

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

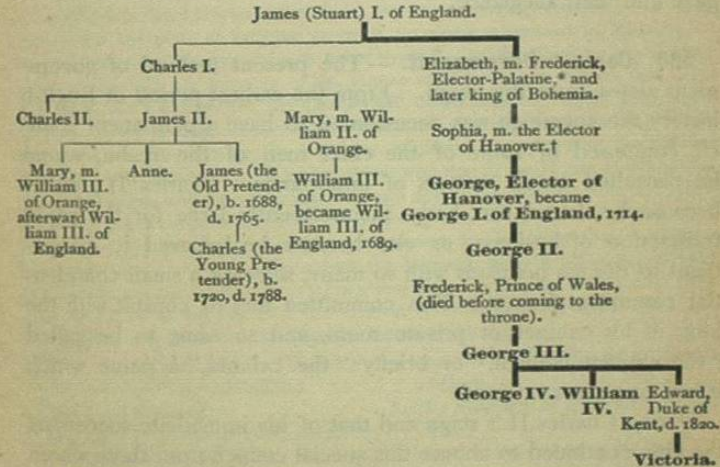
581. Accession of George I.—As Queen Anne died without leaving an heir to the throne, George, Elector of Hanover, now, in accordance with the Act of Settlement,¹ came into possession of the English crown. The new king, however, was in no haste to leave the quiet little German court where he had passed 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 Guelph.



* 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). | 7. The Secretary of State for Foreign
Affairs. |
| 2. The Lord Chancellor. | 8. The Secretary of State for the Colo-
nies. |
| 3. The Lord President of the Council. | 9. The Secretary of State for India. |
| 4. The Lord Privy Seal. | 10. The Secretary of State for War. |
| 5. The Chancellor of the Exchequer. | 11. The First Lord of the Admiralty. |
| 6. The Secretary of State for Home
Affairs. | |

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 party¹ 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 Chevalier² 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 Lottie'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 America¹ 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 Carthage, South America, though later Commodore Anson inflicted great damage on the Spanish colonies, and returned to England with large amounts of captured treasure.

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-lā-shā'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*.

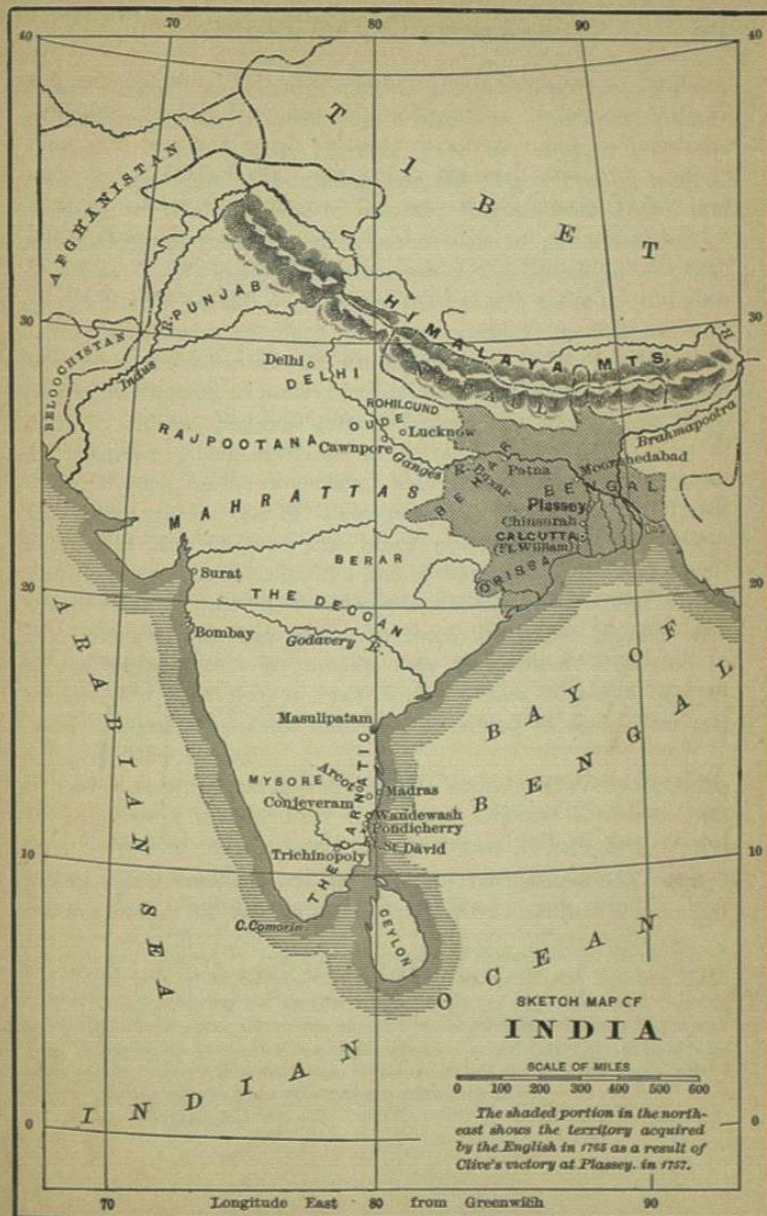
Calcutta, a wealthy British trading-post. He captured the fort which protected it, and seizing the principal English residents, one hundred and forty-six in number, drove them at the point of the sword into a prison called the "Black Hole," less than twenty feet square and having but two small windows. 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



