

602. The Lord George Gordon Riots.—While the American war was in progress, England had not been entirely quiet at home. In consequence of the repeal of the most stringent of the unwise and unjust laws against the Roman Catholics, — certainly unwise and unjust in their continuance for so many generations, if not in their origin, — Lord George Gordon, a half-crazed Scotch fanatic, now led an attack upon the government (1780). For six days, London was at the mercy of a furious mob, which set fire to Catholic chapels, pillaged many dwellings, and committed every species of outrage. Newgate prison was broken into, the prisoners released, and the prison burned.¹ No one was safe from attack who did not wear a blue cockade to show that he was a Protestant, and a man's house was not secure unless he chalked "No Popery" on the door in conspicuous letters; or, as one individual did in order to make doubly sure, "No Religion whatever." Before the riot was finally subdued a large amount of property had been destroyed and many lives sacrificed.

603. Impeachment of Warren Hastings.—The same year that the American war came to an end Warren Hastings, governor-general of India, was impeached for corrupt and cruel government, and was tried before the House of Lords, gathered in Westminster Hall. On the side of Hastings was the powerful East India Company, ruling over a territory many times larger than the whole of Great Britain. Against him were arrayed the three ablest and most eloquent men in England, — Burke, Fox, and Sheridan. The trial was continued at intervals for eight years, and resulted in the acquittal of the accused; but it was proved that the chief business of those who went out to India was to wring a fortune from the natives, and then go back to England to spend it in a life of luxury; this fact, and the stupendous corruption that was shown to exist, eventually broke down the gigantic monopoly, and the country was thrown open to the trade of all nations.²

¹ See Dickens's *Barnaby Rudge*.

² See Burke's *Speeches*; also Macaulay's *Essay on Warren Hastings*.

604. Liberty of the Press; Law and Prison Reforms; Abolition of the Slave Trade.—Since the discontinuance of the censorship of the press,¹ though newspapers were nominally free to discuss public affairs, yet the government had no intention of permitting any severe criticism. On the other hand, there were men who were equally determined to speak their minds through the press on political as on all other matters. In the early part of the reign, John Wilkes, an able but scurrilous writer, attacked the policy of the crown in violent terms. A few years later a writer, who signed himself "Junius," began a series of letters in a daily paper, in which he handled the king and the king's friends still more roughly. An attempt was made by the government to punish Wilkes and the publisher of the "Junius" letters, but it signally failed in both cases, and the public feeling was plainly in favor of the right of the freest expression,² which was eventually conceded.

Up to this time Parliamentary debates had rarely been reported. In fact, under the Stuarts and the Tudors, members of Parliament would have run the risk of imprisonment if their criticisms of royalty had been made public; but now the papers began to contain the speeches and votes of both Houses on important questions. Every effort was made to suppress these reports, but again the press gained the day; and henceforth the nation learned whether its representatives really represented the will of the people, and so was able to hold them strictly accountable, — a matter of vital importance in every free government.

Another field of reform was also found. The times were brutal. The pillory still stood in the centre of London;³ and if the unfortunate offender who was put in it escaped with a shower of mud and other unsavory missiles, instead of clubs and brick-

¹ See Paragraph No. 550.

² Later, during the excitement caused by the French Revolution, there was a reaction from this feeling, but it was only temporary.

³ The pillory (see Paragraph No. 580) was not abolished until the accession of Queen Victoria.

bats, he was lucky indeed. Gentlemen of fashion arranged pleasure parties to visit the penitentiaries to see the wretched women whipped. The whole code of criminal law was savagely vindictive. Capital punishment was inflicted for upwards of two hundred offences, many of which would now be thought to be sufficiently punished by one or two months' imprisonment in the house of correction. Not only men, but women and children even, were hanged for pilfering goods or food worth a few shillings.¹ The jails were crowded with poor wretches whom want had driven to theft, and who were "worked off," as the saying was, on the gallows every Monday morning in batches of a dozen or twenty, in sight of the jeering, drunken crowds who gathered to witness their death agonies.

Through the efforts of Sir Samuel Romilly, Jeremy Bentham, and others, a reform was effected in this bloody code; and by the labors of the philanthropic John Howard, and forty years later of Elizabeth Fry, the jails were purified of abuses which had made them not only dens of suffering and disease, but schools of crime as well. The laws respecting punishment for debt were also changed for the better, and thousands of miserable beings who were without means to satisfy their creditors were now set free, instead of being kept in useless life-long imprisonment. At the same time Clarkson, Wilberforce, Fox, and Pitt were endeavoring to abolish that relic of barbarism, the African slave trade, which, after twenty years of persistent effort both in Parliament and out, they at last accomplished.

605. War with France; Battle of the Nile; Trafalgar; Spain.

— In 1789 the French Revolution broke out. It was a violent and successful attempt to destroy those feudal institutions which the nation had outgrown, and which had, as we have seen, disappeared gradually in England after the Wars of the Roses. At first the revolutionists received the hearty sympathy of many of the

¹ Five shillings, or \$1.25, was the hanging limit; anything stolen above that sum in money or goods sent the thief to the gallows.

