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BRITISH HISTORY

BRITISH HISTORY

A Survey of the History of all the British Peoples

By RAMSAY MUIR

Author of "A Short History of the British Commonwealth," etc., etc.

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A SURVEY OF THE HISTORY
OF ALL THE BRITISH PEOPLES

BY

RAMSAY MUIR

AUTHOR OF "A SHORT HISTORY OF THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH"

PART III

A CENTURY OF CONFLICT
(1688-1815)

LONDON

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BOOK V

**THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT**

(1688-1714)

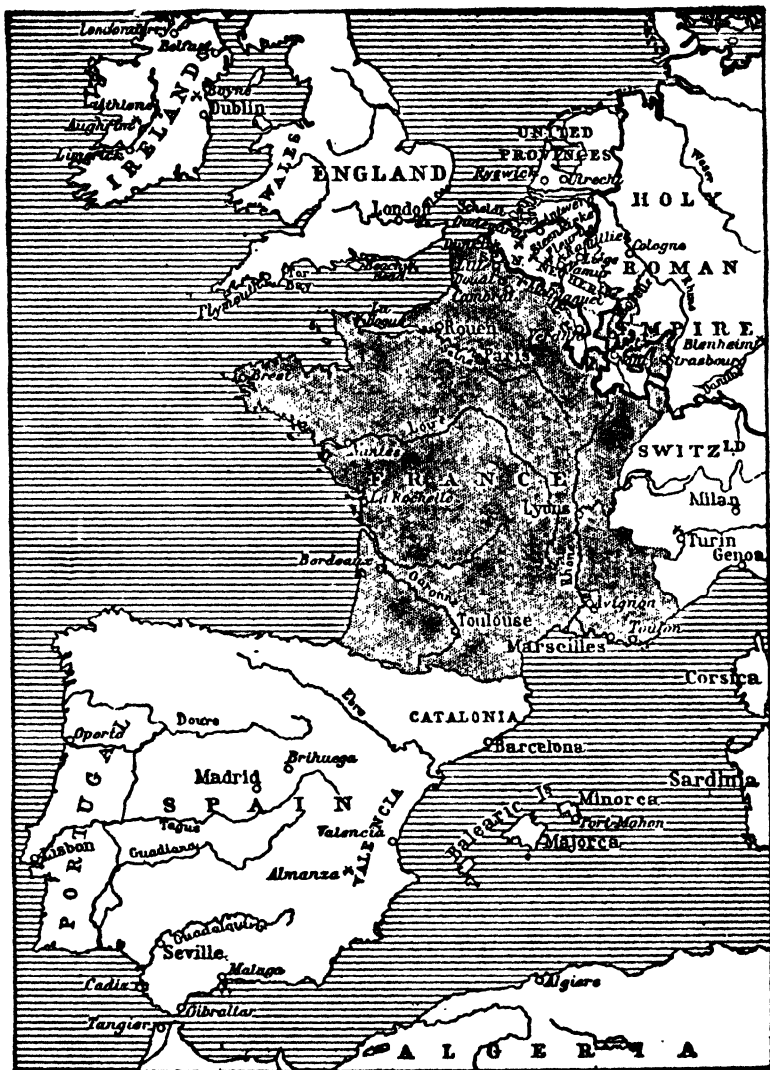


FIG. 23.—The Struggle against Louis XIV.

BOOK V

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT (1688-1714)

THE quarter of a century which followed the flight of James II was a period of great significance in British history. In one aspect it was the completion of the preceding period, because it saw the conclusion of the long struggle between Crown and Parliament which filled the seventeenth century, and the definition of the methods of government by a landowning oligarchy wielding control through Parliament which lasted until the nineteenth century. In another aspect it was the beginning of the next period, because it saw the opening of the long duel with France for commercial and colonial supremacy which came to an end in 1815.

The best way of regarding these twenty-five years is to think of them as occupied with a struggle for the establishment and defence of constitutional government and parliamentary supremacy. The process of constitutional definition was not completed in 1689. It lasted throughout the period; it covered the Scottish Union of 1707 and the establishment of the cruel penal code in Ireland; and it reached its culmination in the defeat of the attempt to restore the Stewarts on the death of Anne. The struggle with Louis XIV was at first waged mainly for the defence of the Revolution Settlement, and the long war of William III has sometimes been called "the War of the English Succession"; while the later stage of this conflict may fairly be described as a battle for supremacy, in the European field, between two conceptions of government—absolutism, represented by Louis XIV, and constitutionalism, represented by the English and the Dutch. This struggle was to be extended to the non-European world in the following period.

CHAPTER XXV

THE REVOLUTION SETTLEMENT AND THE FIGHT FOR ITS DEFENCE (1689-1692)

I. THE SETTLEMENT IN ENGLAND

The Situation in 1688.—The bloodless victory over James II was not decisive. Many difficulties had yet to be solved, not only in England, but in Scotland and Ireland. And across the Channel Louis XIV, exasperated by the unexpected turn of events, was watching for an opportunity to restore the situation. He not only commanded immense military resources : at this moment his fleet, built up by Colbert during the previous quarter of a century, was so strong as to give him, for a time, command of the Channel. It was therefore urgently important that the new Government should be firmly established in every part of the islands as rapidly as possible.

The Convention.—Immediately after occupying London, William of Orange called together an irregular assemblage, known as the *Convention*, to give the cover of popular support to his actions. There was no time for an election ; so the Convention consisted of the peers, together with all who had sat in the parliaments of Charles II, and the Mayor and Aldermen of London. This body drew up a *Declaration of Rights*, setting forth all the breaches of the constitution of which James II had been guilty ; and authorised the election of a Parliament, which met in January.

The Problem of the Succession.—Meanwhile the leading men were discussing the problem of what was to be done about the succession to the crown. It was the great virtue of the Revolution of 1688 that it was not a party victory : Tories as well as Whigs had shared in it. But Tories and Whigs still differed sharply about the theory of the monarchy. The Whigs, regarding the king as only the first officer of the State, would have liked Parliament frankly to declare James II deposed, and to choose William as his successor. The Tories hated the idea of disturbing the divinely appointed hereditary succession, and would have liked to salve their consciences by appointing William as "Regent" on behalf of James II : at the most, they wanted to pretend that James had abdicated, to pretend further that his son was a changeling, and to let the throne pass to Mary, as his heir. There might easily have been strife between

these irreconcilable views. But the decisive word lay with William. He made it plain that he would neither accept a Regency, nor be content with the position of Prince Consort. He was making ready to return to Holland, when a compromise was reached which saved the face of the Tories : James was declared to have abdicated by his flight, and William and Mary were invited to occupy the throne jointly. In February they were crowned, and the two months' interregnum came to an end. In reality the Whig view had triumphed. It was Parliament which had fixed the line of succession, and this fact governed the whole settlement.

The Bill of Rights.—The main feature of the Revolution Settlement in England was its extraordinarily conservative character, and the slight and seemingly unimportant changes which it made in the Constitution. *The Bill of Rights* (1689), which repeated the terms of the Convention's "Declaration," is accounted one of the main documents of English constitutional history, ranking with *Magna Carta*. Yet it was, like *Magna Carta*, mainly a restatement of long recognised laws and usages, which had been violated by the Crown. It declared illegal the exercise of the "suspending power," the maintenance of an army without parliamentary consent, the creation of a High Commission Court, and the like. But there was nothing new in all this. There was no general statement of principle, no assertion of parliamentary supremacy, no attempt to diminish or define the powers of the Crown.

Financial and Military Control.—Nevertheless parliamentary supremacy was very effectually secured, by two simple devices. (1) Instead of voting a large revenue to the king for life, as had been done in the cases of Charles II and James II, Parliament made the greater part of its grants only annual, thus ensuring that it should be summoned every year, and that its assent should be obtained for the purposes for which the taxes were to be spent ; and it also "appropriated" particular taxes to particular purposes, thus ensuring its control over the main departments of government. (2) Recognising that a standing army was now necessary, especially in view of the great war in which England was now to be involved, it found an easy means of ensuring that the Army also should be under its control. For this purpose it passed a *Mutiny Act*, defining the special obligations of military discipline : apart from this Act, only the ordinary laws of the land would apply to soldiers, and discipline would be destroyed. The *Mutiny Act* was made annual ; Parliament,

therefore, must meet every year to renew it. These two simple measures made the Crown completely dependent upon Parliament, and unable to carry out any policy which Parliament did not approve. This completed the Revolution Settlement, as it was defined in 1689.

The Triennial Act and Freedom of the Press.—Two enactments, made later by a Whig Parliament, formed a sort of supplement. In 1694 a *Triennial Act* was passed. Its purpose was not (like that of the Act of 1664) to ensure that Parliament should meet at least once every three years, for such a provision was now unnecessary. It provided that no Parliament should last for more than three years, in order to ensure against the existence of any more Long Parliaments, kept in being because they suited the Crown. Finally, in 1695, the Licensing Act was not renewed. It was never revived again. And this meant that complete *liberty of the Press* was established in England. This is one of the most essential elements in a system of free government.

The Toleration Act.—On the religious side the settlement was equally modest and simple. There was some talk of a measure of "comprehension" for the Dissenters. But the High Church clergy were already sufficiently restive and unhappy: the archbishop, four bishops, and four hundred clergy (known as the "Non-jurors") gave up their benefices rather than take the oath of allegiance to the new sovereigns. This ensured the supremacy of the Low Church party, who were allies of the Whigs and not unfriendly to the Dissenters, and the new archbishop, Tillotson, was a strong Low Churchman. It was, however, felt to be dangerous to press the High Church party too hard. So the only religious change made was the passing of a *Toleration Act* (1689), which gave freedom of worship to all who would accept thirty-six of the Thirty-nine Articles. This excluded Roman Catholics, who could not abjure Transubstantiation, and Unitarians, who could not accept the doctrine of the Trinity. The laws were not enforced, however, even against these, except at moments when Jacobite plots made the Roman Catholics appear politically dangerous. The Toleration Act undid the cruelty of the "Clarendon Code." But it did not repeal the Test Act of 1673, or the Corporation Act, which excluded Dissenters from all public offices. Many Dissenters, however, got over the difficulty by "Occasional Conformity," that is, by taking the Anglican Sacrament for qualifying purposes; and in practice toleration

was genuine in England from 1689 onwards, except for the Roman Catholics.

Such were the extremely modest legal changes whereby parliamentary supremacy and religious liberty were established in England. They had the supreme virtue that they were reached by consent, and enabled the nation to pass through a difficult period without serious division. Nevertheless, the new regime was felt to be insecure. For that reason, there were very few of the leading men of this period—Tories and Whigs alike—who were not guilty of maintaining secret relations with the exiled court, since there was always a danger that the Stewarts would be restored by the might of Louis XIV.

2. THE REVOLUTION IN SCOTLAND

Collapse of the Stewart System.—In Scotland the change was more complete and unflinching than in England. The flight of James II brought about an immediate collapse of the whole system of tyranny in Church and State which had been built up since 1660. The Roman Catholic ministers fled. While the persecuted peasantry of the south-west "rabbed" the hated curates, an assembly of nobles and gentry invited William to undertake the government, and a Convention was called, which met in March 1689—after William and Mary had been crowned in England. There was a Jacobite element in the Convention, but it was so much outnumbered that many of its members withdrew. A "Claim of Right" was drawn up on the model of the English Declaration, setting forth James's offences; but without any evasion it went on to declare that he had forfeited the crown, and to offer it to William and Mary. The Episcopate was condemned, and also the practice of appointing "Lords of the Articles" to do the work of Parliament, which had been one of the main foundations of royal power. Thus, for the first time in its history, the Scottish Parliament acquired real freedom of action. Next year (1690) the full Presbyterian system was restored, and the General Assembly met again. The Revolution brought constitutional and religious liberty to Scotland. But this liberty was attended by dangers. Now that, in both England and Scotland, Parliament was supreme, there was a real danger of a divergence of policy between the two countries. A Union of the Crowns was not enough. A Union of Parliaments had to follow, though seventeen years passed before it came.

The Battle of Killiecrankie.—While the Convention was establishing the new system, Graham of Claverhouse (now Viscount Dundee), who had for ten years commanded the royal forces in Scotland, was preparing to strike a blow for the fallen king. He was a gallant and loyal soldier, with some of the qualities of his cousin Montrose. He was able to raise an army in the Highlands, especially among the clans that hated the Campbells, whose chief, the Earl of Argyle, was almost the hereditary head of the Presbyterian party. The Scottish army, under General Mackay, was sent to deal with Dundee, and met him in the Pass of *Killiecrankie*. They were dispersed by one wild onrush of the clansmen, while they were trying to fix their new-fangled bayonets. But Dundee was killed in the fray; and after his death resistance melted away.

The Massacre of Glencoe.—It took two years more to pacify the Highlands. In 1691 an indemnity was offered to all who would take the oath before the end of the year. One petty chieftain, Macdonald of Glencoe, delayed till after the last moment through motives of pride, but actually took the oath on January 7th, 1692. The Master of Stair, William's most trusted adviser on Scottish affairs, thought that this gave an opportunity of teaching a lesson to the Highlands, and resolved to punish the Glencoe Macdonalds. The task was entrusted to a detachment from Argyle's own regiment, the hereditary enemies of the Macdonalds. Welcomed as guests, in the night of February 1st the soldiers turned on their hosts and massacred them: a profitless and unforgivable crime which has stained William III's memory. It did not turn the other Macdonald clans into friends of the new regime; they were in the van of every later rising. But for the moment there was no further ground for nervousness in regard to Scotland.

3. THE REVOLUTION IN IRELAND

The Irish Situation in 1688.—It was in Ireland that the crisis of the Revolution had to be fought out. There, during James II's reign, his Lord-Lieutenant, the Earl of Tyrconnell, had already done much to stir up national feeling among the Irish Catholics. As soon as the news arrived that William of Orange had landed in England, Tyrconnell proceeded to arm the Catholics, raising, it was said, as many as 100,000 men; while he ordered the Protestants to give up their arms. Many Protestants fled the

country. Those of Ulster, deserting their homes, concentrated in Londonderry and Enniskillen, where they prepared to defend themselves ; they proclaimed William and Mary as king and queen and sent urgent messages to England for aid.

Londonderry and Enniskillen.—In March 1689, James II landed in Ireland, bringing some French troops, French officers to train the Irish, large supplies of arms, and a considerable sum of money—all given by Louis XIV. Londonderry and Enniskillen were at once besieged : they were the last English strongholds in Ireland. The *Siege of Londonderry* lasted from April to July, and the defenders had almost been starved into surrender when English vessels contrived to break the boom which closed the river, and threw provisions into the town. A little later (August) the defenders of Enniskillen sallied out and beat back the opposing forces at *Newtown Butler*. James had thus failed to crush this last resistance while he was still left to himself. In October a small English force landed at Belfast, under the Duke of Schomberg, a French Huguenot exile in the service of William. This force contrived to win back most of Ulster, where the Protestants were numerous. But at the end of 1689 four-fifths of Ireland was still under the control of James, and the Revolution was insecure while this state of things continued.

The Irish Parliament.—Meanwhile an Irish Parliament had met in Dublin. It cancelled the Acts of Settlement of Charles II, and voted the restoration to their original owners of all lands confiscated since 1641. It practically established the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland. It repealed Poyning's Acts, and declared the Irish Parliament independent of English control. In other words, Ireland, like Scotland, declared for political and religious independence. James did not welcome these decisions, though he had to accept them ; and friction and divided purposes resulting from this weakened the action of the Irish leaders. The Irish Parliament also committed the grave blunder of passing a savage Act of Attainder, whereby it condemned to death as traitors over two thousand peers, landowners, and clergy who had failed to give their allegiance to James II. This made the struggle one of life and death. In any case, it seemed essential for the safety of England and Scotland that Ireland should be reconquered. In 1690 the war in Ireland became the centre of the whole European conflict, and William III himself took command.

The Crisis of 1690.—If Louis XIV had realised the importance of the Irish struggle, and concentrated his strength upon it, the situation would have been grave indeed. For at this moment, having won an important battle at *Fleurus* in the Netherlands, he had the upper hand of the continental allies on land. And, what was far more important, he also had command of the sea. In July 1690, the French fleet, under Tourville, defeated the combined English and Dutch fleets under Lord Torrington, off *Beachy Head*. This was the worst defeat yet recorded—or ever recorded—in British naval annals, and it might have been disastrous. There was a panic in England lest there should be a French invasion: troops for the purpose were mustered at Dunkirk, and the main English military forces had gone to Ireland. Louis missed this opportunity. He did not even attempt to cut the communications between England and Ireland, which he might readily have done; nor did he send more than a small force to Ireland to take part in the critical struggle. He allowed the Battle of the Boyne, which had been fought just before the Battle of Beachy Head, to be the decisive event in the Irish struggle.

The Battle of the Boyne.—William had landed in Ulster in the spring of 1690, with an army of 35,000 men. Advancing southwards on Dublin, he found his passage barred at the River Boyne by James, with an army of 30,000 men, including 6,000 French. This was a cosmopolitan battle: while there were French troops on the one side, on the other there were, besides Irish Protestants and English troops, also Dutch, German, Swedish, and even Finnish soldiers. The Battle of the Boyne was a turning-point not merely in the history of Ireland, but in the great European conflict. William won a complete victory; James abandoned Dublin without attempting a defence, and fled to France.

The Treaty of Limerick.—Deserted by their king, the Irish resisted gallantly for another year. In 1691, when it was too late, substantial French forces were sent to stiffen the resistance. A hard campaign had to be fought by English troops under the Dutch General Ginckel, before Munster and Connaught were conquered. The decisive events were the forcing of the line of the Shannon at *Athlone*, and the shattering of the main Franco-Irish army at *Aughrim* (June 1691). Even then, Limerick held out for three months under the gallant Patrick Sarsfield. Its surrender (October 3rd, 1691) marked the final subjugation of Ireland. In surrendering, Sarsfield thought he had at least gained something for his country. The *Treaty of*

Limerick permitted the Irish troops to go abroad and take service there if they wished, and many gallant officers in continental armies made Irish names famous during the eighteenth century. The Treaty also provided that Irish Catholics should enjoy the same degree of freedom as they had enjoyed under Charles II. Alas ! the Irish Parliament—now again reflecting the Protestant ascendancy—repudiated this provision (1697), on the ground that Ginckel had exceeded his powers.

Supremacy of the English Parliament.—The Revolution Settlement in Ireland could not begin until the war was over. In 1692 the English Parliament—overriding the rights of the Irish Parliament—passed an Act requiring all officials and all members of Parliament in Ireland to make a declaration against Transubstantiation. This, of course, excluded the Catholics—three-quarters of the population—from all public offices and from Parliament, though not from the right of voting. The Irish Parliament did not challenge this extraordinary assumption of power on the part of the English Parliament, and it was thus established that the English Parliament could legislate over the head of the Irish Parliament—a claim never put forward in the case of Scotland.

The Irish Settlement.—In 1692, 1695, and 1697 the Irish Parliament (now limited to the Protestant minority) passed a series of Acts which regulated Irish affairs for more than a century. In the first place it rescinded all that had been done by its Catholic predecessor in 1689. This brought back Poyning's Acts into effect, which provided that the Irish Parliament could pass no laws which had not previously been approved by the English and Irish Privy Councils ; accordingly the English government must share responsibility for all the subsequent legislation. The restoration of Poyning's Acts, together with the power of direct legislation claimed by the English Parliament, turned the Irish Parliament into a controlled and subordinate legislature. Hence there appeared to be no such reason for a Union as there was in the case of Scotland.

The Penal Code.—In 1695 it was enacted under severe penalties that no Catholic might teach in a school or in a private house, and that no child might be sent abroad to be educated as a Catholic : in so far as this law was enforced, the whole Catholic population was sentenced to the ignorance which means barbarism. It was also enacted that no Catholic might possess arms, or a horse worth more than £5. In 1697 all Roman Catholic bishops and

priests were banished ; marriage between Catholics and Protestants was forbidden, and it was provided that if a Protestant heiress married a Catholic her inheritance should pass to the nearest Protestant heir. It was also enacted that all lands belonging to anybody who had taken the side of James II in the recent war should be confiscated : two years later the English Treasury stepped in and sold these lands, taking the proceeds as a contribution to the cost of the war.

Thus were laid the foundations of the iniquitous Penal Code under which Ireland had to live for a century. Further refinements of cruelty were added later. These disgraceful laws form the gravest blot on the records of the British peoples. They caused more than two centuries of conflict, and the poison which they engendered still works in the veins of the British Commonwealth.

4. THE REVOLUTION IN THE COLONIES

Parliamentary Supremacy.—In the colonies the Revolution was very quietly accepted. It swept away at once the scheme of centralised government for the northern American colonies which James II had begun to apply. In effect, the post-Revolution government accepted and developed the colonial policy of Charles II. But the establishment of the supremacy of Parliament in England made a very great difference to the position of the colonies. Hitherto their dealings had been almost wholly with the king and the Privy Council ; and, in theory, their own legislative bodies had stood in the same relation to the king as the parliaments of England, Scotland, and Ireland. Now their legislatures, like that of Ireland, were definitely subordinated to the English Parliament.

The Massachusetts Charter.—One important change, however, was due to the Revolution. In 1691 a new Charter was granted to Massachusetts, in place of the one which Charles II had called in. It transferred the appointment of the Governor from the colony to the Crown, merged the old colony of Plymouth with its greater neighbour, established a system of religious toleration in place of the rigid intolerance which had hitherto marked New England, and introduced a moderately democratic franchise in place of the old limitation of civic rights to Church members. Everywhere, save in Ireland, the Revolution brought greater liberty and religious freedom. In Ireland alone it brought cruel oppression and the most crushing form of religious persecution.

The Board of Trade and Plantations.—In 1696 a new public office was instituted to deal with colonial questions—the Board of Trade and Plantations. Its officers conducted the correspondence with the colonial Governors, and endeavoured to maintain a consistent and continuous policy in dealing with them. Although the Revolution brought no material change in English colonial policy, it made that policy more definite and coherent ; and this was important in the long series of colonial wars which now began.

CHAPTER XXVI

WILLIAM III AND LOUIS XIV (1688–1702)

I. "KING WILLIAM'S WAR" (1689–1697)

Character of William III.—William III* was always a foreigner in England, as his popular nickname, "Dutch William," indicates. Perhaps it was only his English queen, a lady of great charm and ability, with an understanding affection for her difficult husband, who made the new regime even tolerable in its first years : after her death in 1694 William's difficulties multiplied. He was an ailing, silent, morose man, with no attractive gifts ; but he had an indomitable courage in difficulties, and this probably saved the Revolution in England as it had earlier saved the very existence of Holland. He lived for one thing alone—to dispel the nightmare of French domination, and to abase the intolerable pride of Louis XIV. England was for him no more than a means to this end, and he took little interest in her problems save as they helped or hindered his great task. He was never happy except in Holland. He made no English friends : indeed, he had good reason for distrusting Englishmen, for almost every leading man, Whig and Tory alike, was a potential, and often an actual, traitor in secret relations with the exiled king. His friends were Dutchmen who came over with him, and his lavish gifts to them (which founded the fortunes of at least

* There is a short Life of William III by H. D. Traill (Twelve English Statesmen).

two of the English ruling families, the Bentincks and the Keppels) were among the causes of his unpopularity.

