

Colchester, an annuity of four thousand pounds being also granted him for his meritorious services. The right honourable Charles Manners Sutton was elected in his place.

In the month of August, 1817, lord Amherst, who, in the preceding year, had left England on an embassy to China, arrived at Portsmouth on his return. Whatever were the advantages anticipated from this expensive equipment, of which indeed the prospect, after the total failure of a former embassy by lord Macartney, must have been very faint, they were totally frustrated by the refusal of lord Amherst to submit to the degrading ceremonial of prostration now required by the court of Peking, though dispensed with in the person of his predecessor. The emperor, however, in his "imperial mandate to the king of England" (for such was the language of the court of Peking), expressed his satisfaction "at the disposition of profound respect, and due obedience, which were visible in sending this embassy. I, therefore," says the emperor of China, "thought proper to take from the articles of tribute a few maps, with some prints and portraits. In return, I ordered to be given unto you, O king, a *Jouée* [a string of imperial beads], two silk purses, and eight small ones, as a proof of our tender and indulgent conduct. Your country is too remote from the central and flourishing empire. Besides, your ambassador, it would seem, does not know how to practise the rights and ceremonies of the central empire. There will be no occasion hereafter for you to send an ambassador from so great a distance, and to give him the trouble of passing over mountains and crossing the ocean. If you do but pour out the heart in dutiful obedience, it is by no means necessary, at any stated time, to come to the celestial presence." Such was the haughty tone of rebuke in which the emperor of China thought proper to address the sovereign of England; after which, it can hardly be expected that a third embassy to China will speedily take place.

The 6th of November, 1817, was rendered fatally memorable by the sudden and affecting death of the princess Charlotte of Wales, presumptive heiress of the crown, immediately after she had given birth to a still-born infant. Her marriage, in the preceding year, to prince Leopold of Saxe-Cobourg, has been already mentioned as an event which gave high satisfaction to the nation, and this was greatly strengthened by the announcement, that she was in a situation likely to afford an eventual heir to the British throne; and rarely had the hopes and wishes of a whole people been so deeply interested in any similar event. This double calamity, so sudden and so irreparable, filled the whole land with mourning. Indeed, her death caused an unfeigned sensation of sorrow in every court and every country throughout Europe, and even in the distant regions of Asia and America. The youth of the royal sufferer—the state of conjugal felicity which she was understood to enjoy with the partner of her choice—the domestic virtues which adorned her character—and, finally, the consideration that she was the sole progeny in the second degree from the royal stock, all conspired to imbitter her loss, and to render the public grief not only acute but lasting. Her remains were conveyed to the royal vault at Windsor, on the 19th of November, with every solemnity suited to the melancholy occasion, prince Leopold himself sustaining the afflicting office of chief mourner. The character of her royal highness appears to have been both amiable and exemplary. She was affable and condescending to her inferiors; humane, friendly, and beneficent. Her good sense had corrected that vivacity which, in her earlier years, bordered upon petulance: and though still lively, after her marriage she appeared in general to resemble the steady and prudent mother of a family. She did not, like some of the members of the royal household, delight in pomp and pageantry, the "baubles of little minds;" but preferred the calm privacy of domestic life, and the friendliness of select and social parties, to the unmeaning compliments and frivolous ostentation of a crowded and courtly drawing-room. She had cultivated her mind with care and assiduity; to a taste for literature she added the elegant and ornamental accomplishments suited to her sex and station, and her moral purity was refined by the influence of religion. In

short, her virtues, her accomplishments, her principles, her prudence and discretion in a situation of peculiar difficulty, were fully appreciated; and the hope, enthusiastically cherished, of future felicity under her government, had no parallel since the days of Elizabeth, whose name she had often on her lips, and whom, in all that was great and excellent, she was ambitious to resemble. Thus untimely faded "the expectancy and rose of the fair state."

In the year 1818, a new dynasty commenced in Sweden. On the 5th of February, the king died after a tedious illness, and was succeeded by Charles John Bernadotte, formerly one of Napoleon's marshals, who assumed the royal functions with all the confidence of an hereditary sovereign, but not without the acquiescence of the nobility and people at large. On accepting the reins of government, he pledged himself to imitate the princely virtues and exemplary conduct of his lamented predecessor. A session of the diet was conducted under his auspices with decorum and tranquillity; and some useful enactments and regulations evinced his desire of continuing in a state of harmony with his subjects.

