

kissed the royal hand as Chancellor. Camden was dismissed. Yorke, borne down by agitation of mind, died, as was supposed by his own hand, on the 20th of January. On the 22nd there came on another great debate in the House of Lords on the State of the Nation, in which Chatham announced his cordial union with the party of Rockingham. It was on this occasion that Chatham recommended a specific plan of Parliamentary Reform. "The boroughs of this country have properly enough been called 'the rotten parts' of the Constitution. But in my judgment, my lords, these boroughs, corrupt as they are, must be considered as the natural infirmity of the Constitution. Like the infirmities of the body, we must bear them with patience, and submit to carry them about with us. The limb is mortified, but the amputation might be death. Let us try, my lords, whether some gentler remedies may not be discovered. Since we cannot cure the disorder, let us endeavour to infuse such a portion of new health into the Constitution as may enable it to support its most inveterate diseases. The representation of the counties is, I think, still preserved pure and uncorrupted. That of the greatest cities is upon a footing equally respectable; and there are many of the larger trading towns which still preserve their independence. The infusion of health which I now allude to would be to permit every county to elect one member more, in addition to their present representation. The knights of the shires approach nearest to the constitutional representation of the country, because they represent the soil. It is not in the little dependent boroughs, it is in the great cities and counties, that the strength and vigour of the Constitution resides; and by them alone, if an unhappy question should ever arise, will the Constitution be honestly and firmly defended. It would increase that strength, because I think it is the only security we have against the profligacy of the times, the corruption of the people, and the ambition of the crown."

The continued debate on the State of the Nation was deferred till the 2nd of February. On the 28th of January, the duke of Grafton resigned. The king was not unprepared for this event. On the 23rd of January he thus wrote to lord North: "Lord Weymouth and lord Gower will wait upon you this morning to press you in the strongest manner to accept the office of First Lord Commissioner of the Treasury. My mind is more and more strengthened in the rightness of the measure, which would prevent every other desertion. You must easily see that if you do not accept, I have no peer at present that I would consent to place in the duke of Grafton's employment." "The rightness of the measure" was to be tested by twelve years of national calamity.

CHAPTER VII.

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.

THE domestic agitations during the period of the duke of Grafton's ministry required to be given in an unbroken narrative. We now take up the more truly important relation of those events in the North American Colonies, and of the mode in which they were dealt with by the imperial government. These facts form the prologue to the tragedy of the American Revolution.

In 1768 a third Secretary of State was appointed. The office of Secretary of State for Scotland had been abolished; but now a new place was created for the earl of Hillsborough—the Secretaryship of the Colonies. It was a position of authority which demanded a rare union of firmness and moderation. But the Secretary was a member of a cabinet divided in judgment on the great question of American taxation; and lord Hillsborough was of the party of the duke of Bedford, who held opinions on that subject, not exactly in consonance with that championship of our free constitution which has been claimed for him.* Hillsborough had to deal with colonial subjects of the British Crown, whose indignation at the Stamp Act had been revived by Charles Townshend's fatal measure for granting duties in America on glass, red and white lead, painter's colours, paper, and tea. These duties were not to be collected until the 20th of November, 1767. That day passed over in quiet in Boston; but the inhabitants had previously assembled, and had entered into resolutions to forbear the use of many articles of British produce or manufacture. The principle of resistance to the Revenue Act of 1767 was declared in a work largely circulated, entitled "Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania." The author was John Dickinson. Franklin republished these letters in London, although they were opposed to his earlier

* See ante.