Jacobite Plots.—One of the reasons for William's dislike of England was that he was the object of frequent Jacobite plots. The worst of these was a plot formed in 1696 by Sir John Fenwick and other Tories to murder the king: it resembled the Rye-house Plot of 1683 against Charles II. For a time the disclosure of this conspiracy discredited the Tory party, and it was followed by the formation of an Association on the model of that formed for Queen Elizabeth's protection a century earlier. But the inquiries which were carried out in connection with this plot showed that nearly all the leading men in both parties, though they knew nothing of Fenwick's plans, were in secret relations with James II. It is no wonder that William III was unhappy in England, and distrusted the men with whom he had to deal. In truth, there was nothing heroic about the men of the Revolution period. Long years of immorality in high places, of faction-strife, and of pretended enthusiasm about religion which had no roots of genuine belief, had undermined the morale of the politicians.*

The War with Louis XIV.—William had come to England solely in order to swing her weight over to the coalition against Louis XIV; and this aim was achieved when war was declared against France in June 1689. It was his greatest service to England that he brought her into this war; for both by its direct result—the checking of Louis XIV's inordinate ambitions—and by its yet more important indirect consequences, it marked an epoch in British history.

The Fighting in the Netherlands.—The aspect of the war which attracted most attention was the struggle between the rival armies round the fortresses of the Spanish Netherlands (Belgium).† The art of fortification had been brought to so high a pitch of perfection (in relation to the offensive weapons then available) that, unless one side had overwhelming strength or was led by daring genius, deadlock was the normal condition; and, in fact, during nine years of fighting, scarcely any advance was made by either side. William had no such genius for war as Marlborough

* Stanley Weyman's novel, *Shrewsbury*, gives a good idea of the spirit of this time.

† School Atlas, Plate 22a.

later displayed. He was defeated in two pitched battles, at *Steenkerke* (1692) and *Landen* (1693), but was skilful enough to avert any evil consequences. In 1695 he achieved one brilliant success, in the capture of *Namur*, the most important victory of the war. In all these battles English regiments played an active part: it was in these Flanders campaigns that the regular British Army, so recently formed, was "blooded"; and *Steenkerke*, *Landen*, and *Namur* are the earliest names inscribed on the standards of the oldest English regiments. But, beyond stopping the conquering career of Louis XIV, all this fighting had no very definite result.

The War at Sea.—Far more significant was the fighting on the sea, in which the English and the Dutch were now standing allies, but the English became more and more the predominant partners. The war had opened with the disaster of *Beachy Head*, which gave an alarming proof of French naval strength. But Louis XIV, fighting a ring of enemies on land, could not also maintain a supreme navy. In 1692, at *La Hogue*,* his fleet suffered a crushing disaster from the English fleet under Russell. It was to have been used to convoy an army of invasion into England; Russell's victory not only put a stop to that, and killed James II's last hopes, it also securely established English supremacy at sea. There were no more naval battles in this war, and for that reason the importance of the naval war has been overlooked. But the pressure of sea-power is often most effective when it is so great that no battles need to be fought. In reality, the part played by the navy was decisive. It made Britain absolutely safe from attack. It enabled British forces to be moved wherever they were needed. It crippled the enemy: thus when France was attacking Spain in 1694, and sending troops by the sea-route from *Toulon*, the appearance of an English fleet in the Mediterranean was enough to ruin her enterprise, without any fighting. During these years, English trade suffered very severely from French privateers, while there were very few captures from the French. This was a ground of bitter complaint against the Government, but it was really a proof of naval supremacy. For the reason why there were few captures from the French was that French commerce had been swept from the seas, while the number of British ships was mounting so fast that the lurking French privateer could always find its prey. At the end of

* See School Atlas, Introduction, p. 28.

the war English foreign trade was greater than it had ever been ; French foreign trade had been ruined. This was the result of naval supremacy.

War in the Colonies.—The war extended also to the colonies : it was the first phase of the long rivalry between France and England in America, which ended in 1763.* A French force from Canada invaded the Hudson Valley, and sacked the frontier town of Schenectady (1690). The New Englanders, led by the Governor of Massachusetts, responded in the same year with a vigorous attack on the French colonies. They conquered *Acadia* (Nova Scotia) and seriously threatened Quebec. There was fighting also in the West Indies and in West Africa. In these fields this war was a sort of rehearsal for the fiercer conflicts that were to come. It taught the colonists that they were in danger from the French, and therefore strengthened their loyalty.

The End of the War.—The struggle came to an end in 1697, with the *Treaty of Ryswick*. By this treaty both sides restored their conquests, and Acadia returned to French allegiance, only to be conquered again in the next war. This may seem a lame and impotent conclusion for so much fighting. But it meant that Louis XIV had been definitely checked. His power began to decline ; and the wealth of France had been gravely impaired, both by the expulsion of the Huguenots (many of whom had brought their skill to England, while others had gone to Brandenburg, to Holland, and to the Dutch colony of South Africa), and still more by the setback which the naval war had given to French oversea trade. But perhaps the most important element in the peace was that Louis XIV recognised William III as King of England. "The war of the English Succession" had made the Revolution secure.

2. PARTY GOVERNMENT : THE NATIONAL DEBT

The indirect consequences of the war were even more important than its direct results. It led to, or hastened, very important constitutional and economic changes.

Rise of Party Government.—In the first place, it brought about an approach to the modern system of Cabinet Government. At the opening of his reign William naturally tried to avoid identi-

* School Atlas, Plate 49a.

fyng himself with either of the political parties, and gave offices to the best men on both sides. But this led to friction and cross-purposes among his ministers, while Parliament, in which there was now a Whig majority, was very distrustful of Tory ministers. This was not merely inconvenient, it might have been disastrous when the nation was at war, because the efficient conduct of war demands unity of purpose. It was by no means easy to carry on government efficiently under the system of parliamentary supremacy. The shrewd Earl of Sunderland, who had been James II's chief minister, suggested to William that the best way out of the difficulty would be to choose all his ministers from one party. They would then be more easily able to work together, and to command the confidence of the House of Commons. The Whigs not only had a majority in Parliament, they were also much more whole-hearted than the Tories about carrying on the war. Accordingly, William gradually gave all the important posts to Whigs; and by 1696 the Whig ascendancy was complete. The group of ministers who held office at that period worked together so intimately that they were known as "The Whig Junto," and there were complaints that government by a secret clique was being revived. In reality the "Junto" of 1696 (whose ablest members were Somers, the Lord Chancellor, and Charles Montague, the Chancellor of the Exchequer) was the first shadowy anticipation of a modern party cabinet. Cabinet government, based on parties, was being forced into existence by the pressure of circumstances.

The Bank of England and the National Debt.—In the second place, the war made great changes in financial methods necessary. It was the first war in which England maintained an army abroad, year after year, besides keeping up a great fleet. It was also the first war in which she found subsidies for her continental allies. But this involved an enormous outlay, far greater than could be met by the proceeds of taxation. It had to be met by borrowing. Governments had long been in the habit of borrowing from year to year, in anticipation of the collection of taxes, and the London bankers had always been ready to accommodate them with loans from the money deposited with them. But these could only be "short-term" loans; they had to be repaid in a few months, otherwise the bankers would be unable to meet their obligations to their depositors. Something different from this was now needed—"long-term" loans, for an indefinite period, forming a permanent "National Debt."

In 1694, on the advice of a Scotsman, William Paterson (who in the next year started the Bank of Scotland), Montague, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, found a means of getting over the difficulty. A group of merchants made a permanent loan to the Government, on condition that they were incorporated as the Bank of England and given the management of future loans of the same kind. The foundation of the Bank of England was an event of the highest political and economic importance. It greatly encouraged the habit of banking, because the security it could offer was greater than that of private banks. It made the raising of government loans easy. And the establishment of the permanent National Debt was also politically important, because those who had lent their money to the Government became strong supporters of the Revolution Settlement, being afraid that a restored Stewart monarchy might repudiate the debt. The "moneyed" and commercial interest, which was growing rapidly stronger, became a very important political factor, able to influence the policy of governments. Its influence was generally thrown on the Whig side.

3. TORY HOSTILITY AND THE PROBLEM OF THE SPANISH SUCCESSION

Tory Reaction.—The conclusion of peace in 1697 ended the first period of William III's reign. Hitherto, while the Revolution was in danger, the Whigs had been most powerful and had had a majority in Parliament, because they had no divided sympathies, and were enthusiastic in their support of the war. But now a reaction towards Toryism began. The Revolution Settlement was safe. The English queen was dead. The "foreignness" of William III, and his lavish generosity to his Dutch friends; the heavy cost of the war, and the burden of the National Debt of £20,000,000; the omnipotence of the Whig "Junto"; the growing power of the "moneyed" interest as against the "landed" interest—all these things aroused the anger of the country gentlemen. The French war had never been popular among the Tories: some of them sympathised with the exiled king, sheltered by France; most of them could not see why England should be dragged by a foreign king into a foreign war, in the interest (as they supposed) of the Dutch. Toryism became the party of Little England and peace. In 1698 there was a Tory majority in the House of Commons. They

attacked the Whig ministers, and reduced the army to 7,000 men.

The Partition Treaties.—William resented this reaction all the more because it came at a very critical moment in foreign politics. Charles II of Spain, the last heir of Philip II in the direct male line, had always been sickly, and his death had been awaited for twenty years. It was now clear that he could not live much longer; and the question of the succession to the immense Spanish empire, in the old world and the new, was vexing the diplomats of Europe.* The French and the Austrian royal lines had claims to the succession, of practically equal validity; but neither would allow the other to absorb the whole Spanish empire, nor could Europe contemplate the creation of a power so gigantic without fear. Louis XIV, taught moderation by the strain of the last war, was anxious to avoid the conflict that loomed ahead; and in 1698 he agreed with William III to recognise the infant prince of Bavaria as heir to the Spanish throne, France and Austria receiving modest compensations in Italy for the abandonment of their claims. In 1699, however, the Bavarian infant died, and the whole question was reopened. With even greater magnanimity Louis consented to recognise the Archduke Charles, second son of the Emperor, as heir to the Spanish crown, France being compensated by Milan and Naples, which would have made her the predominant power in Italy.

Opposition to the Treaties.—These treaties, which were secretly concluded between Louis and William without any consultation with Spain, could only be justified on the ground that they would maintain the peace of Europe. They aroused a natural indignation in Spain. They aroused, also, the anger of the English Tories, because they involved England in incalculable obligations on the Continent. Despite their theories of royal power, the Tories were challenging the king's right to direct foreign policy. The opposition was so vigorous that William had to get rid of his Whig ministers, and appoint Tories, as the only means of keeping the House of Commons in a good humour. This was another step in the direction of party-cabinet government.

A French King in Spain.—And, after all, the Partition Treaties were of no avail. For in 1700 Charles II of Spain died; and being anxious to preserve the unity of the Spanish empire, made a

* See Genealogical Table G, at the end of the volume.

will just before his death whereby he bequeathed his throne to Louis XIV's grandson, Philip Duke of Anjou, calculating that France was the only power capable of defending the whole inheritance. There was no doubt that the sentiment of the Spanish people endorsed this decision. The temptation thus offered to Louis XIV was too great to be resisted. Here was Spain clamouring to be taken under the wing of France, and all the wealth of the Indies awaiting exploitation. Louis might have hesitated if he had been certain that he would have to meet the united opposition of England and Europe. But in England the Tories were in power; they were attacking William III's policy; they had cut down the army to an almost negligible size. Without the fleet and the subsidies of England other opposition was not to be feared. Louis accepted the splendid prize on behalf of his grandson. At one stroke the results of all the long wars were undone, and the combined Franco-Spanish power seemed to dominate not only Europe but the whole world.

Impeachment of Somers.—With bitterness in his heart, William had to accept the accomplished fact. His Tory ministers and the Tory majority in Parliament took the view that the balance of power in Europe was no concern of England's. They even proceeded (1701) to impeach the Whig leader, Lord Somers, and two of his colleagues, for the part they had played in negotiating the Partition Treaties. In actual fact, William had kept the negotiations in his own hands, holding (like his Tudor and Stewart predecessors) that foreign policy was the king's business. In the case of the first Partition Treaty, he had actually required Somers to send him a blank commission, sealed with the Great Seal, authorising unknown persons to sign an unknown treaty. The impeachment of Somers in 1701, like that of Danby in 1678, implied that ministers were responsible for foreign policy. But it is significant to find the Tories, with their exalted views of royal power, taking the lead in thus restricting the king's authority. The impeachment of Somers came to nothing, because there was a Whig majority in the House of Lords. But thenceforward the responsibility of ministers to Parliament for the conduct of foreign as well as domestic affairs was never again seriously challenged. With sublime inconsistency, it was the Divine Right party which established this principle.

The Act of Settlement.—In 1701 Parliament was called upon to decide upon a very difficult question. The only surviving

son of the Princess Anne had just died ; and it was necessary to make provision against the probable event that both William and Anne would die without heirs. This question was answered by the *Act of Settlement*, 1701, which, though passed by a Tory Parliament, disregarded the claims of James II's son, and the claims of the next heirs, the Dukes of Savoy, who were descended from Charles I's youngest daughter ; and went back to the descendants of James I's daughter Elizabeth.* Even the line of her eldest son was passed over, because they were Catholics ; and the right of succession was conferred upon the aged Sophia, Elizabeth's daughter, who had married the elector of Hanover, and upon her eldest son, afterwards George I. It is important to realise how far afield this Tory Parliament had to go in order to find a Protestant heir ; because this shows how completely they had broken with the idea of divine hereditary right.

Attacks on the Crown.—The Tory authors of the Act of Settlement went out of their way to wound William III. They provided in the Act that the next king was not to involve England in war to protect his foreign dominions without the consent of Parliament, that the king was not to leave England without the consent of Parliament, and that no foreigners (this glanced at William's Dutch friends) were to receive grants or offices or to sit in Parliament. Inspired by personal opposition to a "Whiggish" king, these clauses nevertheless represent an extraordinary departure from divine-right monarchy. The same hostility was shown in other clauses, which provided that no minister or holder of office was to sit in Parliament, and that public affairs were to be transacted in the full Privy Council, and not in cabinet councils of ministers. This was meant as a condemnation of the Whig "Junto." If these anti-Whig clauses had remained law, they would have prevented the development of the system of cabinet government.

Judicial Independence.—One very valuable clause, however, was included in the Act of Settlement, which formed a vitally important appendix to the Revolution system. It provided that the judges were to have fixed salaries, and that they were only to be removed after an address to the Crown by both Houses of Parliament. This clause established the independence of the judicial bench, a vitally important constitutional principle, and one of the essential safeguards of liberty. Henceforward the judges were not to be

* See Genealogical Table C, at the end of the volume.

servants of the Crown, as they had been under the Stewarts—"lions under the throne" Bacon had called them; nor were they to be liable to dismissal because the king disliked their decisions. They were to be the impartial interpreters of laws which were equally binding upon all.

Louis XIV recognises "James III."—Almost at the moment when the Act of Settlement became law, the exiled James II died. Thereupon the magnificent Louis XIV, now, as he thought, securely master of France and Spain, the Netherlands and the Indies, recognised James II's thirteen-year old son, later known as the Old Pretender, as king of England. This was a direct repudiation of the Treaty of Ryswick, and of the Act of Settlement. It suggested that the now redoubled power of France might be employed to conquer England for Catholicism. This bravado brought about a sudden reversal of opinion in England. At the end of 1701 a new Parliament was elected. It was far more Whig in complexion than its predecessor; and even its Tory members were indignant at Louis' action, and ready for war with France.

Death of William III.—Having lived to see English opinion swing round to a sense of the danger of French domination, William III did not survive to take the lead in this last crusade against his life-long adversary. He fell from a horse in March 1702, and his frail constitution was unable to resist the shock. The second, and more intense, phase of the duel with France was left to other leadership. William died unlamented, except by a few friends; yet in face of almost insuperable difficulties he had achieved great things, and had guided England and Europe through a perilous time.

CHAPTER XXVII

QUEEN ANNE: THE DOWNFALL OF LOUIS XIV: WHIGS AND TORIES

I. MARLBOROUGH AND THE WAR OF THE SPANISH SUCCESSION

Queen Anne and the Churchills.—Queen Anne was a placid, stupid, obstinate lady, married to a bovine husband, Prince George of Denmark; she was clearly incapable of directing a great war. But

she had been for twenty years completely under the influence of her brilliant and domineering friend, Sarah Jennings, the devoted wife of John Churchill ; and Churchill,* though few opportunities of displaying his power had yet been given him, was beyond all comparison the ablest man in England, ideally fitted for the difficult work which now lay before him. When Anne dismissed the Whig ministers whom William III had appointed at the end of his reign, and practically put the control of affairs in the hands of the Churchills, she opened the most dazzling period of military glory that England had yet enjoyed. †

John Churchill.—Handsome in person, and with infinite charm of manner, Churchill was always master of himself, and could preserve an Olympian calm in moments of crisis. These qualities made him a wonderful diplomat, able to deal with the touchy and pompous representatives of the heterogeneous States which formed the Grand Alliance : only the highest diplomatic genius could have held them together and directed their activities to a common end. But he had also a genius for war. He was the greatest soldier whom England has ever produced—great not only in tactics, or the management of battles, and in strategy, or the planning of campaigns, but in the still greater power of seeing the war as a whole, and co-ordinating apparently disconnected campaigns on land and sea. He was the first to grasp how sea-power could best be employed in connection with land armies. This superlative genius (like Napoleon later) had no sense of honour, and was governed not by patriotism but by personal ambition. He had betrayed James II and William III in turn ; for this reason William, while recognising his military gifts, had never trusted him. He had no political principles, and, though bred a Tory, despised Whig and Tory alike, and used them for his own purposes : moreover, both parties distrusted him. He was avaricious of money, and used every opportunity that came in his way of adding to his private fortune—taking commissions on all the subsidies paid by England to her allies. He was “the greatest and the meanest of mankind.”

Godolphin.—Churchill's most intimate political ally was Lord Godolphin, whose son had married his daughter. As Lord Treasurer,

* There is a *Life of Churchill (Marlborough)* by C. F. Atkinson (*Heroes of the Nations*).

† Thackeray's *Edmond* gives a good picture of England and English society in this period of war.

Godolphin was at the head of the English government during eight glorious years, yet he has left a singularly indefinite impression. He had enjoyed long experience of public affairs, and was a very competent man of business: Charles II summed him up as "never in the way, and never out of the way." While Godolphin managed the business of government and finance at home, Churchill (who spent every winter, between campaigns, in London) directed not only the war, but the foreign policy of the country. These partners, engrossed in their single purpose, tried at first to work with Tory colleagues; but finding that the Whigs alone whole-heartedly supported the war, they gradually drifted into association with them, until in 1708 the ministry had become wholly Whig.

The Military Situation.—When the war began,* all the advantages seemed to lie with Louis XIV. He was facing the old combination of England, Holland, and Austria, with some of the minor German States; but now Spain, instead of being against him, was under his control, and he also had the useful alliance of Bavaria in Germany. Relatively to his enemies, he held the central position, and had the great advantage of unity of direction; the allies were not only geographically scattered, but under independent governments. Only the fact that England was the paymistress gave unity to their counsels, and this lever had to be used with tact and caution. One advantage, however, the allies possessed—they had command of the seas. Nobody except Marlborough realised the significance of this fact. Even modern narratives assume that only the land-battles counted; whereas sea-power was the controlling factor, though only one naval battle was fought.

The First Campaigns.—The main object of the war was to drive out the French king of Spain, and to put his Austrian rival on the Spanish throne. But before this could be seriously attempted, the position of the European allies had to be secured.† Austria was endangered on the side of Bavaria and also by a rebellion among her Hungarian subjects. Holland was gravely endangered by the fact that France now controlled the whole of the Spanish Netherlands. During the first two campaigns, 1702 and 1703, the Emperor was

* Macaulay has an essay on the War of the Spanish Succession and on the politics of the period.

† For the situation of the various European powers engaged in the war, see School Atlas, Plate 16. For France and the Spanish Netherlands, see School Atlas, Plate 24.

hard pressed ; the Bavarians were even threatening Vienna. But Churchill, in the Netherlands, made Holland safe by mastering the fortresses of the Meuse and the lower Rhine as far as Bonn. * He concentrated his attention on this part of the field in order to get into touch with the Germans and the emperor. The Dutch, who could not see the war as a whole, would have liked him to throw his strength into the war in western Flanders ; if he had done so, the emperor would have been ruined, and the Grand Alliance would have broken up. Churchill was, in fact, laying the foundations of the great campaign of 1704, which really decided the issue of the war. Meanwhile the British fleet was preparing for the attack on Spain. Though it failed in an attempt to capture Cadiz as a base for an invading army, it captured the Spanish treasure-fleet and destroyed the French squadron that convoyed it (1702) ; and its appearance in southern waters persuaded Portugal to join the allies, thus providing a good base for the invasion of Spain : the *Methuen Treaty* of 1703 with Portugal not only fixed this useful alliance, but in return for facilities for English trade gave an advantage to Portuguese wines over French wines in England, with the result that the English became a port-drinking nation. Meanwhile in Italy the Duke of Savoy had also joined the allies.

Blenheim and Gibraltar.— Thus, by 1704, things were ready for a great series of combined operations. Churchill had no intention of being tied down to a stationary war among the fortresses of the Netherlands, such as William III had fought : he meant to restore the war of movement, and to give the enemy no rest. Hoodwinking the Dutch, who would never have consented to the withdrawal of the army from the Netherlands, he marched swiftly across Germany, made a junction with the main Austrian army, and falling upon the combined French and Bavarian forces under Marshal Tallard, inflicted upon them a shattering blow at *Blenheim* (August 1704), the first great defeat that the armies of Louis XIV had ever suffered. This dazzling victory (in which the enemy had 14,000 casualties and lost 12,000 prisoners) not only saved Austria and reduced Bavaria to impotence, it put France henceforward on the defensive. The prestige of victory was now on the side of the allies, and the initiative always lay with them. Churchill was rewarded with the title of Duke of Marlborough, and with a great estate on

* For the barrier fortresses and Netherlands campaigns, see School Atlas, Plate 224.

which he erected Blenheim Palace. Meanwhile the fleet, under Sir George Rooke, had seized *Gibraltar* (August 1704), and defeated a French fleet that tried to relieve it at *Malaga*. The seizure of Gibraltar gave to the allies a naval base at the entrance to the Mediterranean. It was fiercely attacked during the winter, but it remained securely in English control.

Invasion of Spain.—In 1705 a double attack was made on Spain : * it was, of course, only made possible by sea-power. Under the Earl of Galway, a joint English, Dutch, and Portuguese force advanced from Portugal into Spain ; while on the east coast an Austrian and English force (the latter under the daring and reckless Lord Peterborough †) was landed by a fleet under Sir Cloudesley Shovel on the coast of Catalonia. That province rose in support of the Austrian claimant ; and (always by the aid of the navy) the provinces of Catalonia and Valencia were rapidly won. In the next year, 1706, Galway even succeeded for a moment in occupying Madrid. No hostile army had been seen in Spain since the expulsion of the Moors. These brilliant successes, though they were only temporary, terribly strained the resources of Louis XIV and weakened his prestige. They also demonstrated the formidable nature of sea-power, which made it possible to land unexpected armies at any point on the coast.

Ramillies and Turin.—Meanwhile, Marlborough had been busy in the Netherlands. In 1705 he had broken through the fortified lines, supposed to be impregnable, which the French had prepared from Antwerp to Namur, though the defenders greatly outnumbered the attackers. In 1706 he followed this up by winning, at *Ramillies*, the most brilliant of all his victories, in which he shattered the main French army of the north, inflicting terrible losses. Most of the fortified towns of the Netherlands surrendered. In the same summer, an Austrian army in Italy, under Prince Eugene, won a crushing victory at *Turin*, and drove the French out of Italy.

First Offer of Peace.—Since modern history began, no such series of crushing blows had been endured by any nation as the French had suffered between 1704 and 1706. The pride of Louis XIV

* School Atlas, Plate 266.

† There is a short Life of Peterborough by W. Stebbing (*English Men of Action*).

was humbled. He asked for peace, offering to let the Archduke Charles have Spain, and to leave to the Dutch a barrier of fortresses in the Netherlands. These terms (1706) ought to have been accepted. The intoxication of victory made the allies refuse them.