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').

nant of his troops by his calmness and courage. Not long after, a second expedition was sent out against the French fort, in which Washington led the advance. The garrison fled at his approach, the English colors were run up, and the place was named Pittsburgh, in honor of William Pitt, then virtually prime minister of England.¹

About the same time, the English took the forts on the Bay of Fundy, and cruelly drove out the peaceful French settlers from Acadia.² This gave them control of Nova Scotia. Other successes followed, by which they obtained possession of important points. Finally, Canada was won from the French by Wolfe's victory over Montcalm, at Quebec (1759), where both gallant soldiers verified the truth of the lines, "The paths of glory lead but to the grave,"³ which the English general had quoted to some brother-officers the evening before the attack. This ended the war. Spain now ceded Florida to Great Britain, so that in 1763, when peace was made, the English flag waved over the whole eastern half of the American continent, from the Atlantic to the Mississippi. Thus, within a comparatively few years, Great Britain had gained an empire in the East (India), and another in the West (America). A few more such conquests and her "morning drum-beat, following the sun, and keeping company with the hours" would literally "circle the earth with one continuous and unbroken strain of the martial airs of England."⁴

¹ He was secretary of state, but in point of influence was head of the Cabinet. See Paragraph No. 587.

² See Bancroft's *United States*, and Longfellow's *Evangeline*.

³ "The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour;
The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

—GRAY'S *Elegy* (1750).

"I would rather be the author of that poem," said Wolfe, "than to have the glory of beating the French to-morrow." Wolfe and Montcalm were both mortally wounded, and died within a few hours of each other.

⁴ Daniel Webster, speech of May 7, 1834.

595. Moral Condition of England; Intemperance; Rise of the Methodists.—But grand as were the military successes of the British arms, the reign of George II. was morally torpid. With the exception of a few public men like Pitt, the majority of the Whig party seemed animated by no higher motive than self-interest. It was an age whose want of faith, coarseness, and brutality were well portrayed by Hogarth's pencil and Fielding's pen. For a long time intemperance had been steadily on the increase; strong drink had taken the place of beer, and every attempt to restrict the traffic was met at the elections by the popular cry, "No gin, no king." The London taverns were thronged day and night, and in the windows of those frequented by the lowest class placards were exhibited with the tempting announcement, "Drunk for a penny; dead drunk for twopence; clean straw for nothing." On the straw lay men and women in beastly helplessness. Among the upper classes matters were hardly better. It was a common thing for great statesmen to drink at public dinners until one by one they slid out of their seats and disappeared under the table; and Robert Walpole, the late prime minister of England, said that when he was a young man his father would say to him as he poured out the wine, "Come, Robert, you shall drink twice while I drink once, for I will not permit the son in his sober senses to be witness of the intoxication of his father."¹

Such was the condition of England when a great religious revival began. Its leader was a student at Oxford, named John Wesley. He, with his brother Charles and a few others, were accustomed to meet at certain hours for devotional exercises. The regularity of their meetings and of their habits generally got for them the name of Methodists, which, like Quaker and many another nickname of the kind, was destined to become a title of respect and honor.

