

Lords had been secured by the creation of twelve Tory peers. In home politics the new ministry was in danger of being carried away by its more violent supporters. St John, now Viscount Bolingbroke, with unscrupulous audacity placed himself at their head. The Occasional Conformity Bill was at last carried (1711). To it was added the Schism Act (1714), forbidding dissenters to keep schools or engage in tuition. Bolingbroke went still further. He engaged in an intrigue for bringing over the Pretender to succeed the queen upon her death. This wild conduct alienated the moderate Tories, who, much as they wished to see the throne occupied by the heir of the ancient line, could not bring themselves to consent to its occupation by a Catholic prince, even if his birth marked him out for sovereignty. Such men, therefore, when Anne died (1714) joined the Whigs in proclaiming the elector of Hanover king as George I.

Accession of the House of Hanover.

The accession of George I. brought with it the predominance of the Whigs. They had on their side the royal power, the greater part of the aristocracy, the dissenters, and the higher trading and commercial classes. The Tories appealed to the dislike of dissenters prevalent amongst the country gentlemen and the country clergy, and to the jealousy felt by the agricultural classes towards those who enriched themselves by trade. Such a feeling, if it was aroused by irritating legislation, might very probably turn to the advantage of the exiled house, especially as the majority of Englishmen were to be found on the Tory side. It was therefore advisable that Government should content itself with as little action as possible, in order to give time for old habits to wear themselves out. The landing of the Pretender in Scotland (1715), and the defeat of a portion of his army which had advanced to Preston,—a defeat which was the consequence of the apathy of his English supporters, and which was followed by the complete suppression of the rebellion,—gave increased strength to the Whig Government. But they were reluctant to face an immediate dissolution, and the Septennial Act was passed (1716) to extend to seven years the duration of parliaments, which had been fixed at three years by the Triennial Act of William and Mary. Under General Stanhope an effort was made to draw legislation in a more liberal direction. The Occasional Conformity Act and the Schism Act were repealed (1719); but the majorities on the side of the Government were unusually small, and Stanhope, who would willingly have repealed the Test Act so far as it related to dissenters, was compelled to abandon the project as entirely impracticable. The Peerage Bill, introduced at the same time to limit the royal power of creating peers, was happily thrown out in the Commons. It was proposed partly from a desire to guard the Lords against such a sudden increase of their numbers as had been forced on them when the treaty of Utrecht was under discussion, and partly to secure the Whigs in office against any change in the royal councils in a succeeding reign. It was in fact conceived by men who valued the immediate victory of their principles more than they trusted to the general good sense of the nation. The Lords were at this time, as a matter of fact, not merely wealthier but wiser than the Commons; and it is no wonder that, in days when the Commons, by passing the Septennial Act, had shown their distrust of their own constituents, the peers should show, by the Peerage Bill, their distrust of that House which was elected by those constituencies. Nevertheless the remedy was worse than the disease. A close oligarchy would not only have held a dominant position for some twenty or thirty years, during which it would really be fit to exercise authority, but would have been impenetrable to the force of public opinion when the time came that a public opinion

Repeal of Occasional Conformity Act and Schism Act. Peerage Bill.

worthy of the name was formed. It is essential to the permanence of an Upper House that it should be unable to set at defiance the will of the nation expressed by its representatives; and without the power of creation the House of Lords might easily have attempted to do this till there was no alternative to a violent alteration of the constitution.

The excitement following on the bursting of the South Sea Bubble, and the death or ruin of the leading ministers, brought Walpole to the front (1721). As a man of business when men of business were few in the House of Commons, he was eminently fit to manage the affairs of the country. But he owed his long continuance in office especially to his sagacity. He clearly saw, what Stanhope had failed to see that the mass of the nation was not fitted as yet to interest itself wisely in affairs of government, and that therefore the rule must be kept in the hands of the upper classes. But he was too sensible to adopt the coarse expedient which had commended itself to Stanhope, and he preferred humouring the masses to contradicting them.

Walpole's ministry

The struggle of the preceding century had left its mark in every direction on the national development. Out of the reaction against Puritanism had come a widely-spread relaxation of morals, and also, as far as the educated class was concerned, an eagerness for the discussion of all social and religious problems. The fierce excitement of political life had stirred up the fountains of thought, and the most anciently received doctrines were held of little worth until they were brought to the test of reason. It was a time when the pen was more powerful than the sword, when a secretary of state would treat with condescension a witty pamphleteer, and when such a pamphleteer might hope, not in vain, to become a secretary of state.