A Year of Failures.—In 1707 the tide seemed to have turned. The Austrians were severely defeated in southern Germany. The allies in Spain, attempting a new attack upon Madrid, were disastrously defeated at *Almanza* by the Duke of Berwick (an illegitimate son of James II), and were left with nothing but rebellious Catalonia. And an attempt to take Toulon, backed by the fleet under Sir Cloudesley Shovel, was a complete failure; though the French burnt the best ships of their Mediterranean fleet lest Shovel should seize them, and thus left to the English an unchallenged control of the Mediterranean.

French Resistance Broken.—But the set-backs of 1707 were only temporary. In 1708 a British fleet seized *Minorca*, as a base for operations on the coast of Spain: it remained in British possession for more than seventy years. In the Netherlands Marlborough won a brilliant victory at *Oudenarde*, which broke the French army defending the road to Paris; he also captured the great fortress of *Lille*, and the road to Paris lay open.

Second Offer of Peace.—Once more Louis begged for peace. He was willing that his grandson should give up the whole Spanish empire except Naples and Sicily, and for his own part to cede all the Belgian fortresses to the Dutch, and even to surrender his own earlier conquests of Strassburg and Franche Comté. The allies refused to negotiate, except on the intolerable condition that Louis should send French armies to turn his grandson out of Spain; for they knew that they could not themselves conquer Spain.

Dragging War.—The war went on; but there were no more runaway victories. In 1709, indeed, Marlborough won a fiercely contested battle at *Malplaquet*, but his losses were terribly heavy—heavier than those of the enemy; and this slaughter, coming on the head of the rejected terms of 1708, turned English feeling against the war. The French fought with the courage of despair. During 1710–1711 Marlborough made his way slowly into France; in Spain, though Stanhope again occupied Madrid, he was defeated and forced to surrender at *Brihuega* (1710).

Conquest of Acadia.—During these last years, the war was for the first time extended to the New World, which had hitherto

been left untouched.* In 1710 an English force, with contingents from New England and the co-operation of a fleet, conquered *Acadia* (Nova Scotia) and, in honour of the queen, gave the name of Annapolis to its capital, Port Royal. Next year a more elaborate campaign was planned against Quebec, in the hope of sweeping the French out of Canada ; but it was a failure.

English Politics and the War.—Louis XIV was saved by a change of ministers in England ; the fate of Europe now depended upon the course of English politics. For, thanks to Marlborough's genius, England had suddenly become the greatest power in Europe. Her strength depended, though neither Europe nor, indeed, England herself yet realised this, upon her naval power and the wealth she drew from oversea trade. Her navy had bound the allies together ; her wealth, dispensed in annual subsidies, had enabled them to keep their armies on foot ; and the genius of Marlborough had seen how to utilise these factors of success.

2. THE UNION OF ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND AND THE FALL OF GODOLPHIN

While the pride of Louis XIV was being lowered by the hammerblows of Marlborough, the Godolphin ministry had brought about an event of even greater significance in British history—the parliamentary Union of England and Scotland.

Scotland since the Revolution.—Scotland had been enjoying the beginnings of an unknown prosperity since the Revolution. Her Parliament was now free and sovereign. Her Church was also free. In 1696 she had fulfilled the ambitions of John Knox by establishing a school in every parish. By creating a banking system, she had begun to organise the thrift of her people. She had also conceived the ambition of creating an oversea trade of her own, and in 1695 had launched a South Sea Company, which (after various unsuccessful experiments) sent a group of settlers to *Darien*, on the Isthmus of Panama (1698). This adventure was discouraged by William III, because it was bound to arouse the hostility of Spain. In fact, the settlers were attacked by the Spaniards, and decimated by fever ; and every penny invested in the venture was lost. The Scots attributed this failure to English jealousy, and anti-English feeling grew strong.

* School Atlas, Plate 50a.

Scotland and the Succession.—This was the more serious because the question of succession to the crown had to be decided. When the Scots failed to imitate the English Act of Settlement, negotiations for a Union were opened. They broke down upon the prickly nationalism of the Scots, who in 1702 passed an *Act of Security*, providing that the English king should not be also king of Scotland unless he accepted "limitations" which would have made the Scottish Parliament independent. Even more alarming, another Act ordered the general arming of the Scottish nation (1703)—and this at a time when the great war with France was at a critical stage. Thereupon the English militia of the northern counties was called out, and the English Parliament passed resolutions threatening to treat Scotland (especially in trade) as a foreign State, "unless a union be had." It looked as if war between England and Scotland was at hand.

The Act of Union.—Fortunately a more moderate party now gained the ascendancy in Scotland, and negotiations were resumed. Equality of trade throughout the English dominions, which would follow from Union, was the bribe to win Scottish assent. The negotiations went on through 1706. It was agreed that the Scottish Church system and the Scottish legal system should not be interfered with. With great wisdom, the English negotiators showed much generosity in making the necessary financial adjustments. While Scotland obtained sixteen representative peers, and forty-five members of the united House of Commons (one-eleventh of the whole) she was to provide only one-fortieth of the revenues of the United Kingdom; and she was to receive £400,000 to pay out the shareholders of her bankrupt colonial enterprise. On these terms a treaty was concluded, which passed through both parliaments early in 1707; and on May 1st, 1707, the separate kingdoms of England and Scotland ceased to exist, and the *United Kingdom of Great Britain*, with a new flag, the "Union Jack," blending the white cross of St. Andrew with the red cross of St. George, took its place. The union was at first intensely unpopular in Scotland: on a democratic vote it would certainly have been rejected. It was unpopular in England also. Nevertheless, it was the beginning of happier days for both countries, and especially for Scotland.

Balance of Parties in England.—It was a fortunate thing that in 1707 the Tories were not in power, for they would not have been likely to accept the establishment of Presbyterianism. Godolphin

was already largely depending upon Whig votes ; and when, in 1708, the ablest of the Tories, Harley and St. John, left his ministry, it became exclusively Whig. There were 190 Tories in the House of Commons and only 150 Whigs, but a solid body of 100 placemen who steadily voted for the Government, whatever its complexion, ensured him a majority. If the Act of Settlement were to come into force, as was intended, when Anne died, this convenient arrangement would have come to an end, because it forbade placemen to sit in the House of Commons. But in 1708 an Act was passed which limited the exclusion to the holders of offices created after 1705. This Act made the rise of the cabinet system possible.

Fall of Godolphin.—After 1708 the power of Marlborough and Godolphin rapidly declined. Their failure to make peace was highly unpopular. Public opinion was stimulated against the war by Swift's brilliant pamphlet, the *Conduct of the Allies** (1711). The Tories vigorously took up the cause of peace. And another ground of attack was provided by the case of *Dr. Sacheverell*, a Tory divine and a pompous windbag, who preached two violent High Church sermons in which he attacked the ministry. The Government foolishly impeached him, and the Whig majority in the House of Lords suspended him for three years. He became a popular hero, for no particular reason, and made a triumphal progress through the midlands : evidently the High Church party was very strong. Finally, Queen Anne, who had quarrelled with the domineering Duchess of Marlborough, was persuaded by her new favourite, Mrs. Masham, and by Mrs. Masham's cousin, the Tory leader Harley, to dismiss the ministry (1710).

3. THE TORY SUPREMACY AND THE PLANS OF BOLINGBROKE

Harley and St. John.—The complete change of ministers which took place in 1710 gave power into the hands of the Tories. They now commanded the votes of the placemen. An election in 1710 increased their own following in the House. And, two years later, by the creation of twelve peers, they turned the Whig majority in the House of Lords into a minority. The Tory ascendancy thus established lasted until 1714. Its leaders were Robert Harley, now created Earl of Oxford, and Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke.

* This pamphlet is worth reading as a model of controversial method.

These two men were agreed upon the necessity of ending the war ; but otherwise they differed greatly. Harley was a moderate-minded man, with Dissenting connections, who had been trying to educate his party into accepting the Revolution Settlement : he had been largely responsible for the Act of Settlement, so surprising a product of a Tory government. Bolingbroke, on the other hand, was a brilliant and unprincipled sceptic, whose chief desire was to destroy the Whigs ; and for that purpose, sceptic as he was, he was not ashamed to hound on the High Church Tories into a new persecution of the Dissenters.

The Treaty of Utrecht.—The first act of the new Government was to recall Marlborough, and to disgrace him by bringing against him unanswerable charges of peculation. He had no defence ; and could only retire to the Continent. He was succeeded in his command by the Duke of Ormond, who was ordered to do nothing ; and, without consultation with the allies, negotiations were promptly opened with Louis XIV. The way in which peace was negotiated was a model of how such matters ought not to be settled ; and the desertion of the Catalans, who had been encouraged to rebel by promises of protection, and were now left to the vengeance of Philip V, was highly discreditable. But the terms of the *Treaty of Utrecht* * (1713), which resulted from these negotiations, were in themselves wise and sound. Philip V was allowed to retain the crown of Spain, on condition that it should never be united with that of France ; Austria became dominant in Italy, and received the Spanish Netherlands, thus forming a barrier between France and Holland. Great Britain kept Gibraltar and Minorca, and with them naval supremacy in the Mediterranean. She also kept Acadia in the New World ; and the island of Newfoundland, on which there had been both English and French trading settlements, became British, subject to certain French fishing rights. Thus the two gate-posts of the St. Lawrence were in British hands. Britain also secured the "Asiento," *i.e.* the right of sending one trading ship yearly to Spanish America, and of importing to the Spanish dominions 4,800 negro slaves per annum. This concession was regarded as one of the greatest achievements of English diplomacy. The Treaty of Utrecht may be said to have marked the definite establishment and recognition of British naval and colonial superiority.

* There is a map showing the results of the Treaty of Utrecht in the larger Atlas, Plate 59a.

Attack on the Whigs and the Dissenters.—While the war-policy of the Whigs was being overthrown by these negotiations, a systematic campaign was opened at home to destroy the power of the Whigs and to establish securely the power of the Tories. In 1710 an Act was passed restricting membership of the House of Commons to owners of landed estates worth more than £300 a year in the case of borough members, and £600 a year in the case of county members: this was meant to exclude the "moneyed" interest, who supported the Whigs. Sir Robert Walpole, the ablest Whig debater in the House of Commons, was silenced by a baseless charge of corruption, for which he was expelled from the House and imprisoned in the Tower. An attack was also directed against the Dissenters. On several occasions an Occasional Conformity Bill (to prevent Dissenters from qualifying for office by taking the sacrament) had been introduced. It was carried in 1711, with the enthusiastic support of Bolingbroke, who was himself an Occasional Conformist, since, being an atheist, he could not otherwise have held office. Next year (1712) the opponents of toleration for Dissenters in England enacted a measure giving toleration to Anglican Dissenters in Scotland. Finally, as a last blow against the Dissenters, Bolingbroke framed a *Schism Act* which was carried in 1714. Excluded from the universities and the public schools, the Dissenters had created schools of their own. The Act aimed at ruining these schools by forbidding any person not licensed by a bishop to teach in any school.

Plan of a Jacobite Restoration.—Behind this attack on the Whigs and their supporters lay a deeper plan: no less than a restoration of the exiled Stewarts, in defiance of the Act of Settlement. For the Tory leaders knew that if the Hanoverian line was allowed to succeed, the influence of the Whigs would probably revive. Secret communications were opened with the Pretender in 1713. The Pretender, to his honour, refused to become a Protestant, though this would probably have ensured his succession; and at this Harley began to waver. Bolingbroke, who cared nothing for religion, was ready to go on, and persuaded the queen to dismiss Harley.

Collapse of the Plot.—All was going well for the realisation of the great design. The Whig nobles, in alarm, were preparing for armed resistance, and a new civil war seemed almost inevitable; when, two days after Harley's dismissal, the queen had a stroke of apoplexy. Her death was plainly imminent. A Cabinet Council

was held to decide upon the course of action to be taken. Bolingbroke, left to himself, would no doubt have persuaded his colleagues to go on with the scheme. But two Whig magnates, the Dukes of Argyll and Somerset, forced their way into the Cabinet, on the ground that as members of the Privy Council they had a right to be consulted. Their presence turned the waverers. A special envoy was sent to summon the Elector of Hanover. The fleet was called out, and precautions were promptly taken against any possibility of resistance. Bolingbroke's scheme had failed. When George I landed (September 1714), and when his first Parliament threatened an impeachment of the fallen ministers, Bolingbroke fled to France (1715), where for some years he acted as Secretary of State to the Pretender whom he had tried to use as the instrument of his ambition. The chief result of his folly was to ensure the domination of the Whigs for half a century.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE TRANSITION TO THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

I. POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

A Century of Conflict.—The peaceful accession of George I brought to an end the century of religious and political conflict which began with the peaceful accession of James I. James I's accession was a triumph for hereditary right; George I's a triumph for parliamentary sovereignty. Save for the last hopeless flickers of Jacobitism, both the constitutional and the religious conflicts were at an end for more than a century. The supremacy of Parliament had been established; not even George III ever ventured to challenge it again.

The Character of Parliament.—This omnipotent Parliament was in no sense a democratic body. It was the organ of a governing class, the class of landowners. At the end of the eighteenth century it was laid down in the law-courts as an axiom that "those who own the land should rule the land"; and this aphorism sufficiently well reflected actual practice. The House of Lords was filled with the greatest landowning magnates. Membership of the

House of Commons was limited by law to gentlemen of landed estate ; and if this law was not rigidly enforced, the exceptions were very few, and mainly consisted of younger sons of the great landed families. The franchise in the county constituencies was limited to landowners—the “forty-shilling freeholders.” But (except at times of great excitement) the small freeholder was content to leave the nomination of his representatives in the hands of his powerful neighbours, and for two generations the real choice of the members for Yorkshire took place in Lord Rockingham’s drawing-room. As for the boroughs, most of them were modest market-towns lying at the park-gates of some great man, whose lead they naturally followed. The right of voting was fixed by a great variety of local customs. In some cases the franchise was limited to the occupiers of particular strips of land called “burgages,” which it was easy for a rich man to buy up. In other cases the corporation of the borough nominated its representatives, and as the members of most corporations sat for life and filled up vacancies in their own membership, it was easy to get control over them. In yet other cases the franchise belonged to freemen, usually elected by the corporations ; and batches of freemen of the right complexion could be nominated on the eve of an election at the request of a borough “patron.” In some boroughs (such as the dockyard towns) the voters were mostly government servants who would lose their jobs if they did not vote for government candidates. There were only a few boroughs, such as Westminster and Preston, in which there was a democratic electorate, and even in these places the voters expected to be paid for their votes. It was therefore easy for a man with wealth and family influence to get control of a group of borough seats if he cared to do so.

The Landowning Oligarchy.—Thus, when the power of monarchy was overthrown, its place was taken by the power of a landowning oligarchy, which retained its domination, practically unchallenged, until the next great revolution, in the nineteenth century. The eighteenth century, which was now opening, was the golden age of the landowning oligarchy. It controlled not only national government but (except in the towns, which included less than one-quarter of the population) local government as well.

The Justices of the Peace.—All the functions of local government in the rural areas were in the control of the Justices of the Peace, who were the leading local gentry, appointed by the Crown on the nomination of the Lord-Lieutenant of each county.

And the Justices of the Peace were no longer subject to the close supervision which the Privy Council had given to them under the Tudors and early Stewarts. The Privy Council had become a large and formal body, which never met as a whole. Its place had gradually been taken, since the Restoration, by a "Cabinet Council" of Ministers, who practically confined themselves to questions of national policy; and the Justices of the Peace were left very much to themselves. If they chose, they could be petty local tyrants. The novels of the eighteenth century, from *Pamela* and *Tom Jones* to *Caleb Williams*,* show that they often abused their powers. But in actual fact, the Justices were much less active than they had been under the Tudors. They had ceased to trouble themselves with the fixing of wages and the regulation of apprenticeship; and they left the management of the Poor Law largely in the hands of the parish overseers. The age of *laissez-faire* in government had begun.

Buttresses of the Oligarchy.—The powers of the land-owning oligarchy cannot have been seriously abused, for there was little or no active protest against them. The rule of the landowning class was, in fact, willingly accepted, almost as part of the order of nature. It was, in truth, deeply rooted. The legal profession was closely allied with it, judges and barristers being nearly always members of the landed families, while attorneys and solicitors drew their livelihood mainly from serving them. The Church was equally closely linked, bishoprics and good livings going nearly always to "men of family," while the poorer livings fell to their dependants. The universities had become in part the playgrounds of the aristocracy, where men of family wore "tufts" that were assiduously "hunted" by needy dons; in part the universities were funnels through which the brains of the nation were sucked into the service of the ruling class. The best endowed schools had become the preserves of the ruling class, where their sons underwent a Spartan discipline, and studied the manners and ideals of the patricians of old Rome, whom in many ways the English ruling class resembled.

Safeguards against Abuse of Power.—It was a real safeguard against the abuse of their immense powers by this ruling aristocracy that it had divided itself into two parties, jealous and watchful of one another. Not only in national government and in Parliament, but in local government and on every county bench of

* By Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding and William Godwin respectively.

magistrates, the rival parties were constantly on the watch for one another's blunders or injustices, in the hope of weakening or discrediting one another. It was a further and still greater safeguard that the Reign of Law had been very thoroughly established in England, and that the habit of respect for law was deeply rooted in all classes. In the British lands, alone of all the world, nobody was exempted from the ordinary law of the land; the judges were absolutely independent, and were dominated by a great professional tradition of impartiality; and through the jury system the whole nation had a share in the administration of the law. For these reasons, the supremacy of the ruling class of landowners worked, on the whole, very well. Indeed, it reflected the social order of the nation, which was still predominantly rural and agricultural. The landowners were the natural leaders of a community which was mainly engaged in tilling the soil, and of which a large proportion had some share of ownership in the soil which they tilled.

Social Classes.—English rural society was roughly divided into four classes, which shaded insensibly into one another, so that there was no sharp cleavage anywhere. First there were the *Magnates*, owners of very great estates, who lived in splendour in their princely mansions, the noblest of which were erected during this period; they also had their town houses, where they gathered annually for the Season while Parliament and the law-courts were sitting, and thus brought together spokesmen of every part of the country. There were about seventy of these great ruling families, and it seemed natural that they should play the principal part in the management of national affairs. This highest class shaded gradually into the *Squirearchy*, men of substantial estates, living on their land, often keeping a house in the county town, and playing a very active part in county affairs. Next came the *Yeomanry*, though it was impossible to distinguish between a small squire and a substantial yeoman. Sometimes farming their own land, and sometimes renting farms, they formed a solid and prosperous middle class, from which the upper classes were steadily recruited; and, through the parish vestries, and in the offices of churchwarden and overseer, they mainly managed village business. Finally there was the great class of the *Peasantry*—the majority of the whole nation—not, as now, wholly wage-earning labourers, but including large numbers of smallholders; even the day labourer often drew a substantial part of his livelihood from a little holding and pasture rights on the village common.

Industrial Classes.—Great as had been the advance of English trade and industry during the seventeenth century,* they were still of minor importance, in comparison with agriculture. The woollen industry, still far the greatest of English manufactures, was mainly carried on in three great areas—the west-country, Norfolk, and the West Riding of Yorkshire. It was still largely carried on in the homes of the weavers, who often combined with their trade the cultivation of a little land ; while the spinning of yarn for the weavers gave occupation to thousands of spinning-wheels in the cottages of rural workers, whose livelihood was thus supplemented. Although the capitalist “ clothiers ” (who bought up raw wool, got it spun in the cottages, and then had the yarn woven to their own patterns by the weavers) were winning an increasing control over the industry, it was still a “ domestic ” industry, and was closely connected with the agricultural work of the rural population. Mining and metal-work stood more aloof from rural life, but they were as yet on a very modest scale. There was therefore no sharp cleavage between the industrial population and the rural population ; and the English society was still a coherent body.

The Dominance of London.—Even the population of the towns was mainly engaged in rural marketing. Only a few towns, engaged in foreign trade, had a separate economic life of their own—London, Bristol, Southampton, Hull, and (just beginning to become important) Liverpool. London was the only really big town. Its population of about half a million made it the greatest city of the western world ; and the great companies, such as the Bank of England, the East India Company, and the South Sea Company, which had their centres in London, gave to it a political importance which outweighed that of all the other English towns put together. The city of London was, in fact, the only powerful factor in English life which was independent of the landowning class. But even in London, the potent influence of snobbery (which has been one of the chief moulding forces in English life, leading each class to imitate the class above it) was impelling the rich merchants to identify themselves with the ruling class by acquiring estates ; and their sons, as landowners, easily became absorbed in the ruling class. Lord Danby, later Duke of Leeds, who played so great a part in the reign of Charles II and in the Revolution, was an example of this : his

* See the map of England before the Industrial Revolution, School Atlas, Plate 42a.

great-grandfather had been a London merchant in Elizabeth's reign.

An Era of Contentment.—England, in short, was in a state of social harmony and contentment. Her prosperity aroused the admiration of foreign visitors, who especially admired the well-being of her peasantry, in contrast with the wretched lot of the peasantry of France, Germany, and Italy. It has been asserted that there has never been a time since the era of the Antonine Emperors in Rome when prosperity and contentment were so widely diffused as in England during the first half of the eighteenth century. The claim is exaggerated, but it has a foundation of truth.

Progress of Scotland and Ireland.—Scotland was less prosperous. But she was enjoying the first period of settled peace and orderly government in her history. Her people, more generally educated than any other people in Europe, with a school in every parish and no less than four universities, were beginning to turn their energies to wealth-making, and to utilise the opportunities afforded by the Union for expanding trade. But beyond the "Highland line" * the primitive conditions of tribal life still survived, and travellers who penetrated the Highlands during the first half of the eighteenth century brought back amazing accounts of modes of life that were not far removed from savagery. In Ireland the barbarous treatment of the Catholics had reduced a large proportion of the population to a pitiful state of poverty, of which Dean Swift gave mordant descriptions. Yet even Ireland saw some improvement of prosperity in the first half of the eighteenth century, thanks to the existence of settled peace. If not contented, her people were at least submissive.

2. THE MOVEMENT OF IDEAS

Decay of Enthusiasm.—Contentment often means stagnation, and the period which opened with the accession of George I—and, indeed, the quarter of a century which preceded that event—was in many respects a stagnant interval in the development of national life. The fervid and passionate beliefs of the seventeenth century had burnt themselves out. They had been succeeded by a cynical and materialist temper. Nobody believed strongly enough

* School Atlas, Plate 38a.

in anything to run great risks or to make great sacrifices. Religious ardour had died down, not only in England but in Scotland, and, indeed, throughout Europe. In the ruling classes Latitudinarianism, or a polite scepticism, was the prevailing fashion. Anglo-Catholic and Puritan alike had lost their intensity of belief. Even in the Dissenting communities ardour had decayed, and it is significant that during the first half of the eighteenth century the majority of English Presbyterians became Unitarians, while in Scotland the reign of the Moderates succeeded the fanaticism of the Covenanters. "Enthusiasm" had been the note of the seventeenth century: the eighteenth despised "enthusiasm," and was the age of reason and good sense.

The Age of Prose.—This change of temper was reflected in the literature of the period. The first half of the seventeenth century was an age of great poetry. It began with the supreme tragedies of Shakespeare, and passed on to the austere and profound poetry of Milton; even in prose, its exalted temper was expressed in the rich and mystical eloquence of Sir Thomas Browne or the majesty of Jeremy Taylor. The second half of the seventeenth century was an age of disillusioned fervour: its representative poet was the masculine satirist Dryden, and it gave birth to the cynical drama of the Restoration wits, which reached its highest point after the Revolution, with Congreve. The reign of Queen Anne is always accounted a great literary epoch. But it was essentially an age of prose, limpid, persuasive, and sweetly reasonable, as in Addison's and Steele's essays, or grimly sardonic as in Swift's great satires* and pamphlets: even the great poet of this age, Pope, who is one of the supreme masters of pointed phrase, appeals always to the head, not to the heart. The age of Shakespeare and the age of Pope were both great ages, but there is a mighty contrast between them, and the contrast is a measure of the change that had taken place in the mind of the nation. The age of poetry had given place to the age of prose; the age of faith and ardour to the age of reason and common sense.