opinion that external taxation,—import duties—were essentially less obnoxious than internal taxation—a Stamp Act. In February, 1768, the Assembly of Massachusetts, between which body and the governor, Francis Bernard, there had been serious disputes, addressed a circular letter to the other provinces, inviting them to unite in opposing the act for raising a revenue in the colonies. When the intelligence of this circular reached London, Hillsborough wrote to Bernard directing him to require, in the king's name, the House of Representatives in Massachusetts to rescind the resolution which produced the circular letter from their Speaker; and if they refused, immediately to dissolve them. The governors of the other colonies were ordered to pursue a similar course, if the assemblies gave any countenance to the "seditious paper," of Massachusetts. The dissolution of the Assembly of that state took place on the 1st of July, 1768, on its refusal, by a very large majority, to rescind the resolution. At that time there was a great ferment in Boston, occasioned by the seizure of a sloop laden with wine from Madeira, which had been attempted to be landed without paying duty. The new Commissioners of Customs directed the seizure; but a riot ensuing, they fled in terror to a fortress at the mouth of the harbour. It was now ascertained, from a letter written by Hillsborough to Bernard at the very time that this riot was taking place, that troops were ordered to be sent from Halifax to Boston. Some of the more violent inhabitants proposed to arm; others requested the governor to call together another Assembly. He refused to do so. The bold step was then taken by the popular leaders of summoning a Convention to meet at Boston. Elections took place; and committee men, as they were termed, from ninety-five towns or districts held sittings in a building belonging to the people of Boston, known as Faneuil Hall. The Convention sat only six days. The governor had remonstrated against this body of delegates attempting to transact the public business, and warned them of the penal consequences which they might incur if they did not separate. They protested, however, against taxation of the Colonies by the British Parliament, and against a standing army. They addressed a petition to the king. They recommended to the preservation of good order. On the 28th of September, a squadron arrived from Halifax; conveying a large body of troops with artillery. Other troops continued to arrive; and four regiments were encamped near the city, or found their lodging in any public building. It was illegal to quarter them on the inhabitants. There was quiet; but the spirit of resistance was not thus to be extinguished. That spirit was not confined to Massachusetts;

although the determination to counteract the operation of the Revenue Act took only the form of associations who agreed not to consume the produce or manufactures of the mother-country. The "sons of liberty," as they were called, would wear no English broadcloth; and the "daughters of liberty" would drink no tea, if a duty were to be paid of threepence a-pound. The consumers of tea in England paid four times as much duty; but the Colonists denied the right of the imperial Parliament to levy any duty at all upon those who were unrepresented.

The king, on opening the Parliament on the 8th of November, 1768, spoke in severe terms of the proceedings in North America. The spirit of faction had broken out afresh; one of the colonies had proceeded to acts of violence and of resistance to the execution of the law; the capital town of that colony was in a state of disobedience to all law and government,—had adopted measures subversive of the constitution, and attended with circumstances that might manifest a disposition to throw off their dependence on Great Britain. Not a word was uttered of the cause of this disobedience. Turbulent and seditious persons were to be defeated. On the 15th of December, in the House of Lords, the duke of Bedford moved an Address to the king, recommending that the chief authors and instigators of the late disorders in Massachusetts should be brought to condign punishment; and beseeching his majesty that he would direct the governor of that colony "to take the most effectual methods for procuring the fullest information that can be obtained touching all treasons or misprision of treason, committed within this government since the 30th day of December last, and to transmit the same, together with the names of the persons who were most active in the commission of such offences, to one of your majesty's principal Secretaries of State, in order that your majesty may issue a special commission for inquiring of, hearing and determining, the said offences within this realm, pursuant to the provisions of the statute of the 35th year of the reign of king Henry VIII., in case your majesty shall upon receiving the said information, see sufficient ground for such a proceeding." This most arbitrary proposal was carried without a division. In the House of Commons, at the opening of the Session, Mr. Stanley, the seconder of the Address, said that the people of the insolent town of Boston "must be treated as aliens." "It is not arms that govern a people," exclaimed Burke. Beckford spoke with plain English honesty: "At the time of passing the American Stamp Act, I openly declared it to be my opinion that taxing America for the sake of raising a revenue would never do. Why would you

stir these waters? Let the nation return to its old good-nature, and its old good-humour." The Resolutions and Address of the Lords had been sent down to the Commons. On the 26th of January, 1769, the proposal of the duke of Bedford was strenuously resisted, and feebly defended. Burke said, with regard to this dangerous remedy for disaffection, "you fire a cannon upon your enemy which will re-act upon yourselves." Why, he said, do you call for this Act of Henry VIII. to be put in force? "Because you cannot trust a jury of that country. If you have not a party among two millions of people, you must either change your plan of government, or renounce the colonies for ever." George Grenville said the Resolution was "so much waste paper . . . Your conduct reminds me of the story of the sailor who climbed up to the top of the main-mast: on being asked what he was doing, he said he was doing nothing, and that the lad was helping him."* The most practical advice was offered to the House by Mr. Pownall, who had been governor of Massachusetts:—"Let the matter of right rest upon the declaratory law, and say no more about it."†