Freedom of thought.

It was in this world of reason and literature that the Whigs of the Peerage Bill moved. Walpole perceived that there was another world which understood none of these things. With cynical insight he discovered that a great Government cannot rest on a clique, however distinguished. If the mass of the nation was not conscious of political wants, it was conscious of material wants. The merchant needed protection for his trade; the voters gladly welcomed election day as bringing guineas to their pockets. Members of Parliament were ready to sell their votes for places, for pensions, for actual money. The system was not new, as Danby is credited with the discovery that a vote in the House of Commons might be purchased. But with Walpole it reached its height.

Parliamentary corruption.

Such a system was possible because the House of Commons was not really accountable to its constituents. The votes of its members were not published, and still less were their speeches made known. Such a silence could only be maintained around the House when there was little interest in its proceedings. The great questions of religion and taxation which had agitated the country under the Stuarts were now fairly settled. To reawaken those questions in any shape would be dangerous. Walpole took good care never to repeat the mistake of the Sacheverel trial. When on one occasion he was led into the proposal of an unpopular excise he at once drew back. England in his days was growing rich. Englishmen were bluff and independent, in their ways often coarse and unmannerly. Their life was the life depicted on the canvas of Hogarth and the pages of Fielding. All high imagination, all devotion to the public weal, seemed laid asleep. But the political instinct was not dead, and it would one day express itself for better ends than an agitation against an excise bill or an outcry for a popular war. A Government could no longer employ its powers for direct oppression. In his own house and in his own conscience, every Englishman, as far as the Government was concerned, was the master of his destiny. By

General political apathy.

and by the idea would dawn on the nation that anarchy is as productive of evil as tyranny, and that a Government which omits to regulate or control allows the strong to oppress the weak, and the rich to oppress the poor.

Walpole the first prime minister.

Walpole's administration lasted long enough to give room for some feeble expression of this feeling. When George I. was succeeded by George II. (1727), Walpole remained in power. His eagerness for the possession of that power which he desired to use for his country's good, together with the incapacity of two kings born and bred in a foreign country to take a leading part in English affairs, completed the change which had been effected when William for the first time entrusted the conduct of government to a united Cabinet. There was now for the first time a prime minister in England, a person who was himself a subject imposing harmonious action on the Cabinet. The change was so gradually and silently effected that it is difficult to realize its full importance. So far, indeed, as it only came about through the incapacity of the first two kings of the house of Hanover, it might be obliterated, and was in fact to a great extent obliterated by a more active successor. But so far as it was the result of general tendencies, it could never be obliterated. In the ministries in which John Somers and Montagu on the one hand and Harley and St John on the other had taken part, there was no prime minister except so far as one member of the administration dominated over his colleagues by the force of character and intelligence. In the reign of George III. even North and Addington were universally acknowledged by that title, though they had little claim to the independence of action of a Walpole or a Pitt.

The change was, in fact, one of the most important of those by which the English constitution has been altered from an hereditary monarchy with a parliamentary regulative agency to a parliamentary government with an hereditary regulative agency. In Walpole's time the forms of the constitution had become, in all essential particulars, what they are now. What was wanting was a national force behind them to give them their proper work.

The Opposition.

The growing opposition which finally drove Walpole from power was not entirely without a nobler element than could be furnished by personal rivalry or ignorant distrust of commercial and financial success. It was well that complaints that a great country ought not to be governed by patronage and bribery should be raised, although, as subsequent experience showed, the causes which rendered corruption inevitable were not to be removed by the expulsion of Walpole from office. But for one error, indeed, it is probable that Walpole's rule would have been further prolonged than it was. In 1739 a popular excitement arose for a declaration of war against Spain. Walpole believed that war to be certainly unjust, and likely to be disastrous. He had, however, been so accustomed to give way to popular pressure that he did not perceive the difference between a wise and timely determination to leave a right action undone in the face of insuperable difficulties, and an unwise and cowardly determination to do that which he believed to be wrong and imprudent. If he had now resigned rather than demean himself by acting against his conscience, it is by no means unlikely that he would have been recalled to power before many years were over. As it was, the failures of the war recoiled on his own head, and in 1742 his long ministry came to an end.

War with Spain.

Ministry of Henry Pelham.

