X.

"The history of England is emphatically the history of progress. It is the history of a constant movement of the public mind, of a constant change in the institutions of a great society." — MACAULAY.

INDIA GAINED; AMERICA LOST. — PARLIAMENTARY REFORM. — GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE.

THE HOUSE OF HANOVER, (1714,) TO THE PRESENT TIME.

George I., 1714–1727.
George II., 1727–1760.
George III., 1760–1820.
George IV., 1820–1830.
William IV., 1830–1837.
Victoria, 1837– —

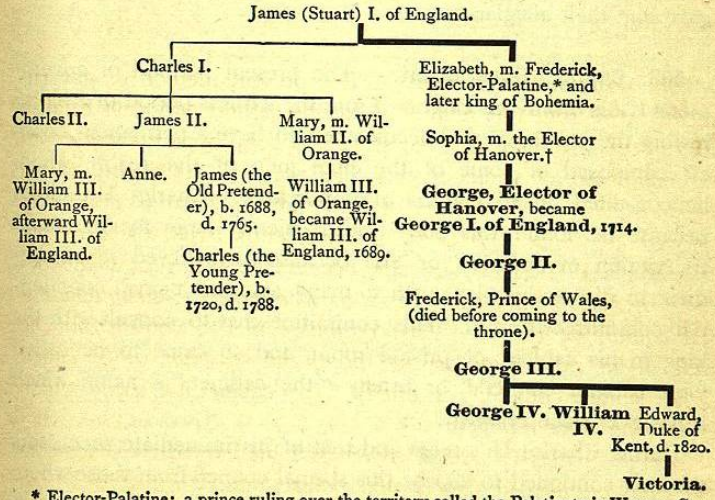
581. Accession of George I. — As Queen Anne died without leaving an heir to the throne, George, Elector of Hanover, now, in accordance with the Act of Settlement,[1] came into possession of the English crown. The new king, however, was in no haste to leave the quiet little German court where he had passed his fifty-fourth birthday, and where he would have gladly spent the rest of his uneventful life. As he owed his new position to Whig legislation, he naturally favored that party and turned his back on the Tories, who, deprived of the sunshine of royal favor, were as unhappy as their rivals were jubilant. In fact, the reaction was so strong that the three Tory leaders were now impeached for treason, on the ground that they had intrigued to restore the fallen house of Stuart, and endeavored to make the Pretender king. Two of the three fled the country, and the third,

[1] Act of Settlement: see Paragraph No. 549.

after a term of imprisonment in the Tower, was discharged without further punishment.[1]

582. Character of the New King. — The new sovereign was a selfish, coarse old man, who in private life would, as Lady Montagu said, have passed for an honest blockhead. He neither knew anything about England, nor did he desire to know anything of it. He could not speak a word of the language of the country he was called to govern, and he made no attempt to learn it; even the coronation service had to be explained to him as best it could, in such broken Latin as the ministers could muster. Laboring under these disadvantages, his majesty wisely determined not to try to take any active part in the affairs of the nation. He was a hearty eater and drinker, so that his table exercises took up a considerable portion of his time. Much of the rest he was

[1] The House of Hanover, also called Brunswick and Guelf.



* Elector-Palatine: a prince ruling over the territory called the Palatinate in Western Germany, on the Rhine.

† Elector of Hanover: a prince ruling over the province of Hanover, a part of the German Empire, lying on the North Sea. The Elector received his title from the fact that he was one of seven princes who had the right of electing the German emperor.

contented to spend quietly smoking his pipe, or playing cards and laughing at the caricature pictures of the English which the German ladies of his court cut out of paper for his amusement. As for politics, he let his Whig friends, with Sir Robert Walpole at the head, manage the country in their own way. Fortunately, the great body of the English people were abundantly able to take care of themselves. Voltaire said of them that they resembled a barrel of their own beer, froth at the top, dregs at the bottom, but thoroughly sound and wholesome in the middle. It was this middle class, with their solid, practical good sense, that kept the nation right. They were by no means enthusiastic worshippers of the German king who had come to reign over them, but they saw one thing clearly: he might be as heavy, dull, and wooden as the figure-head of a ship, yet, like that figure-head, he stood for something greater and better than himself, — for he represented Protestantism, with civil and religious liberty, — and so the people gave him their allegiance.