The minority, whether in Parliament or amongst the nation generally, who opposed the principle of American taxation, little knew in the spring of 1769 how near they were to a triumph. On the 19th of April, governor Pownall moved that the House should go into Committee to consider the Act passed for granting certain duties on the American colonies. There was a short debate, but the motion was rejected, by what lord North called "a mannerly way of putting aside the present question"—namely, by moving the orders of the day. On the 9th of May the Parliament was prorogued. But on the 1st of May a Cabinet Council was held, in which the result of a deliberation on the question of America is thus described by the duke of Grafton in his MS. Memoirs: "The internal state of the country was really alarming; and from my situation I had more cause to feel it than any other man. But a measure at this time adopted by a majority of the king's servants gave me still more apprehension, considering it to be big with more mischief; for contrary to my proposal of including the article of teas, together with all the other trifling objects of taxation, to be repealed on the opening of the next Session, it was decided that the teas were still to remain taxed as before, though contrary to the declared opinions of lord Camden, lord Granby, general Conway, and myself. Sir Edward Hawke was absent through illness: otherwise I think he would have agreed with those who voted for including the teas in the repeal." The duke of Grafton then pro-

* "Cavendish Debates," vol. i. p. 203.

† *Ibid.*, p. 225.

ceeds distinctly to accuse lord Hillsborough of having suppressed in the minute of the Council, which was to be communicated to the colonial governors, "words as kind and lenient as could be proposed by some of us, and not without encouraging expressions which were too evidently displeasing to his lordship." Camden charged Hillsborough with this suppression; which he denied. The presumptuous Secretary, who evidently acted with some authority from a higher quarter, not only garbled the minute, but accompanied it with a circular letter, which Grafton terms "unfortunate and unwarrantable—calculated to do all mischief, when our real minute might have paved the way to some good." Grafton and Camden felt that their power was gone. They ought to have resigned and denounced their dangerous colleague. The tea-duties were to be retained upon the principle maintained by the king, that "there must always be one tax, to keep up the right."

Whilst the king's ministers were thus divided upon the question of which few men saw the real importance, a demonstration of opinion was taking place in one of the colonies, of far more significance than the riots at Boston, and the meeting of its Convention. Lord Hillsborough had removed sir Jeffrey Amherst from the post of governor of Virginia, and had appointed in his place lord Boutetort, who, in a lucrative American office, could repair the consequences of his extravagance at home. In 1758 America had been called "the hospital of England;" the places in the gift of the Crown being filled "with broken Members of Parliament, of bad if any principle; valets de chambre, electioneering scoundrels, and even livery servants."* Lord Boutetort was a faded courtier whose rank would be acceptable to the aristocratic families of Virginia, and whose parade might dazzle the eyes of discontented politicians. Boutetort, the only governor who had appeared in Virginia within memory, opened the Session of the Legislature of Virginia, at Williamsburg, with royal pomp. He went to the House of Representatives in a state carriage, drawn by six white horses. He gave splendid entertainments. A dutiful address was presented to him, which he answered with the most perfect courtesy.† But there were men in that Assembly of a character not to be propitiated by cream-coloured horses or sumptuous feasts. George Washington, Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, Peyton Randolph, were members of that Assembly. The House of Burgesses followed up its dutiful Address by unanimous Resolutions, in which they asserted that the right of laying taxes on Virginia

* Letter of General Huske in Phillimore's "Memoirs of Lord Lyttelton."

† Bancroft, "American Revolution," vol. iii. p. 309.

was exclusively vested in its own Legislature; and pronounced that the mode of trial recommended in Parliament upon charges of high treason, was illegal and unconstitutional. The governor, without waiting for an official communication, dissolved the Assembly. On the next day the members assembled at the Raleigh tavern; and in a room called "The Apollo"—probably in memory of the famous Apollo Room where Ben Jonson prescribed his "*Leges Conviviales*"—eighty-eight pledged themselves not to import or purchase certain articles of British merchandise, whilst the Revenue Act was unrepealed, and signed Resolutions to that effect. The example spread. Pennsylvania approved the Resolutions. Delaware adopted them.