After a short interval a successor was found in Henry Pelham. All the ordinary arts of corruption which Walpole had practised were continued, and to them were added arts of corruption which Walpole had disdained to practise. He at least understood that there were certain principles in accordance with which he wished to conduct

public affairs, and he had driven colleague after colleague out of office rather than allow them to distract his method of government. Pelham and his brother, the cowardly intriguing duke of Newcastle, had no principles of government whatever. They offered place to every man of parliamentary skill or influence. There was no opposition, because the ministers never attempted to do anything which would arouse opposition, and because they were ready to do anything called for by any one who had power enough to make himself dangerous; and in 1743 they embarked on a useless war with France in order to please the king, who saw in every commotion on the Continent some danger to his beloved Hanoverian possessions.

At most times in the history of England such a ministry would have been driven from office by the roused outcry of an offended people. In the days of the Pelhams, government was regarded as lying too far outside the all-important private interests of the community to make it worth while to make any effort to rescue it from the degradation into which it had fallen; yet the Pelhams had not been long in power before this serene belief that the country could get on very well without a government in any real sense of the word was put to the test. In 1745 Charles Edward, the son of the Pretender, landed in Scotland. He was followed by many of the Highland clans, always ready to draw the sword against the constituted authorities of the Lowlands; and even in the Lowlands, and especially in Edinburgh, he found adherents, who still felt the sting inflicted by the suppression of the national independence of Scotland. The English army was in as chaotic a condition as its Government, and Charles Edward inflicted a complete defeat on a force which met him at Prestonpans. Before the end of the year the victor, at the head of 5000 men, had advanced to Derby. But he found no support in England, and the mere numbers brought against him compelled him to retreat, to find defeat at Culloden in the following year (1746). The war on the Continent had been waged with indifferent success. The victory of Dettingen (1743) and the glorious defeat of Fontenoy (1745) had achieved no objects worthy of English intervention, and the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle put an end in 1748 to hostilities which should never have been commenced. The Government pursued its inglorious career as long as Henry Pelham lived. He had at least some share in the financial ability of Walpole, and it was not till he died in 1754 that the real difficulties of a system which was based on the avoidance of difficulties had fairly to be faced.

The young Pretender.

Death of Pelham.

The change which was needed was not such as was to be expected from any mere re-adjustment of the political machine. Those who cared for religion or morality had forgotten that man was an imaginative and emotional being. Defenders of Christianity and of deism alike appealed to the reason alone. Enthusiasm was treated as a folly or a crime, and earnestness of every kind was branded with the name of enthusiasm. The higher order of minds dwelt with preference upon the beneficent wisdom of the Creator. The lower order of minds treated religion as a kind of life-assurance against the inconvenience of eternal death.

Moral and religious atmosphere.

Upon such a system as this human nature was certain to revenge itself. The preaching of Wesley and Whitfield appealed direct to the emotions. They preached the old Puritan doctrine of conversion, and called upon each individual not to understand, or to admire, or to act, but vividly to realize the love and mercy of God. In all this there was nothing new. What was new was that Wesley added an organization, in which each of his followers unfolded to one another the secrets of their heart, and became accountable to his fellows. Large as the numbers of the

Wesley and Whitfield.



Weslevans ultimately became. their influence is not to be measured by their numbers. The double want of the age, the want of spiritual earnestness and the want of organized coherence, would find satisfaction in many ways which would have seemed strange to Wesley, but which were, nevertheless, a continuance of the work which he began.

Ministry of Newcastle.

As far as Government was concerned, when Henry Pelham died (1754) the lowest depth of baseness seemed to have been reached. The duke of Newcastle, who succeeded his brother, looked on the work of corruption with absolute pleasure, and regarded genius and ability as an awkward interruption of that happy arrangement which made men subservient to flattery and money. Whilst he was in the very act of trying to drive from office all men who were possessed of any sort of ideas, he was surprised by a great war. In America, the French settlers in Canada and the English settlers on the Atlantic coast were falling to blows for the possession of the vast territories drained by the Ohio and its tributaries. In India, Frenchmen and Englishmen had striven during the last war for authority over the native states round Pondicherry and Madras, and the conflict threatened to break out anew. When war commenced in earnest, and the reality of danger came home to Englishmen by the capture of Minorca (1756), there arose a demand for a more capable Government than any which Newcastle could offer. Terrified by the storm of obloquy which he aroused, he fled from office. A Government was formed, of which the soul was William Pitt. Pitt was, in some sort, to the political life of Englishmen what Wesley was to their religious life. He brought no new political ideas into their minds, but he ruled them by the force of his character and the example of his purity. His weapons were trust and confidence. He appealed to the patriotism of his fellow-countrymen, to their imaginative love for the national greatness, and he did not appeal in vain. He perceived instinctively that a large number, even of those who took greedily the bribes of Walpole and the Pelhams, took them, not because they loved money better than their country, but because they had no conception that their country had any need of them at all. It was a truth, but it was not the whole truth. The great Whig families rallied under Newcastle and drove Pitt from office (1757). But if Pitt could not govern without Newcastle's corruption, neither could Newcastle govern without Pitt's energy. At last a compromise was effected, and Newcastle undertook the work of bribing, whilst Pitt undertook the work of governing.