The apparent tranquillity which prevailed in France, and the probability of its continuance, induced the allied sovereigns, in whose hands were now placed the destinies of Europe, to gratify the French people by recalling the whole army of occupation, two years before the stipulated time. A congress was convoked at Aix-la-Chapelle; and as the affair had been already settled in their respective cabinets, the proposition of recall received the sanction of the two emperors and the king of Prussia, October the 9th, and the assent of lord Castlereagh, also, in the name of the prince-regent of England. In a note which announced this determination, it was declared to be a proof of the confidence which the sovereigns reposed in the wisdom of his most Christian majesty, and the fidelity of the French nation; and the duke de Richelieu, in answer to the pleasing communication, expressed the fervent gratitude of his royal master for this mark of friendly respect, promising at the same time that France would cordially join the high and august association, with a view of securing the future peace and happiness of Europe. (1)

## LETTER XXII.

*History of Europe continued—Revolution in Spain—Proclamation of the Cortes—Ferdinand swears to maintain the new Constitution—Singular Mortality in the royal Family of England—Death and Character of George III.—George IV. proclaimed—His alarming illness—Detection of the Cato-street Plot—Return of Queen Caroline from Italy—Proceedings against her in the House of Lords—Bill of Pains and Penalties abandoned—Glance at the Affairs of France—Portugal—the Netherlands—States of the Germanic Empire—Prussia—Naples—and Austria, &c. &c. A. D. 1820, 1821.*

THE allied armies having withdrawn from the territories of France, the inhabitants had, in consequence, got exempt from one continual source of mortification and chagrin; but there remained many other grievances to be redressed ere a state of perfect tranquillity could be restored. The dissensions of party were, in fact, as acrimonious in France as those which agitated the British nation. A proposed alteration in the law of popular election excited a strong sensation among the Parisians. This change was not suggested by the ministers, but by the ultra-royalists, who had sufficient influence in the chamber of peers to procure a majority of votes on this question. To counteract their object, however, the king added fifty-four peers to the assembly by a new creation; and this act of prerogative secured his influence. The other chamber supported the existing law, which was therefore retained. Both assemblies agreed to a removal of the censorship, while

(1) Dr. Bissett's History of the Reign of George III.—Dr. Aikin's Annals of the Reign of George III.—Annual Registers, *sub ante*.—Parliamentary Debates—and London Gazette.

wished to ingratiate themselves with the British court: she consequently abandoned all idea of returning to England, until she became *de jure*, queen of the united kingdom. While at Rome she addressed a letter to the earl of Liverpool, complaining of the omission of her name in the liturgy, as "an act of cruel tyranny;" but to that letter no answer was returned. After a long interval, however, she shaped her course towards England, and arriving at St. Omer's, she was there met by Mr. Brougham, her legal adviser; and by lord Hutchinson also, who had been commissioned by her husband to wait upon her, and offer her an annual allowance of fifty thousand pounds, on provision that she should neither assume the title of queen, nor reside in any part of Great Britain. The proposal roused her indignation; she declared it was impossible for her to listen to it for a moment; and apprehending that means might be resorted to in order to prevent her landing in England, she instantly set off for Calais whither she proceeded with all possible speed, and crossed the channel in the first vessel that she found ready for sailing, accompanied by her confidential friends, lady Anne Hamilton and alderman Wood. On landing at Dover, she was received with every mark of respect which she could desire; and her progress to London had an air of triumph. The consternation of the court at finding her already in the midst of them was extreme: and the king instantly determined to convert her joy into sorrow. He sent down a message to both houses of parliament, accompanied by a multitude of papers, which were laid upon the table of the honourable house by lord Castlereagh, tending to fix upon her the imputation of adulterous guilt. Alarming as her situation now became, she did not remain silent, but addressed a letter to the commons, protesting against the formation of a secret tribunal, and reprobating that series of ill-treatment which could only be justified by trial and conviction. Mr. Brougham, in the strongest terms, opposed the intended inquiry, as the most impolitic that could be devised, and hoped that it would be superseded by a private and amicable adjustment. Mr. Canning acknowledged that he had advised the illustrious lady, six years before, to fix her residence on the continent, being aware of the existence of determined alienation on the part of her husband, and apprehensive, as he was, that if she should remain in England "faction would mark her for its own." He was her avowed friend; had been her frequent and favoured guest; and from an intimate acquaintance with her manners, had pronounced her "the life, grace, and ornament of every society she chose to ennoble with her presence." He did not object to the inquiry, as it appeared to him to be forced upon the ministers; but he declared that he never would act as an accuser or prosecutor of her majesty.