Whig party, but after the execution of Louis XVI. and Queen Marie Antoinette,¹ England became alarmed not only at the horrible scenes of the Reign of Terror, but at the establishment of that democratic Republic which seemed to justify them; and joined an alliance of the principal European powers for the purpose of restoring the French monarchy. Napoleon had now become the real head of the French nation, and seemed bent on making himself master of all Europe. He undertook an expedition against Egypt and the East which was intended as a stepping-stone toward the ultimate conquest of the English empire in India, but his plans were frustrated by Nelson's victory over the French fleet at the battle of the Nile. With the assistance of Spain, Napoleon next prepared to invade England, and was so confident of success that he caused a gold medal to be struck, bearing the inscription, "Descent upon England." "Struck at London, 1804." But the combined French and Spanish fleets on whose co-operation Napoleon was depending were driven by the English into the harbor of Cadiz, and the great expedition was postponed for another year. When, in the autumn of 1805, they left Cadiz harbor, Lord Nelson lay waiting for them off Cape Trafalgar,² near by. Two days later he descried the enemy at daybreak. The men on both sides felt that the decisive struggle was at hand. With the exception of a long, heavy swell the sea was calm, with a light breeze, but sufficient to bring the two fleets gradually within range.

"As they drifted on their path
There was silence deep as death;
And the boldest held his breath
For a time."³

Just before the action, Nelson ran up this signal to the mast-head of his ship, where all might see it: "ENGLAND EXPECTS EVERY MAN TO DO HIS DUTY." The answer to it was three ringing cheers from the entire fleet, and the fight began. When it

¹ See Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution (Death of Marie Antoinette).

² Cape Trafalgar (Traf-al'-gar).

³ Campbell's Battle of the Baltic, but applicable as well to Trafalgar.

ended, Napoleon's boasted navy was no more. Trafalgar Square, in the heart of London, with its tall column bearing aloft a statue of Nelson, commemorates the decisive victory, which was dearly bought with the life of the great admiral. The battle of Trafalgar snuffed out Napoleon's projected invasion of England. He had lost his ships, and their commander had in despair committed suicide; so the French emperor could no longer hope to bridge "the ditch," as he derisively called the boisterous Channel, whose waves rose like a wall between him and the island which he hated. A few years later, Napoleon, who had taken possession of Spain, and placed his brother on the throne, was driven from that country by Sir Arthur Wellesley, destined to be better known as the Duke of Wellington, and the crown was restored to the Spanish nation. ✓

606. Second War with the United States.—The United States waged its first war with Great Britain to gain an independent national existence; in 1812 it declared a second war to secure its personal and maritime rights. During the long and desperate struggle between England and France, each nation had prohibited neutral powers from commercial intercourse with the other, or with any country friendly to the other. Furthermore, the English government had laid down the principle that a person born on British soil could not become a citizen of another nation, but that "once an Englishman always an Englishman" was the only true doctrine. In accordance with that theory, it claimed the right to search American ships and take from them and force into their own service any seamen supposed to be of British birth. In this way Great Britain had seized more than 6000 men, and notwithstanding their protest that they were American citizens, either by birth or by naturalization, had compelled them to enter the English navy. Other points in dispute between the two countries were in a fair way of being settled amicably, but there appeared to be no method of coming to terms in regard to the question of search and impressment, which was the most important of all, since, though the demand of the United States was, in the popular

phrase of the day, for "Free Trade and Sailors' Rights," it was the last which was especially emphasized. In 1812 war against Great Britain was declared, and an attack made on Canada which resulted in the American forces being driven back. During the war British troops landed in Maryland, burned the Capitol and other public buildings in Washington, and destroyed the Congressional Library. On the other hand, the American navy had unexpected and extraordinary successes on the ocean and the lakes. Out of sixteen sea combats with approximately equal forces, the Americans gained thirteen.¹ The contest closed with the signal defeat of the English at New Orleans under Sir Edward Pakenham, brother-in-law of the Duke of Wellington, by the Americans under General Andrew Jackson. The right of search was thenceforth dropped, although it was not formally abandoned by Great Britain until 1856.

607. Battle of Waterloo.—On Sunday, June 18, 1815, the English war against Napoleon, which had been carried on almost constantly since his accession to power, culminated in the decisive battle of Waterloo.² Napoleon had crossed the Belgian frontier, in order that he might come up with the British before they could form a junction with their Prussian allies. All the previous night the rain had fallen in torrents, and when the soldiers rose from their cheerless bivouac in the trampled and muddy fields of rye, a drizzling rain was still falling. Napoleon planned the battle with the purpose of destroying first the English and then the Prussian forces, but Wellington held his own against the furious attacks of the French. It was evident, however, that even the "Iron Duke," as he was called, could not continue to withstand the terrible assaults many hours longer. As time passed on, and he saw his solid squares melting away under the murderous French fire, as line after line of his soldiers coming forward, silently stepped into the places of their fallen comrades, while the ex-

¹ Fiske's *Washington and his Country*.

² Waterloo: near Brussels, Belgium.

pected Prussian reinforcements still delayed their appearance, the English commander exclaimed, "O that night or Blücher¹ would come!" At last Blücher with his Prussians did come, and as Grouchy,² the leader of a division on whom Napoleon was counting, did not, Waterloo was finally won by the combined strength of the allies, and not long after, Napoleon was sent to die a prisoner on the desolate rock of St. Helena.

When all was over, Wellington said to Blücher, as he stood by him on a little eminence looking down upon the field covered with the dead and dying, "A great victory is the saddest thing on earth, except a great defeat."

