or the tendency, of the disturbances which have of late prevailed in some of the northern colonies." Such were the terms of the king's speech. His majesty said, that he had issued orders for the exertion of all powers of government for the suppression of riots and tumults; and added, "Whatever remains to be done on this occasion I commit to your wisdom." A debate ensued in the Commons, which was reported by two members, and printed in Paris,—the Houses still strictly forbidding the publication of their proceedings. On that night Burke made his first speech in parliament; and Pitt, whose voice had not been heard for a year, delivered one of those orations which, however imperfectly recorded, give us a notion of that supremacy that, broken as he was in health, wrapped in flannels, and giving effect to his action with a crutch, he still, above all men, exercised over his contemporaries. In a letter which he wrote from Bath on the 9th, he said "If I can crawl, or be carried, I will deliver my mind and heart upon the state of America." What he then spoke was remembered and repeated as the great contest went on; and by none more diligently than by the colonists. He went with them to the full extent of denying the right of the British Legislature to impose taxes without representation. He touched upon great principles that extended beyond this question of taxing the American Colonies: "There is an idea in some that the Colonies are virtually represented in this House. I would fain know by whom an American is represented here? Is he represented by any knight of the shire, in any county in this kingdom? Would to God that respectable representation was augmented to a greater number! Or will you tell him that he is represented by any representative of a borough—a borough, which, perhaps, its own representative never saw. This is what is called 'the rotten part of the constitution.' It cannot continue the century; if it does not drop, it must be amputated. The idea of a virtual representation of America in this House is the most contemptible idea that ever entered into the head of a man; it does not deserve a serious refutation. The Commons of America, represented in their several Assemblies, have ever been in possession of the exercise of this, their constitutional right, of giving and granting their own money. They would have been slaves if they had not enjoyed it." Grenville replied to Pitt, and defended his Stamp Act: "When I proposed

to tax America, I asked the House, if any gentleman would object to the right. I repeatedly asked it, and no man would attempt to deny it. Protection and obedience are reciprocal. Great Britain protects America; America is bound to yield obedience. If not, tell me when the Americans were emancipated? When they want the protection of this kingdom, they are always very ready to ask it. That protection has always been afforded them in the most full and ample manner. The nation has run itself into an immense debt to give them their protection: and now they are called upon to contribute a small share towards the public expense, an expense arising from themselves, they renounce your authority, insult your officers, and break out, I might almost say, into open rebellion. The seditious spirit of the colonies owes its birth to the factions in this House." Pitt was permitted again to speak, the House being clamorous to hear him. There are passages in his second speech which show how much the House gained in this departure from its ordinary rules. We may give the concluding summary of the orator's opinions: "A great deal has been said without doors, of the power, of the strength, of America. It is a topic that ought to be cautiously meddled with. In a good cause, on a sound bottom, the force of this country can crush America to atoms . . . . In such a cause, your success would be hazardous. America, if she fell, would fall like a strong man. She would embrace the pillars of the state, and pull down the constitution along with her. Is this your boasted peace? Not to sheath the sword in its scabbard, but to sheath it in the bowels of your countrymen? . . . The Americans have not acted in all things with prudence and temper. They have been wronged. They have been driven to madness by injustice. Will you punish them for the madness you have occasioned? Rather let prudence and temper come first from this side. I will undertake for America, that she will follow the example. There are two lines in a ballad of Prior's, of a man's behaviour to his wife, so applicable to you and your colonies, that I cannot help repeating them:

> 'Be to her faults a little blind:
> Be to her virtues very kind.'

Upon the whole, I will beg leave to tell the House what is really my opinion. It is, that the Stamp Act be repealed absolutely, totally, and immediately. That the reason for the repeal be assigned, because it was founded on an erroneous principle. At the same time let the sovereign authority of this country over the colonies be asserted in as strong terms as can be devised, and be

made to extend to every point of legislation whatsoever. That we may bind their trade, confine their manufactures, and exercise every power whatsoever, except that of taking their money out of their pockets without their consent."