Progress of Science.—The most notable mark of the new era was that it saw almost the beginning of modern organised science. Great investigators had not been lacking in the previous era: Bacon

* *Gulliver's Travels* was designed, not as a fairy tale for children, but as a fierce satire on the politics of Swift's time.

had foreseen the new scientific methods, and the first of the great English men of science—Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood, who was a court physician in the time of Charles I—pursued his inquiries by methods that were in accord with the strictest canons of modern research. But it was in the reign of Charles II that organised and co-operative research began, with the foundation of the Royal Society (1663); and before the accession of George I the supreme genius of English science, Isaac Newton, had not only set forth his epoch-making discoveries, but had founded a school of the new learning. Even mechanical invention was beginning. Newcomen's steam-pump (1705), which made deep coal-mining possible, foreshadowed the coming of the age of steam. The quiet, non-partisan, patient methods of the laboratory were slow to conquer the controversial realms of politics and theology. But even here argument was taking the place of persecution. Hobbes and Locke were working out the theory of politics; Bolingbroke was trying to find a logical basis for Toryism; and a crowd of theological writers were discussing the foundations of belief in a spirit of rationalism that would have been impossible a century earlier.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING ON BOOK V

The *Short History of the British Commonwealth*, Bk. V, Chaps. V-IX, covers the subject-matter of this Book more fully: see especially Chap. VI on the ideas of the political parties, and Chap. VIII on economic developments. Maitland's *Constitutional History* (Period IV: Public Law at the Death of William III) is illuminating on constitutional questions. For the great period of colonial rivalry, see Seeley's *Expansion of England*. Mahan's *Influence of Sea-power on History* is very important for this period, bringing out the significance of the naval war which most of the books underestimate. Lord Acton has three very good lectures on this period (*Lectures on Modern History*). Morris's *Age of Queen Anne* (Epochs of Modern History) is a good short book.

BOOK VI
COLONIAL SUPREMACY AND
DISRUPTION
(1714-1782)



FIG. 24 — North America, 1714-1783.

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BOOK VI

COLONIAL SUPREMACY AND DISRUPTION (1714-1782)

THE outstanding feature of British history in the two generations following the accession of the Hanoverian line was the rapid establishment of a complete British supremacy in America, promptly followed by the disruption of the colonial empire which had been built up by a century and a half of steady work. The moral of these events was that the old colonial system, established in the seventeenth century, was unsound.

During the same period Britain became, almost in spite of herself, the mistress of an astonishing empire in India, the organisation and government of which presented problems of extreme complexity and difficulty. The period which raised these issues of government in the New World and in the Old is of the highest significance and interest.

In the internal development of the British peoples the period does not, at first sight, present any such outstanding features of interest. Yet the methods by which the Whigs established their "Venetian oligarchy," the rise of cabinet government as an outcome of these methods, the challenge delivered by George III both to the power of the oligarchy and to the cabinet system, are all full of interest. Throughout the greater part of the period there was a strange absence of ideas and ideals in the ruling class, which, if it had continued, might have been ruinous. But a new religious and humanitarian movement, springing from the preaching of the Wesleys, was at work during the second half of the period. It was to have a profound influence upon the development of British civilisation, and upon the character of the British Empire.

The period falls naturally into three clearly marked sections :

first, twenty-five years of apparent stagnation (1714-1739) during which, however, the cabinet system of government was worked out; then twenty-four years of warfare in Europe, America and Asia, ending in the dazzling ascendancy recognised in 1763; and finally twenty years of strife and disruption, when the Empire, so brilliantly won, broke into fragments, and the British power seemed suddenly to have fallen to the second rank.

CHAPTER XXIX

WALPOLE AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE WHIG OLIGARCHY (1714-1739)

I. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WHIG POWER

The New King.—George I* was a singularly unattractive and uninteresting man, who had locked up his wife for life, and was not on speaking terms with his son. He could not speak a word of English, and did not try to learn. He was quite unable to understand British conditions. Convinced that the Tories wanted to turn him out, he was content to leave the conduct of affairs entirely in the hands of the Whigs, with results that were highly important for the development of the British system of government.

Jacobite Conspiracy.—It was impossible that anybody should feel loyalty towards such a king; and it was inevitable that an attempt should be made to overthrow him. Bolingbroke, in France, immediately got to work upon the plans for a general rising, which it was hoped Louis XIV would support. Unfortunately for him, Louis died in 1715, and the Duke of Orleans, who acted as Regent for the infant Louis XV, wished for his own reasons to remain on good terms with the British Government; instead of helping, the Regent did much to hinder the plans of the Jacobites. The main plan of the conspirators was that the Duke of Ormond (who had fled with Bolingbroke) was to land in the south-west, and raise the Tory gentry of that area. Meanwhile there was to be a rebellion in the north of England, another in Wales, and another in the Highlands,

* Read Thackeray's essay on George I in *The Four Georges*.

where the clans that hated the Campbells could always be roused. Bolingbroke tried to persuade the Pretender to announce his conversion to Protestantism. If he had done so, there might have been a chance of success, but he refused.

Failure in England.—The excellent secret service of the Whigs kept them fully informed of all that was going on. The critical points in the south-west were garrisoned, and the fleet was on the watch to prevent any invasion in force. The result was that, though Ormond landed in Plymouth, he had to slink away again, with nothing done. Nothing came of the projected rising in Wales. A considerable rising took place in Northumberland, under a wealthy squire named Forster and the Earl of Derwentwater. They were joined by the Jacobites of the Scottish border, under Lord Nithsdale, Lord Kenmure, and others. They marched into Lancashire in the hope of raising the Catholics of that county. But they were easily disposed of at *Preston* (November 1715) by a force which numbered less than one-third of their own, and the northern rising collapsed.

The Scottish Rising.—Meanwhile the standard had been raised in Scotland,* at Braemar, by the Earl of Mar, a very ill-chosen leader. Some ten thousand Highlanders joined him.† But he allowed his southward march to be checked by Argyle, with 3,000 men, at *Sheriffmuir*, on the day after the rout of *Preston* (November 1715); and after this check the dispirited force melted away. The Pretender landed in Scotland after the defeat, made no attempt to retrieve it, and retired once more to France. This spiritless business discredited the Jacobite cause, already a dying one. The Whigs were wise enough not to exact harsh vengeance. Two peers and thirty commoners were executed. But pardons were freely granted. The Jacobite exiles began to slink home. Even Bolingbroke was contemptuously allowed to return in 1722, on condition that he took no part in politics.

The Whig Control of Parliament.—The defeat of the risings of 1715 secured the position of the Whigs. In 1716 they passed a *Septennial Act*, whereby the duration of Parliament was extended to seven years. This gave them time to establish their power very solidly. The foundation of their strength lay in their

* School Atlas, Plate 39a.

† Scott's *Rob Roy*—one of the best of his tales—gives a vivid picture of the condition of Scotland in this period.

control of all the patronage of the Crown. Every office in Church and State was filled with loyal Whigs. They already controlled a working majority in the House of Lords, and no new peers were created who were not Whigs. In 1719 it was even proposed, in a *Peerage Bill* introduced by Lord Sunderland, to forbid the creation of any more peers, as a security against such a measure as the creation of twelve Tory peers in 1712; but this ill-conceived measure was rejected by the House of Commons on the instigation of Sir Robert Walpole. Over the House of Commons the supremacy of the Whigs was secured partly by the assiduity with which the great Whig magnates got control over borough seats; partly by the fact that the forty-five Scottish members voted solidly for the Government, their election being managed by the Duke of Argyle or his brother the Earl of Islay; partly by controlling what were known as "government boroughs"—dockyard towns where Government employees formed a majority of the voters, or the little boroughs in the royal duchy of Cornwall; but most of all by the fact that, thanks to the control of royal patronage, there was a solid block of 120 "placemen" in the House of Commons, who would lose their places if they voted against the Government. Thus the ascendancy of the Whigs was complete and impregnable.

The Commons under the Whigs.—A Whig House of Commons consisted of three blocks: the placemen; the nominee members who were returned by patrons of "rotten" or "pocket" boroughs; and the "independent country gentlemen," mostly members for counties or for the larger boroughs. In the last class there were a few Tories, never more than fifty or sixty. There was always the possibility of an opposition being formed by a group of dissatisfied borough-owners backed by the independent country gentlemen. But the Government always had the whip hand, and so long as the Whigs held together they were irresistible.

Cabinet Government.—Another source of Whig power was that, as the king could not speak English, he ceased to attend the meetings of his ministers, or Cabinet Councils. Somebody had to take the chair in his place, and this somebody tended to be very like a modern Prime Minister, though the office of Prime Minister was not recognised by law, and, indeed, was held to be unconstitutional. The members of the Cabinet naturally strove to conceal any differences that might arise amongst them. They kept no record of their discussions, and gave their advice to the king as a united body, through

their chairman. Thus were established the essentials of Cabinet Government—the joint responsibility of a ministry supported by a majority in the House of Commons. The upgrowth of this system was gradual, and many regarded it as a dangerous infringement of the principles of the constitution. Bolingbroke later developed this line of criticism with great force. The Whigs themselves did not realise that they were introducing a great and valuable political device. They were merely organising their own oligarchical power, and they strove to keep their methods as much as possible in obscurity. But the essentials of the cabinet system—the unity and coherence of the body of ministers, and their joint responsibility for policy—first came into existence as an instrument of the Whig oligarchy.

2. THE MINISTRY OF STANHOPE (1714-1720)

Stanhope.—During the first years of the reign, there was sharp rivalry between two groups of Whig leaders, Stanhope and Sunderland on the one side, Walpole and Townshend on the other. Stanhope, whose influence was strongest until 1720, was a soldier-statesman of Marlborough's school, and had led an English army in Spain during the Spanish Succession War. His interest was mainly in foreign affairs, which were extremely complicated during these years.

The Alliance with France.—The main feature of Stanhope's policy was the maintenance of an alliance with France, for the preservation of European peace. This was made possible by a remarkable reversal of French policy which took place after the death of Louis XIV in 1715. The new king, Louis XV, who was Louis XIV's great-grandson, was a sickly infant; and the Regent (the Duke of Orleans) was for two reasons anxious to preserve peace, especially with England. One reason was that France, during the recent wars, had sacrificed the chance of building up her oversea trade and empire, and was now eager to recover lost ground. The other was that, if (as seemed likely) Louis XV should die, the Regent would be the next heir, provided that Philip V of Spain (Louis XIV's grandson) was held to the renunciation of his rights to the French crown which had been one of the conditions of the Treaty of Utrecht. The Regent, therefore, feared Spain, and wanted to uphold the Treaty of Utrecht.

Spanish Restlessness.—Spain, on the other hand, had undergone a real revival, and under a very able minister, Cardinal Alberoni,

was tempted to make a bid for the reversal of some of the Utrecht provisions. To prevent this, France made, in 1717, a Triple Alliance with the "Maritime Powers," England and Holland; and when Spain attacked Sicily, a British fleet wiped out the Spanish fleet at *Cape Passaro* (1718). Meanwhile, Alberoni made friends with the warlike King Charles XII of Sweden, and planned a Jacobite rising in Scotland. British fleets blockaded the Swedish coast, while the king's Hanoverian troops took the bishoprics of Bremen and Verden from Sweden. A small Spanish force was actually landed at *Loch Shiel* (1719); but it was easily disposed of. All through these years, the French alliance was the sheet-anchor of British policy. It undoubtedly did much to preserve the peace of Europe, and it was a valuable safeguard against any renewal of Jacobite troubles. It lasted unimpaired until 1733.

Domestic Quiescence.—In domestic affairs, the Stanhope government was careful to avoid any cause of disturbance. It repealed Bolingbroke's Occasional Conformity and Schism Acts, and thus relieved the Dissenters. It annually passed an Indemnity Bill for those Dissenters who had held office in despite of the provisions of the Test Act. But it made no attempt to remove the disabilities of the Dissenters, for fear of arousing a High-Church agitation. This timidity was characteristic of the Whig government. Their policy was to "let sleeping dogs lie," and give the country time to settle down; and they adhered to this policy throughout their ascendancy, attempting no constructive legislation of any kind. The only important new law of this period (apart from the Septennial Act) was the *Declaratory Act* (1719), which formally asserted the right of the English Parliament to legislate for Ireland over the head of the Irish Parliament—a monstrous assertion of power.

Growth of Oversea Trade.—The nation (or the most active part of it) was, indeed, engrossed during these years by the prospects of wealth through the development of oversea trade, especially in the tropics. This was not peculiar to Britain. All Europe had been awakened to the value of oversea and tropical trade. The revived Spanish monarchy was vigorously developing its tropical empire, and extending its control over Texas and California. Portugal was drawing great wealth from Brazil. All the western nations, including the Danes and the Prussians, were striving to get a share of the lucrative African slave trade, and of the sugar trade

with the West Indies. The French were showing a remarkable activity. Their sugar-islands in the West Indies were beating their English competitors. They founded, in 1717, the new colony of Louisiana at the mouth of the Mississippi, and their enterprising agents were busy dotting forts and trading-stations up the line of the Mississippi and about the Great Lakes, thus claiming the vast central plain of North America.* In India, also, a French East India Company was getting for the first time a substantial share of trade, in rivalry with the English and the Dutch.

English Supremacy.—The English had much the best of the rivalry in India, where in 1717 their Company obtained the valuable concession of relief from all duties on the goods they exported from Bengal. In the west, also, the English had a great advantage in their possession of the *Asiento*, which gave them a monopoly of licensed trade with the Spanish dominions, though they, like the other trading nations, also engaged in a very active smuggling trade with these rich lands.

The Great Triangle.—The most lucrative branch of over-sea trade was the "Great Triangle," whereby European vessels took out cheap cargoes to West Africa, exchanged them for negro slaves, took these to the West Indies, where they sold for high prices, and filled up with home cargoes of sugar and tobacco. London, Bristol, and Liverpool (but in this period especially Bristol) were coining fortunes from this traffic, in which they had definitely beaten their foreign rivals.

The South Sea Bubble.—There seemed to be no limit to the wealth that could be made from the "South Sea" trade, and this led to a mania of speculation, both in France and in England. In France the gigantic schemes of the Scotsman John Law caused widespread ruin. In England the South Sea Company actually offered to take over the whole National Debt, at a reduced rate of interest, buying out the creditors either with its own shares or with cash; and so fantastic were the expectations of profit from tropical trade that this proposal led to wild speculation in South Sea stock. The speculative mania spread to the whole field of finance, and preposterous proposals such as Swift satirised in his *Voyage to Laputa* † trapped the savings of the credulous. The result was a terrible crash (1720) and

* School Atlas, Plate 50a.

† The whole of *Gulliver's Travels* (of which the *Voyage to Laputa* is a part) was a satire upon the politics of this period.

wholesale ruin, in which the Government was involved, because it had caused all the trouble by accepting the original scheme. The Postmaster-General committed suicide; the Chancellor of the Exchequer was expelled from the House of Commons; Stanhope (who may be described as the Prime Minister, though he would have repudiated the title) died of a fit brought on by the attacks directed against him.

Fortunately for the Whigs, their ablest man, Robert Walpole, was out of office, and was able to step into the breach and turn what might have been the ruin of the Whigs into a source of strength. The skill with which he handled the situation demonstrated his mastery of finance, and established his power, which lasted for twenty years.

3. THE GOVERNMENT OF WALPOLE (1720-1739)

Character of Walpole.—Robert Walpole* was at once the ablest and the most characteristic of the statesmen of the Whig regime. He was the master of the House of Commons, not only because he perfected the Whig machinery for maintaining a majority, but because he loved the House, thoroughly understood it, and was a great master of the arts of parliamentary debate. He was, in truth (with the possible exception of Pym), the first of the long line of great parliamentarians, and the first powerful minister to rule through the House of Commons. It was not until his fall from power that he accepted a peerage; and he regarded his removal to the House of Lords as banishment. He was the first also of the line of great financiers (including the younger Pitt, Peel, and Gladstone) who have regarded sound finance as the very keystone of statesmanship. He was a coarse-grained man, shrewd, practical, and wholly free from any trace of idealism or enthusiasm; but he was also devoid of rancour, and singularly tolerant of hostile criticism. In his view the supreme aim of statesmanship was the maintenance of peace, the increase of material prosperity, and the avoidance of meddling with the lives of individuals. All these things the British lands enjoyed during his long period of power; and there is no period of equal length in modern British history in which there has been less to record.

* There is a good short Life of Walpole by John Morley (Twelve English Statesmen).

Walpole's Monopoly of Power.—Walpole's weakness was a dictatorial temper. He did not easily brook opposition; and one after another of his colleagues was forced to resign—beginning with his brother-in-law Lord Townshend, who at first shared his power. He was thus more fully a "Prime Minister" than any earlier statesman, and it is commonly said that it was Walpole who determined the position of the Prime Minister as the "keystone of the Cabinet arch," and established his power of deciding who his colleagues should be.

The Opposition.—Naturally opposition sprang up against this monopolist of power. It clustered, at first, round the Prince of Wales, who was on bad terms with the king; and when George I died, in 1727, it was hoped and expected that Walpole's power would come to an end. George II* was a much shrewder and more active man than his father, and he could speak English. Nevertheless he did not venture to depart from his father's dependence upon the Whigs. To the acute disappointment of the opposition, both the king and his able and sensible wife, Queen Caroline, gave all their confidence to Walpole, whose power became greater than ever. The opposition of those who were excluded from the sweets of office continued, finding a new centre in the court of the new Prince of Wales, who (in accordance with Hanoverian tradition) was on bad terms with his father. Walpole despised his opponents: "all these men have their price," he said; and in regard to most of them he was probably right.

The Doctrines of Bolingbroke.—But in fact a new school of political thought was rising, which found its inspiration in Bolingbroke, now back from exile. In the *Craftsman*, a paper which he published in 1726–1727, and later and more fully in a little book called *The Patriot King*, written in 1738, Bolingbroke denounced the whole Whig system of party power built upon corruption, and prayed for the coming of a Patriot King who would call the ablest men into counsel, regardless of party, and refuse to be governed by a clique. Among those whom Bolingbroke influenced was a young man, William Pitt, † who was conscious of the possession of powers which the Whig ascendancy might never permit him to exercise. Pitt's fiery and tempestuous nature was, indeed, the very antithesis

* Read Thackeray's study of George II in *The Four Georges*.

† Two of Macaulay's best essays deal with Pitt.

of that of Walpole ; and in the later years of the minister's long career this young man was to give him a world of trouble.

Religious Lethargy.—The domestic history of Britain during Walpole's government was extraordinarily uneventful. The country had fallen into complete lethargy. The old religious controversies were dead. The Church and the dissenting bodies had lost all energy. The Church in especial suffered from the fact that all its higher offices were filled by men whose sole recommendation was political orthodoxy ; many of them, like the famous Hoadley, Bishop of Bangor, who was the centre of prolonged controversies, were more than suspected of disbelieving in some of the essential tenets of Christianity. The lower clergy, many of them High Churchmen shut out from any chance of promotion by that fact, were commonly neglectful of their duties. The need for the stirring of a new life was nowhere more plain than in the religious life of the nation.

Walpole's Finance.—In politics, as in religion, it was Walpole's aim to give the people no ground for excitement. His own main interest and achievement lay in the important but unemotional realm of finance. He started a Sinking Fund to pay off the National Debt. He greatly reduced and simplified the dues on trade. Trade threw as its burdens decreased, and for this Walpole deserves real credit. The only political excitement of the period, indeed, was caused by a sound and rational scheme of financial reform which he embodied in the *Excise Bill* of 1733. This was a scheme to abolish import duties on a number of goods on which the Treasury was cheated by smuggling, and to charge an excise instead, to be levied when the goods were taken out of the warehouses : this would not only have prevented smuggling, it would also have encouraged the re-exportation of these goods without payment of duty, and thus stimulated export trade. But a fantastic outcry was raised by the opposition, who pretended that in some mysterious way the excise would involve tyranny ; and Walpole, who would never face a storm, withdrew his proposals.

Wood's Halfpence and the Porteous Riot.—The only other popular excitements about domestic questions during Walpole's long tenure of power took place in Ireland and in Scotland. In 1723 there was a great outcry in Ireland because a contract for Irish copper coinage had been given to an Englishman named Wood. The contract was quite businesslike. But it gave to Dean Swift an opportunity for attacking the English Government which he used to

great effect in his satirical *Drapier's Letters*—the first public protest against the way in which the English ascendancy over Ireland was used. The second popular excitement was the Porteous Riot in Edinburgh (1736), which was caused by the hanging of a popular smuggler, and the too prompt use of firearms by his guards. This episode would never have found the place it has been given in all the books but for the emptiness of the period, and the fact that Scott used it as the theme of one of his best novels.* Another and much more important piece of work in Scotland which was carried out under Walpole was the construction of a number of roads through the Highlands by General Wade (1725), and the erection of Forts William and Augustus to hold down that wild region. This was, in fact, the beginning of the taming of the Highlands.

Neglect of the Colonies.—In colonial affairs Walpole took no interest. Here also he “let sleeping dogs lie,” with unfortunate results. His Secretary of State, the fussy and incompetent Duke of Newcastle, notoriously never read the colonial despatches. Some of the American colonies were beginning to be jealous of control, and were showing their jealousy by refusing to vote the salaries of governors and judges for more than a year at a time, in order to keep them under control. This raised a question of vital importance, which ought to have been faced: it was later one of the causes of quarrel between the colonies and the mother-country. But Walpole refused to face it. He contented himself (1729) with advising the governors to take what they could get, and avoid friction. For thus shirking a difficult problem, he has been credited with wise statesmanship, and his lack of policy has been favourably compared with the mistakes made by his successors when the question had been made, by his neglect, too difficult for easy solution.

The Molasses Act.—But he did not always display this prudent inactivity in dealing with colonial questions. When the interests of the Exchequer were concerned, he made decisions which contributed greatly to intensify the difficulties. He found that the colonists were buying sugar from the French West Indies, because it was better and cheaper, when they ought to have been buying from the English West Indies. Walpole met this difficulty by the *Molasses Act (1733)*, which imposed prohibitive duties against foreign sugar-products, and levied these duties in the colonial ports as well as in

* *The Heart of Midlothian.*

England. This not only interfered with a profitable (if illegal) branch of colonial trade, it also raised the question of the right of Parliament to raise taxes in America. Walpole further created a very bad precedent when in 1732 he actually prohibited the smelting of copper in the colonies. These restrictions upon colonial trade, which were considerably extended under later Whig ministries, contributed materially to create the discontent which flamed out into revolt when the danger from France was removed. Far from deserving any credit for his colonial policy, Walpole deserves condemnation for his failure to understand the causes which were already producing friction with the colonies, and which later—when the danger from the French had been removed—were to lead to disruption. Insight and imagination were needed to foresee these problems. But these are qualities of great statesmanship; Walpole was without them.

Georgia.—One new colony, and one only, was founded in this period, which was less concerned with colonisation than with the wealth to be made from colonial trade. This was Georgia, the last of the famous thirteen.* It was established in 1733, and marked the appearance of a new motive for colonisation. The founder was General George Oglethorpe, a man of fashion, whose pity had been aroused by the sufferings of the debtors whom the cruel law of that period left to languish in gaol. The purpose of the colony was to give these unfortunates the chance of a new start in life. Oglethorpe also found room for a number of Highlanders, and for persecuted Protestants from Germany. He spent a large part of his fortune in nurturing the colony through its early troubles, and his work was a foreshadowing of the philanthropic movement which was to have a very important influence both in colonisation and in other spheres in the second half of the century. But Walpole can claim no share of credit for this achievement, which he regarded as unpractical "enthusiasm."