Ministry of Pitt and Newcastle.

The Seven Years' War.

The war which had already broken out, the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), was not confined to England alone. By the side of the duel between France and England, a war was going on upon the Continent, in which Austria—with its allies, France, Russia, and the German princes—had fallen upon the new kingdom of Prussia and its sovereign Frederick II. England and Prussia, therefore, necessarily formed an alliance. Different as the two Governments were, they were both alike in recognizing, in part at least, the conditions of progress. The generations which have succeeded the generation of Pitt and Frederick have learned gradually the necessity of seeking strength from the embodiment of popular feeling in a representative assembly, and of seeking order from the organization of scientific knowledge. Even in Pitt's day England, however imperfectly, rested its strength on the popular will. Even in Frederick's day Prussia was ruled by administrators selected for their special knowledge. Neither France nor Austria had any conception of the necessity of fulfilling these requirements. Hence the strength of England and of Prussia. The war seems to be a mere struggle for territory. There is no feeling in either Pitt

or Frederick, such as there was in the men who contended half a century later against Napoleon, that they were fighting the battles of the civilized world. There is something repulsive as well in the enthusiastic nationality of Pitt as in the cynical nationality of Frederick. Pitt's sole object was to exalt England to a position in which she might fear no rival, and might scarcely look upon a second. But in so doing he exalted that which, in spite of all that had happened, best deserved to be exalted. The habits of individual energy fused together by the inspiration of patriotism conquered Canada. The unintelligent over-regulation of the French Government could not maintain the colonies which had been founded in happier times. In 1758 Louisburg was taken, and the mouth of the St Lawrence guarded against France. In 1759 Quebec fell before Wolfe, who died at the moment of victory. In the same year the naval victories of Lagos and Quiberon Bay established the supremacy of the British at sea. The battle of Plassey (1757) had laid Bengal at the feet of Clive; and Coote's victory at Wandewash (1760) led to the final ruin of the relics of French authority in southern India. When George II. died (1760), England was the first maritime and colonial power in the world.

In George III. the king once more became an important factor in English politics. From his childhood he had been trained by his mother and his instructors to regard the breaking down of the power of the great families as the task of his life. In this he was walking in the same direction as Pitt was walking. If the two men could have worked together in the same direction, England might have been spared many misfortunes. Unhappily, the king could not understand Pitt's higher qualities, his bold confidence in the popular feeling, and his contempt for corruption and intrigue. And yet the king's authority was indispensable to Pitt, if he was to carry on his conflict against the great families with success. When the war came to an end, as it must come to an end sooner or later, Pitt's special predominance, derived as it was from his power of breathing a martial spirit into the fleets and armies of England, would come to an end too. Only the king, with his hold upon the traditional instincts of loyalty and the force of his still unimpaired prerogative, could, in ordinary times, hold head against the wealthy and influential aristocracy. Unfortunately, George III. was not wise enough to deal with the difficulty in a high-minded fashion. With a well-intentioned but narrow mind, he had nothing in him to strike the imagination of his subjects. He met influence with influence, corruption with corruption, intrigue with intrigue. Unhappily, too, his earliest relations with Pitt involved a dispute on a point on which he was right and Pitt was wrong. In 1761 Pitt resigned office, because neither the king nor the cabinet were willing to declare war against Spain in the midst of the war with France. As the war with Spain was inevitable, and as, when it broke out in the following year (1762), it was followed by triumphs for which Pitt had prepared the way, the prescience of the great war-minister appeared to be fully established. But it was his love of war, not his skill in carrying it on, which was really in question. He would be satisfied with nothing short of the absolute ruin of France. He would have given England that dangerous position of supremacy which was gained for France by Lewis XIV. in the 17th century, and by Napoleon in the 19th century. He would have made his country still more haughty and arrogant than it was, till other nations rose against it, as they have three times risen against France, rather than submit to the intolerable yoke. It was a happy thing for England that peace was signed (1763).