At first Wesley had no intention of separating from the Church

¹ See Coxe's *Memoirs of Sir Robert Walpole*, and Lecky's *England in the Eighteenth Century*.

of England, but labored only to quicken it to new life; eventually, however, he found it best to begin a more extended and independent movement. The revival swept over England with its regenerating influence, and extended across the sea to America. It was especially powerful among those who had hitherto scoffed at both church and Bible. Rough and hardened men were touched and melted to tears of repentance by the fervor of this Oxford graduate, whom neither threats nor ridicule could turn aside from his one great purpose of saving souls.

Unlike the church, he did not ask the multitude to come to him; he went to them. He rode on horseback from one end of the country to the other, preaching in the fields, under trees, which are still known throughout England by the expressive name of "Gospel Oaks," in cities, at the corners of the streets, on the docks, in the slums; in fact, wherever he could find listening ears and responsive hearts.

If we except the great Puritan movement of the seventeenth century, no such appeal had been heard since the days when Augustine and his band of monks set forth on their mission among the barbarous Saxons. The results answered fully to the zeal that awakened them. Better than the growing prosperity of extending commerce, better than all the conquests in the East or the West, was the new religious spirit which stirred the people of both England and America, and provoked the national church to emulation in good works, — which planted schools, checked intemperance, and brought into vigorous activity all that was best and bravest in a race that when true to itself is excelled by none.

596. Summary. — The history of the reign may be summed up in the movement which has just been described, and in the Asiatic, continental, and American wars with France which ended in the extension of the power of Great Britain in both hemispheres.

GEORGE III. — 1760–1820.

597. Accession and Character; the King's Struggle with the Whigs. — By the death of George II. his grandson,¹ George III., now came to the throne. The new king was a man of excellent character, who prided himself on having been born an Englishman. He had the best interests of his country at heart, but he lacked many of the qualities necessary to a great ruler, and although thoroughly conscientious, he was narrow and stubborn to the last degree. His mother, who had seen how ministers and parties ruled in England, was determined that her son should have the control, and her constant injunction to the young prince was, "Be king, George, be king!" so that when he came to power George was determined to be king if self-will would make him one.

But beneath this spirit of self-will there was moral principle. In being king, George III. intended to carry out a reform such as neither George I. nor II. could have accomplished, providing that either had had the will to undertake it.

The great Whig families of rank and wealth had now held uninterrupted possession of the government for nearly half a century. Their influence was so supreme that the sovereign had practically become a mere cipher, dependent for his authority on the political support which he received. The king was resolved that this state of things should continue no longer. He was determined to reassert the royal authority and secure a government which should reflect his principles, and to have a ministry to whom he could dictate, instead of one that dictated to him.

For a long time he struggled in vain, but at last succeeded, and found in Lord North a premier who bowed to the royal will, and endeavored to carry out George III.'s favorite policy of "governing for, but never by, the people." That policy finally resulted in calling forth the famous resolution of the House of Commons

¹ Frederick, Prince of Wales, George II.'s son, died before his father, leaving his son George heir to the throne. See Table, Paragraph No. 581.

that the king's influence "had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished";¹ but it had other consequences, which, as we shall presently see, were more far-reaching and disastrous than any one in the House of Commons then imagined.

598. Taxation of the American Colonies. — The wars of the two preceding reigns had largely increased the National Debt, and the government resolved to compel the American colonies to share in a more direct degree than they had yet done, the constantly increasing burden of taxation. England then, like all other European countries, regarded her colonies in a totally different way from what she does at present. It was an open question at that time whether colonial legislative rights existed save as a matter of concession or favor on the part of the home government. It is true that the government had found it expedient to grant or recognize such rights, but they had seldom been very clearly defined, and in many important respects no one knew just what the settlers of Virginia or Massachusetts might or might not do.² The general theory of the mother country was that the colonies were convenient receptacles for the surplus population, good or bad, of the British Islands; next, that they were valuable as sources of revenue and profit, politically and commercially; and lastly, that they furnished excellent opportunities for the king's friends to get office and make fortunes. Such was the feeling about India, and such, modified by difference of circumstances, it was respecting America. In consequence of this feeling, the policy pursued toward these settlements was severely restrictive. By the Navigation and other laws of earlier reigns,³ the American colonies were obliged to confine their trade to England alone, or to such ports as she directed. If they ventured to send a hogshead of tobacco or a bale of produce of any sort to another country, or

¹ Resolution moved by Mr. Dunning in 1780.