With that victory ended the second Hundred Years' War of England with France, which began with the War of the Spanish Succession in 1704³ under Marlborough, and which originally had for its double object the humbling of the power that threatened the independence of England, and the protection of those colonies which had now separated from the mother-country, and had become, partly through French help, the republic of the United States of America.

608. Increase of the National Debt; Taxation. — Owing to these hundred years and more of war, the national debt of Great Britain and Ireland, which in 1688 was much less than a million of pounds had now reached the enormous amount of over nine hundred millions (or \$4,500,000,000) bearing yearly interest at the rate of more than \$160,000,000.⁴ So great had been the strain on the finances of the country, that the Bank of England suspended payment, and many heavy failures occurred. In addition to this, a succession of bad harvests sent up the price of wheat to such a point that at one time an ordinary sized loaf of bread cost the farm laborer more than half a day's wages. Taxes had gone on increasing until it seemed as though the people could not endure the burden. As Sydney Smith declared, with entire truth, there

¹ Blücher (Bloo'ker).

² Grouchy (Grou'she').

³ See Paragraph No. 557.

⁴ Encyclopædia Britannica, "National Debt."

were duties on everything. They began, he said, in childhood with "the boy's taxed top"; they followed to old age, until at last "the dying Englishman pouring his taxed medicine into a taxed spoon, flung himself back on a taxed bed, and died in the arms of an apothecary who had payed a tax of a hundred pounds for the privilege of putting him to death."¹

609. Union of Great Britain and Ireland. — For a century after the battle of the Boyne Ireland can hardly be said to have had a history.² The iron hand of English despotism had crushed the spirit out of the inhabitants, and they suffered in silence. During the first part of the eighteenth century the destitution of the people was so great that Dean Swift, in bitter mockery of the government's neglect, published what he called his "Modest Proposal" for relieving the misery of the half-starved millions by allowing them, as he said, to cook and eat their own children, or else sell them to the butchers. After the French wars broke out an association was formed called the "United Irishmen," which endeavored to secure the aid of France. The rebellion was quelled, and in the last year of the eighteenth century the English government succeeded by the most unscrupulous bribery in buying up a sufficient number of members of the so-called Irish Parliament to secure a vote in favor of union with Great Britain, and (1800) the two countries were joined — at least in name — under the title of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

William Pitt, son of the late Earl of Chatham, used his influence to obtain for Ireland a fair representation in the united Parliament, urging that it was for the interest of the two countries that both Catholics and Protestants should be eligible for election. His advice, however, was rejected, and although a large majority of the Irish people were zealous Catholics, not a single member of that church was admitted to the House of Commons. To increase if possible the hatred of England, free trade with England had up to

¹ Sydney Smith's Essays, Review of Seybert's Annals of the United States.

² Green's English People.

this time been withheld from the Irish, greatly to their loss. They were thus treated as a foreign and hostile race, from a commercial as well as a religious point of view.

610. Material Progress; Canals; Steam; Distress of the Working Class; the North of England.—The reign of George III. was, however, in several directions one of marked progress, especially in England. Just after the king's accession a canal was opened in the north for the transportation of goods. It was the first of a system which has since become so widely extended that the canals of England now exceed in length its navigable rivers. The two form such a complete network of water communication that it is said that no place in the realm is more than fifteen miles distant from this means of transportation, which connects all the large towns with each other and with the chief ports.

In 1769 James Watt obtained the first patent for his improved steam engine.¹ The story is told that he took a working model of it to show to the king. His majesty patronizingly asked him, "Well, my man, what have you to sell?" The inventor promptly answered, "What kings covet, may it please your majesty, — *power!*" The story is perhaps too good to be true, but the fact of the "power" could not be denied—power, too, not simply mechanical, but in its results, moral and political as well. In 1811 such was the increase of machinery driven by steam, and such the improvements made by Hargreaves, Arkwright, Crompton, and others in machinery for spinning and weaving, that much distress arose among the working classes. The price of bread was growing higher and higher, while in many districts skilled operatives could not earn by their utmost efforts two dollars a week. They saw their hand-labor supplanted by patent "monsters of iron and fire," which never grew weary, which subsisted on water and coal, and never asked for wages. Led by a man named Ludd, the starving workmen attacked the mills, broke the machinery in pieces, and sometimes burnt the buildings. The

¹ See Paragraph No. 570.

riots were at length suppressed, and a number of the leaders executed; but a great change for the better was at hand, and steam was soon to remedy the evils it had seemingly created.

Up to this period the North of England remained the poorest part of the country. The population was sparse, ignorant, and unprosperous. It was in the south that improvements originated. In the reign of Henry VIII. the north fought against the dissolution of the monasteries; in Elizabeth's reign it resisted Protestantism; in that of George I. it sided with the Pretender. But steam wrought a great change. Factories were built, population increased, cities sprang up, and wealth grew apace. Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Nottingham, Leicester, Sheffield, and Liverpool made the north a new country. The saying is now current that "what Lancashire thinks to-day, England will think to-morrow." So much for James Watt's "power" and its results. ✓

611. Discovery of Oxygen; Introduction of Gas; the Safety Lamp; Steam Navigation.—Notwithstanding the progress that had been made in many departments of knowledge, the science of chemistry remained almost stationary until, in 1774, Dr. Joseph Priestley discovered oxygen, the most abundant, as well as the most important, element in nature. That discovery not only "laid the foundation of modern chemical science,"¹ but, as Professor Liebig remarks, "the knowledge of the composition of the atmosphere, of the solid crust of the earth, of water, and of their influence upon the life of plants and animals was linked with it." It proved, also, of direct practical utility, since the successful pursuit of innumerable trades and manufactures, with the profitable separation of metals from their ores, stands in close connection with the facts which Priestley's experiments made known.