583. Cabinet Government. — The present method of government dates from this reign. From the earliest period of English history the sovereign was accustomed to have a permanent council composed of some of the chief men of the realm, whom he consulted on all matters of importance. Charles II., either because he found this body inconveniently large for the rapid transaction of business, or else because he believed it inexpedient to discuss his plans with so many, selected a small confidential committee from it. This committee met to consult with the king in his cabinet, or private room, and so came to be called "the cabinet council," or briefly "the cabinet," a name which it has ever since retained.

During Charles II.'s reign and that of his immediate successors the king continued to choose this special council from those whom he believed to be friendly to his measures, often without much regard to party lines, and he was always present at their meetings. With the accession of George I., however, a great change took

place. His want of acquaintance with prominent men made it difficult for him to select a cabinet himself, and his ignorance of English rendered his presence at its meetings wholly useless. For these reasons the new king adopted the expedient of appointing a chief adviser, or prime minister, who chose his own cabinet from men of the political party to which he belonged. Thus Sir Robert Walpole, the first prime minister, began that system (though not until the reign was far advanced) by which the executive affairs of the government are managed to-day. The cabinet, or "the government," as it is sometimes called, now generally consists of twelve or fifteen persons chosen by the prime minister, or premier,[1] from the leading members of both Houses of Parliament, but whose political views agree in the main with the majority of the House of Commons.[2] This system, though not fully devel-

[1] Now generally called the premier (from the French *premier*, first or chief).

[2] The existence of the Cabinet depends on custom, not law. Its members are never *officially* made known to the public, nor its proceedings recorded. Its meetings, which take place at irregular intervals, according to pressure of business, are entirely secret, and the sovereign is never present. As the Cabinet agrees in its composition with the majority of the House of Commons, it follows that if the Commons are Conservative, the Cabinet will be so likewise; and if Liberal, the reverse. Theoretically, the sovereign chooses the Cabinet; but practically the selection is now always made by the prime minister. If at any time the Cabinet finds that its political policy no longer agrees with that of the House of Commons, it usually resigns, and the sovereign chooses a new prime minister from the opposite party, who forms a new Cabinet in harmony with himself and the Commons. If, however, the prime minister has good reason for believing that a different House of Commons would support him, the sovereign may, by his advice, dissolve Parliament. A new election then takes place, and according to the political character of the members returned, the Cabinet remains in, or goes out of, power. The Cabinet now invariably includes the following officers: —

1. The First Lord of the Treasury (Usually the Prime Minister).
2. The Lord Chancellor.
3. The Lord President of the Council.
4. The Lord Privy Seal.
5. The Chancellor of the Exchequer.
6. The Secretary of State for Home Affairs.
7. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
8. The Secretary of State for the Colonies.
9. The Secretary of State for India.
10. The Secretary of State for War.
11. The First Lord of the Admiralty.

In addition, a certain number of other officers of the government are frequently included, making the whole number about twelve or fifteen.

oped until the reign of George III., had become so well established when George II. came to the throne, that he said, "In England the ministers are king." If he could have looked forward, he would have seen that the time was coming when the House of Commons would be king, since no ministry or cabinet can now stand which does not have the confidence and support of the Commons.