² See Story's Constitution of the United States.

³ Navigation Laws: see Paragraph No. 511.

by any but an English ship, they forfeited their goods.¹ On the other hand, the colonies were obliged to buy the products of British mills and factories, whether they found it to their advantage or not; the object of the government being to keep the colonies wholly dependent.

They were not permitted to make so much as a horse-shoe nail or print even a copy of the New Testament, but they might, nay, they must, trade with England and pay taxes to her.

It was resistance to these arbitrary measures which first caused trouble. In the reign of Charles II. the colonies endeavored to evade these oppressive laws. To punish them that monarch revoked the New England charters, thus depriving them of whatever degree of self-government they enjoyed, and compelling them to submit to the absolute will of the crown. Under the tyrannical sway of Governor Andros, who was shortly after sent over by James II. to rule, or rather misrule, in the king's name, an explosion of popular wrath occurred which showed that, loyal as the colonies were, they would not continue to endure treatment which no Englishman at home would bear.

599. The Stamp Act. — In accordance with these theories about the colonies, and to meet the pressing needs of the home government, the English ministry, as early as 1764, proceeded to levy a tax on the colonies in return for the protection they had granted them against the French and the Indians. The colonists had paid, however, as they believed, their full proportion of the expense of the war out of their own pockets, and for the future they felt abundantly able to protect themselves. But notwithstanding this plea, a specially obnoxious form of direct tax, called the Stamp Act, was brought forward in 1765. It required that all legal documents, such as deeds, wills, notes, receipts, and the like, should be written upon paper bearing high-priced government stamps. Not only the leading men among the colonists, but the colonists generally, protested

¹ This was the case with all produce of any importance; the exceptions need not be enumerated.

against the act, and Benjamin Franklin, with other agents, was sent to England to sustain their protests by argument and remonstrance. But in spite of their efforts the law was passed, and the stamps were duly sent over. The people, however, were determined not to use them, and much tumult ensued. In England strong sympathy with the colonists was expressed by William Pitt (who was shortly after created Earl of Chatham), Burke, Fox, and generally by what was well called "the brains of Parliament." Pitt in particular was extremely indignant. He urged the immediate repeal of the act, saying, "I rejoice that America has resisted." Pitt further declared that any taxation of the colonies without their representation in Parliament was tyranny, that opposition to such taxation was a duty, and that the spirit shown by the Americans was the same that in England had withstood the despotism of the Stuarts, and established the principle once for all that the king cannot take the subject's money without the subject's consent. Against such opposition the law could not stand. The act was accordingly repealed, amid great rejoicing in London; the church bells rang a peal of triumph, and the shipping in the Thames was illuminated; but the good effect on America was lost by the immediate passage of another act which maintained the unconditional right of England to legislate for the colonies, or, in other words, to tax them, if they saw fit, without their consent.

600. The Tea Tax and the "Boston Tea Party," with its Results.—Another plan was now devised for getting money from the colonies. Parliament enacted a law compelling the Americans to pay taxes on a number of imports, such as glass, paper, and tea. In opposition to this law, the colonists formed leagues refusing to use these taxed articles, while at the same time they encouraged smugglers to secretly land them, and the regular trade suffered accordingly. Parliament, finding that this was bad both for the government and for commerce, now abolished all of these duties except that on tea, which was retained for a double purpose: first, and chiefly, to maintain the principle of the right

of Great Britain to tax the colonies,¹ and next, to aid the East India Company, which was pleading piteously for help.

In consequence mainly of the refusal of the American colonists to buy tea, the London warehouses of the East India Company were full to overflowing with surplus stock, and the company itself was in a half-bankrupt condition. The custom had been for the company to bring the tea to England, pay a tax on it, and then sell it to be reshipped to America, where the colonists were expected to pay a tax. To aid the company in its embarrassment, the government now agreed to remit this first duty altogether, and to impose a tax of threepence (six cents) a pound on the consumers in America. Such an arrangement would, they argued, be an advantage all around, for first, it would aid the company to dispose of its stock, next, it would enable the colonists to get tea at a cheaper rate than before, and lastly, and most important of all, it would keep the principle of taxation in force. But the colonists did not accept this reasoning. In itself the three-penny tax was a trifle, but underlying it was a principle which seemed to the Americans no trifle; for such principles revolutions had been fought in the past; for such they would be fought in the future.