The Assembly of Massachusetts was at last legally convened in May, 1769. The members complained that they could not discuss the public affairs with freedom, being surrounded with an armed force. The governor told them he had no authority over the ships in the port or the troops in the town. The place of assembling was removed to the town of Cambridge. The two authorities continued hostile, and the Assembly was prorogued. Sir Francis Bernard was recalled to England; and a lieutenant-governor, Hutchinson, an American, remained in authority. Then commenced a series of outrages on the part of the leaders of the non-importation agreement, which was disgraceful to the cause which would have had far better argument in moderation. Obnoxious persons were tarred and feathered. At a public dinner "strong halts, firm blocks, and sharp axes, to such as deserve them," was one of the toasts.* These excesses, which are slightly passed over by the historian of the American Revolution, elicited the following remarks from lord Chatham, strenuous as he was in contending for the right of America to be untaxed by Great Britain. His words are not reported in the Parliamentary History, but they are given in a letter from Mr. Johnson, Agent for Connecticut.† "I have been thought to be, perhaps, too much the friend of America. I own I am a friend to that country. I love the Americans because they love liberty, and I love them for the noble efforts they made in the last war. But I must own I find fault with them in many things; I think they carry matters too far; they have been wrong in many respects. I think the idea of drawing money from them by taxes as ill-judged. Trade is your object with them, and they should be encouraged. But (I wish every sensible American, both here and in that country, heard what I say,) if they carry

* Bancroft, vol. iii. p. 342.

† Note of Mr. Jared Sparkes, in his edition of Franklin's Works.

their notions of liberty too far, as I fear they do, if they will not be subject to the laws of this country, especially if they would disengage themselves from the laws of trade and navigation, of which I see too many symptoms, as much of an American as I am, they have not a more determined opposer than they will find in me."

We have now reached the period of lord North's administration. On the 5th of March, 1770, on the House of Commons proceeding to take into consideration the petition of the Merchants of London trading to North America, the First Lord of the Treasury, in a temperate speech, moved the repeal of such portions of the Act of 1767, as laid duties upon glass and other articles, omitting any mention of tea. "I cannot propose," he said, "any further repeal than what it was my intention to promise them. The Americans, by their subsequent behaviour, have not deserved any particular indulgence from this country." Upon this principle, many a mistaken policy has been persisted in, out of pure defiance of the excesses which that policy has provoked. "We will not be driven to repeal, by any threats held out to us," said the minister. He anticipated no larger revenue than 12,000*l.* a year from the tea duties, but he would not give up the right to tax America which was asserted in the preamble of the Act imposing the duties. There was much discussion upon the particular point in dispute; but colonel Barré took a broad view of the whole question: "For three years we have seen nothing but the folly and absurdity of succeeding administrations. If the former erred, they had the sense of the nation with them; they acted upon a system. We are now proceeding upon no system at all: what we do carries nothing with it but monuments of our tyranny and folly. . . . Why suffer these discontents to rankle in the minds of your American subjects? I suspect we are not safe behind this peace. With your colonies discontented, what would be your condition if a war should break out? Could you depend upon receiving their support? With their minds soured, they might, perhaps, go further: they might take you at an unlucky moment, and compel you to come into their terms." The proposition of lord North was carried by a majority of sixty-two. Franklin, writing to a friend in America, says of this result, "I think the repeal would have been carried, but that the ministry were persuaded by governor Bernard, and some lying letters, said to be from Boston, that the associations not to import were all breaking to pieces; that America was in the greatest distress for the want of the goods; that we could not possibly subsist any longer without them, and must, of course, submit to any terms Parliament should think fit to impose

upon us. The ministerial people gave out, that certain advices were received of our beginning to break our agreement; of our attempts to manufacture proving all abortive, and ruining the undertakers; of our distress for want of goods, and dissensions among ourselves, which promised the total defeat of all such kind of combinations, and the prevention of them for the future, if the government were not urged imprudently to repeal the duties. But now that it appears, from late and authentic accounts, that agreements continue in full force, that a ship is actually returned from Boston to Bristol with nails and glass (articles that were thought of the utmost necessity), and that the ships, which were waiting here for the determination of Parliament, are actually returning to North America in their ballast, the tone begins to change."