584. The "Pretender"; "the Fifteen." — The fact that George I. exclusively favored the Whigs exasperated the opposite, or Tory, party, and the Jacobites or extreme members of that party[1] in Scotland, with the secret aid of many in England, now rose, in the hope of placing on the throne the son of James II., James Edward Stuart, called the Chevalier[2] by his friends, but the Pretender by his enemies. The insurrection was led by John, Earl of Mar, who, from his frequent change of politics, had got the nickname of "Bobbing John." Mar encountered the royal forces at Sheriffmuir, in Perthshire, Scotland, where an indecisive battle was fought, which the old ballad thus describes: —

> "There's some say that we won, and some say that they won,
> And some say that none won at a', man;
> But one thing is sure, that at Sheriffmuir
> A battle there was, which I saw, man."

On the same day of the fight at Sheriffmuir, the English Jacobites, with a body of Scotch allies, marched into Preston, Lancashire, and there surrendered, almost without striking a blow. The leaders of the movement, except the Earl of Mar, who, with one or two others, escaped to the continent, were beheaded or hanged, and about a thousand of the rank and file were sold as slaves to the West India and Virginia plantations. The Pretender himself landed in Scotland a few weeks after the defeat of his friends; but

[1] See Paragraph No. 547.

[2] The Chevalier de St. George; after the birth of his son Charles in 1720, the former was known by the nickname of the Old Pretender, and the son as the Young Pretender.

finding no encouragement he hurried back to the continent again. Thus ended the rebellion known from the year of its outbreak (1715) as "the Fifteen."

One result of this rising was the passage of an act extending the duration of Parliament from three years, which was the longest time that body could sit, to seven years, a law still in force.[1] The object of this change was to do away with the excitement and tendency to rebellion at that time, resulting from frequent elections, in which party feeling ran to dangerous extremes.

585. The South Sea Bubble. — A few years later a gigantic enterprise was undertaken by the South Sea Company, a body of merchants, originally organized as a company trading in the southern Atlantic and Pacific oceans. A Scotchman named Law had started a similar project in France, known as the Mississippi Company, which proposed to pay off the national debt of France from the profits of its commerce with the West Indies and the country bordering on the Mississippi River. Following his example, the South Sea Company now undertook to pay off the English national debt, mainly, it is said, from the profits of the slave trade between Africa and Brazil.[2] Walpole had no faith in the scheme, and attacked it vigorously; but other influential members of the government gave it their encouragement. The directors now came out with prospectuses promising dividends of fifty per cent on all money invested. Everybody rushed to buy stock, and the shares rapidly advanced from $500 to $5000 a share. A speculative craze followed, the like of which has never since been known. Bubble companies now sprang into existence with objects almost as absurd as those of the philosophers whom Swift

[1] The Triennial Act provided that at the end of three years Parliament must be dissolved and a new election held. This was to prevent the sovereign from keeping that body in power indefinitely, contrary, perhaps, to the political feeling of the country, which might prefer a different set of representatives. Under the Septennial Act the time was extended four years, making seven in all, but the sovereign may, of course, dissolve Parliament at any time before that limit is reached.

[2] Loftie's History of London.

ridiculed in "Gulliver's Travels," where one man was trying to make gunpowder out of ice, and another to extract sunbeams from cucumbers. A mere list of these companies would fill several pages. One was to give instruction in astrology, by which every man might be able to foretell his own destiny by examining the stars; a second was to manufacture butter out of beech-trees; a third was for a wheel for driving machinery, which once started would go on forever, thereby furnishing a cheap perpetual motion; a fourth projector, going beyond all the rest in audacity, had the impudence to offer stock for sale in an enterprise "which shall be revealed hereafter." He found the public so gullible and so greedy for gain, that he sold $10,000 worth of the new stock in the course of a single morning, and then prudently disappeared with the cash, though where, as the unfortunate investors found to their sorrow, was not among the things to "be revealed hereafter."

The narrow passage leading to the stock exchange was crowded all day long with struggling fortune hunters, both men and women. Suddenly, when the excitement was at its height, the bubble burst, as Law's scheme in France had a little earlier.