Even as it was, a spirit of contemptuous disregard of the rights of others had been roused, which would not be

George III.

Pitt's resignation

Bute and Grenville

easily allayed. The king's premature attempt to secure a prime minister of his own choosing in Lord Bute (1761), came to an end through the minister's incapacity (1763). George Grenville, who followed him, kept the king in leading-strings in reliance upon his parliamentary majority. Something, no doubt, had been accomplished by the in-corrupibility of Pitt. The practice of bribing members of parliament by actual presents in money came to an end, though the practice of bribing them by place and pension long continued. The arrogance which Pitt displayed towards foreign nations was displayed by Grenville towards classes of the population of the British dominions. It was enough for him to establish a right. He never put himself in the position of those who were to suffer by its being put in force.

The Stamp Act.

The first to suffer from Grenville's conception of his duty were the American colonies. The mercantile system which had sprung up in Spain in the 16th century held that colonies were to be entirely prohibited from trading, except with the mother country. Every European country had adopted this view, and the acquisition of fresh colonial dominions by England, at the peace of 1763, had been made not so much through lust of empire as through love of trade. Of all English colonies, the American were the most populous and important. Their proximity to the Spanish colonies in the West Indies had naturally led to a contraband trade. To this trade Grenville put a stop, as far as lay in his power.

Resistance in America.

Obnoxious as this measure was in America, the colonists had acknowledged the principle on which it was founded too long to make it easy to resist it. Another step of Grenville's met with more open opposition. Even with all the experience of the century which followed, the relations between a mother country and her colonies are not easy to arrange. If the burthen of defence is to be borne in common, it can hardly be left to the mother country to declare war, and to exact the necessary taxation, without the consent of the colonies. If, on the other hand, it is to be borne by the mother country alone, she may well complain that she is left to bear more than her due share of the weight. The latter alternative forced itself upon the attention of Grenville. The British parliament, he held, was the supreme legislature, and, as such, was entitled to raise taxes in America to support the military forces needed for the defence of America. The Act (1765) imposing a stamp tax on the American colonies was the result.

As might have been expected, the Americans resisted. For them, the question was precisely that which Hampden had fought out in the case of ship-money. As far as they were concerned, the British parliament had stepped into the position of Charles I. If Grenville had remained in office he would probably have persisted in his resolution. He was driven from his post by the king's resolution no longer to submit to his insolence.

A new ministry was formed under the marquis of Rockingham, composed of some of those leaders of the Whig aristocracy who had not followed the Grenville ministry. They were well-intentioned, but weak, and without political ability; and the king regarded them with distrust, only qualified by his abhorrence of the ministry which they superseded.

As soon as the bad news came from America, the ministry was placed between two recommendations. Grenville, on the one hand, advised that the tax should be enforced. Pitt, on the other, declared that the British parliament had absolutely no right to tax America, though he held that it had the right to regulate, or in other words to tax, the commerce of America for the benefit of the British merchant and manufacturer. Between the two

the Government took a middle course. It obtained from parliament a total repeal of the Stamp Act, but it also passed a Declaratory Act, claiming for the British parliament the supreme power over the colonies in matters of taxation, as well as in matters of legislation.

It is possible that the course thus adopted was chosen simply because it was a middle course. But it was probably suggested by Edmund Burke, who was then Lord Rockingham's private secretary, but who for some time to come was to furnish thinking to the party to which he attached himself. Burke carried into the world of theory those politics of expediency of which Walpole had been the practical originator. He held that questions of abstract right had no place in politics. It was therefore as absurd to argue with Pitt that England had a right to regulate commerce, as it was to argue with Grenville that England had a right to levy taxes. All that could be said was that it was expedient in a wide-spread empire that the power of final decision should be lodged somewhere, and that it was also expedient not to use that power in such a way as to irritate those whom it was the truest wisdom to conciliate.

Burke's political theory.