On the same day that the British Parliament was voting against the repeal of the tea-duties, the people of Boston were fighting with British soldiers in their streets. The story of this conflict has been related as if, as is generally the case, there were not egregious faults on both sides. "At the cry of innocent blood shed by the soldiery, the continent heaved like a troubled ocean," writes Mr. Bancroft.* There was a quarrel between a soldier and some workmen at a rope-walk. The soldier challenged one to fight in the good old English fashion of fisty-cuffs; was beaten; and came back with some of his companions for revenge. A general scuffle ensued, and the troops were driven to their barracks. Sunday intervened; but on Monday, the 5th of March, the troops, who had been stimulating each other, came forth in the evening, and offering some insults to the townsmen, there was a serious tumult. This was at length quieted. The more prudent of the citizens cried "Home, home;" but many boys remained, daring the soldiers, and calling them "lobsters." They at last surrounded a sentinel; and captain Preston, the captain of the day, ordered the main guard to turn out. The captain, a corporal, and six men marched to the rescue of the sentinel. They began to load; and then a party of the townsmen passed along the front of the soldiers, and struck their muskets with sticks. They dared the guard to fire, calling them "lobster scoundrels." One of the soldiers received a blow with a stick thrown at him, and he shot a mulatto. Two other persons were killed, and eight wounded. A warrant was issued against Preston, who surrendered himself, and the soldiers were committed to prison. With great good sense governor Hutchinson and the colonel in command removed all the troops from the town. The affray was called "a massacre." When Preston was tried for

* "American Revolution," vol. iii. p. 386.

murder a few months afterwards, no counsel dared undertake his defence; till John Adams, a rising advocate, devoted to the popular cause, but more devoted to his duty, accepted a brief; and the jury returned a verdict of Not Guilty. The high-minded barrister became the President of the United States. Two of the soldiers were found Guilty of Manslaughter. On the 4th of May, Burke brought forward a motion for inquiry into the late disasters in America. On that occasion George Grenville made his last speech in Parliament, he dying in the following November. His concluding words, in giving assent to Burke's motion, were solemn and prophetic: "If, by the neglect of his ministers, our beloved sovereign should leave his crown to his successor diminished and dishonoured, then, sir, let those who brought the misery upon us, rise up severally and say, 'I was the man who formed these incompetent plans; I was the man who advised this plan and that plan; I was the man to whom all these fatal consequences are owing.'"

When the American colonists came to know that the British Parliament had repealed all the duties laid by the Act of 1767, except that on tea, the spirit which had prompted the non-importation agreements was somewhat allayed. The citizens of New York determined by a large majority to resume importations from England; and many orders were despatched in July for every kind of merchandise but tea. Other provinces were indignant with the New Yorkists. Massachusetts maintained a position of sullen defiance. The jurymen of Boston had manifested that in the discharge of their duty, in the trial of captain Preston and the soldiers, they were not to be influenced by public clamour. The conduct of John Adams showed how high-minded were many of those opponents of an obstinate policy, who, in parliamentary language, were usually called rebels. "The language we hold," said colonel Barré, "is little short of calling the Americans rebels; the language they hold is little short of calling us tyrants—rebels on one side, tyrants on the other." It was thus that the men of England and the men of America were mutually inflamed. Although, for two or three years, there was in America an apparent calm—a deceptive absence of violence which looked like peace—the time was rapidly approaching when the exhortation of Mr. Wedderburn, in 1770, before he became lord North's solicitor-general, would be looked upon as a prophecy: "How, sir, will it hereafter sound in the annals of the present reign, that all America—the fruit of so many years' settlement, nurtured by this country at the price of so much blood and treasure—was lost to the Crown of Great Britain in the reign of George III.?"* Whilst there is a lull in this trans-atlantic tem-

* "Cavendish Debates," vol. ii. p. 30.

pest, let us revert to our domestic affairs—petty in their details, but very significant in their tendencies.