The petitions against the American Stamp Act, and the papers laid before Parliament, occupied in the Commons the attention of a Committee of the whole House for three weeks. Several persons were also examined, amongst whom was Dr. Benjamin Franklin. The examination of this eminent man afforded much practical information as to the condition of the North American Colonies. He considered that there were about 300,000 white men in North America, from sixteen to sixty years of age; that the inhabitants of all the provinces, taken at a medium, double in about twenty-five years; that the colonists raised, clothed, and paid, during the recent war, near twenty-five thousand men, and spent many millions; that they paid many and heavy taxes amongst themselves, for the support of the civil and military establishments of the country, and to discharge the debt contracted in the war. His answer to the question, "What was the temper of America towards Great Britain before the year 1763?" is very remarkable: "The best in the world. They submitted willingly to the government of the Crown, and paid, in all their courts, obedience to Acts of Parliament. Numerous as the people are in the several old provinces, they cost you nothing in forts, citadels, garrisons, or armies, to keep them in subjection. They were governed by this country at the expense only of a little pen, ink, and paper. They were led by a thread. They had not only a respect, but an affection, for Great Britain; for its laws, its customs and manners, and even a fondness for its fashions, that greatly increased the commerce. Natives of Britain were always treated with particular regard. To be an Old-England man was, of itself, a character of some respect, and gave a kind of rank amongst us." To the question, Whether he thought the people of America would submit to pay the Stamp duty if it was moderated, he boldly answered, "No; never; unless compelled by force of arms." He said it was a prevailing opinion amongst the people in America, that they could not be taxed in a Parliament where they were not represented; but the payment of duties laid by Act of Parliament, as regulations of commerce, was never disputed. They distinguished between external and internal taxes. An external tax was a duty on commodities imported, and it enhanced their price; but the people were not obliged to pay the duty; they might refuse the article. An internal tax is forced from the people without their consent. The Americans could do without British

maufactures. They could do without cloth from England. "I am of opinion," said Franklin, "that before their old clothes are worn out, they will have new ones of their own making." But "can they possibly find wool enough in North America?" he was asked. The answer showed the mettle of the people that he represented: "They have taken steps to increase the wool. They entered into general combination to eat no more lamb, and very few lambs were killed last year. This course, persisted in, will soon make a prodigious difference in the quantity of wool. The establishing of great manufactories, like those in the clothing towns, is not necessary, as it is where the business is to be carried on for the purposes of trade. The people will all spin and work for themselves, in their own houses." To the question, "If the Stamp Act should be repealed, would it induce the Assemblies of America to acknowledge the right of Parliament to tax them, and would they erase their Resolutions?" the answer was, "No, never."

After this examination of papers and witnesses, the repeal of the Stamp Act was recommended by the Committee of the whole House, and a declaratory Resolution was adopted: "That the king's majesty, by and with the consent of the Lords spiritual and temporal, and Commons of Great Britain, in Parliament assembled, had, hath, and of right ought to have, full power and authority to make laws and statutes of sufficient force and validity to bind the colonies and people of America, subjects of the Crown of Great Britain, in all cases whatsoever." The distinction which Pitt had maintained, that Parliament was not competent to pass a law for taxing the Colonies, was set at nought by this Resolution. But it was contended that though the right existed, it was impolitic to exercise it, and therefore the Stamp Act ought to be repealed. Pitt adhered to his opinion, but did not attempt to divide the House. A Declaratory Bill was passed, embodying the principle of the power of Parliament to bind the Colonies "in all cases whatsoever." In the Upper House this Bill was supported by the lord chancellor Northington; but was opposed by lord Camden in a very remarkable speech, in which he explicitly declared that "the British Parliament have no right to tax the Americans . . . . Taxation and Representation are inseparably united . . . Taxation and representation are coeval with, and essential to, this constitution." He alluded to Carte's History of England, and to another History "much read and admired" [Hume's], which mischievously endeavoured "to fix the era when the House of Commons began in this kingdom . . . . When did the House of Commons first begin? When, my lords? It began with the Constitution, it grew up with the Constitution.