The Alliance with France.—Throughout all the earlier period of Walpole's government the alliance with France, which Stanhope had made, continued to be the keystone of British foreign policy. It was tested once more in 1725-1729, when the old enemies, Austria and Spain, unexpectedly came together. Both had grievances against Britain. Spain wanted to regain Gibraltar and

* School Atlas, Plate 50a.

Minorca. Austria wanted to get her share of tropical trade, and for that purpose to revive the prosperity of her Netherlands port of Antwerp, which had been ruined when, under the Treaty of Utrecht, the Dutch and the English insisted upon the closing of the Scheldt. The two discontented powers made an alliance in 1725, and Spain once more besieged Gibraltar. But France remained loyal to the alliance; and without any serious fighting the trouble was settled by diplomacy.

The Alliance Strained.—The alliance, however, was not to last much longer. Both in France and in England politicians of the younger generation were losing patience with the tepid policy of peace. In France the younger men were eager for a more adventurous policy, and were inclined to urge that the natural alliance for France would be one with Spain, to challenge the trade supremacy of the Maritime Powers. In England also there was a similar impatience, and a feeling that a conflict for trade and colonial supremacy could not be long delayed. It was by the vigour with which he maintained this view that William Pitt first acquired fame.

The Polish Succession War.—The first serious strain upon the alliance came in 1733, when a dispute about the succession to the throne of Poland broke out, which involved the greater part of Europe in war. Poland, long weakened by an absurd constitution, was showing some signs of national revival, and when her foreign king died, she elected a Polish noble as his successor. Austria and Russia, wanting to keep Poland weak, insisted upon the election of their candidate, Augustus of Saxony. France supported the Polish candidate, and wanted Britain to join her. If Britain had done so, it is possible that Poland might have been saved from the ruin which already threatened her, and which came forty years later. Walpole stood aloof, and boasted, with some justification, that while 50,000 lives were being sacrificed over a question in which Britain had no direct concern, not a single British life was lost. That is the strongest possible argument for a policy of peace. But the result was that the Franco-British alliance, which had so long maintained an uneasy peace in Europe, came to an end; and a long series of wars began which raged almost continuously for a generation, and in which Britain was inevitably involved.

The Breach with Spain.—France turned instead to Spain, and a treaty of alliance, known as the *First Family Compact*, was signed between the two Bourbon Powers in 1733. Instead of doing

anything for Poland, the allies devoted their attention to making conquests in Italy, with which we are not concerned. But one result of this alliance was that Spain, which had been the chief centre of unrest in Europe since 1715, was encouraged to take more vigorous action against the British smugglers in South American waters. They were becoming more and more active in defying the Spanish trade monopoly; and Spain can hardly be blamed for trying to put a stop to their activities by means of a fleet of coast-guard vessels. But the stories of searches of English ships carried out on the high seas by Spanish coast-guards aroused a good deal of excitement in England, and were used as a ground of attack against the Government. And when one Captain Jenkins came home with a story of outrage, complained that his ear had been cut off, and in proof of his complaint produced the identical ear, carefully preserved in a bottle, and showed it to the House of Commons, Walpole's hand was at last forced. In 1739 he reluctantly declared war against Spain. The long era of painfully preserved quiescence was at an end; and a struggle began which rapidly enlarged its scope until it covered the greater part of the world.

CHAPTER XXX

FIRST PHASE OF THE STRUGGLE FOR COLONIAL SUPREMACY (1739-1755)

I. THE SPANISH WAR AND THE WAR OF THE AUSTRIAN SUCCESSION

Nature of the War.—Walpole had been reluctant to enter upon war with Spain, not only because he detested all war, but because, knowing of the secret Family Compact of 1733, he feared its consequences. An effective union of the power of France and Spain had been the nightmare of British statesmen since 1698; now it seemed to be at hand. It was a disturbance of the Balance of Power in Europe which Walpole dreaded. He had not the imagination to foresee what was to be the actual outcome of this beginning—a struggle that would extend into every part of the globe, and end in the establishment of an amazing British supremacy on the seas and beyond them. With the possible exception of Pitt, nobody yet realised that an immense struggle for colonial supremacy was about to begin, and

that, for Britain, the issues oversea were of immeasurably greater importance than the issues in Europe.

The War at Sea.—Walpole strove to limit the range of the war as much as possible, and displayed no energy. In 1739 a small expedition under Admiral Vernon captured *Portobello*, which commanded the route followed by the Peruvian treasure from the Pacific to the Atlantic; but it was not retained. In 1741 an attack was directed against *Cartagena* in South America, but it was a complete failure. Meanwhile, in 1740, a plundering raid under Anson was sent round Cape Horn to attack the Pacific coast. Various misfortunes reduced his squadron to one ship, the *Centurion*; but, like Drake long before, he terrorised the coast of Chile and Peru, captured a great treasure-ship, and made his way home by the Cape of Good Hope—a gallant adventure, but of no military importance.*

The Fall of Walpole.—The futility of this method of carrying on war brought about the fall of Walpole (1742). Pitt thundered denunciations. All the Whig cliques whom Walpole had angered by excluding them from office joined in the attack, and a new ministry was constituted which brought them all in under a colourless figure-head, Lord Wilmington. There was but one man of great ability in this ministry—Lord Carteret, a man who knew more about European politics than any other Englishman of his time. Meanwhile a very critical situation had developed in Europe; and under Carteret's direction Britain was once more plunged into a European conflict, which obliterated the colonial issue.

The Austrian Succession.—In 1740 the Emperor Charles VI died.† He was the last of the Habsburgs in the direct male line. He left only a daughter, Maria Theresa. For twenty years before his death he had been striving to secure her succession to the wide dominions of the Habsburg House, collecting the signatures of the European powers to a document known as the Pragmatic Sanction. Almost all the powers had signed at one time or another, with the exception of the Elector of Bavaria, who had a better claim to the inheritance than Maria Theresa, because his wife was the daughter of Charles VI's elder brother and predecessor.‡ When Charles VI died, the Bavarian claim was at once put forward, and the Elector was

* Anson's *Voyage Round the World* is included in Everyman's Library.

† For the European position, see School Atlas, Plate 17.

‡ See Genealogical Table G, at the end of the volume.

chosen as Emperor. France, seeing a chance of ruining her ancient rival, supported the Bavarian claim to the Habsburg lands. Spain took the same side, hoping to win certain Austrian territories in Italy. And Prussia, to whose throne the ambitious and able young prince later known as Frederick the Great had just succeeded (1740), seized the opportunity of self-aggrandisement, and suddenly invaded the rich Austrian province of Silesia. Attacked on all sides, Maria Theresa was unable to hold her own. She was friendless, when Carteret brought in the power of Britain on her side, gave her large subsidies, took the whole Hanoverian army into British pay, and sent all the available British forces into Europe (1742). He also persuaded Maria Theresa to buy off Frederick of Prussia by ceding Silesia to him. Thus the whole strength of Britain was engaged in a European conflict, and the struggle overseas was forgotten.

British Share in the War.—The British intervention unquestionably saved Maria Theresa. British money enabled her to re-equip her armies, and to drive the French and Bavarians out of Austria. A British and Hanoverian force, led by George II in person, advanced from the north to attack the flank of the French army, and at *Dettingen*, on the Main, in the very heart of Germany, won a gallant if rather futile victory (1743). Yet more important, the British fleet in the Mediterranean ruined the Spanish campaign in Italy by preventing the passage of troops and supplies. A somewhat indecisive naval action off *Toulon* (1744), against the combined fleets of France and Spain, had the effect of penning their fleets into harbour for the remainder of the war, and demonstrated the overwhelming naval superiority of Britain. Even Walpole had not neglected the Navy. The leadership at Toulon had not been all that it might have been. But, after a series of courts-martial, the older commanders were displaced, and younger officers, such as Sir Edward Hawke, were given commands. British naval preponderance was more complete in this war than ever before.

The "Broad-bottomed" Ministry.—Carteret's government had undoubtedly acted with great vigour in Europe, and had changed the whole situation. But in Parliament Pitt and others vehemently denounced the concentration of effort upon the continental war, and the total neglect of the colonies. In 1744 Carteret was driven from office, and the direction of affairs passed into the far more incompetent hands of Henry Pelham and his elder brother the Duke of Newcastle. In theory they set themselves to constitute a

national ministry, representative of all the groups, including even the Tories ; and a place was later found for the stormy orator, Pitt, as Paymaster-General. This was a very lucrative office, because Paymasters were accustomed to take a commission on all foreign subsidies, and no doubt it was calculated that this would stop Pitt's mouth ; but, though a poor man, he declined to take advantage of his opportunities, and this unprecedented self-denial, while it puzzled the politicians, increased his hold upon the House of Commons and the nation. Nevertheless, as a subordinate member of the Government, Pitt was muzzled. And the new ministry, though it was called the "Broad-bottomed Administration," was as exclusively Whig in its aims and methods as Walpole's government had been, and as blind to the Colonial question. The Pelhams were, in fact, merely borough-jobbers on the grand scale, and their conception of statesmanship was limited to "managing" the House of Commons and maintaining the Balance of Power in Europe.

Louisbourg and Fontenoy.—Until 1744, though French and British troops and ships had met in battle, the French had fought as allies of Bavaria and of Spain, the British as allies of Austria : it was not until 1744 that formal war was begun between them. This immediately brought open conflict in America and in India. The strange struggle which now began in India will be dealt with in a later chapter. In America * the news of the declaration of war had no sooner arrived than the spirited governor of Massachusetts, William Shirley, organised an expedition against the formidable fortress of *Louisbourg* on Cape Breton island, which had been constructed by Vauban, the greatest military engineer of his time. Protected by four ships from the West Indian squadron, 5,000 colonial troops were landed on a rocky coast, to attack the greatest fortress in the New World, with a garrison of 2,500. After a siege of five weeks they forced it to surrender. This was a brilliant success, wholly due to the initiative of the colonists ; but no attempt was made to follow it up. Meanwhile British and Dutch troops had undertaken the defence of the Austrian Netherlands against a French invasion ; and the bloody battle of *Fontenoy* (May 1745), in which they were defeated, was fought as a part of this campaign. But suddenly the Netherlands campaign was interrupted by the news that a Jacobite insurrection had broken out in Scotland : the troops had to be hurried back to deal with it.

* School Atlas, Plate 50a.

2. THE JACOBITE RISING OF 1745

Plans of Invasion.—As soon as open war between France and Britain began, the French Government, realising that a Jacobite rising would be the best distraction, offered to Prince Charles Edward, the gallant son of the Old Pretender, the support of an army of 15,000 men if he would lead an insurrection in Scotland. The army was duly gathered at Dunkirk; but the watchful British fleet made its sailing impossible, and the army was soon diverted to the Flanders campaign.

Prince Charles Edward.—The Young Pretender resolved to proceed alone. In a little brig, loaded with muskets which he had pledged his credit to obtain, he evaded the British ships, and landed at Moidart in the Western Highlands in August 1745, with only seven followers. Even the gallant Highlanders were slow to join an adventurer who came with such small resources. But Stuarts, Camerons, and Macdonalds came in, and were captivated by the young prince's gallant bearing; meanwhile the Marquis of Tullibardine, long an exile, raised the clans of Perthshire.*

The Prince in Edinburgh.—England and Scotland were almost denuded of troops; but 3,000 men were sent north under Sir John Cope to deal with the rebels. Charles evaded Cope, and marched swiftly down to Edinburgh, where there was no force capable of offering resistance. The capital was occupied. Once more a Stewart held a levee for his subjects in the Palace of Holyrood; and the romance of this adventure carried Edinburgh off its feet. Meanwhile Cope, stranded in the Highlands, took ship from Aberdeen to Dunbar. In the mist of a September morning the Highlanders burst upon Cope's army at *Prestonpans*, and his men were scattered in a wild panic. †

The Advance to Derby.—The news of *Prestonpans* and the loss of Edinburgh came like a bolt from the blue to the English Government. They had no troops ready; the militia could never resist a Highland charge. The army was hurried back from Flanders; but if Charles could have swept southwards through England as rapidly as he had marched from Moidart to Edinburgh,

* There is a good description of the '45 in Scott's *Waverley*; and Stevenson's *Masters of Ballantrae* gives a sidelight upon it.

† For the campaign and the route of the Young Pretender, see *School Atlas*, Plate 39a.

he might have taken London by surprise. But he was delayed for five weeks. By the time his march to England had started, an army of veterans was back from the Continent, and his chance had gone. Nevertheless, he got as far as *Derby* by the beginning of December ; and the news caused a panic in the Bank of England. He had hoped to be joined by the Jacobites of Northern England, but his recruits



FIG. 25. The Jacobite Rising in Scotland.

were numbered by tens instead of by thousands, and his Highlanders, unhappy so far from home, were melting away.

Culloden.—It was necessary to retreat ; and hard on the heels of the dispirited army came the Duke of Cumberland with the army from Flanders. Charles turned at *Falkirk* (January 1746), and struck a smart blow at the enemy's vanguard. But his cause was manifestly lost. His army steadily dwindled. His council of war was made wretched with mutual reproaches. At length, in April 1746, the agony came to an end on *Culloden Moor*, near Inverness, where the Highlanders flung themselves in vain upon the serried

bayonets of veteran troops. Dire vengeance followed this final defeat of the Stewart cause. The slaughter which followed the battle was so cruel that it gained for Cumberland the name of the Butcher of Culloden. The glens of the clans were pitilessly harried, and every homestead burnt. A price of £30,000 was put upon the head of the defeated prince : but among all the impoverished Highlanders there was found not one who was mean enough to claim it, and after many perilous adventures, the Young Chevalier made his way back to France, leaving behind him a memory more fragrant than that of any of his ancestors. Once at least, and perhaps more often, Charles Edward paid secret visits to England in later years. But there was no more hope of any rising : during all the long years until he died in 1788, a wreck of his old self, he lived on the memory of those days of romance when he was a lad of twenty-five.

The Taming of the Highlands.—The long, tragic tale of the Stewarts was at an end. The old, wild life of the Highlands was at an end also. For after this rising, the Government set itself to remove all further danger by a series of repressive laws. The jurisdiction of the chiefs was abolished.* The wearing of the kilt and the playing of the bagpipes were made penal offences, and the possession of arms made the Highlander liable to heavy punishment. Presently the imagination of Pitt found a happier way of treating the valiant clansmen : he raised regiments among them for the war in America, and the pipes were heard again, leading the charge against the abattis of Ticonderoga.

3. THE PEACE OF AIX LA CHAPELLE

End of the War.—The rising of 1745, by necessitating the withdrawal of British troops, had meanwhile given the French great advantages in the Netherlands. But elsewhere they had suffered serious reverses ; and their mercantile marine had been almost swept from the seas. Even more than the British, they had lost by being diverted into a purely European war. Nevertheless, the war dragged on for another two years, and the Duke of Cumberland was again defeated at *Laffeldt* (1747).

The Terms of Peace.—In 1748 a peace of sheer weariness was concluded at Aix la Chapelle. It left Maria Theresa mistress

* For all this, see Stevenson's *Kidnapped*, which deals with the period after the '45. Stevenson also has a ballad on Ticonderoga.

of all the Habsburg lands, save some territories in Italy which went to Spain, and the duchy of Silesia,* which she had to concede reluctantly to the treacherous Frederick of Prussia. But the rivalry of Austria and Prussia for the leadership of Germany, which was to last until 1866, had begun; and ere long Maria Theresa was to make a bid for revenge. As for Britain, France, and Spain, having forgotten the real causes of quarrel between them, they also reached no decision. There was a mutual restoration of conquests; and the New Englanders saw, with exasperation, their conquest of Louisbourg handed back to France, as the price of Madras, in distant India, which the French had conquered from the East India Company. Here was no settlement; and the eight years which passed before the next war broke out were in fact filled with irregular warfare, in the East and in the West, a preamble to the decisive conflict which had been merely postponed.

4. THE WESLEYS AND RELIGIOUS REVIVAL

While public men were engrossed with the resultless fighting in Europe and the intrigues of politicians, a great thing was happening in England, infinitely more important than either. A religious revival had begun. Its influence, affecting gradually all the Churches, gave birth in the second half of the century to a humanitarian movement which deeply affected British policy, and to a missionary movement which permanently modified the character of the British Empire.

Revival in Wales.—This revival started, concurrently and independently, in Wales and in England. The Welsh movement, which began in 1735, was limited to the Welsh-speaking area, and therefore attracted little attention elsewhere. It was accompanied by an educational and a literary revival, and it marked the beginning of a new life in Wales. Modern Welsh nationalism took its rise in this movement.

The Wesleys.—The English revival was primarily due to the work of John and Charles Wesley,† two Oxford scholars of distinction. While still at Oxford, in 1729, they had formed a small religious

* For Austrian and Prussian territories, see School Atlas, Plates 192, 196.

† There is a short Life of John Wesley by W. H. Hutton. Q's story, *Hetty Wesley*, gives a picture of his family background.

society known by scoffers as "the Methodists." The Wesleys were the sons of a Lincolnshire parson. Puritanism was in their blood : both of their grandfathers had been among the Puritan divines ejected on St. Bartholomew's Day, 1662. In 1735, attracted by Oglethorpe's philanthropic schemes, they went to the new colony of Georgia, where they laboured for three years. Returning in 1738, they found that their old Oxford friend, George Whitefield, had struck out a fruitful line of work, preaching to the degraded and neglected colliers of Kingswood, near Bristol. He had exercised a remarkable influence upon the lives of his hearers. The Kingswood colliers were typical of great masses of the working folk of England, in town and country, to whom the Church of that time had nothing to offer. In 1739 John Wesley took up Whitefield's work, and began preaching in the highways and hedges ; his brother joined in the task, and other recruits were presently added.

The Wesleyan Apostolate.—Without intermission John Wesley went on with this work for over fifty years, until his death in 1791, and his colleagues were as active. They travelled over all the roads of Britain, and John Wesley alone covered an average of five thousand miles a year. It was his practice to preach twenty times a week, beginning at five in the morning. Most of this work was done in the open air—in the market-places of towns, in the yards of gaols, on bare hillsides in the country. This was the first attempt at public propaganda of this kind, the first appeal to the mass of common folk, since Wycliffe sent out his Poor Priests. The manifest sincerity of these devoted evangelists, their fearlessness, the moving power of their eloquence, had the most profound effect. Vast crowds gathered to hear them, often in mere curiosity : they seldom went away unmoved. Even cynical worldlings like Lord Chesterfield and Horace Walpole were carried away by their eloquence. There can have been very few of the inhabitants of Britain who were not, at one time or another, brought under the influence of these impassioned preachers during their long apostolate. This stirring of the stagnant waters was an event of immense importance.

Wesley and the Church.—No hostility to the Church was intended by these activities. They resembled the work of the Friars of the thirteenth century, who had also set themselves to carry the message of religion to the outcast and the degraded. If the English Church of the eighteenth century had been as wise as the Latin Church of the thirteenth century, it would have found a place

for the work of the Wesleys. Nothing more clearly demonstrates the deadness of the religious life of that age than the fact that the Wesleys and Whitefield were treated as dangerous fanatics and "enthusiasts," refused admission to churches, and finally driven to organise separate Churches of their own. It was, of course, impossible that John Wesley (who had a genius for organisation) should leave the flocks whom he had stirred to a new life without shepherds. At first he was content to organise them in "societies" for mutual edification over and above the formal weekly services of the Church. But as time went on, more than this was found to be necessary; and towards the end of his life he began to ordain ministers to tend the chapels which his followers had long been erecting as centres for the "enthusiasm" which the Church would not countenance.*

The Evangelical Revival.—The influence of the Wesleyan movement was by no means limited to the new Societies of Methodists. It stirred a fresh life in all the dissenting Churches. It gave birth to the Evangelical movement in the Church of England which was, from the 'sixties onwards, the most vital element in its life. It helped to bring about co-operation between Churchmen and Dissenters in the philanthropic activities which distinguished the second half of the century. By a significant coincidence, the year 1739, in which Wesley began preaching in the open air, was the year in which the Spanish war began; and while these unwearied apostles were tramping all the roads of England and America, the long struggle for maritime and colonial supremacy was spreading its range over the world. The British peoples, in more than one way, were being shaken out of the torpor into which they had fallen.

5. THE BREWING OF A NEW WAR (1748-1755)

The Great Issues.—The Treaty of Aix la Chapelle brought no settlement of the great issues that had arisen, either in Europe or in the non-European world; and during the next eight years these questions were all becoming more acute, so that in 1756 fierce warfare simultaneously broke out in Europe, in America, in India, in the West Indies, in West Africa, and on the seas. This was to be the first of a series of world-wide wars brought about by the

* There is a little book on Methodism, by H. B. Workman, in the Cambridge Manuals.

ambitions of the European States, culminating in the Great War of 1914-1918. But there were very few, in England or in Europe, who appreciated the importance of the struggle that was looming ahead. Like men walking in their sleep, the politicians moved towards a crisis which they did not foresee.

In India.—It was the development of a fierce rivalry between France and England in America and India that was of deepest concern to the British peoples. In India, during these years, the French, led by the genius of Dupleix, were opening new paths of ambition which threatened ruin to their English rivals ; but the history of the struggle in India will be dealt with as a single whole in a later chapter. Meanwhile in America the clash between English and French was becoming yearly more marked.

The French in America.—Since the Treaty of Utrecht the French had been very active in America. They had a series of forts, mission stations and trading posts which controlled the Great Lakes, and held the line of the Illinois and the Mississippi.* A glance at the map will show that in the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi they controlled the two great waterways which led into the heart of North America. Masters of the great central plain, they would have penned the British colonies into a narrow coastal strip, backed by the trackless wooded hills of the Alleghany range, through which Virginian traders were only beginning to find their way. They thus held the upper hand ; and though their settlers were outnumbered by ten to one by the British settlers, they were all under a single unified control, while the British were divided into thirteen disunited colonies, with no machinery for common action.

The Struggle in Acadia.—The weakness of the French position was that the British, holding Newfoundland and Nova Scotia, commanded the entrance to the St. Lawrence. To guard this point the French in 1749 re fortified the fortress of Louisbourg, restored in 1748 ; while the British found it necessary to fix a large garrison at Halifax in Nova Scotia. But apart from this garrison, the whole population of Nova Scotia was French. During these years the French Government used every possible means to stir up the hostility of the French settlers in Nova Scotia against their English masters, and even offered a reward to the Red Indians for every English scalp brought in. They also occupied all the territory

* School Atlas, Plate 50a.

beyond the isthmus (modern New Brunswick), though this region had always been regarded as part of "Acadia," ceded in 1712. The situation in Nova Scotia was so dangerous that in 1755 the British authorities decided upon the deportation of the whole French population, who were removed to the southern British colonies.* This was a cruel act, though it might seem to be justified by military necessity.

The Struggle in the Ohio Valley.—Meanwhile the French had made an important forward move in another direction. In 1749 they decided to occupy the Ohio valley, immediately behind the British territories. British traders were expelled. Thereupon the governor of Virginia, Robert Dinwiddie, sent a small force under a young Virginian squire, George Washington, to warn off the French, and a little woodland fort was erected at the junction of the rivers Monongahela and Allegheny, where Pittsburg now stands (1753). The French, however, had made a road through the forests from Lake Erie to the disputed region; and by this route a force advanced, which drove out the modest garrison from the fort.