The parliamentary conflict on the question of the Middlesex election was not likely to drop after the great debates on the Address at the opening of the Session of 1770. Mr. Sheriff Townsend, in his place in the House of Commons on the 7th of February, declared, upon going into a Committee of Ways and Means, that it was not his intention to pay the Land-tax. He would state the case as on the part of the freeholders of Middlesex. Their lawful representative, Mr. Wilkes, was kept out of the House by force and violence. Mr. Luttrell was not their representative. Lord North told the worthy sheriff that if any demand upon him was illegal, the law would relieve him. He refused to pay the tax; his goods were distrained; he brought an action against the collector; and lord Mansfield having charged the jury that the question was no other than whether there was a legislative power in this county, the jury found for the defendant. The declaration of Mr. Townsend was an indication of the prevailing temper of the citizens of London. On the 14th of March, the lord mayor and sheriffs, a few aldermen, and a great number of the common council, exercising the right of the City to present addresses to the king in person, arrived, with an immense concourse of people at St. James's. The address, remonstrance, and petition offered on this occasion, prayed for the dissolution of Parliament, and the removal of evil ministers; spoke of "secret and malign influence" which had deprived the people of their dearest rights; and declared that the present House of Commons did not represent the people. The king's answer was "deemed by some to have been uncommonly harsh." * His majesty said, "I shall always be ready to receive the requests, and to listen to the complaints of my subjects; but it gives me great concern to find that any of them should have been so far misled, as to offer me an Address and Remonstrance, the contents of which I cannot but consider as disrespectful to me, injurious to my Parliament, and irreconcilable to the principles of the constitution." A debate took place the next day in the House of Commons, upon a motion for an Address to his majesty that he would direct a copy of this paper and his answer to be laid before them. The lord mayor (Beckford), alderman Trecothick, and sheriffs Townsend and Sawbridge, boldly defended the language of the Remonstrance. Lord North told them that they would be remembered as the John Lilburns and Dr. Sacheverells of their day. Burke called to the memory of the House the words of lord Falkland, "Peace! peace!"

* "Annual Register," 1771, p. 790.

The Commons, by a large majority, agreed upon an Address to the king; having resolved that "to deny the legality of the present Parliament, and to assert that the proceedings thereof are not valid, is highly unwarrantable." The general opinion was, that the lord mayor and sheriffs courted commitment.* On the 23rd of May, the lord mayor, aldermen, and common council, presented a second Remonstrance to the king at St. James's. Walpole says, "it had been drawn up by lord Chatham, or formed on one of his late speeches." They lamented that his majesty had been advised to lay the weight of his displeasure upon the citizens of London. "We are deeply concerned that what the law allows, and the constitution teaches, has been misconstrued by ministers, instruments of that influence which shakes the realm into disrespect for your majesty." They demanded "a full, free, and unmutated Parliament." They concluded by saying, "we offer our constant prayers to Heaven that your majesty may reign as kings only can reign, in and by the hearts of a loyal, dutiful, and free people." The king's answer conveyed no change of opinion on the proceedings of the City: "I should have been wanting to the public as well as to myself, if I had not expressed my dissatisfaction at the late Address. My sentiments on that subject continue the same." The king had no sooner spoken his answer, writes Walpole, "than, to the astonishment of the whole court, Beckford, the lord mayor, desired leave to say a few words. This was totally unprecedented. Copies of all intended harangues are first transmitted privately to court, that the king may be prepared with an answer. On this occasion the king was totally at a loss how to act. He was sitting in ceremony on his throne, and had no means to consult, no time to consider, what to do. Remaining silent and confounded, Beckford proceeded." † The words said to be uttered by the lord mayor are engraved in letters of gold under his monument in the Guildhall of London. Having this distinguished record, it may be proper here to give them:—

"Most gracious Sovereign,—Will your majesty be pleased so far to condescend as to permit the mayor of your royal city of London to declare in your royal presence, in behalf of his fellow-citizens, how much the bare apprehension of your majesty's displeasure would at all times affect their minds. The declaration of that displeasure has already filled them with inexpressible anxiety and with the deepest affliction. Permit me, sire, to assure your majesty, that your majesty has not in all your dominions any

* "Chatham Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 429.