There is not a blade of grass growing in the most obscure corner of the kingdom, which is not, which was not ever, represented since the Constitution began; there is not a blade of grass which, when taxed, was not taxed by the consent of the proprietor." Lord Camden divided the House; but only four Peers voted with him against the Declaratory Bill. Whilst this bill was passing into law, a strong opposition was getting up against the Bill for the repeal of the Stamp Act, which was about to be proposed by the Government. It is painful to look back upon one of the most miserable exhibitions which history can present of "a house divided against itself"—those called the friends of the king intriguing against the king's ministers. Lord Bute, whose honour was never doubted, whatever might have been his political indiscretions, distinctly gave his solemn word, that he had never offered an opinion upon measures, or the disposition of offices, directly or indirectly, since the time when the duke of Cumberland was consulted on the arrangement of a ministry. We may therefore dismiss from our minds the popular belief that lord Bute was the instigator of all the double-dealing that was characteristic of the early years of the reign of George III. Burke has been charged with exaggeration in denouncing the system pursued, "in the idea of weakening the State in order to strengthen the Court;" a system effected by those he calls "the new court corporation."* But there were too many proofs of the evidence of "a reptile species of politicians, never before and never since known in our country."† They worked underground to prevent this repeal of the Stamp Act. Their operations were evinced in a singular misunderstanding between the king and his ministers' in the crisis of the Stamp Act. The most dispassionate relation of the circumstances is in a letter of general Conway to lord Hertford, on the 13th of February: "His majesty had told lord Rockingham and the duke of Grafton that he was for the repeal; but he on Tuesday told lord Strange that he was not so now—that he wished his opinion to be known, and his lordship might declare it. This ran through the House of Commons and the town, and has had an odd effect. Our ministerial lives were not thought worth three days' purchase. His majesty has been pleased to explain himself to us, that he always was for the repeal, when contrasted with enforcing the whole act, but not as compared with modification. We told his Majesty this distinction was unfortunately not explained to us; and that in consequence we had (as he had allowed lord Rockingham particularly to do) declared his

* "Present Discontents."

† Macaulay, in "Edinburgh Review," vol. lxxx. p. 516.

majesty to be for the repeal; and that on all accounts we were engaged and obliged to push that measure. It was very mortifying to us, and very unhappy, that it now appeared to be against his majesty's sentiments, which put us into an odd predicament, being under a necessity of carrying on a great public measure against his majesty's declared sentiments, and with great numbers of his servants acting against us. He was not displeased, he said, with our freedom—thought we acted like honest men—had no design of parting us—always foresaw the difficulties which might attend his business—but that, once over, he hoped all things would go smoothly again. You see that this might branch out into very long details, had I time for them; but this is the substance. 'Tis a whimsical situation, and what will be the event I don't know. I think the Bill of Repeal will probably pass, because our disposition for it is too strong in the House of Commons for anything now to conquer; and the Lords, I think, with submission, dare not resist it."*