The Conference of Albany.—A war for the possession of the Ohio valley was obviously beginning. To deal with this crisis, a conference of the thirteen colonies was held at *Albany* (1754), when it was proposed that a federal organisation should be set up, with power to organise the colonies for common defence. The moving spirit in this proposal was Benjamin Franklin. It would have been welcomed by the home government. But the colonies were too jealous of their independence to agree. They preferred to leave the whole responsibility to the home government.

French Aggressions.—While the Conference was sitting, Washington † had been sent with 400 men to regain the fort. He was attacked by much superior numbers, and forced to surrender; and the French rebuilt and fortified the fort, calling it Fort Duquesne (1754). They had won the mastery of the Ohio valley at the moment when the colonists were refusing to take common action. In the same year the French made another formidable move. They fortified the fortress of Ticonderoga, on Lake Champlain, commanding the great water-route ‡ from the St. Lawrence to the Hudson, and threatening the very heart of the English settlements.

* This is the episode described in Longfellow's *Evangeline*.

† Of the many Lives of Washington, the short one by H. C. Lodge may be named.

‡ School Atlas, Plate 504.

Armies on Foot.—Meanwhile the home authorities, in both countries, were realising the importance of the crisis. In 1755 the English Government sent out General Edward Braddock with two regiments of regulars to stiffen the colonial resistance. In the same year the French Government sent 3,000 men, with instructions to attack the British settlements by way of Lake Champlain and the River Hudson—a great navigable water-way which cut through the centre of the British settlements. Without any declaration of war, a struggle for supremacy in America had definitely opened in 1755.

The Diplomatic Revolution.—While war between France and England was becoming inevitable in America and India, the situation in Europe also was undergoing an ominous change. Maria Theresa of Austria could not forgive Frederick of Prussia for his treacherous seizure of Silesia in the last war. She was determined upon a war of revenge. Her old ally, Britain, would not help her, because Prussia was the next neighbour of Hanover, which would thus be exposed to attack. She turned towards her ancient enemy, France. France had no reason for going to war with Prussia: she ought to have avoided European complications in view of the coming struggle overseas; but the king's mistress, Madame de Pompadour, hated Frederick of Prussia, and such things count in the policy of despotic courts. France, therefore, allowed herself (1756) to become the cat's-paw of Austria. Russia and Sweden were also drawn into the confederacy, and it seemed that Prussia, surrounded by a ring of enemies, must be ruined. What was to be the attitude of Britain in this strange regrouping of European alliances? The supreme concern of the Duke of Newcastle, now in control of British policy, was for the safety of Hanover. Open war with France began early in 1756, and Hanover lay open to attack from France on the West. In order to secure the Electorate on the east, Newcastle concluded with Frederick of Prussia the *Convention of Westminster* (1756), whereby Britain and Prussia mutually guaranteed each other's possessions. Once more, it appeared, Britain was to be dragged into a European war, in which she had no concern, as the sole ally of a power that was threatened on all sides. Once more her overseas interests were in danger of being sacrificed for the supposed interests of Hanover.

Pitt in Opposition.—These arrangements aroused the thunder of Pitt's eloquence in the British Parliament. He was now unmuzzled, for in 1754 Henry Pelham had died; the ministry had

been reconstructed under his flustered and incompetent brother, the Duke of Newcastle; and Pitt had found that he was still to be excluded from any share of real power. He went into violent opposition. During the years following 1754 his denunciations of the Government were arousing the attention of the country. Though Parliament was not reported, the echoes of his fervid eloquence were heard throughout the land, and he became the standard-bearer of a rising indignation against the Whig oligarchy and its conceptions of national policy.

Character of Pitt.—William Pitt* was, in 1754, forty-six years old. He had spent twenty years in Parliament, and was already famous as the most commanding orator whom the House of Commons had ever known. He was a man who compelled attention. Tall and spare, with the eye of a hawk, he dominated the House as no man has ever done. Yet because he did not belong to one of the great families, and had no "borough influence," he had never been given a chance of showing what was in him. He shared Bolingbroke's contempt for the Whigs and their methods, and would have been glad to lend a hand in the overthrow of their corrupt oligarchy. He was an austere and lonely figure; he did not work easily with other men; and he cultivated an Olympian manner, and invited ridicule by his theatrical poses. But it was not safe to laugh at Pitt. He was no mere *poseur*, but a man of immense courage, with an ardent belief in the destiny of his country, and in his own power to lead it to triumphs such as it had never known. He was not a logical thinker, and was often inconsistent. But he believed passionately in England and in liberty. The two causes were identified in his mind. He wanted to see the English system of liberty triumphant over the French system of absolutism. He believed that the destiny of England lay on the seas and beyond them. This had been his theme for twenty years. It had led him to denounce Walpole's fear of facing the issue with Spain, and the half-heartedness of Walpole's conduct of the war when it came. It had led him to denounce Carteret for involving England in European war, instead of concentrating upon the struggle overseas. Now, when the great duel with France for supremacy in America was manifestly beginning, the same beliefs raised Pitt's eloquence to an unprecedented fervour

* There is a good short Life of Pitt by Frederic Harrison (Twelve English Statesmen), and a fuller one by W. F. Reddaway (Heroes of the Nations).

as he denounced the Duke of Newcastle, first for his blindness to the real issues, and then for the incredible incompetence with which he handled the war.

Thus during the years 1748-1755 everything was shaping for an epical conflict. War was raging in India and in the backwoods of America. A huge conflagration was preparing in Europe. And in England the greatest leader of men since Cromwell had come into the forefront and was laying before the nation a new conception of its policy. "England has been long in labour," said Frederick of Prussia in 1756, "but at last she has produced a Man."

CHAPTER XXXI

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NAVAL AND COLONIAL SUPREMACY (1755-1763)

I. YEARS OF DISASTER (1755-1757)

The "Seven Years' War."—The great and decisive conflict which now began is known in Europe as the Seven Years' War, dating from the invasion of Saxony by Frederick of Prussia in the summer of 1756. But open war between France and England had formally begun some months earlier; the real beginning of the conflict in America dates back to 1755, when regular forces of French and English met in the Ohio valley; the first shots had been fired in 1754, when Washington attacked Fort Duquesne. For Britain and France, therefore, it was not a "Seven" but an "Eight" or a "Nine" Years' War.

The Disasters of 1755.—For the first three years there was nothing but a record of disasters. In 1755 General Edward Braddock, a competent soldier wholly unused to backwoods warfare, set out to recapture Fort Duquesne. He had expected the support of the colonists; but he had the greatest difficulty in raising a few irregular troops, and even in getting the requisite wagons. In the trackless woods he was ambushed by a force of Indians and Canadians; his regulars knew not how to deal with their invisible foes; they were shot down as they stood; Braddock himself was killed; and only a remnant of the force could be extricated by young Washington.

Meanwhile, in the North, the French had begun to advance southwards from Ticonderoga. It was only with difficulty that New England levies held the forts at the bottom of Lake George, which commanded the entrance to the Hudson valley.* Next year these might be forced, and the line of the Hudson would be lost. Most of the Red Indian tribes were in alliance with the French. During the winter the long unguarded western frontier of the colonies was terrorised by frequent raids. There was no army to protect the frontier. The colonists (except in New England) would do nothing, waiting for the mother-country to protect them.

Loss of Minorca.—Worse news soon followed. In April a French fleet and army suddenly attacked Minorca, taking it entirely by surprise. A British fleet under Admiral Byng came to its relief. Byng fought an indecisive battle, and (being somewhat outnumbered) drew off to Gibraltar, and left Minorca to surrender. There was an outcry in England. Byng was recalled, court-martialled, and sentenced to death. Popular clamour demanded his immediate execution *pour encourager les autres*. Pitt lost some of his popularity because he resisted this unjust sentence, which was carried out.

The Danger in America.—To America the French had sent out a very able soldier, Montcalm, who could dispose of 7,000 troops. The Duke of Newcastle sent out 900 men, under an old-fashioned general, Lord Loudoun; and although the colonists were now, in alarm, recruiting in larger numbers, they were untrained and outnumbered. The fighting on Lake George was still indecisive; but the outlook seemed almost hopeless. Meanwhile the war had begun in Europe. Britain's only ally, Frederick of Prussia, had seized Saxony; but the armies of Austria, Russia, Sweden, and France were making ready to attack him. It seemed certain that he would be overwhelmed. He could not possibly help to defend Hanover.

Pitt's First Ministry.—These disasters brought about the fall of the Duke of Newcastle. Pitt, with the Duke of Devonshire, formed a ministry. But they had no majority in Parliament, which was still controlled by Newcastle. Moreover, the king had no confidence in a minister who had denounced the subordination of English interests to Hanover. Pitt promptly began to make great plans. Large reinforcements were to be sent to America. All the French ports were to be blockaded by the Navy to prevent the dispatch

* School Atlas, Plate 506.

of troops across the Atlantic. Raids were to be made on the French coast. Adequate forces were to be maintained in Hanover to keep the French employed. Highland regiments were raised. A Militia Act was passed to provide for home defence and release all available troops for foreign service. In a very short time Pitt's energy promised to transform the situation. But he was not allowed a free hand. The Duke of Cumberland, who was to take command in Hanover, refused to serve under this anti-Hanoverian. In April 1757, Pitt was dismissed, and for eleven weeks, at a critical moment, there was no Government.

The Coalition of Pitt and Newcastle.—Petitions and addresses poured in demanding Pitt's return to power; nineteen towns voted him the freedom, and "it rained gold boxes," as Horace Walpole put it. Eventually, in June, an agreement was made whereby Pitt and Newcastle formed a junction—Newcastle taking charge of the "management" of Parliament, which was what he cared about, while Pitt directed the war. There was no real confidence between these mutually disdainful colleagues. But this did not matter. Pitt assumed the powers of a dictator; and on all questions affecting the war his colleagues trembled and obeyed—storing their resentment for a more convenient season. Pitt's dictatorship lasted for four years. They were the most glorious four years in British history.

The Failures of 1757.—The campaign of 1757 was still unsuccessful; for Pitt's plans had not had time to mature, nor had he yet found the right instruments. In America * Loudoun, with his enlarged army, went to Halifax, meaning to attack Louisbourg, but thought better of it, and returned having achieved nothing; while the French under Montcalm mastered the forts below Lake George, and would have advanced down the Hudson but for Loudoun's return. On the Continent of Europe Frederick of Prussia met a severe defeat in Bohemia, while his enemies were closing in upon him on every side. † Worst of all, a French army invaded Hanover, inflicted a severe defeat on Cumberland at *Hastenbeck*, and forced him to sign a humiliating convention at *Klosterzeven*, whereby his army was to be disbanded. To cap all this bad news came the tidings that an expedition against *Rochefort*, on the French coast,

* For the American campaign, School Atlas 30a and b.

† For the Prussian campaigns, see the larger Atlas, Plate 67a.

which Pitt had planned, had ignominiously failed, because the general in command had refused to attack. Everywhere the generals of the old school were proving their incompetence. Pitt learnt his lesson; in future he would pick his own men, without regard to seniority.

A Black Outlook.—At the end of 1757, after three years of fighting, the outlook was black indeed. Not only in America and in Europe but in distant India everything had gone wrong. The news of the loss of Calcutta and of the Black Hole,* though these events had happened in 1756, only reached England in June, 1757. Even Pitt was disheartened. Utter ruin seemed to face the nation. "We are undone at home and abroad," said Lord Chesterfield. "We are no longer a nation. I never yet saw so dreadful a prospect." But the gloom of 1757 was only the background for the intoxicating successes of the next two years. The contrast is the measure of Pitt's greatness.

The Turn of the Tide.—The tide was soon to turn. Even during the winter good news began to come in. Frederick of Prussia won two dazzling victories, over the French at *Rosbach*, over the Austrians at *Leuthen*: he became a popular hero in England, and public houses took "The King of Prussia" in his blue uniform for their sign. Then came the incredible news of Clive's victory at *Plassey*, of which there will be more to say elsewhere. These successes were not organised in England. But they prepared the way for the amazing change of fortune which began in the next year.

2. THE YEARS OF TRIUMPH (1758-1760)

Pitt's Plans.—During the last years of disaster Pitt had been organising for victory. He had discarded all the old-fashioned generals, and selected young men of the right spirit—Wolfe, Amherst, Howe, Granby. He had persuaded the American colonies to raise numerous forces by undertaking to pay the whole cost of their equipment. He had raised his Highland regiments, and embodied the militia in England. He had repudiated the Convention of Klosterzeven, and sent out a new army to defend Hanover, under an able German general, Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick. But above all, he had conceived a great plan of campaign, in which all the parts

* See below, p. 433.

were related to one another; and this was the greatest of his achievements.

The Role of the Navy.—The foundation of all was the strength of the Navy. It was employed mainly in the tedious work of blockading all the French naval ports, so as to prevent the sending of any French reinforcements across the Atlantic. But command of the sea was also used as a means of alarming the French by frequent descents upon their coast, which compelled them to keep large forces at home. And other naval forces were employed in more distant attacks. Meanwhile the main French army was to be kept occupied in Germany. Pitt was often criticised for his inconsistency in carrying on German campaigns. But his answer was complete. His German campaigns were not an end in themselves, but a means to an end—"I will conquer America in Germany." The main struggle was in and for America, but it might not have been so triumphant if the navy had not kept up its blockade, and if coastal raids and the German campaign had not diverted the main strength of France.

The War in Europe.—The blockade of the French ports was strictly maintained throughout 1758. There were no less than five descents on the French coast, in one of which Cherbourg was occupied and its shipping and forts destroyed. There was a brilliant little campaign in West Africa,* where the main French stations of Senegal and Goree were captured. Finally, in Germany a mixed army of British troops and German mercenaries brilliantly out-mancœuvred two French armies, defeated one of them at *Crefeld*, and cleared them out of Hanover.

The Campaign in America.—But the main campaign was in America. Here Pitt had designed a quadruple attack upon the French. The main attack, by a fleet under Boscawen and an army under Amherst and Wolfe, was directed against *Louisbourg*: the fortress with 4,000 soldiers was captured, and 13 French ships in the harbour were destroyed. The second force, under Abercrombie and Howe, directed against the French forts on Lake Champlain, was beaten back at *Ticonderoga*, where the new Highland regiments were decimated in a frontal onslaught upon a strongly defended position. The third force, under a colonial officer, Bradstreet, advanced to Lake Ontario up the Mohawk valley, and captured

* School Atlas, Plate 56c.

Forts Oswego and Frontenac, thus cutting the link between Canada and the Ohio valley. The fourth force, under a gallant old soldier, Forbes, cut a road through the woods to Fort Duquesne, and occupied that much-contested post, renaming it Pittsburg in honour of the great minister. Apart from the failure at Ticonderoga, this was a good year's work; and it prepared the way for a final onslaught on French Canada in the following campaign.

Naval Victories.—Good as was the record of 1758, that of 1759 was yet more brilliant. It opened with a menace of invasion. A French army of 50,000 was prepared in the Channel ports; another force of 36,000 French, Russians, and Swedes was to invade Scotland under the protection of a Swedish fleet. Like Parma in 1588, and like Napoleon in 1804, the vigorous French minister Choiseul had prepared a huge fleet of flat-bottomed boats to carry over the troops; their transfer was to be covered by a massing of French fleets in the Channel. In England preparations were made for the invasion, as in 1588 and 1804, by calling out the militia and raising regiments of volunteers. There was a great outburst of patriotic zeal. But it was never put to the test. The navy was more than equal to its task. When the French Mediterranean fleet sallied out from Toulon to make a junction with the Channel fleet, it was caught by Boscawen in the Straits of Gibraltar, pursued to *Lagos** on the Portuguese coast, and there all but completely destroyed (August 1759). Later the main French fleet came out from Brest, taking advantage of a gale which had driven off the blockading squadron. It was caught by Hawke with the English Channel fleet, pursued into *Quiberon Bay* despite its dangerous reefs, and annihilated in a brilliant battle fought in a gale that blew on to a dangerous lee shore (November). *Lagos* and *Quiberon Bay* between them not only destroyed all possibility of a French invasion, they made British naval supremacy unchallengeable, they swept French commerce from the seas, and they made it impossible for France to send reinforcements to Canada. They also made it easy to attack the French West Indies, where the rich sugar island of *Guadeloupe* was captured in this year.

Victory in Germany.—Meanwhile on the Continent, though Frederick of Prussia was very hard-pressed, the British forces in Hanover won a dazzling victory at *Minden* which humiliated the

* For the naval battles, see School Atlas, Introduction, p. 18.

French army and made Hanover safe. It was a mixed force which fought this battle ; but the brunt of the fighting fell upon six British regiments, which still carry the name of Minden on their colours. The victory would have been yet more complete but that Lord George Sackville, disobeying orders, failed to follow up the pursuit.

The Conquest of Canada.—But once again, the main campaign was in North America. While Prideaux captured Fort Niagara, Amherst advanced up Lake Champlain, where he found that the main French forces had been withdrawn to concentrate upon the defence of Quebec. It was his duty to hasten, so as to co-operate in the culminating attack on *Quebec*. But he was needlessly deliberate ; with the result that Wolfe * (who, with the support of a fleet under Sanders, had been given the job of attacking Quebec

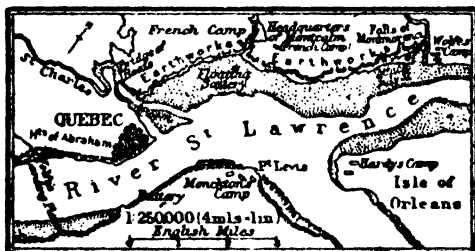


FIG. 26.—Quebec.

from the east) found himself faced by an almost impossible task. Wolfe had 9,000 troops. But Quebec, reputed to be impregnable, and elaborately fortified, was defended by 15,000 troops under Montcalm. Montcalm's army lay behind entrenchments to the east of the city : to the west a line of cliffs two hundred feet high seemed to make an attack impossible. Wolfe tried an attack on Montcalm's lines ; it was beaten off. Amherst did not arrive. September had come, and the campaigning season was nearly over. As a last desperate chance, Wolfe took 5,000 men by night, in boats with muffled oars, to a point at the foot of the Heights of Abraham, west of the city. An advance guard crept up a steep path and overpowered the surprised sentinels ; the rest of the little army followed, dragging with them two guns ; and by dawn were drawn up on the

* There is a good short *Life of Wolfe* by A. G. Bradley (*English Men of Action*).

high plateau. Montcalm, hurrying up with his army, ordered a charge that should sweep them off the plateau. The British troops lay still until the enemy were within forty paces ; then three withering volleys and a wild charge settled the fate of the French empire in America. Both Montcalm and Wolfe were mortally wounded.

Garnering Conquests.—This was the crowning achievement of a year of victories such as Britain had never known in her history : “ It is necessary,” wrote Horace Walpole, “ to ask every morning what victory there is, for fear of missing one.” The years 1760 and 1761 were spent in garnering the results of 1759. In Canada there was still hard fighting, and Wolfe’s small army was for a time besieged by French forces in Quebec. But before the end of 1760 the French army—having (thanks to the navy) no hope of any succour from the mother country—was forced to surrender at Montreal, and the whole of Canada submitted. In the same year the last resistance of the French in India was overpowered at Wandewash. But on the Continent Frederick of Prussia was almost exhausted ; Austria and France were also weary of war ; and the time seemed to have come for making peace.

Projects of Peace.—Pitt was very ready to make peace ; this, indeed, was why he had not shown his accustomed energy in pressing on the war during 1760 and 1761. He was ready for peace on two conditions—that Britain should reap the reward of her victories, and that Prussia should not be left in the lurch. But in the meanwhile the situation had changed in English politics. George II died in October 1760. His grandson and successor, George III, had conceived the ambition of overthrowing the Whig oligarchy and restoring the royal authority. For this purpose he was eager to end the war. Many members of the Cabinet were equally eager : some because they wanted to get rid of the dictator, others because they were frightened by the magnitude of the British victory and feared a European coalition, others again because they were terrified by the dimensions of the debt. Pitt found that his power was weakening.

The Fall of Pitt.—Meanwhile France had concluded a secret treaty with Spain—the *Third Family Compact*, August 1761—whereby Spain undertook to declare war on Britain unless peace was promptly made. The Bourbon powers were in fact making up their minds that the British naval and colonial supremacy must be challenged before it was too late. Pitt did not know of this treaty, but he suspected it, because of a sudden change of tone on the part of the

French, who demanded that peace must be made without Prussia, and that certain concessions must be made to Spain. He broke off the negotiations, and urged that war should at once be declared on Spain. The Cabinet refused, and Pitt resigned (October 1761). Three months later war with Spain was declared (January 1762).

The War with Spain.—Though Pitt was gone, he had made his plans for the expected war, and chosen the men who were to carry them out. The campaign of 1762 was therefore only less brilliant than that of 1759. All the French West Indian islands were seized. *Havana*, the capital of Cuba, was captured by a fleet and an army, together with twelve Spanish warships. When Spain invaded Portugal, a British army was landed from the sea, and drove the Spanish troops over the border. And an expedition despatched from India seized *Manila*, and compelled the surrender of the whole of the Philippine Islands and the payment of a heavy ransom. It appeared that the Spanish Empire was about to go the same way as the French, before the irresistible power of the British Navy.

3. THE PEACE OF PARIS

The campaign of 1762 convinced both France and Spain that there was nothing to be got by continuing the war. They resolved to make peace, and build up their naval power in preparation for another challenge when an opportunity should come : it came after fourteen years. And as the British Government was bent on peace, the terms were quickly settled, before the end of 1762, and ratified early in 1763.

Desertion of Prussia.—The treaty made no provision for Frederick of Prussia—a desertion which aroused Pitt's indignation, and which Frederick never forgave. But for the accident which in 1762 brought his admirer, Peter III, to the Russian throne, and swung the strength of Russia over to his side, he would have been ruined. As it was, he was able to make peace a little later at Hubertsburg without suffering any loss : his success in resisting half Europe brought Prussia into the first rank of powers.

British Gains.—To the British peoples the Treaty of Paris* brought an amazing triumph. France ceded to Britain all Canada except the two small islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, and all the

* School Atlas, Plate 44.

territory east of the Mississippi ; Spain ceded Florida in exchange for Havana ; while France handed over to Spain Louisiana and her vague claims to the lands west of the Mississippi. In effect, the control of the North American Continent passed into British hands. In the West Indies * France regained Martinique and Guadeloupe, but the other French islands became British ; while Minorca, the emblem of supremacy in the Mediterranean, was restored to Britain. In India France obtained her two trading-stations of Pondicherry and Chandernagore, but only as trading-stations : political supremacy remained British. In the East, as in the West, the British power was now supreme.

This treaty was much criticised, by Pitt among others, on the ground that it gave to Britain less than she might have claimed. She might, indeed, at that moment have claimed almost any territories in the oversea dominions of France and Spain that she cared to possess. But her moderation was wise. She had, in fact, already acquired more than she was yet able to administer successfully ; and she had scarcely yet begun to realise how difficult were the responsibilities which these conquests imposed upon her. Both in India and in America she was to find herself involved, during the next twenty years, in all but insoluble problems.

CHAPTER XXXII

GEORGE III AND THE QUARREL WITH THE AMERICAN COLONIES (1760-1775)

I. THE AIMS OF GEORGE III

New Problems.—The uneventful apathy of the Whig period had come to an end. The long reign of George III, which began during the War, was to be fuller of great events and great issues than any earlier period of British history. Britain had suddenly become the greatest Power in the world, and was faced by new and bewildering problems. A vast new empire had been acquired in America : part of it was peopled by French Catholics, strange to the British system ;

* School Atlas, Plate 48c.

another part consisted of a huge wilderness inhabited by wandering tribes of savages. How were these new dominions to be governed? The thirteen colonies were growing up, and the old colonial system, under which they had lived since 1660, was manifestly working badly. How could it be adjusted? In India a new empire of an unprecedented kind had been won. What was to be done with it? In Ireland a movement of protest against the repressive system established since the Revolution was afoot. In England the great social change known as the Industrial Revolution was about to begin, and a religious and philanthropic revival was afoot. All these great questions combined to make the new period one of immense difficulty and interest. But, for the moment, they were all obscured by a political problem. The new king had come to the throne with the set intention of overthrowing the Whig oligarchy, and restoring to the Crown the powers designed for it in the Revolution Settlement. All the other problems were affected by this. Parliament and the politicians could not give their minds to the greater questions of imperial policy, because they were engrossed by the struggle between the king and the Whigs.