Great numbers of people were hopelessly ruined, and the cry for vengeance was as loud as the bids for stocks had once been. One prominent government official who had helped to blow the bubble was sent to the Tower, and another committed suicide rather than face a parliamentary committee of investigation, one of whose members had suggested that it would be an excellent plan to sew the South Sea directors up in sacks and throw them into the Thames.

586. How a Terrible Disease was conquered. — But among the new things which the people were to try in this century was one which led to most beneficent results. For many generations the great scourge of Europe was the small-pox. Often the disease was as violent as the plague, and carried off nearly as many victims. Medical art seemed powerless to deal with it, and even

in years of ordinary health in England about one person out of ten died of this loathsome pestilence. In the early part of George I.'s reign, Lady Mary Montagu, then travelling in Turkey, wrote that the Turks were in the habit of inoculating their children for the disease, which rendered it much milder and less fatal, and that she was about to try the experiment on her own son.

Later, Lady Montagu returned to England, and through her influence and example the practice was introduced there. It was tried first on five criminals in Newgate who had been sentenced to the gallows, but were promised their freedom if they would consent to the operation. As it proved a complete success, the Princess of Wales, with the king's consent, caused it to be tried on her daughter, with equally good results. The medical profession, however, generally refused to sanction the practice, and the clergy in many cases preached against it as an "invention of Satan, intended to counteract the purposes of an all-wise Providence" but through the perseverance and good sense of Lady Montagu, with a few others, the new practice gradually gained ground. Subsequently Dr. Jenner began to make experiments of a different kind which led late in the century to the discovery of vaccination, by which millions of lives have been saved; this, with the discovery of the use of ether in our own time, may justly be called the two greatest triumphs of the art of medicine.

587. How Walpole governed. — Robert Walpole had been a member of the Cabinet during most of the reign down to 1721. He then became premier, and continued in office as head of the government until near the middle of the next reign, or about twenty-one years in all. He was an able financier, and succeeded in reducing the National Debt; he believed in keeping the country out of war, and also, as we have seen, out of bubble speculation, but he was determined at all cost to maintain the Whig party in power, and the Protestant Hanoverian sovereigns on the throne.

In order to accomplish this, he openly bribed members of Par-

liament to support his party; he bought votes and carried elections by gifts of titles, honors, and bank-notes, thus proving to his own satisfaction the truth of his theory that most men "have their price," and that an appeal to the pocket-book is both quicker and surer than an appeal to principle. But he had to confess before the end of his ministry that he had found in the House of Commons one "boy patriot," as he sneeringly called him, named William Pitt (afterward Earl of Chatham), whom neither his money could buy nor his ridicule move.

Bad as Walpole's policy was in its corrupting influence on the nation, it was an admission that the time had come when the king could no longer venture to rule by force, as in the days of the Stuarts: it meant that the government had been deprived of the arbitrary power it once wielded. Walpole was a fox, not a lion; and "foxes," as Emerson tells us, "are so cunning because they are not strong."

588. Summary. — Though George I. did little for England except keep the Pretender from the throne by occupying it himself, yet that was no small advantage, since it gave the country peace. The establishment of the cabinet system of government under Sir Robert Walpole, the suppression of the Jacobite insurrection, and the disastrous collapse of the South Sea Bubble are the principal events.

GEORGE II. — 1727–1760.

589. Accession and Character. — The second George, who was also of German birth, was much like his father, though he had the advantage of being able to speak broken English readily. His wife, Queen Caroline, was an able woman, who possessed the happy art of ruling her husband without his suspecting it, while she, on the other hand, was ruled by Sir Robert Walpole, whom the king hated, but whom he had to keep as prime minister. George II. was a good soldier, and decidedly preferred war to peace; but Walpole saw clearly that the peace policy was best for the nation, and he and the queen managed to persuade the king not to draw the sword.