The weak side of this view was the weak side of all Burke's political philosophy. Like all great innovators, he was intensely conservative where he was not an advocate of change. With new views on every subject relating to the exercise of power, he shrunk even from entertaining the slightest question relating to the distribution of power. He recommended to the British parliament the most self-denying wisdom, but he could not see that in its relation to the colonies the British parliament was so constituted as to make it entirely unprepared to be either wise or self-denying. It is true that if he had thought out the matter in this direction he would have been led further than he or any other man in England or America was at that time prepared to go. If the British parliament was unfit to legislate for America, and if, as was undoubtedly the case, it was impossible to create a representative body which was fit to legislate, it would follow that the American colonies could only be fairly governed as practically independent states, though they might possibly remain, like the great colonies of our own day, in a position of alliance rather than of dependence. It was because the issues opened led to changes so far greater than the wisest statesman then perceived, that Pitt's solution, logically untenable as it was, was preferable to Burke's. Pitt would have given bad reasons for going a step in the right direction. Burke gave excellent reasons why those who were certain to go wrong should have the power to go right.

Arguments of Pitt and Burke.

Scarcely were the measures relating to America passed when the king turned out the ministry. The new ministry was formed by Pitt, who was created Lord Chatham (1766), on the principle of bringing together men who had shaken themselves loose from any of the different Whig cliques. Whatever chance the plan had of succeeding was at an end when Chatham's mind temporarily gave way under stress of disease (1767). Charles Townshend, a brilliant headstrong man, led parliament in the way which had been prepared by the Declaratory Act, and laid duties on tea and other articles of commerce entering the ports of America.

Ministry of Lord Chatham

The tea duties.

It was impossible that the position thus claimed by the British parliament towards America should affect America alone. The habit of obtaining money otherwise than by the consent of those who are required to pay it would be certain to make parliament careless of the feelings and interests of that great majority of the population at home which was unrepresented in parliament. The resistance of America to the taxation imposed was therefore not with-



Wilkes and *The North Briton*.

Middlesex election.

Lord North and the new Tories.

Divisions in the Opposition.

out benefit to the natives of the mother-country. Already there were signs of a readiness in parliament to treat even the constituencies with contempt. In 1763, in the days of the Grenville ministry, John Wilkes, a profligate and scurrilous writer, had been arrested on a general warrant,—that is to say, a warrant in which the name of no individual was mentioned,—as the author of an alleged libel on the king, contained in No. 45 of *The North Briton*. He was a member of parliament, and as such was declared by Chief Justice Pratt to be privileged against arrest. In 1768 he was elected member for Middlesex. The House of Commons expelled him. He was again elected, and again expelled. The third time the Commons gave the seat to which Wilkes was a third time chosen to Colonel Luttrell, who was far down in the poll. Wilkes thus became the representative of a great constitutional principle, the principle that the electors have a right to choose their representatives without restriction saving by the regulations of the law.

For the present the contention of the American colonists and of the defenders of Wilkes at home was confined within the compass of the law. Yet in both cases it might easily pass beyond that compass, and might rest itself upon an appeal to the duty of Governments to modify the law and to enlarge the basis of their authority, when law and authority have become too narrow.

As regards America, though Townshend died, the Government persisted in his policy. As resistance grew stronger in America, the king urged the use of compulsion. If he had not the wisdom of the country on his side, he had its prejudices. The arrogant spirit of Englishmen made them contemptuous towards the colonists, and the desire to thrust taxation upon others than themselves made the new colonial legislation popular. In 1770 the king made Lord North prime minister. He had won the object on which he had set his heart. A new Tory party had sprung up, not distinguished, like the Tories of Queen Anne's reign, by a special ecclesiastical policy, but by their acceptance of the king's claim to nominate ministers, and so to predominate in the ministry himself.

Unhappily the Opposition, united in the desire to conciliate America, was divided on questions of home policy. Chatham would have met the new danger by parliamentary reform, giving increased voting power to the freeholders of the counties. Burke from principle, and his noble patrons mainly from lower motives, were opposed to any such change. As Burke had wished the British parliament to be supreme over the colonies, in confidence that this supremacy would not be abused, so he wished the great land-owning connection resting on the rotten boroughs to rule over the unrepresented people, in confidence that this power would not be abused. Amidst these distractions the king had an easy game to play. He had all the patronage of the Government in his hands, and beyond the circle which was influenced by gifts of patronage he could appeal to the ignorance and self-seeking of the nation, with which, though he knew it not, he was himself in the closest sympathy.