The colonists resolved not to have the tea at any price. A number of ships laden with the hated taxed herb arrived at the port of Boston. The tea was seized by a band of men disguised as Indians, and thrown into the harbor. The news of that action made the king and ministry furious. Parliament sympathized with the government, and in retaliation passed four acts unparalleled for their severity. The first was the Boston Port Bill, which closed the harbor to all trade; the second was the Massachusetts Bill, which virtually annulled the charter of the colony, took the government away from the people and gave it to the king; the third law ordered that Americans who committed murder in resistance to the law should be sent to England for trial; the fourth declared the country north of the Ohio and east of the

¹ "There must be one tax," said the king, "to keep up the right."

Mississippi a part of Canada¹—the object of this last act being to conciliate the French Canadians, and secure their help against the colonists in case of rebellion.

Even after this unjust action on the part of the government a compromise might have been effected, and peace maintained, if the counsels of the best men had been followed; but George III. would listen to no policy short of coercion: his one idea of *being king* at all hazards had become a monomania. Burke denounced the inexpediency of such oppression, and Fox, another prominent member of Parliament, wrote: "It is intolerable to think that it should be in the power of one blockhead to do so much mischief." For the time, at least, the king was as unreasonable as any of the Stuarts. The obstinacy of Charles I. cost him his head, that of James II., his kingdom, that of George III. resulted in a war which saddled the English tax-payer with an additional debt of six hundred millions of dollars, and ended by Great Britain's losing the fairest and richest dominions that she or any nation ever possessed.

601. The American Revolution; Recognition of the Independence of the United States.—In 1775 war began, and the fighting at Lexington and Bunker Hill showed that the Americans were in earnest. The cry of the colonies had been, "No taxation without representation"; now it had got beyond that, and was, "No legislation without representation." But events moved so fast that even this did not long suffice, and on July 4, 1776, the colonies, in congress assembled, solemnly declared themselves free and independent. As far back as the French war there was at least one man who foresaw this declaration. After the English had taken Quebec, Vergennes,² an eminent French statesman, said of the American colonies with respect to Great Britain, "They stand no longer in need of her protection; she will call on them

¹ Embracing territory now divided into the five States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

² Vergennes (Věr'zhěn').

to contribute toward supporting the burdens they have helped to bring on her; and they will answer by striking off all dependence."¹

This prophecy was now fulfilled. Then the English ministry became alarmed, they were ready to make terms, they would in fact grant anything but independence; * but they had opened their eyes to the facts too late, and nothing short of independence would now satisfy the colonists. It is said that attempts were made to open negotiations with General Washington, but the commander-in-chief declined to receive a letter from the English government addressed to him, not in his official capacity, but as "George Washington, Esq.," and so the matter came to nothing. The war went on with varying success through seven heavy years, until, with the aid of the French, the Americans defeated Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown in 1781.² By that battle France got her revenge for the loss of Quebec in 1759, and America finally won the cause for which she had spent so much life and treasure.

On a foggy December morning in 1782, George III. entered the House of Lords, and with a faltering voice read a paper in which he acknowledged the independence of the United States of America. He closed his reading with the prayer that neither Great Britain nor America might suffer from the separation; and he expressed the hope that religion, language, interest, and affection might prove an effectual bond of union between the two countries. Eventually the separation proved, as Goldwin Smith says,³ "a mutual advantage, since it removed to a great extent the arbitrary restrictions on trade, gave a new impetus to commerce, and immensely increased the wealth of both nations."

¹ Bancroft's History of the United States.

² It is pleasant to know that a hundred years later, in the autumn of 1881, a number of English gentlemen were present at the centennial celebration of the taking of Yorktown to express their hearty good will toward the nation which their ancestors had tried in vain to keep a part of Great Britain.

³ Goldwin Smith's Lectures on Modern History (the Foundation of the American Colonies). * This was in 1778, after the French treaty with the U. S.