To pursue in detail the narrative of this unhappy state of matters between the royal pair, and the proceedings in parliament to which it gave rise, would carry me far beyond the limits to which we can now go. Let it suffice to remark, that after numerous projects and propositions had been discussed and disposed of, a bill of "pains and penalties" was introduced into the house of peers, having for its object to annul the prerogatives and privileges of Caroline Amelia Elizabeth, and to procure a dissolution of the marriage between his majesty and that princess, on account of an alleged adulterous connexion between her and Bartolomeo Bergami, an Italian, of low extraction, on whom she had bestowed extraordinary marks of favour and distinction. The court at first entertained the idea of proceeding capitally against the unfortunate princess; but her kind friends (for even the ministers had formerly been her friends) finding that this would be an illegal process, the alleged acts of criminality having been committed on the continent, with one who was not a subject of this realm, condescended to relinquish their primary intention, and to be content with the degradation of the object of their master's animosity. No measure upon record in the annals of the country met with more strenuous opposition from the public than this arbitrary and impolitic bill. It was declared to be the fruit of a vile conspiracy for the ruin of an amiable princess, who had never enjoyed her husband's favour. Her guilt, it was said, was at least problematical; and even were it certain and undoubted, there were

mitigating circumstances which pleaded strongly in her favour, arising from the tyrannical harshness which had driven her from her home, without any alleged reason; for the statement of a dislike conceived by one party is no reason for such conduct either in law or in equity.

In the course of the investigation, all the principal servants of her household were attracted by liberal offers to depose freely against her; but the utmost their united testimony amounted to was, that of eliciting suspicious circumstances; while the points of imputation were considerably invalidated by the ordeal of cross-examination to which her learned and able counsel subjected the witnesses, and by the adduction of more disinterested evidence. After a tedious judicial process, a motion for the second reading of the bill produced a very animated debate. The lords Grey, Erskine, and Lansdown denied that the proofs of guilt were such as could justify a penal bill, while the lord-chancellor Eldon and lord Liverpool affected to consider the case as triumphantly proved. When the division upon the bill took place, the numbers were found to be one hundred and twenty-three in favour of it, against it ninety-five. On the commitment of the bill, the clause which provided for a divorce was strongly opposed by the archbishops of York and Tuam, as well as other prelates, who considered it in the light of a mere political expedient, rather than an act of impartial justice; and maintained that it was repugnant both to divine and human laws. The clause was consequently abandoned by ministers—and on a subsequent division, the majority on the bill became reduced to nine; whereupon the earl of Liverpool, referring to the warmth of feeling, and the agitated state of the country, on the 10th of November, declared that he would not persist in the measure, and consequently moved that the third reading of the bill be postponed to that day six months.

The abandonment of this obnoxious bill was regarded as a triumph by her majesty and the numerous supporters of her cause. An illumination took place in the metropolis, for three nights, during which the populace behaved with greater forbearance than could reasonably have been expected. Ministers, from a sense of common decency, now proposed to parliament that the queen should be allowed the same income which they had promised her before she returned to England; but the honour of being mentioned in the liturgy was still denied her—thus affixing, by implication, a stigma upon her character, which, being entailed by the hand of power, made a visible impression upon her majesty's mind.