As intellectual light spread, so also did material light. It was not until near the close of the reign of George III. that London could be said to be lighted at night. A few feeble oil lamps were in use, but the streets were dark and dangerous, and highway rob-

¹ Professor Youmans's New Chemistry.

beries were frequent. About 1815 a company was formed to light the city with gas. After much opposition from those who were in the whale-oil interest the enterprise succeeded. The new light, as Miss Martineau has said, did more to prevent crime than all that the government had accomplished since the days of Alfred. It changed, too, the whole aspect of the capital, though it was only the forerunner of the electric light, which has since changed it even more. The sight of the great city now, when viewed at night from Highgate archway on the north, or looking down the Thames from Westminster bridge, is something never to be forgotten. It gives one a realizing sense of the immensity of "this province covered with houses," which cannot be got so well in any other way. It brings to mind, too, those lines expressive of the contrasts of wealth and poverty, success and failure, inevitable in such a place:—

"O gleaming lamps of London, that gem the city's crown,
What fortunes lie within you, O lights of London town!

* * * * *
O cruel lamps of London, if tears your light could drown,
Your victims' eyes would weep them, O lights of London town."¹

The same year in which gas was introduced, Sir Humphry Davy invented the miner's safety lamp. Without seeking a patent, he generously gave his invention to the world, finding his reward in the knowledge that it would be the means of saving thousands of lives wherever men are called to work underground.

Since Watt had demonstrated the value of steam for driving machinery, a number of inventors had been experimenting with the new power, in the hope that they might apply it to propelling vessels. In 1807 Robert Fulton, an American, built the first steamboat, and made the voyage from New York to Albany in it. Shortly after, his vessel began to make regular trips on the Hudson. A number of years later a similar boat began to carry passengers on the Clyde, in Scotland. Finally, in 1819, the bold undertaking was made of crossing the Atlantic by steam. An American steamship, the *Savannah*, of about three hundred tons, set the

¹ From the play "The Lights of London."

example by a voyage from the United States to Liverpool. Dr. Lardner, an English scientist, had proved to his own satisfaction that ocean steam navigation was impracticable. The book containing the doctor's demonstration was brought to America by the *Savannah* on her return. Twenty-one years afterward, the Cunard and other great lines, with fleets of vessels ranging from 5,000 to 8,000 tons, were established, making passages from continent to continent in about as many days as the ordinary sailing-vessels formerly required weeks. The fact that during a period of more than forty-five years one of these lines has never lost a passenger is conclusive proof that Providence is on the side of steam, when steam has men that know how to handle it.

612. Literature; Art; Education; Dress.—The reign of George III. is marked by a long list of names eminent in letters and art. First in point of time among these stands Dr. Samuel Johnson, the compiler of the first English dictionary worthy of the name, and that on which those of our own day are based to a considerable extent, the author also of the story of *Rasselas*—which may be called a satire on discontent and the search after happiness. Next, stands Johnson's friend, Oliver Goldsmith, famous for his genius, his wit, his improvidence, which was always getting him into trouble, and for his novel, the "Vicar of Wakefield," with his poems. Edward Gibbon, David Hume, author of the history of England, and Adam Smith come next in time. In 1776 the first published his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," which after more than a hundred years still stands the ablest history of the subject in any language. In the same year Adam Smith issued "An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations," which had an immediate and permanent effect on legislation respecting commerce, trade, and finance; during this period, also, Sir William Blackstone became prominent as a writer on law, and Edmund Burke, the distinguished orator and statesman, wrote his "Reflections on the French Revolution." The poets Burns, Byron, and Shelley, with Sheridan, the orator and dra-

matist, and Sterne, the humorist, belong to this reign; so, too, does the witty satirist, Sydney Smith, and Sir Walter Scott, whose works, like those of Shakespeare, have "made the dead past live again." Maria Edgeworth and Jane Austen have left admirable pictures of the age in their stories of Irish and English life. Coleridge and Wordsworth began to attract attention toward the last of this period, and to be much read by those who loved the poetry of thought and the poetry of nature; while early in the next reign, Charles Lamb published his delightful "Essays of Elia."

In art we have the first English painters and engravers. Hogarth, who died a few years after the beginning of the reign, was celebrated for his coarse but perfect representations of low life and street scenes; and his series of election pictures with his "Beer Lane" and "Gin Alley" are valuable for the insight they give into the history of the times. The chief portrait painters were Reynolds, Lawrence, and Gainsborough, of whom the last afterward became noted for his landscapes. They were followed by Wilkie, whose pictures of "The Rent Day," "The Reading of the Will," with many others, tell a story of interest to every one who looks at them. Last, and greatest, came Turner, who surpassed all former artists in his power of reproducing scenes in nature. At the same time, Bewick, whose cuts used to be the delight of every child that read "Æsop's Fables," gave a new impulse to wood-engraving, while Flaxman rose to be the leading English sculptor, and Wedgwood introduced useful and beautiful articles of pottery.