590. The War of Jenkins's Ear. — At the end of twelve years, however, trouble arose with Spain. According to the London newspapers of that day, a certain Captain Jenkins, while cruising, or, more probably, smuggling, in the West Indies, had been seized by the Spaniards and barbarously maltreated. They, if we accept his story, accused him of attempting to land English goods contrary to law, and searched his ship. Finding nothing against him, they vented their rage and disappointment by hanging him to the yard-arm of his vessel until he was nearly dead. They then tore off one of his ears, and bade him take it to the king of England with their compliments. Jenkins, it is said, carefully wrapped up his ear and put it in his pocket. When he reached England, he went straight to the House of Commons, drew out the mutilated ear, showed it to the House, and demanded justice. The Spanish restrictions on English trade with the Indies and South America [1] had long been a source of ill feeling. The sight of Jenkins's ear brought matters to a climax; even Walpole could not resist the clamor for vengeance, and contrary to his own judgment he had to vote for war. Though Jenkins was the occasion, the real object of the war was to compel Spain to permit the English to get a larger share in the lucrative commerce of the New World. It was another proof that America was now rapidly becoming an important factor in the politics of Great Britain. The announcement of hostilities with Spain was received in London with delight, and bells pealed from every steeple. "Yes," said Walpole, "they may ring the bells now, but before long they will be wringing their hands," — a prediction which was verified by the heavy losses the English suffered in an expedition against Carthagena, South America, though later Commodore Anson inflicted great damage on the Spanish colonies, and returned to England with large amounts of captured treasure.

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[1] By the Assiento (contract) Treaty, made at Utrecht in 1713, one English ship of 600 tons burden was allowed to make one trading voyage a year to the colonies of Spanish America.

591. War of the Austrian Succession. — On the death of Charles VI. of the house of Austria, emperor of Germany, his daughter Maria Theresa succeeded to the Austrian dominions. France now united with Spain, Prussia, and other European powers to overturn this arrangement, partly out of jealousy of the Austrian power, and partly from desire to get control of portions of the Austrian possessions. England and Holland, however, both desired to maintain Austria as a check against their old enemy France, and declared war in 1741. During this war George II. went over to the continent to lead the English forces in person. He was not a man of commanding appearance, but he was every inch a soldier, and nothing exhilarated him like the smell of gunpowder. At the battle of Dettingen, in Bavaria, he got down from his horse, and drawing his sword, cried: "Come, boys, now behave like men, and the French will soon run." With that, followed by his troops, he rushed upon the enemy with such impetuosity that they turned and fled. This was the last battle in which an English king took part. It was followed by that of Fontenoy, in the Netherlands, in which the French gained the victory. After nearly eight years' fighting the Treaty of Aix la Chapelle secured a peace advantageous for England.[1]

592. Invasion by the Young Pretender; "the Forty-Five."[2] — While the war of the Austrian Succession was in progress, the French encouraged James II.'s grandson, Charles Edward, the Young Pretender,[3] to make an attempt on the English crown. He landed in 1745 on the northern coast of Scotland with only seven followers, but with the aid of the Scotch Jacobites of the Highlands he gained a battle over the English at Prestonpans, near Edinburgh. Emboldened by his success, he now marched into Derbyshire, England, on his way to London, with the hope, that as he advanced, the country would rise in his

[1] Aix la Chapelle (Āks-lă-shă pel').
[2] So called from the Scotch rising of 1745.
[3] See note to Paragraph No. 584.

favor; but finding no support, he retreated to Scotland. The next year he and his adherents were defeated with great slaughter at Culloden, near Inverness. With the flight of the Pretender from that battle-field, his Scotch sympathizers lost all hope. There were no more ringing Jacobite songs, sung over bowls of steaming punch, of "Who'll be king but Charlie?" and "Over the water to Charlie"; and when in 1788 Charles died in Rome, the unfortunate house of Stuart disappeared from history."[1]