† "Memoirs of George III.," vol. iv. p. 454.

subjects more faithful, more dutiful, or more affectionate to your majesty's person and family, or more ready to sacrifice their lives and fortunes in the maintenance of the true honour and dignity of your crown. We do therefore, with the greatest humility and submission, most earnestly supplicate your majesty that you will not dismiss us from your presence, without expressing a more favourable opinion of your faithful citizens, and without some comfort, without some prospect at least of redress. Permit me, sire, further to observe, that whoever has already dared, or shall hereafter endeavour, by false insinuations and suggestions, to alienate your majesty's affections from your loyal subjects in general, and from the city of London in particular, and to withdraw your confidence in and regard for your people, is an enemy to your majesty's person and family, a violator of the public peace, and a betrayer of your happy constitution, as it was established at the glorious Revolution."

Chatham was in raptures. Two days after he wrote to Beckford, "The spirit of Old England spoke, that never-to-be-forgotten day . . . Your lordship's mayoralty will be revered, till the constitution is destroyed and forgotten." Beckford replied, "What I spoke in the king's presence was uttered in the language of truth, and with that humility and submission which becomes a subject speaking to his lawful king."* Certainly the constitution was somewhat outraged when a subject forgot that ministerial responsibility ought to have sheltered his lawful king from a personal reproof. † Beckford died within a month after this remarkable impulse of an honest but over-zealous partisanship. The agitations connected with the Middlesex election soon subsided. The term of Wilkes's imprisonment had expired in April; and, in his position of alderman, he became more a city agitator than a demagogue to stir a nation.

In the ensuing Session of Parliament, in 1771, there was a contest between the House of Commons and the Corporation of London which was eventually productive of the highest public benefit. Although both Houses held strenuously to the principle that it was the highest offence to publish their debates, the speeches of particular members were frequently printed. Sometimes the privileges of Parliament were strictly enforced. At other times little notice was taken of reports, with stars and initials in newspapers and magazines. The thirteenth Parliament of Great Britain was one in which the majorities of both Houses were on the anti-popular side; and thus the nation had only occasional

* "Chatham Correspondence," vol. iii. pp. 462-3.

† See *ante*, p. 55.

glimpses of the proceedings of those who presided over their destinies. On the 8th of February, 1771, colonel Onslow complained to the House of Commons, that two newspapers had printed a motion he had made, and a speech against it; and moreover had called him, "little Cocking George." Upon his motion, the papers were delivered in and read; and the printer of the "Gazetteer," R. Thompson, and the printer of the "Middlesex Chronicle," J. Wheble, were ordered to attend the House. The printers could not be found to serve the orders upon them, and then the House addressed the king that he would issue his royal proclamation for their apprehension. On the 12th of March, colonel Onslow said, he was determined to bring this matter to an issue. "To-day I shall only bring before the House three brace, for printing the debates." This wholesale proceeding was resisted by motions for adjournment and amendments, which protracted the debates till five o'clock in the morning, during which the House divided twenty-three times.* One member moved an amendment to the motion for summoning one of the printers, by adding, "together with all his compositors, pressmen, correctors, blackers and devils;" and Burke said, "It would be as irregular for the printer to come to your bar without them, as it would be for you, sir, to come to the House without your mace, or a marshal of the King's Bench without his tipstaff, or a first lord of the treasury without his majority." † Four of the printers obeyed the orders of the House; made their submission, and were discharged. But the affair now took a more serious turn. The serjeant-at-arms had been ordered to take J. Miller, of the "London Evening Post" into custody. Wheble and Thompson had been previously arrested collusively, by some friends or servants; and being taken before alderman Wilkes, and alderman Oliver, were discharged. Miller was apprehended by the officer of the House of Commons, at his house in the city; but the officer was immediately himself taken into custody by a city constable. The parties went before the lord mayor, Crosby; who was attended by Wilkes and Oliver. The lord mayor decided that the arrest of a citizen without the authority of one of the city magistrates, was a violation of its charters; and ordered Miller to be released, and the officer of the Commons to give bail to answer a charge of assault. The king, always impatient of resistance to authority, wrote on the 17th of March to lord North.—"If lord mayor and Oliver be not committed, the authority of the House of Commons is annihilated." On the first complaint of colonel Onslow he had written to his minister, "Is not the

* "Annual Register," 1771.

† "Cavendish Debates," vol. ii. p. 391.