In common school education little advance had been made for many generations. In the country the great mass of the people were nearly as ignorant as they were in the darkest part of the Middle Ages. Hardly a peasant over forty years of age could be found who could read a verse in the Bible, and not one in ten could write his name. There were no cheap books or newspapers, no railroads, no system of public instruction. The poor scarcely ever left the counties in which they were born, they knew nothing of what was going on in the world, and their education was wholly of that practical kind which comes from work and things, not

books and teachers; yet many of them with only these simple helps found out two secrets which the highest culture sometimes misses, — how to be useful and how to be happy.¹

The close of George III.'s reign marks the beginning of the present age. It was indicated in many ways, and among others by the change in dress. Gentlemen were leaving off the picturesque costumes of the past — the cocked hats, elaborate wigs, silk stockings, ruffles, velvet coats, and swords, — and gradually putting on the plain democratic garb, sober in cut and color, by which we know them to-day.²

613. Last Days of George III. — In 1820 George III. died at the age of seventy-eight. During ten years he had been blind, deaf, and insane, having lost his reason not very long after the jubilee, which celebrated the fiftieth year of his reign in 1809. Once, in a lucid interval, he was found by the queen singing a hymn and playing an accompaniment on the harpsichord. He then knelt and prayed aloud for her, for his family, and for the nation; and in closing, for himself, that it might please God to avert his heavy calamity, or grant him resignation to bear it. Then he burst into tears, and his reason again fled.³ In consequence of the incapacity of the king, his eldest son was appointed Prince Regent, and on the king's death came to the throne.

614. Summary. — The long reign of George III., covering over sixty years, was in every way eventful. During that time England lost her possessions in America. During that period, also, Ireland was united to Great Britain. The wars with France, which lasted more than twenty years, ended in the victory of Trafalgar and the still greater victory of Waterloo. In consequence of these wars, with that of the American revolution, the national debt of Great Britain rose to a height which rendered the burden of taxation

¹ See Wordsworth's poem "Resolution and Independence."

² See Martin's Civil Costumes of Great Britain.

³ See Thackeray's Four Georges.

well-nigh insupportable. The second war with the United States in 1812 resulted in completing American independence, and England was forced to relinquish the right of search. The two greatest reforms of the period were the abolition of the slave trade and the mitigation of the laws against debt and crime; the chief material improvement was the application of steam to manufacturing and navigation.

GEORGE IV. — 1820—1830.

615. Accession and Character of George IV. — George IV., eldest son of the late king, came to the throne in his fifty-eighth year; though owing to his father's insanity, he had virtually been king since 1811. His habits of life had made him a selfish, dissolute spendthrift, who, like Charles II., cared only for pleasure. Though while Prince of Wales he had had for many years an income of upwards of half a million of dollars, which was largely increased at a later period, yet he was always hopelessly in debt. In 1795 Parliament appropriated over \$3,000,000 to relieve him from his most pressing creditors, but his wild extravagance soon involved him in difficulties again, so that had it not been for help given by the long-suffering tax-payers, his royal highness must have become as bankrupt in purse as he was in character. After his accession matters became worse rather than better. At his coronation, which cost the nation over a million of dollars, he appeared in hired jewels, which he forgot to return, and which Parliament had to pay for. Not only did he waste the nation's money more recklessly than ever, but he used whatever political influence he had to oppose such means of reform as the times demanded.

616. Discontent and Conspiracy; the "Manchester Massacre." — When in 1811 the prince became regent, he desired to form a Whig ministry, not because he cared for Whig principles, but solely for the reason that he should thereby be acting in opposition to his father's wishes. Finding his purpose impracticable,

the prince accepted Tory rule, and a government was formed with Lord Liverpool as its nominal head, which had for its main object the exclusion of the Catholics from representation in Parliament.

Liverpool was a dull, well-meaning man, who utterly failed to comprehend the real tendency of the age. He was the son of a commoner who had been raised to the peerage. He had always had a reputation for honest obstinacy, and for little else. After he became premier, Madame de Staël, who was visiting England, asked him one day, "What has become of that *very* stupid man, Mr. Jenkinson?" "Madame," answered the unfortunate minister, "he is now Lord Liverpool."¹

From such a government, which continued in power for fifteen years, nothing but trouble could be expected. The misery of the country was great. Food was selling at famine prices. Thousands were on the verge of starvation, and tens of thousands did not get enough to eat. Trade was seriously depressed, and multitudes were unable to obtain work. Under these circumstances the suffering masses undertook to hold public meetings to discuss the cause and cure of these evils, but the authorities looked upon these meetings with suspicion, especially as violent speeches against the government were often made, and dispersed them as seditious and tending to riot and rebellion. Many large towns at this period had no voice in legislation. At Birmingham, which was one of this class, the citizens had met and chosen, though without legal authority, a representative to Parliament. Manchester, another important manufacturing town, now determined to do the same. The people were warned not to assemble, but they persisted in doing so, on the ground that peaceful discussion, with the election of a representative, was no violation of law. The meeting was held, and through the blundering of a magistrate, it ended in an attack by a body of troops, by which many people were wounded and a number killed. The bitter feeling caused by the "Manches-

¹ Earl's English Premiers, Vol. II. Madame de Staël (Stäl): a celebrated French writer.

ter Massacre," as it was called, and by the repressive measures of the government generally, led to the "Cato Street Conspiracy." Shortly after the accession of the new king a few desperate men banded together, and meeting in a stable in Cato Street, London, formed a plot to murder Lord Liverpool and the entire Cabinet at a dinner at which all the ministers were to be present. The plot was discovered, and the conspirators speedily disposed of by the gallows or transportation, but nothing was done to relieve the suffering which had provoked the intended crime. No new conspiracy was attempted, but in the course of the next twenty-five years a silent revolution took place, which, as we shall see later, obtained for the people that representation in Parliament which they had hitherto vainly attempted to get.