No wonder resistance grew more vigorous in America. In 1773 the inhabitants of Boston threw ship-loads of tea into the harbour rather than pay the obnoxious duty. In 1774 the Boston Port Bill deprived Boston of its commercial rights, whilst the Massachusetts Government Bill took away from that colony the ordinary political liberties of Englishmen. The first skirmish of the inevitable war was fought at Lexington in 1775. In 1776 the thirteen colonies united in the Congress issued their Declaration of Independence. England put forth all its strength to beat down resistance. She increased her armies by hirings bought from the German princes. But not only did no military genius appear on the English side, but the

distance across the Atlantic was so great, and the immense spaces of even the settled part of the American continent were so large, that it was impossible to effect that conquest which seemed so easy at a distance. The difficulties of the Americans, too, were enormous, but they had the advantage of being at home; and in Washington they found a leader worthy of the great cause for which he fought. In 1777 a British army under Burgoyne capitulated at Saratoga; and in the same year France, eager to revenge the disasters of the Seven Years' War, formed an alliance with the revolted colonies as free and independent states and was soon joined by Spain.

Chatham, who was ready to make any concession to America short of independence, and especially of independence at the dictation of France, died in 1778. The war was continued for some years with varying results; but in 1781 the capitulation of a second British army under Cornwallis at York Town was a decisive blow, which brought home to the minds of the dullest the assurance that the conquest of America was an impossibility.

Before this event happened there had been a great change in public feeling in England. The increasing weight of taxation gave rise in 1780 to a great meeting of the freeholders of Yorkshire, which in turn gave the signal for a general agitation for the reduction of unnecessary expense in the government. To this desire Burke gave expression in his bill for economical reform, though he was unable to carry it in the teeth of interested opposition. The movement in favour of economy was necessarily also a movement in favour of peace; and when the surrender of York Town was known (1782), Lord North at once resigned office.

The new ministry formed under Lord Rockingham comprised not only his own immediate followers, of whom the most prominent was Charles Fox, but the followers of Chatham, of whom Lord Shelburne was the acknowledged leader. A treaty of peace acknowledging the independence of the United States of America was at once set on foot; and the negotiation with France was rendered easy by the defeat of a French fleet by Rodney, and by the failure of the combined forces of France and Spain to take Gibraltar.

Already the ministry on which such great hopes had been placed had broken up. Rockingham died in July 1782. The two sections of which the Government was composed had different aims. The Rockingham section, which now looked up to Fox, rested on aristocratic connection and influence; the Shelburne section was anxious to gain popular support by active reforms, and to gain over the king to their side. Judging by past experience, the combination might well seem hopeless, and honourable men like Fox might easily regard it with suspicion. But Fox's allies took good care that their name should not be associated with the idea of improvement. They pruned Burke's Economical Reform Bill till it left as many abuses as it suppressed; and though the bill prohibited the grant of pensions above £300, they hastily gave away pensions of much larger value to their own friends before the bill had received the royal assent. They also opposed a bill for parliamentary reform brought in by young William Pitt. When the king chose Shelburne as prime minister, they refused to follow him, and put forward the incompetent duke of Portland as their candidate for the office. The struggle was thus renewed on the old ground of the king's right to select his ministers. But while the king now put forward a minister notoriously able and competent to the task, his opponents put forward a man whose only claim to office was the possession of large estates. They forced their way back to power by means as unscrupulous as their claim to it was unjustifiable. They formed a coalition with Lord North whose politics

The second Rockingham ministry.

Struggle between Shelburne and Fox.

The coalition.

The India Bill.

Pitt's ministry.

and character they had denounced for years. The coalition, as soon as the peace with America and France had been signed (1783), drove Shelburne from office. The duke of Portland became the nominal head of the Government, Fox and North its real leaders.

Such a ministry could not afford to make a single blunder. The king detested it, and the assumption by the Whig houses of a right to nominate the head of the Government without reference to the national interests could never be popular. The blunder was soon committed. Burke, hating wrong and injustice with a bitter hatred, had desecrated the government of British India by the East India Company a disgrace to the English name. For many of the actions of that government no honourable man can think of uttering a word of defence. The helpless natives were oppressed and robbed by the Company and its servants in every possible way. Burke drew up a bill, which was adopted by the coalition Government, for taking all authority in India out of the hands of the Company, and even placing the Company's management of its own commercial affairs under control. The governing and controlling body was naturally to be a council appointed at home. The question of the nomination of this council at once drew the whole question within the domain of party politics. The whole patronage of India would be in its hands, and, as parliament was then constituted, the balance of parties might be more seriously affected by the distribution of that patronage than it would be now. When, therefore, it was understood that the Government bill meant the council to be named in the bill for four years, or, in other words, to be named by the coalition ministry, it was generally regarded as an unblushing attempt to turn a measure for the good government of India into a measure for securing the ministry in office. The bill of course passed the Commons. When it came before the Lords, it was thrown out in consequence of a message from the king that he would regard any one who voted for it as his enemy.