The House of Commons came to a decisive vote on the 21st of February, on the Resolution that leave should be given to bring in a Bill for the repeal of the Stamp Act. The Resolution was moved by Conway. He drew a strong picture of the mischiefs that had already ensued. The trade of England was not only stopped, but in danger of being lost. The conflict would ruin both countries. "If we did not repeal the Act, he had no doubt but France and Spain would declare war, and protect the Americans." Grenville exposed the futility of maintaining a right in the Declaratory Bill which the government would not dare to assert. Pitt demanded the repeal as due to the liberty of unrepresented subjects. The scene after the termination of the debate on that February morning has been described by Burke in glowing words; but words not too lofty for the great occasion: "I remember, sir, with a melancholy pleasure, the situation of the honourable gentleman who made the motion for the repeal; in that crisis, when the whole trading interest of this empire, crammed into your lobbies, with a trembling and anxious expectation, waited, almost to a winter's return of light, their fate from your resolutions. When, at length, you had determined in their favour, and your doors, thrown open, showed them the figure of their deliverer in the well-earned triumph of his important victory, from the whole of that grave multitude there arose an involuntary burst of gratitude and transport. They jumped upon him like children on a long absent father. They clung about him as captives about their redeemer. All England,

* MS. collection of "Conway's Letters."

all America, joined to his applause. Nor did he seem insensible to the best of all earthly rewards, the love and admiration of his fellow-citizens. Hope elevated and joy brightened his crest."* Such was the enthusiasm towards Conway, the mover of the Resolution. Walpole has described the difference in the reception of Pitt and Grenville. When Pitt appeared, the crowd pulled off their hats, huzzaed, and many followed his chair home with shouts and benedictions. Grenville was hissed; and in a rage, seized the nearest man to him by the collar. "Providentially the fellow had more humour than spleen—'Well, if I may not hiss,' said he, 'at least I may laugh,' and laughed in his face. The jest caught; had the fellow been surly and resisted, a tragedy had probably ensued." † The Bill for the repeal finally passed the Commons by a large majority; and the Lords, by a majority of more than thirty.

When Mr. Pitt made his memorable appearance in the House of Commons, on the 14th of January, 1766, to deliver his opinion against the Resolution of the House to tax America, which had passed "when he was ill in bed," he said: "If I could have endured to be carried in my bed—so great was my agitation for the consequences—I would have had some kind hand to have laid me down on this floor to have borne my testimony against it. It is now an Act that has passed." But he knew that a ministry had meanwhile come into power who were disposed to repair the evil consequences which he had apprehended. To that ministry he took the earliest opportunity of declaring that he did not give his strenuous support. He had advised some of them, he said, "to engage, but notwithstanding, I cannot give them my confidence. Pardon me, gentlemen, confidence is a plant of slow growth in an aged bosom." He plainly discovered, he affirmed, "the traces of an over-ruling influence." He distinctly pointed to the supposed influence of lord Bute. The great Commoner was probably mistaken, but he was undoubtedly sincere. Conway distinctly repelled the charge that the ministry had been subjected to that particular influence. Pitt has been greatly blamed for not allying himself with the Rockingham Administration. He was invited by them with an earnestness that approached to obsequiousness. He turned a deaf ear to their overtures. They fell, from their inability to stand against the unwilling support of the sovereign, and the intrigues of those who arrogated to themselves the exclusive title of the king's friends. This ministry did popular things. They gave in to the clamour of the weavers, by passing

* Speech on American Taxation, 1774.

† "George III.," vol. ii. p. 299.

an act for restraining the importation of foreign silks. They repealed the cider tax. They passed Resolutions declaring the illegality of General Warrants, and condemning the seizure of private papers, to discover the authors of libels. Their concessions in some degree indicated their weakness. Several of their minor supporters deserted them. The duke of Grafton left them, resigning his office of Secretary of State, on the ground that they wanted "authority, dignity, and extension;" that he knew but one man who could give them strength and solidity; and that were that person to give his assistance, "he should with pleasure take up the spade and the pickaxe, and dig in the trenches."* A disagreement ensued in the Cabinet; the king was told that the ministry could not go on as they were; and his majesty, in July, resolved to send for Mr. Pitt, and so told his servants. The king wrote him a letter, expressing his desire to have his thoughts "how an able and dignified ministry may be formed." Pitt answered the king—"penetrated with the deepest sense of your majesty's boundless goodness to me, and with a heart overflowing with duty and zeal for the honour and happiness of the most gracious and benign sovereign." Lord Temple was sent for by the king; and his majesty wrote to Mr. Pitt, who was ill, that he had opened a desire to see his lordship in the Treasury; but that "he seems to incline to quarters very heterogeneous to my and your ideas, and almost a total exclusion of the present men." Temple was ambitious. He was indignant at the idea of being "stuck into a ministry as a great cypher at the head of the Treasury, surrounded with other cyphers all named by Mr. Pitt." † The ministry was at length formed. The duke of Grafton became head of the Treasury; general Conway and lord Shelburne, Secretaries of State; lord Camden, Lord Chancellor; Charles Townshend, Chancellor of the Exchequer. Mr. Pitt, to the great surprise of the world, on taking the office of Lord Privy Seal went to the House of Peers as Earl of Chatham.