617. Queen Caroline. — In 1785 Prince George had, contrary to law,¹ married Mrs. Fitzherbert, a Roman Catholic lady of excellent character, and possessed of great beauty. Ten years later, partly through royal compulsion, and partly to get money to pay off some of his numerous debts, the prince married his cousin, Caroline of Brunswick. The union proved a source of unhappiness to both. The princess lacked both discretion and delicacy, and her husband, who disliked her from the first, was reckless and brutal toward her. He separated from her in a year's time, and as soon as she could she withdrew to the continent. On his accession to the throne the king excluded Queen Caroline's name from the Prayer Book, and next applied to Parliament for a divorce on the ground of the queen's unfaithfulness to her marriage vows.

Henry Brougham, afterwards Lord Brougham, acted as the queen's counsel. No sufficient evidence was brought against her, and the ministry declined to take further action. It was decided, however, that she could not claim the honor of coronation, to

¹ By the Royal Marriage Act of 1772, no descendant of George II. could make a legal marriage without the consent of the reigning sovereign, unless twenty-five years of age, and the marriage was not objected to by Parliament.

which, as queen-consort, she had a right sanctioned by custom but not secured by law. When the king was crowned, no place was provided for her. By the advice of her counsel, she presented herself at the entrance of Westminster Abbey as the coronation ceremony was about to begin; but, by order of her husband, admission was refused, and she retired to die, heart-broken, a few days after

618. Three Reforms. — In 1828 the Duke of Wellington, a Tory in politics, became prime minister. His sympathies in all matters of legislation were with the king, but he made a virtue of necessity, and for the time acted with those who demanded reform. The Corporation Act, which was originally passed in the reign of Charles II., and had for its object the exclusion of Dissenters from all town or corporate offices, was now repealed: henceforth a man might become a mayor, alderman, or bank president, and the like, without belonging to the Church of England. At the same time the Test Act, which had also been passed in Charles II.'s reign to keep both Catholics and Dissenters out of government offices, whether civil or military, was repealed. The next year (1829) a still greater reform was carried. For a long period the Roman Catholic Emancipation party had been laboring to obtain the abolition of the unjust laws which had been on the statute books for over a century and a half, by which Catholics were excluded from the right to sit in Parliament — laws which, it will be remembered, were enacted at the time of the alleged "Popish Plot," and in consequence of the perjured evidence given by Titus Oates.¹ After the most strenuous opposition of the king and his party, including the Duke of Wellington, the latter became convinced that further opposition was useless, and he took the lead in securing the success of a measure which he heartily hated, solely, as he declared, to avert civil war.

But at the same time that Catholic emancipation was granted, an act was passed depriving a very large class of small Irish land-

¹ See Paragraph No. 530. See also Sydney Smith's "Peter Plymley's Letters."

holders of the right to vote, on the pretext that they would be influenced by either their landlord or their priest.¹

Under the new order of things, Daniel O'Connell, an Irish gentleman of an old and honorable family, and a man of distinguished ability, came forward as leader of the Catholics. After much difficulty he succeeded in taking his seat in the House of Commons, and henceforth devoted himself, though without avail, to the repeal of the act uniting Ireland with England, and to the restoration of an independent Irish Parliament.

619. The New Police. — Although London had now a population of a million and a half, it still had no effective police. The guardians of the peace at that date were infirm old men who spent their time dozing in sentry-boxes, and had neither the strength nor energy to be of service in any emergency. The young fellows of fashion considered these venerable constables as legitimate game, and often amused themselves by upsetting the sentry-boxes with their occupants, leaving the latter helpless in the street, kicking and struggling like turtles turned on their backs, and as powerless to get on their feet again. During the last year of the reign Sir Robert Peel got a bill passed which organized a new and thoroughly efficient police force, properly equipped and uniformed. Great was the outcry against this innovation, and the "men in blue" were hooted at, not only by London "roughs," but by respectable citizens, as "Bobbies" or "Peelers," in derisive allusion to their founder. But the "Bobbies," who do not carry even a visible club, were not to be jeered out of existence, and they have henceforth continued to do their duty in a way which long since gained for them the good will of all who care for the preservation of law and order.

620. Death of the King. — George IV. died in the summer of 1830. Of him it may well be said, though in a very different sense from that in which the expression was originally used, that

¹ The property qualification in Ireland was raised from £2 to £10.

"nothing in his life became him like the leaving it."¹ During his ten years' reign he had squandered enormous sums of money in gambling and dissipation, and had done his utmost to block the wheels of political progress. How far this son of an insane father was responsible, it may not be for us to judge. Walter Scott, who had a kind word for almost every one, and especially for any one of the Tory party, did not fail to say something in praise of the generous good nature of his friend George IV. The sad thing is that his voice is the only one. In a whole nation the rest are silent; or, if they speak, it is neither to commend nor to defend, but to condemn.

621. Summary. — The legislative reforms of George IV.'s reign are its chief features. The repeal of the Test and Corporation acts and Catholic emancipation were tardy measures of justice, for which neither the king nor his ministers deserve any credit, but which, none the less, accomplished great and permanent good.