The contest had thus become one between the influence of the crown and the influence of the great houses. Constitutional historians, who treat the question as one of merely theoretical politics, leave out of consideration this essential element of the situation, and forget that, if it was wrong for the king to influence the Lords by his message, it was equally wrong for the ministry to acquire for themselves fresh patronage with which to influence the Commons. But there was now, what there had not been in the time of Walpole and the Pelhams, a public opinion ready to throw its weight on one side or the other. The county members still formed the most independent portion of the representation, and there were many possessors of rotten boroughs who were ready to agree with the county members rather than with the great landowners. In choosing Pitt, the young son of Chatham, for his prime minister, as soon as he had dismissed the coalition, George III. gave assurance that he wished his counsels to be directed by integrity and ability. After a struggle of many weeks, parliament was dissolved (1784), and the new House of Commons was prepared to support the king's minister by a large majority.

As far as names go, the change effected placed in office the new Tory party for an almost uninterrupted period of forty-six years. It so happened, however, that after the first eight years of that period had passed by, circumstances occurred which effected so great a change in the composition and character of that party as to render any statement to this effect entirely illusive. During eight years, however, Pitt's ministry was not merely a Tory ministry resting on the choice of the king, but a Liberal ministry resting on national support and upon advanced political knowledge.

The nation which Pitt had behind him was very different from the populace which had assailed Walpole's Excise Bill, or had shouted for Wilkes and liberty. At the beginning of the century the intellect of thoughtful Englishmen had applied itself to speculative problems of religion and philosophy. In the middle of the century it applied itself to practical problems affecting the employment of industry. In 1776 Adam Smith published the *Wealth of Nations*. Already in 1762 the work of Brindley, the Bridgewater canal, the first joint of a network of inland water communication, was opened. In 1767 Hargreaves produced the spinning-jenny; Arkwright's spinning machine was exhibited in 1768; Crompton's mule was finished in 1779; Cartwright hit upon the idea of the power-loom in 1784, though it was not brought into profitable use till 1801. The Staffordshire potteries had been flourishing under Wedgwood since 1763, and the improved steam-engine was brought into shape by Watt in 1768. During these years the duke of Bedford, Coke of Holkham, and Robert Bakewell were busy in the improvement of stock and agriculture.

The increase of wealth and prosperity caused by these changes went far to produce a large class of the population entirely outside the associations of the landowning class, but with sufficient intelligence to appreciate the advantages of a government carried on without regard to the personal interests and rivalries of the aristocracy. The mode in which that increase of wealth was effected was even more decisive on the ultimate destinies of the country. The substitution of the organization of hereditary monarchy for the organization of wealth and station would ultimately have led to evils as great as those which it superseded. It was only tolerable as a stepping-stone to the organization of intelligence. The larger the numbers admitted to influence the affairs of state, the more necessary is it that they respect the powers of intellect. It would be foolish to institute a comparison between an Arkwright or a Crompton and a Locke or a Newton. But it is certain that for one man who could appreciate the importance of the treatise *On the Human Understanding* or the theory of gravitation, there were thousands who could understand the value of the water-frame or the power-loom. The habit of looking with reverence upon mental power was fostered in no slight measure by the industrial development of the second half of the 18th century.

The supremacy of intelligence in the political world was, for the time, represented in Pitt. In 1784 he passed an India Bill, which left the commerce and all except the highest patronage of India in the hands of the East India Company, but which erected a department of the home Government named the Board of Control to compel the Company to carry out such political measures as the Government saw fit. A bill for parliamentary reform was, however, thrown out by the opposition of his own supporters in parliament, whilst outside parliament there was no general desire for a change in a system which for the present produced such excellent fruits. Still more excellent was his plan of legislation for Ireland. Irishmen had taken advantage of the weakness of England during the American war to enforce upon the ministry of the day, in 1780 and 1782, an abandonment of all claim on the part of the English Government and the English judges to interfere in any way with Irish affairs. From 1782, therefore, there were two independent legislatures within the British Isles,—the one sitting at Westminster and the other sitting in Dublin. With these political changes Fox professed himself to be content. Pitt, whose mind was open to wider considerations, proposed to throw open commerce to both nations by removing all the restrictions placed on the trade of Ireland with England and with the rest of the world. The opposi-

Material progress.

Pitt's India Bill.

His scheme of parliamentary reform. His dealings with Ireland.