The transformation of Pitt into Chatham is held to have destroyed his popularity. "That fatal title blasted all the affection which his country had borne to him, and which he had deserved so well. . . . . The people, though he had done no act to occasion reproach, thought he had sold them for a title." ‡ The City of London declined to present an address on the appointment to office of the man they had idolised. The objectors seem to have forgotten the bodily infirmities which necessarily prevented him

* "Chatham Correspondence," vol. ii. p. 422.

† Walpole—"George III.," vol. ii. p. 358.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 436 and 438.

taking the post in the House of Commons which a prime minister was expected to take; and they scarcely gave him credit for the power which remained to him, of influencing his colleagues by the vigour of his plans, when he could not command a popular assembly by the splendour of his eloquence. He had large projects of statesmanship. He was anxious to cement an alliance with the Protestant States of Europe, to counterbalance the Family Compact of France and Spain, which was leading those powers again to meditate attacks upon England. He sent an ambassador to confer with the Czarina of Russia and Frederick of Prussia; but Frederick was indignant at the treatment he had received at the peace, and could place no reliance on a policy so subject to the consequences of ministerial change. There is a strong testimony to the rare powers of lord Chatham's mind, at an early period of his administration. Charles Townshend for the first time attended the Cabinet as Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the great statesman developed his views of the position of Europe. "Mr. Townshend," says the duke of Grafton in his Memoirs, "was particularly astonished; and owned to me, as I was carrying him home in my carriage, that lord Chatham had just shown us what inferior animals we were, and that much as we had seen of him before, he did not conceive till that night his superiority to be so very transcendent." The minister contemplated important changes in the government of Ireland. "To enable himself to contend with the powerful connections there, he proposed to establish himself upon the basis of a just popularity, by shortening the duration of Parliament, and granting other measures which the Irish appeared to have most at heart."* Lord Chatham also had in view organic changes in the constitution of the East India Company—their astonishing dominion having now become an anomaly in the absence of government control, and their vast revenues the means of administering to private rapacity and injustice.

The Administration entered upon its duties at a period of domestic trouble. The season was one of extreme wetness. The harvest failed; and riots attended the rising price of corn. But the price had not quite reached the point at which exportation was forbidden. By an Order in Council an embargo was laid on exportation. The Parliament had not been called together, as it might have been, to sanction the measure, which came into operation on the 24th of September. Parliament met, according to the date of its prorogation, on the 11th of November. The first ap-

* Letter from Lord Camden; quoted from the MS. by sir Denis Le Marchant, in note to Walpole's "George III.," vol. iii. p. 111.