Before I close this letter, it will be proper to glance at the aspect of affairs on the continent during the interval that the interesting events now mentioned were taking place in our own country. Of Spain I have already spoken in the beginning of my letter, where I have detailed the proceedings of the cortes, and the conduct of king Ferdinand in swearing to the new constitution. The example of Spain was soon followed by the people of Portugal; who, disgusted at the continuance of their grievances, resolved to attempt a general reform. The first symptoms of discontent manifested themselves at Oporto, on the 24th of August, 1820. Don Bernardo de Supulveda, a young nobleman who commanded a regiment, exhorted his troops to serve their king and country by the establishment of a constitutional government; and the patriotic appeal was answered by loud acclamations. A provisional junta was appointed by general consent, not only for the administration of that city, but of the whole kingdom. This was unquestionably a bold step, and count Amarante, who had the chief command of the troops in Tras-os-Montes pointedly condemned it; but his denunciations were disregarded, as were those also of the council of state at Lisbon, where their menaces were treated with derision and contempt. Supulveda marched against the count, and drove him into Galicia; and the members of the new junta began their march towards the capital, with an intention of expediting the convocation of the cortes; but before their arrival, a resolution to that effect had been adopted by the terrified council, to the inexpressible joy of the people. Field-marshal Beresford, soon after this, returned from Rio de Janeiro, and being prevented from landing in Portugal, he prudently left that country to its fate,

while the British officers who had served under him in the Portuguese army were dismissed without molestation. Dissensions arose between the republican party and the friends of moderate reform; but the latter gained the ascendancy, and the public tranquillity was not greatly interrupted or disturbed. In the following year, the king returned from Brazil; and, making a virtue of necessity, he acquiesced with a good grace in the constitutional regulations of those who had curtailed his authority.

The court of St. Cloud, influenced by the well-known sentiments of "the holy alliance," viewed with disgust these revolutionary proceedings in Spain and Portugal, but did not interfere with the concerns of those nations with a tone of authority. The affairs of France herself, indeed, were found quite sufficient to occupy their undivided attention. The king and royal family received a great shock by the death of the duke of Berri, who was suddenly assassinated by a political fanatic, from no other motive than a dread of his being the father of a prince who might continue the race of the Bourbons! This flagitious act, which did not appear to have been the effect of combination or concert, inflamed the zeal of the ultra-royalists, who accused M. de Cazes of having promoted the murder by encouraging democratic principles. The charge was both groundless and absurd; but it occasioned the resignation of that minister, who was succeeded in the direction of the cabinet by the duke de Richelieu.

In the Netherlands and Germany, tranquillity generally prevailed, though in the former country, the king found it expedient to check the freedom of the press and of political discussion, inspired probably with the jealousy of his allies. Among the German states, some considerable progress was made towards the establishment of representative governments. The grand-duke of Hesse consented to the formation of two legislative assemblies, and as his first scheme was too aristocratic to please his subjects, he modified it in such a manner as to secure their acquiescence. The king of Saxony, even while his subjects did not seem eagerly bent upon reform, made such concessions as rendered his government still more popular. But none of the improvements which at this period took place among the German states were more remarkable than the new constitutions which were granted by the kings of Wurtemberg and Bavaria. In the former, the states of the realm were transformed into a regular parliament, to the great joy of the citizens of Stuttgart, who hailed the king with loud acclamations as the brave defender of his country, and the beneficent father of his people. In the latter, the system of despotism was repealed, and the king, who assembled the new legislature with apparent satisfaction, expressed his hope that the new constitution would prove a support to his throne and a blessing to his people.

The conduct of the king of Prussia, however, formed an affecting contrast to the improved state of affairs that was introduced in other countries. His majesty studiously repressed the growing spirit of liberty, more especially after the assassination of Augustus von Kotzebue, the celebrated dramatist, by a student of Jena, who, regarding him as the friend of despotism, considered that, by taking away his life, he should be doing his country a service. His Prussian majesty ordered the arrest of many obnoxious individuals; subjected all publications to a rigid censorship; and as the majority of the students at the universities were supposed to be influenced by uncourtly sentiments, he commissioned servile agents to superintend and correct the lectures of the professors, and to introduce that discipline which would insure political forbearance and moderation.