593. War in the East; the Black Hole of Calcutta; Clive's Victories; English Empire of India. — In India the English had long had important trading-posts at Madras, Bombay, Calcutta, and other points, but they had not had control of the country, which was governed by native princes. The French also had established an important trading-post at Pondicherry, south of Madras, and were now secretly planning through alliance with the native rulers to get possession of the entire country. They had met with some success in their efforts, and the times seemed to favor their gaining still greater influence unless some decided measures should be taken to prevent them. At this juncture Robert Clive, a young man who had been employed as clerk in the service of the English East India Company, but who had obtained a humble position in the army, obtained permission to try his hand at driving back the enemy. It was the very work for which he was fitted. He met with success from the first, and he followed it up by the splendid victory of Arcot (1751), which practically gave the English control of Southern India. Shortly after that Clive returned to England. During his absence the native prince of Bengal undertook an expedition against

[1] Devoted loyalty to a hopeless cause was never more truly or pathetically expressed than in some of these Jacobite songs, notably in those of Scotland, of which the following lines are an example:—

"Over the water, and over the sea,
And over the water to Charlie;
Come weal, come woe, we'll gather and go,
And live or die with Charlie." — See Scott's *Redgauntlet*.

Calcutta, a wealthy British trading-post. He captured the fort which protected it, and seizing the principal English residents, one hundred and forty-six in number, drove them at the point of the sword into a prison called the "Black Hole," less than twenty feet square and having but two small windows. In such a climate, in the fierce heat of midsummer, that dungeon would have been too close for a single European captive; to crowd it with more than seven score persons for a night meant death by all the agonies of heat, thirst, and suffocation. In vain they endeavored to bribe the guard to transfer part of them to another room, in vain they begged for mercy and tried to burst the door. Their jailers only mocked them and would do nothing. Then, says Macaulay, "the prisoners went mad with despair; they trampled each other down, they fought to get at the windows, they fought for the pittance of water which was given them, they raved, prayed, blasphemed, and implored the guards to fire upon them. At length the tumult died away in low gasps and moanings. When daylight came and the dungeon was opened, the floor was heaped with mutilated half-putrescent corpses. Out of the hundred and forty-six, one of whom was a woman, only twenty-three were alive, and they were so changed, so feeble, so ghastly, that their own mothers would not have known them."

When Clive returned he was met with a cry for vengeance. He gathered his troops, recovered Calcutta, and ended by fighting that great battle of Plassey (1757), which was the means of permanently establishing the English empire in India on a firm foundation.[1]

594. The Seven Years' War in Europe and America. — Before the contest had closed by which England won her Asiatic dominions, a new war had broken out. In 1756, the fifth year of the New Style,[2] the aggressive designs of Frederick the Great of

[1] See Macaulay's Essay on Clive.

[2] In 1752 the New Style of reckoning time was introduced into Great Britain. Owing to a slight error in the calendar, the year had, in the course of centuries, been gradually losing, so that in 1752 it was eleven days short of what the true computation would make it. Pope Gregory corrected the error in 1582, and his