WILLIAM IV. — 1830-1837.

622. Accession and Character of William IV. — As George IV. left no heir, his brother William, a man of sixty-five, now came to the throne. He had passed most of his life on ship-board, having been placed in the navy when a mere lad. He was somewhat rough in his manner, and cared nothing for the ceremony and etiquette that were so dear to both George III. and IV. His faults, however, were on the surface. He was frank, hearty, and a friend to the people, to whom he was familiarly known as "the Sailor King."

623. Need of Parliamentary Reform; Rotten Boroughs. — From the beginning of this reign it was evident that the great question which must come up for settlement was that of Parliamentary representation. Large numbers of the people of England had now no voice in the government. This unfortunate state of

¹ Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Act I. Sc. 4.

things was chiefly the result of the great changes which had taken place in the growth of the population of the midlands and the north. Since the introduction of steam the rapid increase of manufactures and commerce had built up many large towns in the iron, coal, pottery, and wool-raising districts, such as Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Manchester, which could not send a member to Parliament; while, on the other hand, many places in the South of England which did send, had long since ceased to be of any importance. Furthermore, the representation was of the most hap-hazard description. In one section no one could vote except substantial property-holders, in another, none but town officers, while in a third, every man who had a tenement big enough to boil a pot in, and hence called a "Potwalloper," possessed the right. To this singular state of things the nation had long been indifferent. During the Middle Ages the inhabitants often had no desire either to go to Parliament themselves or to send others. The expense of the journey was great, the compensation was small, and unless some important matter of special interest to the people was at stake, they preferred staying at home; so that it was often almost as difficult for the sheriff to get a distant county member up to the House of Commons in London as it would have been to carry him there a prisoner to be tried for his life. Now, however, everything was changed; the rise of political parties, the constant and heavy taxation, the jealousy of the increase of royal authority, the influence and honor of the position of a Parliamentary representative, all conspired to make men eager to obtain their full share in the management of the government. This new interest had begun as far back as the civil wars of the seventeenth century, and when Cromwell came to power he effected many much-needed reforms; but after the restoration of the Stuarts the Protector's wise measures were repealed or neglected, the old order, or rather disorder, again asserted itself, and in many cases matters were worse than ever. Thus, for instance, the borough or city of Old Sarum, in Wiltshire, which had once been an important place had, at an early

period, gradually declined through the growth of New Sarum, or Salisbury, near by. In the sixteenth century the parent city had so completely decayed that not a single habitation was left on the desolate hill-top where the castle and cathedral once stood. At the foot of the hill was an old tree. In 1830 the owner of that tree and of the field where it grew sent two members to Parliament — that action represented what had been regularly going on for something like three hundred years! In Bath, on the other hand, none of the citizens, out of a large population, might vote except the mayor, aldermen, and common council. These places now got the significant name of "rotten boroughs" from the fact that whether large or small there was no longer any sound political life existing in them.

624. The Reform Bill. — For fifty years after the coming in of the Georges the country had been ruled by a powerful Whig monopoly. Under George III. that monopoly was broken, and the Tories got possession of the government; but whichever party ruled, Parliament, owing to the "rotten borough" system, no longer represented the nation, but simply stood for the will of certain wealthy landholders and town corporations. A loud and determined demand was now made for reform. Among those who helped to urge forward the movement none was more active or influential among the common people than William Cobbett, a self-educated man, but a vigorous and fearless writer, who for years published a small newspaper called the *Political Register*, which was especially devoted to securing a just and uniform system of representation.

On the accession of William IV. the pressure for reform became so great that Parliament was forced to act. Lord Russell brought in a bill providing for the abolition of the "rotten boroughs" and for a fair system of elections. Those who owned or controlled these boroughs had no intention of giving them up. Their opponents, however, were equally determined, and they knew that they had the support of the nation. In a speech which the Rev.

Sydney Smith made at Taunton, he compared the futile resistance of the House of Lords to the proposed reform, to Mrs. Partington's attempt to drive back the rising tide of the Atlantic with her mop. The ocean rose, and Mrs. Partington, seizing her mop, rose against it; yet, notwithstanding the good lady's efforts, the Atlantic got the best of it; so the speaker prophesied that in this case the people, like the Atlantic, would in the end carry the day.¹

When the bill came up, the greater part of the lords and bishops, who, so far as they were concerned personally, had all the rights and privileges they wanted, opposed it; so too did the Tories in the House of Commons. They thought that the proposed law threatened the stability of the government. The Duke of Wellington was particularly hostile to it, and wrote: "I don't generally take a gloomy view of things, but I confess that, knowing all that I do, I cannot see what is to save the Church, or property, or colonies, or union with Ireland, or, eventually, monarchy, if the Reform Bill passes."²

The king dissolved Parliament; a new one was elected, and the Reform Bill was passed by the Commons; but the Upper House rejected it. Then a period of wild excitement ensued. The people in many of the towns collected in the public squares, tolled the church bells, built bonfires in which they burned in effigy the bishops, and other leading opponents of the bill, and cried out for the abolition of the House of Lords. In London the rabble smashed the windows of the Duke of Wellington. In Bristol and Derby terrible riots broke out, and at Nottingham the mob fired and destroyed the castle of the Duke of Newcastle, who was noted for his opposition to reform, while all over the country shouts were heard, "The Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill!"