While the great potentates leagued in "the holy alliance" were brooding over their schemes of artful policy, their attention was called to the affairs of Italy by the effect of that spirit which the intrigues of the Carbonari had aroused. The king of Naples had declared, that he would grant to his subjects such a constitution as should establish their rights and their security: but the sinister influence of Austria was so powerfully exercised over him, that he neglected the performance of his promise, and even violated that engagement by which he had guaranteed the constitutional code framed for the

Sicilians by the wisdom of their British allies. General Papo and many other friends of their country, incensed at this breach of faith, resolved to support the just demands of an insulted nation; and when a great part of the army had been drawn into the combination, the Spanish constitution was proclaimed in every province of the realm. The king assumed an air of intrepidity, and menaced the friends of liberty with an attack from those regiments which remained loyal and faithful to the throne; but he soon revoked his hostile orders, changed his ministry, and made plausible and patriotic promises. Pretending indisposition, he authorized his son to act in his name; and, on the 7th of July, a proclamation announced to the gratified people the royal intention of following the example of his Catholic majesty.

This change of system at Naples alarmed the emperor of Austria, who dreaded the propagation of those revolutionary principles which threatened to undermine the stability of his power in Italy: but before he determined upon actual hostilities, he was desirous of consulting the other members of the "holy alliance;" he therefore obtained an interview with the emperor of Russia, and the prince-royal of Prussia at Troppau. These confederates, inflamed with the arrogance of power, summoned the king of Naples to meet them at Laybach, as if he had been one of their vassals or subjects; and the latter having announced this *invitation* to the revolutionary parliament, with a promise that he would exert all his influence to procure from the great powers a confirmation of the new order of things, he undertook, in the midst of winter, the prescribed journey. The result was easily foreseen. Ferdinand submitted to the dictates of the allied princes, and consented to permit an invasion of his kingdom by the Austrian troops. On the 23d of March, the invading army took possession of the capital, dissolved the parliament, and restored the old government. The king, more degraded by his late abject meanness than he would have been if he had governed a free people, returned to Naples, and began to execute the orders of the emperor of Austria, who had no lawful authority over him; he did not even testify any reluctance when he was desired to institute legal proceedings against many of the Carbonari, who had been active in the late revolutionary movements, and who were now punished in various modes, to gratify the vindictive spirit of a haughty conqueror. A new parliament was convoked; but it was so constituted as to be under the control of one who was a mere vassal to an arbitrary foreign potentate.(1)

## LETTER XXIII.

*History of Europe continued—Coronation of George IV.—Death of Queen Caroline—The King visits Dublin—Hanover—and Scotland—Distress in Ireland, and the Efforts in England for their Relief—Death of Lord Castlereagh, and Reflections on his Administration—Is succeeded by Mr. Canning—Liberal Tone of his Politics—His short but brilliant Career in Office—His premature Decease—Review of the Affairs of Greece and Turkey—Struggles of the Greeks for Independence—Ravages of the Morea by the Turkish Armies—Treaty of London, 1826—Battle of Navarino, and Destruction of the Turkish Fleet, October, 1827.*

WHEN the question regarding the divorce of queen Caroline had been put to rest, by the abandonment of the bill of pains and penalties, the public agitation throughout the British empire gradually subsided. The denial to the queen of those public prayers which had been imperiously demanded from his subjects, during the king's short illness, for the preservation of his sacred person and valuable life, excited occasional murmurs; but as the parliament sanctioned the invidious refusal, the contest, on the part of her friends, seemed to be hopeless, and was consequently relinquished.

(1) Bissett's History of the Reign of George III.—Annual Register, 1820, 1821.—Aikin's Annals of George III.—Parliamentary Debates,—and London Gazette.

they imposed such restrictions as were deemed unreasonable by the advocates of a free press. At Nismes, in the department of the Gard, and other places in the south of France, serious commotions arose between the Catholics and Protestants, instigated, it would appear, by the intrigues of the ultra-royal faction, with a view of embarrassing the court, and many lives were lost in the affrays which took place. The elections which ensued in the autumn of 1819 were neither favourable to that party nor to the ministry, as about two-thirds of the new members affected a great liberality of political sentiment.