pearance of Chatham in the House of Lords was to defend the Order in Council on the ground of public necessity. Camden and others in both Houses maintained its legality. Fierce debates ensued, in which this exercise of the prerogative was compared to former unconstitutional attempts to set up a dispensing power. It was thought essential to mark that such an exertion of the prerogative was not constitutional. An Act of Indemnity was therefore passed to exonerate those who had advised, and acted upon, the Order in Council. A Parliamentary inquiry into the affairs of the East India Company was now forced on by Chatham, in opposition to the wishes of several of his colleagues. He refused to impart to them the nature and extent of his plans. Several of the Rockingham party resolved to secede from him. He had to form new combinations of public men; and to quiet the apprehensions of those who were accused of being despotically governed by him. During the Christmas recess Chatham went to Bath, where he became seriously ill. Parliament assembled, and the prime minister was not in his place. His Cabinet fell into disorder. The fatal effects of the absence of the chief, and his unwillingness to entrust responsibility to his colleagues, were signally manifested, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer commended the Stamp Act, and again proposed to tax the Colonies. Burke has described in his Speech upon American Taxation, this strange disorganization of lord Chatham's ministry. "When his face was hid but for a moment, his whole system was on a wide sea, without chart or compass. . . . As if it were to insult as well as betray him, even long before the close of the first Session of his Administration, when everything was publicly transacted, and with great parade, in his name, they made an Act declaring it highly just and expedient to raise a revenue in America. For even then, sir, even before this splendid orb was entirely set, and while the western horizon was in a blaze with his descending glory, on the opposite quarter of the heavens arose another luminary, and, for his hour, became lord of the ascendant. You understand, to be sure, that I speak of Charles Townshend, officially the reproducer of this fatal scheme."

That portion of the life of Chatham when he was nominally the head of the Administration, but wholly incapable of directing the national affairs, and altogether shrinking from that direction, is as difficult to understand as it is melancholy to contemplate. In the beginning of 1767, when the Parliament met, he was ill at Bath. In the middle of February, the gout had returned so severely upon him as to confine him to his bed at the inn at Marlborough,—as he

writes to lord Shelburne by the hands of his secretary. In that inn he is described by Walpole as "inaccessible and invisible, though surrounded by a train of domestics that occupied the whole inn, and wore the appearance of a little court." * Here he remained a fortnight. The duke of Grafton earnestly entreats to be allowed to come to the earl of Chatham. The answer is, that "until he is able to move towards London, it is by no means practicable to him to enter into discussions of business." On the 2nd of March he came to town, but unable to stir hand or foot. At this time the ministry had been in a minority upon the question whether the Land Tax should be reduced in amount. The king writes to Chatham expressing his reliance upon him "to withstand that evil called connexion," to which his majesty attributes the defeat of the ministry. Chatham responds reverentially. Meanwhile the public business falls into confusion; a violent Opposition, a divided Ministry. From the beginning of April the prime minister had not been allowed to see any one, nor to receive letters. It was in vain that his colleagues desired to visit him. Business, said Chatham, was impossible for him. Again and again the king wrote affectionately to his minister; and at last said, "If you cannot come to me to-morrow, I am ready to call on you." As an interview less to be dreaded, Chatham consented to receive the duke of Grafton. The duke records in his Memoirs that he found him in a different state from what he expected. "His nerves and spirits were affected in a dreadful degree, and the sight of his great mind bowed down and thus weakened by disorder would have filled me with grief and concern, even if I had not long borne a sincere attachment to his person and character." The Session closed on the 2nd of July. The duke of Grafton was now the real minister; although the name of Chatham in some degree upheld the government.

A theory has been proposed, in a review of the Chatham Correspondence, that the illness of the great minister was a long series of pretences—"that the gout, whatever may have been its real severity, was exaggerated in order to excuse a line of conduct, for which, even if true, it would have furnished no excuse;"—that the gout was a frequent pretext;—that the desire of lord Chatham to have a power of attorney prepared in order to enable his lady to transact his private business was a blind;"—that his disappointment at his loss of popularity, and his regret at having descended from his proud position of the Great Commoner, made him reluctant to appear in his new

* "George III.," vol. iii. p. 416. The statement in the "Edinburgh Review," vol. lxxx., that Chatham insisted that during his stay all the waiters and stable-boys of the inn should wear his livery, is contradicted by lord Mahon, on the authority of the late Mr. Thomas Grenville.