Character of George III.—George III* had one great advantage over his predecessors: he had been born and bred in England, and was thoroughly English in sentiment. He was a young man of moderate ability, with a firm will, real courage, and a high sense of public obligation and of his own rights and duties as king. He had spent much of his youth in seclusion. His tutor and friend, the Marquis of Bute, was a Scottish Tory and a warm admirer of Pitt. Like Pitt, the tutor and his pupil were much influenced by the ideas of Bolingbroke, which had been in vogue at the court of George's father, Frederick Prince of Wales. George cast himself for the part of Bolingbroke's "Patriot King." He was determined to overthrow the corrupt Whig oligarchy which had so long usurped all the powers of the Crown, and to resume the function of choosing his own ministers and directing their policy, which the Crown had always enjoyed until 1714. He had no intention of overturning the constitution; he did not even try to reverse the usage of the last two reigns whereby the king did not attend the meetings of his Cabinet. But he meant to reclaim for the Crown the powers which the Revolution Settlement had left to it.

* Read Thackeray's study of George III in *The Four Georges*.

Fall of the Whigs.—It was a sign of this intention when, at the beginning of his reign, he required that Lord Bute should be admitted to the Cabinet ; Cabinet ministers had since 1714 generally been selected by the Whig leader for the time being. It was another sign of his intention that, at the first general election after his accession, he insisted upon being consulted as to the management of the election. He also took into his own hands all the royal patronage, the control of which had been the foundation of Whig power. The Duke of Newcastle, who had been accustomed, like his Whig predecessors, to manage elections and to control the votes of the army of "placemen" in the House of Commons, found that his power had simply melted away. Pitt, who shared the king's ideas, would have been his natural ally. Unfortunately they took different views about the peace. After Pitt's resignation in 1761, the great man sulked, and it was five years before George obtained his help, though he made several attempts to get it in the meanwhile. In 1762 the Duke of Newcastle was dismissed. Thereafter he was a nonentity—so easily did the power of the Whigs collapse once they had lost the control of royal patronage. If all the Whig borough-owners had combined, indeed, they would still have been formidable. But they were split up into cliques, which could be played off one against the other.

Ministry of Bute.—It was thus very easy to destroy the power of the Whigs. But it was more difficult to get a ministry after George's own heart, for ministers, once appointed, were apt to insist upon having their own way. At first George tried to govern through his friend Bute, and it was Bute who negotiated the Peace of Paris. But Bute was not a skilful politician. He did not know how to manage the cliques. He was exposed to a vile and venomous press campaign, which sneered at him for being a Scot, and made unpardonable insinuations about his relations with the king's mother. The worst offender in this campaign was a bankrupt libertine named John Wilkes, against whom George III not unnaturally vowed vengeance. As soon as the Peace of Paris was safely concluded, Bute threw up politics in disgust, and retired into private life (1763).

2. GRENVILLE, WILKES, AND THE STAMP ACT (1763-1765)

The Grenville Ministry.—George now had to find another ministry. After trying in vain to get Pitt, he chose George Grenville, perhaps because he was Pitt's brother-in-law ; and later the Duke of

Bedford, who was the head of one of the strongest of the Whig cliques (known as the "Bloomsbury Gang"), joined the ministry. This Government lasted for little more than two years. But it was of momentous importance, because of two great controversies which it raised.

The Wilkes Case.—The first was the Wilkes question. In No. 45 of his paper, the *North Briton*, Wilkes had described a statement in the king's speech as a lie. The Government thought they had got the scurrilous fellow, and prosecuted him for "seditious libel." He was arrested on a "general warrant" (*i.e.* a warrant containing no names) directed against the "authors, printers, and publishers" of the paper. Such warrants had often been used by governments—Pitt himself had used them. But on this occasion Chief Justice Pratt declared that such warrants were illegal. The decision was important, because it implied that the Government could not wield any powers in the courts of law which were not open to ordinary citizens. The House of Commons joined in the attack on Wilkes, expelling him from his seat; and the House of Lords charged him with breach of privilege for having written a foul squib about one of the bishops. Wilkes did not await his trial. He fled to France, feeling that (as he was loaded with debt) he was not safe when he had lost the freedom from arrest that went with his seat in Parliament. But for a short time he was a popular hero, because he was regarded as a victim of power; and this squalid episode did much to discredit both the king and the Government. It quite obscured the much more important questions of colonial policy which Grenville was meanwhile raising.

Proclamation of 1763.—Grenville was an industrious and thoughtful politician who had a great deal of knowledge about American affairs, and he did his best to deal fairly with the very difficult questions which the war had raised. French Canada was still under military rule. In 1763 Grenville issued a proclamation in which he promised that self-governing institutions should be set up in Canada—which had never enjoyed any such rights before; but the promise was not fulfilled until 1791. The same proclamation also provided that in the newly-conquered territories no land could legally be acquired from Indians except under conditions which ensured that the Indians should know what they were doing. This was the first attempt to protect native races against white exploitation. It was very unpopular among the American colonists. Still more

unpopular was a provision for setting apart the greater part of the new territories west of the Alleghanies as a native reserve. This contributed to increase the bad feeling against the home government which was growing among the colonists.

Regulation of American Trade.—Grenville also tried to improve the trade-system, which had been working very badly. There were hundreds of Acts, and with immense labour he strove to revise and codify them, so as to make the whole system workable. In particular, he revised Walpole's foolish Molasses Act,* greatly reducing the duties on imported French sugar. He gave bounties on a number of colonial products. He had found that the dues on colonial trade (which the colonists recognised as valid) were in fact evaded on a wholesale scale, so that they yielded scarcely any revenue. His general idea was to reduce them and make them reasonable, but at the same time to see that they really were collected. For this purpose he employed naval vessels on coastguard duty in America, and set up an Admiralty Court to try smuggling cases. All this was intensely unpopular among the colonists, who had long been accustomed to defy the trade restrictions, while profiting by the monopoly they enjoyed for their products in British markets.

The Stamp Act.—A third problem which Grenville tried to tackle was the defence of the colonies. The French danger was now removed. It had been removed almost wholly at the expense of the mother-country, who had had to pay even the costs of the colonial contingents. The continued security of the colonies depended upon the British fleet, towards which they made no contribution. The huge national debt had been largely incurred on their account. Grenville did not ask them to contribute to these expenses. But they still needed an army for their defence. This was demonstrated in 1763-1764 when there was a dangerous Indian rising (the Conspiracy of Pontiac) which would have led to widespread slaughter and devastation if it had not been checked by British forces. And as the colonists refused to maintain any forces of their own, a small British army had to be maintained for their protection. It seemed fair that they should contribute towards the cost of this. The trade dues would not nearly cover the cost. Grenville consulted with colonial representatives as to how this contribution should be raised. From some of them he got the reply that as the colonies would not

* Above, p. 371.

combine, and would not contribute separately, the only way was to impose a tax by the authority of the British Parliament. In 1764, therefore, Grenville proposed that stamps should be required upon certain kinds of documents: the proceeds, estimated at £100,000, would be partly paid by the West Indies, and would cover less than a third of the remaining cost of the army. He allowed a year for the discussion of this proposal, and for the suggestion of alternative methods. No alternatives were suggested. In 1765, therefore, the *Stamp Act* was passed by Parliament, with scarcely a word of criticism. Nobody anticipated the storm it was going to raise; neither Pitt nor the Whigs voted against it.

Colonial Resistance.—The passage of the Stamp Act produced an immediate upheaval in the colonies. It was proclaimed to be a denial of the principle of “no taxation without representation.” There were riots, and agreements to boycott British goods. In England Pitt supported the view of the colonists, asserting that they would be slaves if they paid taxes about which they had not been consulted. When it was argued that the trade dues (to which in principle no objection was taken) were in fact taxes imposed by Parliament, the answer was given that there was a difference between “external” taxation, which was legitimate, and “internal” taxation, which was tyranny.

The Rockingham Ministry.—George III and Grenville thought all this clamour unreasonable, and would have liked to insist upon the tax. But they were already on bad terms with one another on other issues: Grenville was just as dictatorial as the old Whig ministries had been. In 1765 Grenville was dismissed; and after another vain attempt to get Pitt, George fell back reluctantly upon the Old Whigs, now led by the Marquis of Rockingham. The Rockingham ministry, which lasted only a year, was a feeble and ineffectual government. It had only one great name, Edmund Burke,* who was Lord Rockingham’s private secretary; but Burke, not being a man of family, held no office of importance. It had no secure majority, because the “placemen”—now instruments of the king—continually hampered it. It achieved only one measure of importance. It repealed the Stamp Act (1766), and the clamour died down. But it accompanied the repeal with a Declaratory Act

* There is a good short *Life of Burke* by John Morley (*English Men of Action*).

asserting the right of taxation. To assert a right without endeavouring to enforce it was mere folly, especially as it was the claim of a right to tax, rather than the actual burden, which the colonists resented.

In 1766 George got rid of Rockingham. He had at last succeeded in persuading the great Pitt, now Earl of Chatham, to join him in forming a non-party ministry, not dominated by any single clique. The great experiment of non-party government, according to the ideas of Bolingbroke, was to be given a fair trial.

3. NON-PARTY GOVERNMENT AND GROWING CONFUSION (1766-1770)

The Chatham Ministry.—Chatham succeeded in getting together a ministry which included a number of very able men, drawn from many different groups. Judged by the capacity of its individual members, it was, indeed, the ablest ministry of the period. But because it was not a party ministry, its members did not see eye to eye. They were a group of ministers, each dealing with the affairs of his own department, rather than a united Cabinet; and consequently there was no coherence in their policy.

Chatham's Disillusionment.—Chatham had entered upon office with high hopes. He meant to settle the American problem. He meant to reorganise the government of British India. He meant also to restore the prestige of Britain in Europe, which had suffered seriously from the confusion of the last few years. He knew there was a danger that France and Spain would seek vengeance for their recent defeat—as they actually did ten years later—and he wanted to build up an alliance to guard against this danger. But he found that the European powers looked with suspicion upon Britain, because her policy seemed to be uncertain and shifting. Frederick the Great of Prussia, in particular, would have nothing to do with her. He had not forgiven the desertion of himself in 1763, and he thought that Britain had become “a sort of island-Poland.” The consequence was that when the next ordeal came, in 1777, Britain found herself alone and friendless.

Failure of Non-party Government.—Disillusioned about foreign affairs, Chatham was also disillusioned about non-party cabinets. He could not get his discordant colleagues to agree upon a definite policy. He withdrew into seclusion, physically and mentally ill, and left them in the lurch: in 1768 he resigned, and in the next

year he was leading the opposition to the ministry which he had himself formed. His loyal henchman, the Duke of Grafton, who was left as nominal head of the Government, had no control over his colleagues, and felt that he had been most unfairly treated. More and more the king became the only unifying force in the discordant ministry, which drifted from blunder to blunder.

The Corsican Question.—In foreign affairs this Government had no influence at all. The episode of Corsica (1768–1769) served to illustrate its impotence. The Corsicans were in rebellion against their Genoese masters, and asked to be taken under British protection. The Genoese, unable to subdue them, offered to sell the island to France. If Chatham had been himself, and in control of affairs, it is certain that he would have accepted the Corsican offer; and France, so recently defeated, would not have risked war with Britain. Shelburne, the Secretary of State, who was a disciple of Chatham, wanted to take the island. But other members of the ministry sent private word to France that Britain would not go to war about Corsica, and France bought the island (1769). That same year Napoleon Buonaparte was born in Corsica. But for Chatham's illness, Napoleon would have been a British subject, and the history of the world would have been different.

Colonial Taxation.—In colonial affairs this Government took up the work which Grenville had dropped. Shelburne worked out an elaborate scheme for the administration of the western territories and for the protection of the Red Indians. This was unpopular among the colonists, who wanted to be left free to do as they liked in the new territories. But it won the friendship of the Red Indians, who henceforward regarded the British Government as their friend. More important, the brilliant and irresponsible Chancellor of the Exchequer, Charles Townshend, took up once again the question of getting a revenue from America for the cost of defence. The colonists had denounced "internal" taxation, but admitted the validity of "external" taxation. They should therefore be taxed "externally"; and Townshend imposed duties on tea, glass, and painters' colours imported into America (1767).

Colonial Resistance.—At once a storm broke out, as violent as that caused by the Stamp Act. The Act stated that the purpose of the duties was to raise a revenue; and it was precisely the claim of a right to raise revenue to which the colonists objected. Most of the colonies made agreements to boycott British goods. The

Massachusetts Assembly took the lead in resistance, and refused to dissolve when the Governor tried to dismiss it. The disorders in Boston reached such a pitch that two regiments were sent from Halifax to maintain order (1768). The soldiers had a very uncomfortable time. In 1770, during a riot in the town, shots were fired, and three of the crowd were killed. This was known as the Boston Massacre, and denounced as an evidence of the brutal tyranny of George III. It was evident that the taxes could not be enforced. In March 1770, the Government decided to withdraw them; but, in order to maintain the principle, the duty on tea was preserved, though only by a majority of one—so deeply divided was the Cabinet. Such was the result, in America, of non-party government.

The Middlesex Election.—At home, meanwhile, a controversy had been raised which almost entirely obscured the American question. Wilkes returned from his exile, stood his trial for libel, and submitted to his sentence. Then, in the election of 1768, he was elected as member for Middlesex. The House of Commons declared the election invalid, on the ground of his previous expulsion. At a second election he was returned again, and again expelled. When he was returned at a third election, the House of Commons, led by the Government, declared his opponent elected. This aroused a constitutional controversy of the fiercest kind. It was all the fiercer because in the election of 1768 wholesale corruption, out of public funds, had been employed to ensure a majority for the King's Friends. The whole question of the parliamentary system was raised as it had never been raised before. Wilkes and the Middlesex election provided the starting-point for a constitutional agitation which never wholly died down until the Reform Act of 1832 was passed. The Whigs denounced royal corruption. Burke wrote his very effective pamphlet on the *Causes of the Present Discontents*. Chatham, returning to active politics, demanded more frequent parliaments so as to make corruption more difficult, and an increase in the number of county members. But the agitation went farther than this. A Society of Friends of the Bill of Rights was founded. It was the first English organisation for political propaganda, and it demanded a wider franchise and annual parliaments.

The Storm Dies Down.—In 1769 and 1770 it seemed as if the Government (which now meant the king) would be defeated. All the elements of opposition had combined to attack both the American policy of the king, and the treatment of Wilkes. Chatham

and the Whigs were working together. The London mob was in a state of high excitement. The mysterious *Junius* was publishing his anonymous letters in the *Public Advertiser*, denouncing the ministers with vitriolic brilliance, and not sparing the king himself. Never had political excitement been higher in England. Yet the storm died down almost as quickly as it had arisen. In reality the policy of George III was not unpopular. The bulk of opinion, both in Parliament and in the country, supported his American policy, and thought that the colonists were unreasonable. Even the excitement about the Middlesex election was short-lived, and was mainly limited to London. The Duke of Grafton resigned with a few of his colleagues; the ministry was reconstituted under Lord North (1770); and the opposition collapsed. The king had, in fact, won his victory. The ministry of North was a ministry after his own heart. It was supported by a large parliamentary majority, built up by the methods which George III had learnt from the Whigs.

4. LORD NORTH AND THE BREACH WITH THE AMERICAN COLONIES (1770-1775)

The North Government.—Lord North was in no sense a Prime Minister. He was merely the king's agent for the management of the House of Commons and the distribution of patronage. During the twelve years 1770-1782 the king was his own Prime Minister, dealing directly with the various heads of departments, and generally controlling policy. He wielded, in fact, very much the same powers as the modern President of the United States. In other words, cabinet government, as it had developed during the period of Whig supremacy, was for the time being suspended. Both Parliament and the country seem to have accepted this system quite readily. Not only the "placemen" but the "independent country gentlemen" generally voted for the Government, and for some years the opposition of Whigs and Chathamites was weak, divided, and disheartened.

The Quebec Act.—Upon the whole, the system worked reasonably well. The North Government passed several useful measures of reform. It found a sound solution for the problem of government in Canada in the *Quebec Act* (1774), which preserved French laws and customs and allowed full freedom to the Roman Catholic religion, without trying to set up a parliamentary system for which the Canadians were not ready, and which they did not want;

and these arrangements kept the loyalty of Canada in the coming crisis, though they aroused the anger of the vehemently Protestant inhabitants of the thirteen colonies. It also dealt with the problem of India far more courageously than any of its predecessors. If it had not been wrecked by the American difficulty, George III's system might have lasted, and the cabinet system might have been forgotten as a mere device of the Whig oligarchy.

The Boston Tea Party.—Even the American problem seemed for a time to be losing its difficulty. The resistance to the tax of 3*d.* a pound on tea (which was the only formal ground of complaint) was gradually diminishing between 1770 and 1773, because it was difficult to maintain passionate indignation over such a matter. And in 1773 North made a change which might have been expected to ease the situation. The East India Company was almost bankrupt. To relieve its distress, it was allowed to send tea direct to America, instead of through England. Thus it would escape the 1*s.* duty levied in England, and pay only the 3*d.* duty levied in America; the Americans would get their tea more cheaply than before the Townshend duties were imposed. When the first consignment under the new rules arrived at Boston, a gang of men disguised as Red Indians boarded the ships and threw the property of the East India Company into the harbour, evidently fearing that if it was landed it might be bought (December 1773).

Penal Legislation.—The Boston tea-riot aroused deep anger in England. Lord North introduced a series of penal laws, one of which removed the custom-house from Boston to Salem, while another transferred the appointment of judges to the Crown, and made it possible (in view of the difficulty of getting convictions in America) to bring cases for trial to England. More serious, the charter of Massachusetts was cancelled. These Acts for the first time gave real colour to the charge that the British Government was an enemy to American liberty. They precipitated an open conflict.

Colonial Resistance.—The Massachusetts Assembly became practically a rebel government. General Gage began to fortify Boston against possible attack by the "rebels." And a Congress of all the colonies except Georgia met at Philadelphia (1774) to concert measures of resistance, and adopted a Declaration of Rights. But it made no constructive proposals for dealing with the difficulty. It refused to consider a scheme for a federal organisation which would be able to vote the funds needed for common defence. Tempers

were up on both sides of the Atlantic. Most Englishmen thought it unreasonable that the colonists should expect to enjoy all the advantages of naval and military protection at the expense of the mother-country, while refusing to contribute to the cost. Most of the colonists were convinced that the essentials of self-government were being challenged.

Attempts at Conciliation.—As the crisis approached, its gravity was for the first time realised in England. Chatham, in conjunction with Benjamin Franklin * (who was living in England as an agent for some of the colonies), tried to devise a scheme of conciliation (1774), but tempers were too high to give it a chance. Burke delivered two noble orations † in the House of Commons, full of profound wisdom, but they were of no avail. Even North proposed a measure of conciliation, under which any colony which made a reasonable contribution to the cost of defence should be exempted from the payment of taxes. It was too late. Over in Massachusetts the militiamen were already drilling. General Gage sent out a small force to seize and destroy a store of munitions lest the colonists should get hold of them. The troops were attacked by the local levies at *Lexington* (April 1775); and the War of American Independence began.

5. THE CAUSES OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

The blame for this disaster, which was to lead, after a war of seven years, to the severance of the thirteen American colonies from the British Crown, has commonly been laid upon George III, Lord North and Grenville. This is not a just judgment. Doubtless they showed too little tact and understanding of the situation. But their claim that the colonists ought to make some contribution to the cost of their own defence was in itself fair, and the colonists were at least as blind to the justice of this claim as the king was to their objections. The roots of the difficulty lay, in truth, much deeper than the mere attempt to collect a very modest sum of taxation, which was rather the occasion than the cause of the revolution.

(1) **The Trade-System.**—The old colonial system of trading regulations, devised in the seventeenth century and greatly extended

* Franklin's *Autobiography* is worth reading.

† Read these two great speeches if you possibly can. They are included in *Everyman's Library*.

by the Whigs, had outlived its usefulness. Although an honest attempt was made to balance the restrictions on colonial trade by monopoly rights for colonial goods in the English markets, and by bounties from the British Treasury on colonial production, and although the balance of advantage and disadvantage was about equal on both sides, it was neither wise nor safe to base imperial unity upon trade-bonds. Moreover, the system was not made by agreement, but solely by the authority of the British Parliament. Its worst features were due to the Whigs, who had tried in vain to prohibit colonial manufactures; and Walpole's Molasses Act was one of the chief causes of friction. Although the colonists never formally attacked the trade-system, they only tolerated it so long as it was not enforced. It was, in fact, one of the main causes of the difficulty. Yet nobody, on either side of the Atlantic, proposed to do away with it. Thus one of the principal causes of strife was one which never came to the forefront during the controversy.

(2) **The Governmental System.**—The system of government, whereby the Governor in each colony was appointed by the Crown but had to work with elected legislatures, was bound to work badly. There was constant friction between the Governors (who had to carry out orders from home) and their Assemblies, and this was made worse by the fact that the Governors were often badly selected. Democratic communities could not but feel that their freedom was limited by this system, and they expressed this feeling by trying to bring the Governors under their control, and by refusing security of tenure to judges. This cause of friction also never emerged openly, yet it was one of the main sources of unrest.

(3) **The Problem of Defence.**—Since the colonies always persistently refused to set up any common organisation for defence and taxation, these duties necessarily fell to the home government, whose action, however necessary, was apt to be resented. When the colonies had won their independence, they themselves found it necessary to set up a common authority in the place of the home government. Their failure to do so at an earlier date (say in 1754)* was probably the main reason for the breakdown of the old system. It was reasonable that the home country, already loaded with debt, which had largely been incurred on behalf of the colonies, should expect some contribution towards the cost of defence which this

* See above, p. 385.

system threw upon it ; but the attempt to obtain this contribution was the immediate cause of the breach.

(4) **Removal of the French Menace.**—The overthrow of the French power in America had removed the main factor which kept the colonies loyal, and led them to endure the inconveniences and the restrictions on their freedom which the old colonial system involved. Montcalm prophesied, shortly before his death, that the conquest of Canada would be followed by a revolt in the English colonies. His prophecy was very quickly verified.

(5) **The Western Territories.**—The problems presented by the new territories east of the Mississippi which had recently been conquered from France were another cause of friction. The colonies regarded these lands as their property, and wanted a free hand in dealing with them ; the home government regarded them as British conquests, and was resolved to administer them with a regard for the rights of their Indian inhabitants with which few of the colonies had any sympathy, and which was, indeed, a new thing in the relations between civilised and backward peoples. This difference materially contributed to intensify the friction which arose from the other causes.