Neither were matters much improved in the sister kingdom Spain, by an experience of the past. Ferdinand, instead of selecting able ministers, and adopting a regular system of government, disgusted his subjects by various acts of cruelty and oppression, while he totally neglected the exercise of that vigour which would have secured the persons and property of his subjects from the outrages of the numerous banditti, which every where infested the country. This relaxation of his authority naturally encouraged the disaffected, and the state of the country became increasingly critical. The liberal notions which had been propagated during the contest with Napoleon had not yet lost their effect. They were kept alive by the continued tyranny of the court, and an opportunity of bringing them into exercise was anxiously expected. The discontent of many officers of the army, whom the king had not thought of conciliating, diffused itself among the troops in Andalusia, and colonel Riego lighted the match which produced an explosion. Marching with a battalion to Acros, he surprised the commander-in-chief, procured an accession of force, and joined Quiroga, who had escaped from a place of confinement. The lines near Cadiz were twice assaulted but without effect; and Riego was then detached with fifteen hundred men, to excite a general insurrection. He was so harassed by the troops that were in the king's interest, that he with difficulty escaped destruction: and Quiroga, in the isle of Leon, seemed to be in equal danger. Yet the malecontents were not discouraged; and in the province of Galicia, by the efforts of some spirited officers, the royal authority was quickly annihilated; while Mina, erecting the popular standard in Navarre, proclaimed the constitution of the year 1812. The flame now spread through other provinces; and Ferdinand was so intimidated by the progress of disaffection, that he promised to convoke the cortes, and bound himself by an oath, March the 10th, 1820, to the observance of the constitution. The public joy, however, arising from this source, was allayed by the brutal treachery of the troops at Cadiz. General Freyre had assured the inhabitants, that the constitution should be proclaimed in form; but when a large concourse of people appeared in the principal square to witness the ceremony, the military made a sudden attack upon the spectators, and put to death more than four hundred of them, before it was known that the king had acceded to the popular claims. It is not understood that general Freyre either authorized or countenanced this atrocity. Some of the wretches who perpetrated it, after a long delay, were punished; but the outrage was never investigated in a regular or satisfactory manner.

Ferdinand, who had long domineered over the nobility and the people, was now a slave to the leaders of the revolution. His cabinet was composed of strenuous constitutionalists, who, justly doubting his sincerity, resolved to hold him in trammels, until the liberties of the country should be permanently established. On the 9th of July, after an interval marked with occasional commotions, the cortes assembled, and set themselves in good earnest to promote the regeneration of the kingdom. The exclusive privileges of the nobles were suppressed or diminished; the administration of justice was purified; abuses in the various departments of state were corrected; the lands of the church were partly appropriated to the public service; arrangements were made for the reduction of the national debt, which amounted to one hundred and sixty millions sterling; and they paid due attention also to the measures necessary to ensure the revival of commerce and the encourage-

ment of general industry. When the session terminated, in the autumn, it was not deemed prudent to suspend the authority of so useful a body of men; three-fourths of them were ordered to form a permanent committee, for the purpose of controlling the executive power. The king occasionally evinced tokens of jealousy and displeasure, and secret advisers did not fail to recommend it to him to shake off the yoke; but no opportunity of a counter-revolution presented itself to his anxious wishes. It might have been expected that the cortes would make a vigorous effort to reclaim the transatlantic colonies to submission; since, however attached to liberty they might pretend to be, they might be of opinion that the glory of Old Spain was involved in the retention of the New World; but the weighty affairs of internal policy engrossed their whole attention. In the mean time, the revolt of those provinces became more general both in North and South America. The royalists of Mexico found the greatest difficulty in preserving their power; and the capital of Peru was nearly reduced to extremity by a continued blockade: their declaration of independence, however, did not take place until the following year.