character, and that he clung to office till he could find some striking and popular occasion for his resignation.* Never was ingenuity more absurdly exercised for the purpose of damaging a great man's character. The true solution of this mystery is, that the intellect of Chatham was temporarily enfeebled, almost destroyed; that he did not resign office, although incapable of performing its duties, because the ordinary perceptions of his mind were clouded to an extent that left him no power of judgment; and that when he did resign, in October, 1768, on account of "the deplorable state of his health," his mind had to some extent resumed its vigour, though his bodily infirmities were as great as ever. His condition during the continuance of his mental prostration is thus described: "Lord Chatham's state of health is certainly the lowest dejection and debility that mind or body can be in. He sits all the day leaning on his hands, which he supports on the table; does not permit any person to remain in the room; knocks when he wants anything; and having made his wants known, gives a signal, without speaking, to the person who answered his call, to retire." † He had sold his property at Hayes, and was removed to Burton-Pynsent, a valuable estate he had acquired under the will of sir William Pynsent. With the intense eagerness of a mind verging on insanity, his one idea was to re-purchase Hayes. Difficulties were naturally raised; and he resigned himself to his disappointment, saying "That might have saved me." But the re-purchase was effected; and for many months he dwelt there secluded from all mankind. Lord Chatham, according to Walpole, under an attack of the gout, had put himself into the hands of Dr. Addington—"innovating enough in his practice to be justly deemed a quack. . . . . . If all was not a farce, I should think the physician rather caused the disease; Addington having kept off the gout, and possibly dispersed it through his nerves, or even driven it up to his head." ‡ If all was a farce, it was a long farce to occupy more than a year in playing out.

The ministry struggled on with considerable difficulty through the Session of 1768. There had been many changes in its composition. Charles Townshend had died of fever. His brilliant talents were neutralized by his levity; and it was clear that if his ambition had placed him at the head of the government, he would have done some rash things—perhaps precipitated a war with America earlier than the nobleman, lord North, who succeeded Townshend as the Chancellor of Exchequer. The Parliament, now approaching the end of its septennial term, was dissolved on the 11th of March, 1768.

* "Quarterly Review," vol. lxvi. p. 251.
† Letter in Lord Lyttelton's "Memoirs." ‡ "George III.," vol. ii. p. 451.

CHAPTER VI.

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.

THE new Parliament was opened on the 10th of May, 1768. In this most important Session the non-publication of debates was enforced with almost unequalled strictness. Horace Walpole has, for some years, been to us the almost only authority for forming any notion of the debating power in an age of real oratory, if we may judge of its rhetorical excellence from the testimony of contemporaries. He is not now a member of "the Thirteenth Parliament of Great Britain." He says, "What traces of debates shall appear hereafter must be mutilated and imperfect, as being received by hearsay from others or taken from notes communicated to me." * The rigid enforcement of the Standing Order for the exclusion of strangers went on from 1768 to 1774—the whole term of the duration of this Parliament, thus known as the "Unreported Parliament." But the debates of the House of Commons in this stirring period were not "unreported." Mr. Cavendish (afterwards sir Henry Cavendish), member for Lostwithiel, not only devoted himself to the task of taking down the heads of speeches, but after some practice, attempted to report them "more at large." These most valuable notes have been the foundation of the collection edited by Mr. J. Wright, as "Sir Henry Cavendish's Debates;" but, probably from inadequate public encouragement, these Reports, in their printed form, do not extend beyond March 27, 1771.†

At the opening of Parliament the ministry comprised lord Camden, Lord Chancellor; the duke of Grafton, First Lord of the Treasury; lord Shelburne, Secretary of State; lord North, Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lord Chatham still held the Privy Seal, but continued unable to discharge any official duties. It was the

* "Memoirs of George III.," vol. iii. p. 180.
† Published in Parts, in 1843, and forming two volumes, the second of which is incomplete.