625. Passage of the Bill (1832); Results.— In the spring of 1832 the battle began again with greater fierceness than ever.

¹ Sydney Smith's Essays and Speeches.

² Wellington's Despatches and Letters, Vol. II. 451.

Again the House of Commons voted the bill, and once again the Lords defeated it.

It was evident that matters could not go on in this manner much longer. The ministry, as a final measure, appealed to the king for help. If the Lords would not pass the bill, the sovereign had the power to create a sufficient number of new Whig lords who would. William now yielded to the pressure, and much against his will, gave the following document to his prime minister: "*The King grants permission to Earl Grey, and to his Chancellor, Lord Brougham, to create such a number of Peers as will be sufficient to insure the passing of the Reform Bill—first calling up peers' eldest sons.*"

WILLIAM R., Windsor, May 17, 1832."¹

But there was no occasion to make use of this permission. As soon as the peers found that the king had granted it, they yielded. Those who had opposed the bill now stayed away; the measure was carried, received the royal signature, and became law. Its passage brought about a beneficent change. (1) It abolished the "rotten boroughs." (2) It gave every householder who paid rent of fifty dollars in any town a vote, and largely extended the list of county votes as well. (3) It granted two representatives to Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester, and nineteen other large towns, and one representative each to twenty-one other places, all of which had hitherto been unrepresented, besides granting fifteen additional members to the counties. (4) It added in all half a million of voters to the list, and it helped to purify the elections from the violence which had disgraced them. Before the passing of the Reform Bill and the legislation which supplemented it, the election of a member of Parliament was a kind of local reign of terror. The smaller towns were sometimes under the control of drunken ruffians for several weeks. During that time they paraded the streets in bands, assaulting voters of the opposite party with

¹ "First calling up peers' eldest sons": that is, in creating new lords, the eldest sons of peers were to have the preference. William R. (*Rex*, King): this is the customary royal signature.

clubs, kidnapping prominent men and confining them until after the election, and perpetrating other outrages which so frightened peaceable citizens that often they did not dare attempt to vote at all.

626. Abolition of Slavery; Factory Reform. — With the new Parliament that came into power the names of Liberal and Conservative began to supplant those of Whig and Tory. The House of Commons now reflected the will of the people better than ever before, and further reforms were accordingly carried.

In 1833 Buxton, Wilberforce, Brougham, and other philanthropists, against the strenuous opposition of the king, secured the passage through Parliament of a bill, for which they, with the younger Pitt, Clarkson, and Zachary Macaulay, had labored in vain for half a century, whereby all negro slaves in British colonies, who now numbered 800,000, were set free, and twenty millions of pounds sterling appropriated to compensate the owners. It was a grand deed grandly done, and could America have followed the noble example, she might thereby have saved a million of human lives and three thousand millions of dollars which were cast into the gulf of civil war, while the corrupting influence of five years of waste and discord would have been avoided.

But negro slaves were not the only slaves in those days. There were white slaves as well, — women and children born in England, but condemned by their necessities to work under ground in the coal mines, or exhaust their strength in the cotton mills.¹ They were driven by brutal masters who cared as little for the welfare of those under them as the overseer of a West India plantation did for his gangs of toilers in the rice swamps. Parliament at length turned its attention to these abuses, and greatly alleviated them by the passage of acts forbidding the employment of women and

¹ Children of six and seven years old were kept at work for twelve and thirteen hours continuously in the factories, and were often inhumanly treated. They were also employed in the coal mines at this tender age. All day long they sat in absolute darkness, opening and shutting doors for the passage of coal cars. If, overcome with fatigue, they fell asleep, they were cruelly beaten with a strap.

young children in the collieries and factories, while a later act put an end to the barbarous practice of forcing children to sweep chimneys. In an overcrowded country like England, the lot of the poor must continue to be exceptionally hard, but there is no longer the indifference toward it that once prevailed. Poverty there may still be looked upon as a crime, or something very like it; but it is regarded now as a crime which may possibly have some extenuating circumstances.

627. Inventions; the First Steam Railway; the Friction Match. — Ever since the application of steam to machinery, inventors had been discussing plans for placing the steam engine on wheels and using it as a propelling power in place of horses. Macadam, a Scotch surveyor, had constructed a number of very superior roads made of gravel and broken stone in the South of England, which soon made the name of macadamized turnpike celebrated. The question now was, Might not a still further advance be made by employing steam to draw cars on these roads, or better still, on iron rails? George Stephenson had long been experimenting in that direction, and at length certain capitalists whom he had converted to his views succeeded in getting an act of Parliament for constructing a railway between Liverpool and Manchester, a distance of about thirty miles. When the road was completed by Stephenson, he had great difficulty in getting permission to use an engine instead of horse power on it. Finally his new locomotive, "The Rocket," — which first introduced the tubular boiler, and employed the exhaust or escaping steam to increase the draught of the fire, — was tried with entire success. The road was formally opened in the autumn of 1830, and the Duke of Wellington, then prime minister, was one of the few passengers who ventured on the trial trip.¹ The growth of this new mode of transportation was so rapid that in five years from that

¹ "The Rocket," together with Watt's first steam pumping engine, are both preserved in the Patent Office Museum, South Kensington, London.

The tubular boiler is, as its name implies, a boiler traversed by a number of tubes communicating with the smoke-pipe; as the heat passes through these, steam