In our own country, an unprecedented series of mortality, at this period, befell the reigning family. I mentioned to you, in my last letter, the death of the princess Charlotte of Wales, which took place in 1817; others now rapidly followed. On the 7th of November, 1818, her majesty queen Charlotte expired at Kew palace, in the 75th year of her age, after a lingering decline, attended with much personal suffering, which she was reported to have sustained with great fortitude and resignation. She merited the respect of the nation by her conjugal virtues and her maternal character; by the uniform propriety of her conduct, and by the strict decorum which she maintained in her court. Her ruling passion, in the decline of life, was believed to be the accumulation of riches; and the political influence which she acquired during the illness of the king in 1788, she maintained to the last; but it was thought to be invariably employed in favour of the aristocratical branch of the constitution.—On the 23d of January, 1820, the public mind received a much severer shock by the decease of his royal highness the duke of Kent, their majesties' fourth son, who expired at Sidmouth, in Devonshire, after a very short illness, arising from an inflammation of the chest. He was truly an illustrious prince, of noble mien, of manners the most accomplished, and of superior intellectual attainments—in all respects fit to grace a throne. He was consequently much esteemed, and died deservedly lamented, leaving an infant daughter, the princess Alexandrina Victoria, then only eight months old, to the care of an accomplished but disconsolate mother.—But the regrets excited by the loss of the duke of Kent were speedily absorbed in the greater grief occasioned by the demise of his venerable father, king George III., which took place at Windsor, on the 29th of the same month—only six days afterward. He had attained the 82d year of his age; and had swayed the royal sceptre, nominally, for nearly fifty-nine years, having been crowned in 1761, though the last nine years of his eventful career had been a melancholy blank in his mental existence.

As the character of George III. has been placed in very different lights by contemporary writers; and as we ourselves are too near the scene of action, probably, to form a strictly impartial judgment of his merits and defects, I shall present to you, my son, the different aspects in which it has been exhibited by two different classes of political writers, leaving it to time to decide which of them is nearest allied to truth.

According to his admirers, "his majesty possessed an excellent understanding, and was a very competent judge both of men and things. His talents for government, they assure us, were respectable; and he exercised them with the happiest effect, even in perturbed and critical times. Having traced in his mind the outlines of the duties which devolved upon him as the sovereign of a great empire, he filled up the intervening space with the skill of a political artist. In deciding upon the American war, he was actuated solely by a sense of justice; he thought himself bound to correct the refrac-

tory spirit of the colonists, and to use force when persuasion and remonstrance had failed. Into the war with revolutionary France he was impelled by an idea of imperious necessity, inasmuch as the career of the democratic opposers of Louis XVI. menaced with subversion the best institutions of other countries; and such was his firmness, that he was not deterred from his object, even by the long-continued success of the enemy. With equal resolution he checked the effervescence of zeal among the votaries of reform in Great Britain, and preserved the state from that mischief which would have been produced by the schemes of profligate and violent jacobins. He also displayed his spirit to advantage, when the whigs at different times endeavoured to subject him to their sway. On the other hand, when conciliation was expedient, and when the voice of the senate corresponded with that of the people, he could yield with a good grace and with dignified complacency. His private character was so exemplary, that it may be quoted as a model of virtue. He was attentive to religious observances, both public and private: correct in his own morals, and studious of the morality of others; mild and unassuming in his demeanour, courteous, gracious, and affable; humane, beneficent, and liberal, while he was temperate and economical in his personal habits. In short, his conduct, both as a king and as a man, deserves the highest praise, and entitles his memory to our esteem and veneration."

Such is the favourable side of the picture, as viewed through the medium of political partiality: the following is a somewhat different estimate of royal merit.

"This monarch was not highly favoured by nature; for his understanding was narrow, and his capacity did not soar above mediocrity. If he had moved in the ranks of private life and of ordinary society, he would not have been considered as any other than a man of very limited powers. His acquirements from education were also scanty and imperfect. Deprived of his father when a youth, he was committed to the care of his mother, in whose opinion book-learning was of little consequence; and it does not appear that his studies were well directed, or pointed to pursuits worthy of a prince. He was not properly tutored in either history or politics; nor was he guided to an intelligent survey of the affairs of the world or the characters of mankind. He could manufacture a button, or draw the model of a house, but could not write a tolerable letter. He could comprehend a plain statement, but could not unravel the web of sophistry or manage a complicated argument, or enter into the *rationale* of the English constitution. In his youth he fell into the hands of bigoted tories, who, having no expansion of intellect themselves, only inspired him with high notions of royal supremacy. Thus instructed, he had no *leaning* to those principles which placed his family upon the throne. He had imbibed as unfavourable an opinion of the advocates of freedom as Charles II. entertained of all mankind:—he fancied that they were base and unprincipled, and deemed his power unsafe in the hands of such statesmen. He did not possess that comprehensiveness of mind which could fathom the depths of policy, or qualify him to govern like an enlightened prince; yet, by the aid of common sense, unperturbed, he might have governed much better than he did. The American war is a foul blot upon his fame; not only for its original injustice, but for the mischievous consequences to which it led, as the parent of the French revolution. Many will think, nor is it easy to disprove the inference, that no prince who had a due sense of religion or equity could have rushed into such a war, or have prosecuted it with such unfeeling obstinacy. To ravage a country with fire and sword, and send savages, like blood-hounds, to hunt down his colonial subjects, because they were desirous of being governed by the constitutional maxims of the mother-country, were not the acts of a pious, just, or benevolent prince. Nor can the war with France, which he carried on with equal zeal and pertinacity, be defended upon equitable principles. He had no right to violate the independence of another state, or to dictate terms of accommodation at the point of the bayonet. Nor can the outrageous attack

