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.

Such was the increase of machinery driven by steam, and such the improvements made by Hargreaves, Arkwright, and Crompton in machinery for spinning and weaving cotton, 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 eight shillings 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 (1811), the starving workmen attacked the mills, broke the machinery in pieces, and sometimes burnt the buildings. The riots were at length suppressed, and a number of the leaders executed; but a great change for the better was at hand, and improved machinery driven by steam was soon to remedy the evils it had seemingly created. It led to an enormous demand for cotton. This helped to stimulate cotton-growing in the United States of America as well as to encourage industry in Great Britain.

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 (§§ 404, 409); in Elizabeth's reign it resisted Protestantism; in that of George I it sided with the so-called "Pretender" (§ 584).

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 (1774); Introduction of Gas; the Safety Lamp; Steam Navigation, 1807. — Notwithstanding the progress that had been made in many departments of knowledge, the science of chemistry remained almost stationary until (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 robberies were frequent. At length (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 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 English 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

[1] See Professor Youmans' New Chemistry.

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 (§ 610), 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 afterward 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 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 line was established. Since then fleets of steamers ranging from five thousand to more than twenty thousand tons have been built. They now make passages from continent to continent in a less number of days than the ordinary sailing-vessels formerly required weeks. The fact that during a period of more than sixty years one of these lines has never lost a passenger is conclusive proof that

[1] From the play The Lights of London.

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. He was also the author of the story of "Rasselas," — that notable satire on discontent and the search after happiness. Next stands Johnson's friend, Oliver Goldsmith, famous for his genius, his wit, and his improvidence, which was always getting him into trouble, but still more famous for his poems, and his novel, "The Vicar of Wakefield."

Edward Gibbon, David Hume, author of the well-known "History of England," and Adam Smith come next in time. In 1776 Gibbon 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, Shelley, and Keats, with Sheridan, the orator and dramatist, 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." Then 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, the last of whom afterward became noted for his landscapes. They were followed by Wilkie, whose pictures of "The Rent Day," "The Reading of the Will," and many others, tell a story of interest to every one who looks at them.

Last came Turner, who in some respects 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 Wedgewood 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 seldom left the counties in which they were born. They knew nothing of what was going on in the world. Their education was wholly of that practical kind which comes from work and things, not from 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

1 See Wordsworth's poem Resolution and Independence.

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.

613. Last Days of George III. — In 1820 George III died at the age of eighty-two. 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.[1] In consequence of the incapacity of the King, his eldest son, the Prince of Wales, was appointed regent (1811), and on the King's death came to the throne as George IV.

614. Summary. — The long reign of George III, covering sixty years, was in every way eventful. During that time England lost her possessions in America, but gained India and prepared the way for getting possession of New Zealand and Australia. 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 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 to navigation.

1 See Thackeray's Four Georges.

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; but, owing to his father's insanity, he had virtually been King for nearly ten years (§ 613). 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 received for many years an income of upwards of £100,000, which was largely increased at a later period, yet he was always hopelessly in debt.

Parliament (1795) appropriated over £600,000 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 £200,000, 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 measures of reform as the times demanded.

616. Discontent and Conspiracy; the "Manchester Massacre"; the Six Acts (1819). — When (1811) the Prince of Wales became regent (§ 613), he desired to form a Whig ministry, not because he cared for Whig principles (§ 531), but solely for the reason that he would thereby be acting in opposition to his father's wishes. Finding his purpose impracticable, he accepted Tory rule (§ 531), and a ministry was formed with Lord Liverpool as Prime Minister. It had for its main object the exclusion of the Catholics from representation in Parliament (§ 609).

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 Prime 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 in St. Peter's Fields, 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 (1819). The bitter feeling caused by the "Manchester Massacre," or "Peterloo," as it was called, was still further aggravated by the passage of the Six Acts (1819). The object of these severe coercive measures was to make it impossible for men to take any public action demanding political reform. They restricted freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and the right of the people to assemble for the purpose of open discussion of the course taken by the Government.

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

These harsh laws coupled with other repressive measures taken by the Tories (§ 531), who were then in power, led to the "Cato Street Conspiracy." Shortly after the accession of George IV 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 ten 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 (§ 625).

617. Queen Caroline. — While Prince of Wales, George IV had, contrary to law, married Mrs. Fitzherbert (1785),[1] 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 which, as Queen-Consort, she had a right sanctioned

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.

by custom but not secured by law. When the King was crowned (1821), 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. — Seven years later (1828) the Duke of Wellington, a Tory (§ 531) 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 (§ 524), 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 town officer, without belonging to the Church of England. At the same time the Test Act (§ 529), 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. As a matter of fact "the teeth of both acts had long been drawn" by an annual Indemnity Act (1727).