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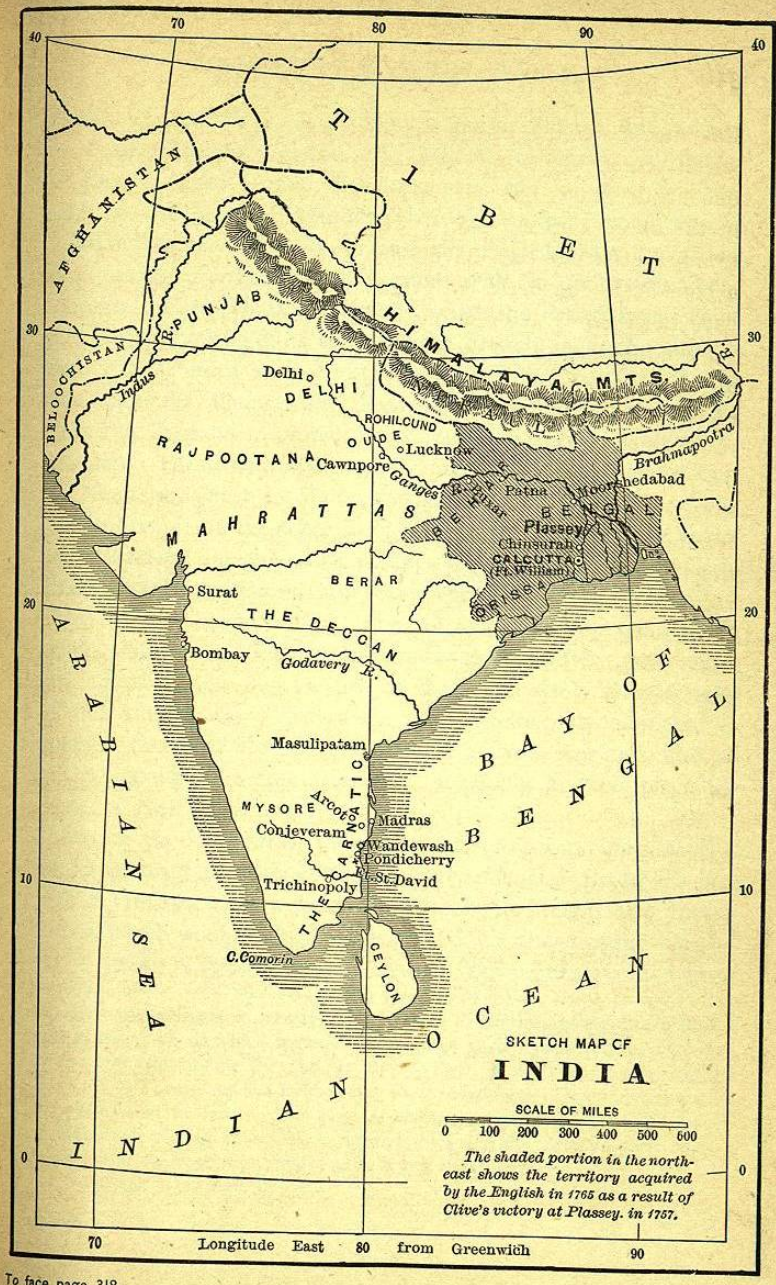

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Prussia caused such alarm that a grand alliance was formed by France, Russia, Austria, and Poland to check his further advance. Great Britain, however, gave her support to Frederick, in the hope of humbling her old enemy France, who, in addition to her attempts to oust the English from India, was also making preparations on a grand scale to get possession of America. Every victory, therefore, which the British forces could gain in Europe would, by crippling the French, make the ultimate victory in America so much the more certain; so that we may look upon the alliance with Frederick as an indirect means employed by England to protect her colonies on the other side of the Atlantic. These had now extended along the entire coast, from the Kennebec River, in Maine, to the borders of Florida.

The French, on the other hand, had planted colonies at Quebec and Montreal, on the St. Lawrence; at Detroit, on the Great Lakes; at New Orleans and other points on the Mississippi. They had also begun to build a line of forts along the Ohio River, which, when completed, would connect their northern and southern colonies, and thus secure to them the whole country west of the Alleghanies. Eventually, they undoubtedly expected to conquer the East also, to erase Virginia, New England, and all other colonial titles from the map, inscribing in their place the name of New France.

During the first part of the war, the English were unsuccessful. In an attempt to take Fort Duquesne,[1] General Braddock met with a crushing defeat from the combined French and Indian forces, which would indeed have proved his utter destruction had not a young Virginian named George Washington saved a rem-

calendar was adopted in nearly every country of Europe except Great Britain and Russia, both of which regarded the change as a "popish measure." But in 1751, notwithstanding the popular outcry, Sept. 3, 1752, was made Sept. 14, by an act of Parliament, and by the same act the beginning of the year was altered from March 25 to Jan. 1. The popular clamor against the reform is illustrated in Hogarth's picture of an Election Feast, in which the People's party carry a banner, with the inscription, "Give us back our eleven days."

[1] Duquesne (Doo kane').