upon the Danes, in resentment of the armed neutrality, or the bombardment of their capital for wishing to retain their fleet, be fairly or honourably vindicated. Other acts of arbitrary violence, the effects of which no courtly sophistry can elude, rise up in appalling array against the memory of the late monarch, though he was styled 'the best of kings.'"

These delineations of the character of the late sovereign of this country are certainly at variance; but, *utrum horum major accipe*—to which of them the praise of greater fidelity belongs, it is not for us to decide. The venerable age, the protracted sufferings, the private and personal virtues of George III., with his still recent demise, render it both a difficult and an invidious task to attempt to sketch the political features of his reign with historic fidelity. It has been said of him on high authority, and, as we believe, with equal truth, that "he would never do wrong except when he mistook wrong for right." The notions of government originally infused into his mind by lord Bute probably differed little from those which Charles I. learned from archbishop Laud, however modified in practice by the necessity of circumstances.

As the prince-regent had now conducted the machine of government for nearly ten years, his assumption of the regal character and office was made less account of than would otherwise have been the case. But scarcely had he been proclaimed king, when he was attacked with an inflammation of the lungs, the very disorder which had recently sent his brother, the duke of Kent, to the grave; and its violence occasioned the greatest alarm among all his friends. However, by the skill and attention of his physicians, he recovered his health, and was enabled to perform the functions of his high station.

It was now intended, according to established custom, to dissolve the parliament, but at the moment that this was about to be carried into effect, a "flagrant and sanguinary conspiracy" was detected and denounced. A person of the name of Thistlewood, who had once moved in a respectable sphere of life and known better days, had been tried for high-treason along with the apothecary Watson, and with him acquitted. His escape, however, in that instance, did not reconcile him to the government, and he brooded over fresh schemes of turbulence and sedition. He now became associated with some disaffected persons of profligate habits; and when it was proposed at their private meetings, which were held in a kind of hay-loft, in Cato-street, Marylebone, that all the members of the cabinet should be put to death, as determined enemies and oppressors of their country, the horrid scheme was adopted as an act of public virtue. A spy, however, who had watched their motions under a pretence of forwarding their views, disclosed their machinations to the ministry; and with some difficulty several of them were apprehended, after Thistlewood had killed one of the police officers. They were tried by a special commission, and five of their number, being declared guilty of high-treason, were executed at the Old Bailey.

When the new parliament assembled, the business of the two houses proceeded for some time currently, attended with but few indications of party animosity. But an incident at length arose, which disturbed the tranquillity of the court and threw the whole empire into an extraordinary ferment. This was the arrival of the queen—the discarded wife of George IV., who had been long absent from the scene of her ill treatment. While residing in Italy, she had received the melancholy news of her daughter's lamented death; and now intelligence had reached her of the demise of her royal uncle, to whose kindness and patronage she had formerly owed much. It was the wish of the new king that she should indefinitely prolong her absence from England; but her high spirit emboldened her to defy his menaces and his resentment, both of which she had experienced. In consequence of reports unfavourable to her character, two gentlemen of the law had been sent to the continent in 1818, to collect evidence on the subject, with a view to a divorce; but their discoveries were not then communicated to the public. In the mean time, she was treated with insolence or contempt by the British ambassadors at the different courts of Europe, and by such travellers as