The next year (1829) a still greater reform was carried. For a long period the Roman Catholic Emancipation party (§ 609) had been laboring to obtain the abolition of the 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. These laws, 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 (§ 530).[1] The King, and the Tory party marshalled by the Duke of Wellington, strenuously resisted the repeal of these statutes; but finally the duke became convinced that further opposition was useless. He therefore suddenly changed about and 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 raising the property qualification of a very

1 See Sydney Smith's Peter Plymley's Letters.

large class of small Irish landholders from £2 to £10. This measure deprived many thousands of their right to vote. The law was enacted on the pretext that the small Irish landholders would be influenced by their landlord or their priest.

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 (1829). He henceforth devoted himself, though without avail, to the repeal of the act uniting Ireland with England (§ 609), and to the restoration of an independent Irish Parliament.

619. The New Police (1829). — 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 (1829) 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 carry no visible club, were not to be jeered out of existence. They did their duty like men, and have continued to do it 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 (1830). — George IV died soon after the passage of the new Police Bill (1830). Of him it may well be said, though in a very different sense from that in which the

expression was originally used, that "nothing in his life became him like the leaving it." 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 (§ 531), 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 was the only one. In a whole nation the rest were silent; or, if they spoke, it was 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 the granting of Catholic emancipation were tardy measures of justice. Neither the King nor his ministers deserve any credit for them, but, none the less, they 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 shipboard, 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 George 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 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 (§§ 610, 616).

Since the introduction of steam (§ 610) the rapid increase of manufactures and commerce had built up Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Manchester, and other large towns in the iron, coal, pottery, and manufacturing districts. These important towns 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 haphazard 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 to stay at home. On this account 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 (§ 531), 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 (§ 519), the Protector's wise measures were repealed or neglected. Then the old order, or rather disorder, again asserted itself, and in many cases matters became 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. The owner of that tree and of the field where it grew sent (1830) 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, alderman, 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.[1]

624. The Reform Bill, 1832. — For fifty years after the coming in of the Georges the country had been ruled by a powerful Whig (§§ 531, 581) monopoly. Under George III that monopoly was broken (§ 597), and the Tories (§ 531) 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. In this movement no one was more active or influential among the common people than William Cobbett. He was 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 John Russell brought in a bill (1831) providing for the abolition of the "rotten

[1] Many towns were so completely in the hands of the squire or some other local "political boss" that, when a successful candidate for Parliament thanked the voters for what they had done, one man replied that he need not take the trouble to thank them; for, said he, "if the squire had zent his great dog we should have chosen him all one as if it were you, zur." — MURRAY, *Wiltshire* (*Hindon*).

boroughs" and for a fair system of elections. But those who owned or controlled those 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 Reverend 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 the bishops, who, so far as they were concerned personally, had all the rights and privileges they wanted, opposed it; so too did the Tories (§ 531), in the House of Commons. They thought that the proposed law threatened the stability of the government. The Duke of Wellington (§ 618) 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 (§ 583, note 2); 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 the bishops in effigy, with 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. At Nottingham the mob fired and destroyed the castle of the Duke of Newcastle because he was opposed to reform. All over the country shouts were heard, "The Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill!"

1 Sydney Smith's Essays and Speeches.

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

625. Passage of the Bill, 1832; Results. — In the spring of 1832 the battle began again with greater fierceness than ever. 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 Tory Lords would not pass the bill, the King 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:[2] 1. It abolished nearly sixty "rotten boroughs." 2. It gave every householder who paid a rent of ten pounds in any town a vote, and largely extended the list of county voters 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

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.

2 See Summary of Constitutional History in the Appendix, page xxvi, § 31.

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 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 (1833); Factory Reform (1833). — With the new Parliament that came into power the names of Liberal and Conservative began to supplant those of Whig and Tory (§ 531). The House of Commons now reflected the will of the people better than ever before, and further reforms were accordingly carried.

Buxton, Wilberforce, Brougham, and other philanthropists, against the strenuous opposition of the King, secured the passage through Parliament of a bill (1833), for which they, with the younger Pitt, Clarkson, and Zachary Macaulay, had labored in vain for half a century. By this act all negro slaves in the British West India colonies, numbering eight hundred thousand, were set free, and the sum of £20,000,000 was appropriated to compensate the owners.

It was a grand deed grandly done. Could America have followed that noble example, she might thereby have saved a million of human lives and many 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 underground in the coal mines, or to exhaust their strength in the cotton mills.[1] They

[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. See Gibbin's Industrial History of England.

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 sugar-cane fields.

Parliament at length turned its attention to these abuses, and greatly alleviated them by the passage of acts (1833) forbidding the employment of women and 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, 1830; the Railway Craze; 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 time London and the principal seaports were connected with the great manufacturing towns, while steam navigation had also nearly doubled its vessels and its tonnage.

Ten years later still the whole country became involved in a speculative craze for building railroads. Hundreds of millions of pounds were invested; for a time Hudson, the "Railway King," as he was called, ruled supreme, and members of Parliament did homage to the man whose schemes promised to cover the whole island with a network of iron roads, every one of which was expected to make its stockholders rich. Eventually these projects ended in a panic, second only to that of the South Sea Bubble (§ 585), and thousands found that steam could destroy fortunes even faster than it made them.

Toward the close of William's reign (1834–1835) a humble invention was perfected of which little was said at the time, but which contributed in no small degree to the comfort and convenience of every one. Up to this date the two most important of all civilizing agents — fire and light — could be produced only with much difficulty and at considerable expense.

Various devices had been contrived to obtain them, but the common method continued to be the primitive one of striking a bit of flint and steel sharply together until a falling spark ignited a piece of tinder or half-burnt rag, which, when it caught, had, with no little expense of breath, to be blown into a flame. The progress of chemistry suggested the use of phosphorus, and after years of experiments the friction match was invented by an

[1] "The Rocket" and 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 is thereby generated much more rapidly than it could otherwise be. The steam, after it has done its work in the cylinders, escapes into the smoke-pipe with great force, and of course increases the draught. Without these two improvements of Stephenson's the locomotive would never have attained a greater speed than five or six miles an hour.

English apothecary, who thus gave to the world what is now the commonest, and perhaps at the same time the most useful, domestic article in existence.

628. Summary. — William IV's short reign of seven years is marked (1) by the great Reform Bill of 1832, which took Parliament out of the hands of a moneyed clique and put it under the control of the people; (2) by the abolition of slavery in the British colonies, and factory reform; (3) by the introduction of the friction match, and by the building of the first successful line of railway.

VICTORIA — 1837–1901

629. The Queen's Descent; Stability of the Government. — As William IV left no child to inherit the crown, he was succeeded by his niece (see table, § 581), the Princess Victoria, daughter of his brother Edward, Duke of Kent. In her lineage the Queen represented nearly the whole past sovereignty of the land over which she governed.[1] The blood of both Cerdic, the first Saxon king, and of William the Conqueror,[2] flowed in her veins, — a fact which strikingly illustrates the vitality of the hereditary and conservative principles in the history of the English crown.

This fact is made more conspicuous by the recent close of the Queen's long reign (1901). Here then let us pause and take a rapid survey of the ground we have passed over.

In 1066 the Normans crossed the Channel, invaded the island, conquered its inhabitants, and seized the throne. Five centuries later the religion of Rome was supplanted by the Protestant faith of Luther.

Somewhat less than a hundred years after that event, civil war burst forth, 1642, the King was deposed and beheaded, and a republic established. A few years subsequently the monarchy was restored, 1660, only to be followed by the revolution, 1688, which changed the order of succession, drove one line of

[1] The only exceptions are the four Danish sovereigns and Harold II.

[2] See table of the Descent of English Sovereigns in the Appendix.

sovereigns from the land, and called in another from Germany to take their place. Meanwhile new political parties rose to power, the Reform Bill passed, 1832, and Parliament came to represent more perfectly the will of the whole people; yet after all these events, at the end of more than ten centuries from the date when Egbert first assumed the crown (828), we find England governed by a descendant of her earliest rulers!

630. A New Order of Things; the House of Commons now Supreme. — Queen Victoria was but little over eighteen when called to the throne. At her accession a new order of things began. The Georges, with William IV, had insisted on dismissing their ministers, or chief political advisers, when they pleased, without condescending to give Parliament any reason for the change. That system, which may be considered as the last vestige of "personal government,"[1] that is, of the power of the Crown to act without the advice of the nation, died with the late king.

With the coronation of Victoria the principle was established that henceforth the sovereign of the British Empire cannot remove the Prime Minister or his Cabinet (§ 583) without the consent of the House of Commons elected by and directly representing the great body of the people; nor, on the other hand, would the sovereign now venture to retain a ministry which the Commons refused to support.[2] This fact shows that the House

[1] See McCarthy's History of Our Own Times.

[2] Attention has already been called (see § 583, note 2) to the fact that the Prime Minister, with his cabinet officers, must retain the support of the majority of the House of Commons. Failing to do so, custom forces him to promptly resign, or in case the sovereign dissolves Parliament and a new election takes place, the Prime Minister with his Cabinet stands or falls according to the political result.

In order to guard herself against any political influence adverse to that of the ministry (and hence of the majority of the House of Commons), the Queen was compelled to consent (1841) that the Mistress of the Robes, or head of her majesty's household, should change at the demand of the incoming Prime Minister, and it was furthermore agreed that any ladies under her whose presence might be politically inconvenient to the Prime Minister should retire "of their own accord." In other words, the incoming ministry have the right to remodel the sovereign's household — or any other body of offices — in whatever degree they think requisite, and the late Prince Albert could not even appoint his own private secretary, but much to his chagrin had to accept one appointed for him by the Prime Minister. See May's Constitutional History of England and Martin's Life of the Prince Consort.

"YOUR MAJESTY" — Announcement to the Princess Victoria of her Accession to the Crown, June 20, 1837