A Difficult Problem.—The truth is that the colonies had grown up, and that the system which had served for their childhood was no longer suitable. They enjoyed a higher degree of freedom than any other colonies in the world, or than any other peoples in the world ; and the freer a people is, the more it resents any restriction on its freedom. Even in the sphere of trade, the restrictions imposed upon the British colonists were as nothing in comparison with the rigid control exercised by France, Spain, and Holland over their colonies. It is merely absurd to say that the home government, corrupt and short-sighted as it was, was in any sense tyrannical. The problem which George III and Grenville and North had to face was a problem far too difficult for them—a problem which even Burke and Chatham never fully appreciated, and which no colonial statesman understood—a problem which was new to the world. It was nothing less than the problem of enabling a number of free communities to live together in unity without impairing the freedom of any of them. It was not the imposition of a threepenny duty on tea that separated America from Britain, but the impossibility, in that generation, with its traditions and background, of reconciling unity with liberty.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE WAR OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND ITS
CONSEQUENCES (1775-1783)

I. THE COLONIAL WAR (1775-1777)

A Civil War.—It was a Civil War which began in 1775. Both in Britain and in America opinion was deeply divided. In Britain, indeed, there was at first a great majority which supported the king's policy; but some of the best men—among them Chatham, Burke, and young Charles Fox,* who had deserted the Government side in 1774—sympathised with the colonists, and felt that the swollen power of the Crown, against which the colonists were fighting, was also dangerous to English liberty. In America there were many thousands who hated the idea of disruption. These were the "Loyalists"; they formed nearly half of the population, and in the middle and southern colonies were probably a majority. Over 20,000 of them fought on the king's side during the war; and when the war was over, more than 60,000 of them left their homes and their property in order to remain under the British flag. Their zeal, rightly used, might have given victory to the king.

British Advantages.—At the outset, all the advantages seemed to lie on the British side. The colonies lay in a long straggling line, hitherto linked mainly by the sea, and the sea was controlled by the Navy. The colonists had no regular army, and their militia were apt to desert the colours in order to get home to their farms. There were no recognised means of raising funds, and the Congress at Philadelphia was ill-obeyed. One thing alone maintained the colonial cause during the first years—the steadfastness of George Washington, their leader. He was the only great man produced by this war on either side; and he was continually hampered by the jealousies of his rivals in Congress. On the other hand, George III suffered from a lack of military resources. The total numbers of the British army only amounted to 38,000 at the beginning of the war, and this included the garrisons of Gibraltar and Minorca, and the troops that

* Sir George Trevelyan's *Early Life of Charles James Fox* is a delightful book which should not be missed.

had to be kept in reserve at home. For this reason mercenaries had to be hired in Germany; and the employment of these Hessian troops was bitterly resented by the Americans. Nevertheless, with command of the sea, and with the strength of the Loyalists stiffened by a regular army, George III ought to have been able to suppress the revolt if his resources had been well used.

The First Campaign (1775).—At the opening of the struggle* the only British force in America consisted of 3,000 men under Gage in Boston. Though his numbers were later raised to 10,000, Gage did not venture to take the offensive. He was beset by 20,000 Massachusetts militiamen under Washington. When they occupied *Bunker's Hill*, which commanded Boston (June 1775), Gage drove



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FIG. 27.—Boston.

them out by a costly frontal attack. But Washington, by occupying Dorchester Heights, which commanded the harbour, made Gage's position untenable; and in March 1776 he had to evacuate Boston, withdrawing his troops by sea to Halifax. Meanwhile a New England force had invaded Canada, occupied Montreal, and besieged Quebec. But the French Canadians remained loyal; and when reinforcements arrived from England in the spring, the New Englanders had to retire. A British attempt to seize Charleston in South Carolina was beaten off.

The Declaration of Independence.—Thus the results of the first campaign were favourable to the colonists. But they knew they needed foreign help. Partly in the hope of getting it, Congress,

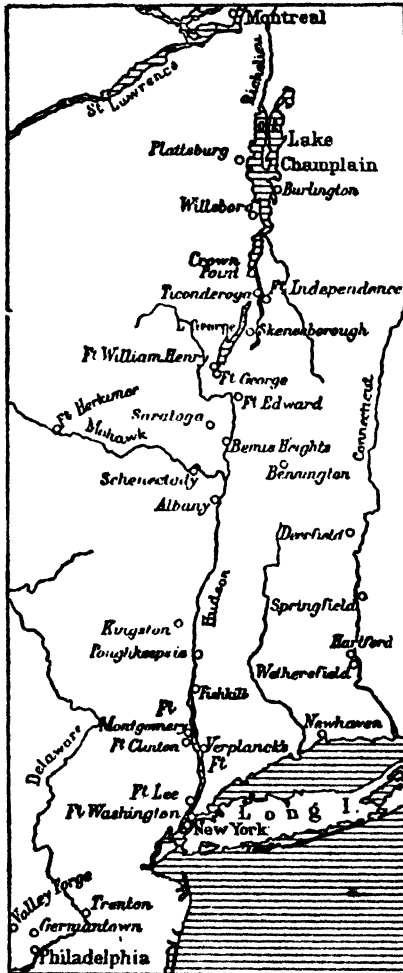
* For the whole war in America, see School Atlas, Plate 50a and b.

on July 4th, 1776, issued a *Declaration of Independence*. This historic document contained a bold declaration of the inalienable right of all men to liberty ; but this did not involve the grant of liberty to the numerous negro slaves of the revolting colonies. In Britain, since the famous judgment of Lord Mansfield in the Somerset case (1772), slavery was illegal, and every slave became free the moment he set foot on British soil ; in America, despite the glorious phrases of the Declaration, slavery survived for nearly a century. The Declaration contained also a formidable series of charges against the mother-country, drawn up in the spirit of the partisan rather than of the judge. It was a memorable moment in human history when, in the name of liberty, a group of self-governing communities deliberately cast off their allegiance. From this moment a new State came into existence, and we must no longer speak of the colonists, but of the Americans.

Campaign of 1776.—The ink was scarcely dry upon the Declaration of Independence when the tide of war turned against the Americans. The British army, now under the command of Lord Howe, was brought from Halifax to *Long Island* (1776), where it nearly captured Washington's army ; New York was seized, and much of New Jersey was occupied, the British forces being everywhere well received, for the Loyalists were in a majority in this region. Controlling the Middle States, the British forces separated New England and Virginia, the chief centres of resistance. Though Washington achieved a brilliant little success by surprising a detached force of Hessians at *Trenton*, his position was extremely difficult ; his troops were largely untrustworthy, and his supplies were badly organised. There seemed every reason to expect that the American resistance would be crushed in the next campaign.

Brandywine and Saratoga.—For the campaign of 1777 the main plan was that Burgoyne should advance from Canada, by the route down Lake Champlain so often used by the French, while another force from New York was to secure the line of the Hudson : this would isolate New England. Meanwhile Howe was to secure his position in the Middle States. The attempt to carry out these two plans concurrently led to disaster. Howe, taking his army round to the Delaware by sea, defeated the main American army at *Brandywine* (October 1777), and occupied Philadelphia, whence Congress had to flee hurriedly. An attack by Washington was beaten off at *Germantown* ; and Washington had to take up his

winter quarters at Valley Forge, where his army suffered the extreme



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FIG. 28.—The Champlain Waterway.

of misery: if Howe had attacked it, it must have been destroyed. This side of the campaign had thus gone well for the British. But Howe had started too late, and had drawn off the forces which ought to have been advancing up the Hudson to make a junction with Burgoyne's Canadian army. Burgoyne, advancing through a thickly wooded country which lent itself to irregular backwoods fighting, had experienced many difficulties in his advance; and in October, just when Howe was winning Philadelphia, he found himself hemmed in at *Saratoga* by the levies of New England under Gates, and was compelled to surrender with his whole force.*

France Enters the War.—The capitulation of Saratoga was the turning-point of the war. It was not in itself a very grave disaster, and the British forces still held the upper hand in the main field of fighting. But it persuaded France to join in the war. A formal treaty of alliance with the United States was concluded

two months after the news of Saratoga reached France; and in

* This campaign is the subject of Bernard Shaw's play, *The Devil's Disciple*,

March 1778, France declared war against Britain. She had for some time been aiding the Americans with money and munitions, and had welcomed American privateers in her ports. She now felt that the moment had come to take her revenge for the last war. Behind France was Spain, bound to her by the Family Compact, and ready to come in at her own time. These two despotic powers, which had never granted any semblance of self-government to their own colonies, now came forward as the champions of the Americans against the mother-country which had conferred upon them the highest degree of liberty enjoyed by any peoples in the world. The entry of France into the war changed the whole character of the struggle. It became, for Britain, a life-and-death struggle against an ancient enemy.

Death of Chatham.—In this crisis Lord North, whose government had now lost the confidence of the nation, was anxious to make way for Chatham ; and if Chatham had been his old self, he might still have redeemed the situation, which was not worse than it had been in 1757. But he was now working in close alliance with the Whigs, though he differed from them profoundly. The Whigs had made up their minds that America was lost, and were for recognising its independence at once. Chatham, though eager to remove the causes of American dissatisfaction, would not consent to the disruption of the Empire. But Chatham was near his end. In April 1778, a month after the French declaration of war, he made his last speech in the House of Lords. It was in effect an attack upon the policy of his Whig friends, and an impassioned protest against "the dismemberment of this ancient and most glorious monarchy." He had to be carried out of the House after his speech, and died a few weeks later. Thus, in the crisis of her fate, Britain lost the one man who might even yet have redeemed the situation.

The conduct of the war remained in the hands of the king, and of his now discredited ministers. They showed, as we shall see, no sort of competence in the conduct of the war. But the king, great as were his defects and limitations, had one great virtue—courage ; and in the coming ordeal the courage of the nation answered to the courage of the king. It is usual to regard the later stages of the American war as a period of unmitigated humiliation. They should rather be regarded as a proof of the strength and courage of the British people even under bad leadership. For never in her history, before or since, has Britain been compelled to face so great a combination of enemies, and to face them without allies.

2. BRITANNIA CONTRA MUNDUM (1778-1782)

A Ring of Foes.—During the next four years Britain was faced by a combination of all the great naval powers, such as many had feared might follow the triumph of 1763. The intervention of France in 1778 was followed by that of Spain in 1779 and Holland in 1780, while all the northern powers—Russia, Prussia, Denmark, Sweden, and the Emperor—formed a League of Armed Neutrality, hostile to Britain. Meanwhile, in America she had to deal with the revolt of the Americans, stiffened by regular forces sent from France ; and in India her infant empire was menaced by a combination of all the great native powers, stirred up in part by French influence. She had no friends or helpers anywhere in the world. That she should have emerged from this ordeal without being entirely ruined was an achievement which, twenty years earlier, would have seemed impossible.

The War at Sea.—Her very existence in this struggle depended upon the Navy ; and the Navy did not fail her, though it was handled with gross incompetence by the First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Sandwich. Meanwhile the mercantile marine had to fight for its life. Every ship had to go armed ; almost every foreign vessel on all the seas of the world was an enemy. Hundreds of ships were captured in this world-wide struggle. But the captures of enemy ships made by British privateers were yet more numerous. This endless sea-war cannot be described in detail ; but it was going on throughout the five dreadful years, and the gallantry of the mercantile marine was an essential part of the resisting power of Britain. The Indian side of this desperate struggle must be left for later treatment ; the struggle on the seas and in America can only be baldly summarised.

Campaign of 1778.—The first result of the French entry into the war was that the British forces evacuated Philadelphia, and fell back upon New York, which continued to be the British headquarters throughout the remainder of the war. It was feared that French forces would be sent to America ; and therefore no forward movement was attempted, except the despatch of a small force to Georgia, where Savannah was occupied. This was the beginning of a new plan of attack, in which the Loyalists of the Southern States were to be made the base for a northward advance. Meanwhile everything depended upon what France was able to do with the new fleet which she had been strenuously building up since 1763. Instead

of blockading the French squadrons in their harbours, as Pitt had done during the last war, Sandwich let the French Mediterranean fleet get out of Toulon and cross the Atlantic. But it was outmanœuvred by Howe off the American coast, and departed without doing anything, to the bitter disappointment of the Americans; it then went off to the West Indies, where it captured two small islands, but was again outmanœuvred by the inferior British forces in those waters.

Intervention of Spain.—In 1779 Spain came into the war, and at once laid siege to Gibraltar. The heroic resistance of the rock-garrison, under Elliot, lasted for three years.* French and Spanish fleets—allowed to make a junction by the folly of Sandwich in failing to maintain a blockade and in scattering the British fleet in small squadrons all over the world—for a time commanded the English Channel. An invasion of England or Ireland seemed likely; and in both countries volunteer forces were hastily raised—with consequences, in Ireland, which will have to be noted later. Yet wherever the enemy attacked, he was routed—as in Jersey, which the French tried to capture; and as in Savannah, which was attacked by a French fleet and an American army. Britain was making no advance, but she was holding her own, and the Americans were rapidly losing faith in their French allies.

The Armed Neutrality: Dutch Intervention.—In 1780 Catherine II of Russia, egged on by Frederick of Prussia, formed the League of Armed Neutrality, to demand that all neutral vessels should be allowed to trade freely with belligerent ports. Britain had been using her naval strength to harass her enemies by intercepting supplies sent to them in neutral vessels. She had, in her desperate struggle, strained the laws of war at sea; she now had to fight with her strength partly crippled. In the autumn of 1780 a new enemy was added in Holland, which had been supplying stores to all the enemy belligerents; she was the most active of all the neutrals in this traffic; and when a draft treaty of alliance with the Americans was found in a captured Dutch ship (October 1780) the British Government declared war, so as to have greater freedom in trying to stamp out this traffic. The year 1780 saw, therefore, a very serious worsening in the situation.

Campaign of 1780.—Nevertheless 1780 was a year of striking

* Drinkwater's *Siege of Gibraltar* is a good contemporary narrative of this heroic episode.

British successes : after two years on the defensive, Britain began to take the initiative again. In America a big forward movement was started in the Southern States. Charleston was taken after a three-months' siege ; and Cornwallis won at *Camden* a crushing victory over the southern American army. This was a promising beginning for the projected southern campaign. On the seas Rodney,* the greatest sailor of this period, relieved Gibraltar and threw abundant supplies into the beleaguered fortress ; defeated a Spanish fleet off *Cape St. Vincent*, capturing six ships ; and then, sailing off to the West Indies, defeated a French fleet at *Dominica*, and drove it back over the Atlantic, thus securing complete command in American waters. At the end of 1780 the Americans were profoundly disheartened. They had had no help from France, with the exception of a few volunteers ; they were almost bankrupt ; many of their troops were mutinous ; and one of their best generals, Arnold, had gone over to the British side. In the autumn of 1780 the French at last sent an army to America : it ought never to have been allowed to cross the Atlantic. But the French also were distressed. They had as yet won no real success anywhere. Spain also was disheartened by her failure to make any impression upon Gibraltar. Britain was not only holding her own, but advancing. If her naval power—now greatly increased by immense activity in ship-building—had been wisely used, the issue of the war might still have been favourable.

The Critical Year 1781.—The next year, 1781, was the critical year of the struggle. Until late in the year everything seemed to be going well for Britain. Gibraltar was relieved again, and still held out ; Jersey beat off another French attack ; a dogged naval battle with the Dutch, off the *Dogger Bank*, though indecisive, practically put an end to the Dutch participation in the war ; in the West Indies Rodney captured the rich Dutch island of *St. Eustatius*, which had been the centre of the contraband traffic with America, and captured vast plunder. Cornwallis boldly pushed forward his campaign in the Southern States. He won a brilliant victory over the main American southern army at *Guildford Court-house*. In his rear, indeed, the Loyalists were gravely endangered ; but he resolved to advance boldly north into Virginia, hoping to catch Washington,

* There is a good short *Life of Rodney* by David Hannay (*English Men of Action*).

who was watching the main British forces under Clinton in New York. The plan might have succeeded if Clinton had given adequate support. But instead of doing so, Clinton (who was afraid of an attack from Washington) ordered Cornwallis to take up a defensive position on the coast, where he could be helped by the fleet. So Cornwallis reluctantly took up a position at Yorktown, on the shore of Chesapeake Bay, and waited for the fleet.

Naval Failure : Yorktown.—Meanwhile, Sandwich's suicidal failure to watch and blockade the French fleets had at last had its inevitably disastrous result. A French fleet under de Grasse had sailed unimpeded from Brest. It had gone to the West Indies, where Rodney—busy with the plunder of St. Eustatius—had not challenged it with sufficient strength. De Grasse had then sailed off to the American coast. Off the mouth of Chesapeake Bay, he met an inferior British squadron, which ought to have fought him to the death, but instead drew off. Washington, acting in conjunction with de Grasse, swiftly moved his army, and a French army co-operating with it, from the Hudson down into Virginia. Clinton, in New York, took no steps to deal with this situation until too late. And the result was that Cornwallis, beset on land by the Franco-American army, saw with despair a French and not an English fleet sailing up Chesapeake Bay. After a gallant resistance, he was forced to surrender at *Yorktown* (October 1781).

Fall of North.—This sudden and disastrous reversal of fortune—which was ultimately due to Sandwich's mishandling of the navy—put an end to the possibility of victory in America. Though British forces still held out in New York and Charleston, they had given up hope. In England the news brought a feeling of despair. It quickly led to the fall of North's government (March 1782), and the triumphant opposition of Whigs and Chathamites, who had been growing in vigour ever since 1778, had to be admitted to power by the reluctant George III. To them fell the duty of making peace ; and though George III would have been ready to carry on the struggle, the Whigs had long since made up their minds that America was lost.

"The Saints" and Gibraltar.—But the negotiations were slow, and the war still continued, at sea, though not in America. The chief scenes of fighting were the West Indies and the Mediterranean. In the West Indies* the French had captured Nevis and

* School Atlas, Plate 48.

St. Kitts, and were threatening Jamaica, and the Spaniards had taken the Bahamas, when Rodney arrived with a British fleet and inflicted upon de Grasse a crushing defeat, off the islands known as *the Saints*, near Martinique (April 1782). This victory completely re-established British naval prestige, and convinced France that nothing was to be gained by prolonging the war. Meanwhile in the Mediterranean a combined French and Spanish army had reduced Port Mahon, the chief town of *Minorca*, after a six months' siege. In September 1782, a final and desperate onslaught was made upon *Gibraltar* by an army of 40,000 and a fleet of 49 ships of the line. The garrison, who numbered 7,000, beat off all attacks; and when peace was made (February 1783) the flag was still flying on the Rock.

3. CONSEQUENCES OF THE AMERICAN WAR

The Terms of Peace.—The peace which concluded this confused and ill-fought war had two aspects. On the one hand, by a treaty signed in November 1782, Britain recognised the independence of the thirteen colonies,* and ceded to them the whole vast territory east of the Mississippi, except Florida, which was claimed by Spain. Canada remained British by her own choice, though the line of demarcation was not clearly drawn. On the other hand, the treaties with France, Spain, and Holland, concluded in 1783, made very little change. Spain regained Florida, which she had lost in 1763, and *Minorca*, which she had lost in 1713; France gained the West Indian island of St. Lucia, and the West African district of Senegal, conquered from her in 1763.

Prelude to the French Revolution.—What were the effects of this war? Contemporary opinion thought that the great days of British power were at an end, but the next few years were to provide a forcible contradiction of this view. France seemed to have re-established her prestige. In reality, she had gained nothing, and almost ruined herself. The financial strain of this war brought her to the verge of bankruptcy, and was the direct cause of the summons of the States-General in 1789, which began the French Revolution. In another way, also, the French Revolution was directly influenced by the American Revolution. French soldiers who had fought in America came back filled with democratic ideas,

* School Atlas, Plate 51.

which reinforced the teachings of Rousseau, then prevalent in France. And, having seen a wide diffusion of prosperity in America, they leaped to the conclusion that democracy brought material well-being. The American Revolution made the French Revolution inevitable.

Organisation of the United States.—But the main consequence of the war was the creation of the United States as a powerful free republic in the New World, unhampered by the feudal traditions of Europe. The essential institutions of this new State were those which it derived from the mother-country. The English common law still ruled American life; and none of the States made any material change in the system of government they had received from the mother-country, apart from the substitution of an elected for a nominated Governor. It was found, however, to be no easy matter to work out a common system of government to take the place of the authority of the British Crown and Parliament. The infant federation almost broke down in face of the jealousies of the various States and their unwillingness to submit to any common authority: these were the very difficulties which had mainly caused the quarrel with the mother-country. There were five years of discussion before the scheme of a federal constitution was agreed upon by a Convention in 1787; and the individual States would only allow definite and limited powers to the new central authority. The system which was eventually set up was closely imitated from that of Britain. There was a legislature of two houses, and a President who was endowed with just the powers which George III had claimed and wielded during the government of Lord North: he chose his own ministers, and (within defined limits) was not responsible to Congress for the way in which he used his powers. Because it was based upon a sort of treaty between thirteen independent States, the new constitution was the most rigid, and the most difficult to alter, that has ever controlled the affairs of a great State. But it was framed with such wisdom that it has stood the strain of nearly a century and a half, and has fitted the needs of a community that has grown to be the biggest and richest of the world's societies.

4. THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT IN IRELAND

The American Revolution brought to a head a movement of national protest which had been gradually gaining force in Ireland since the beginning of the reign of George III.

Irish Grievances.—Every section of the Irish people had its grievances. The greatest and the most bitter were, of course, those of the Catholic majority, who were excluded from Parliament and from all public offices, and subjected to all the tyrannical restrictions of the penal code ; the great mass of Catholics were also sunk in the deepest penury. But the Catholics were almost voiceless, so effective was the system of persecution. The Presbyterians of the North, who formed a majority of the Protestants, also had their grievances : they, almost equally with the Catholics, were excluded from public life. Even the dominant Anglican minority, who formed about one-twelfth of the population, had grievances, which they shared with the rest of the nation. In the first place, Ireland was subject to trade restrictions more severe than those of America, and far more completely enforced. In the second place, the Irish Parliament had been reduced to impotence. The English Parliament claimed the right of legislating over its head. It could not pass any measure which had not previously been approved by the English Privy Council. There was no means of bringing a Parliament to an end, or getting a fresh election, save the death of the king : one Parliament had sat throughout the thirty-three years of George II's reign. There was in Ireland no Mutiny Act, to secure the control of Parliament over the army ; no security of tenure for judges ; not even a *Habeas Corpus* Act. And all Irish offices were filled by the English Government, and used for the purpose of maintaining an obsequious majority in the Irish Parliament. In protesting against these evils, the Anglican minority was asserting not only its own grievances, but those of all Ireland. The Irish Nationalist movement was actually started by the ruling Anglican minority.

Beginning of Opposition.—Protests against this system had begun early in George III's reign. They took two forms. On the one hand, there were a number of agrarian outrages, by gangs who called themselves "Whiteboys," "Oakboys," or "Steelboys" : these were the outcome of acute economic distress, and they pointed to a deep-seated evil that needed attention ; but as yet they led to nothing. On the other hand, an opposition arose in Parliament, which demanded remedies for the various political evils already described. They achieved only one modest success : an *Octennial Act*, limiting the duration of Irish Parliaments to eight years, was passed in 1768.

Grattan as Leader.—The dispute between England and the

American colonies gave new force to this movement of opposition. The grievances of the Americans, both in regard to trade restrictions and in regard to political subordination, were very like the grievances of the Irish, though far less serious. Among the Presbyterians of Ulster, especially, sympathy with the Americans was strong. It happened that the first election under the Octennial Act fell in 1776—the year of the American Declaration of Independence. In the new Parliament the opposition was far stronger than it had been, and it found a leader in Henry Grattan,* perhaps the greatest British orator in that age of great orators. Under Grattan's leadership the opposition set before itself two main objects—the removal of trade disabilities, and the withdrawal of the existing restrictions on the freedom of action of the Irish Parliament. Grattan also favoured relief for the Catholics; but here many of his followers parted company with him. Under the pressure of the war, Lord North was brought to assent to various concessions. The first measure of relief for the Irish Catholics (a very modest measure) was passed in 1778. In the same year North asked the English Parliament to remove many of the restrictions on Irish trade; but here his docile majority would not follow him, and his proposals were almost destroyed.

The Volunteers.—In the next year, 1779, came the threat of an invasion, when the fleets of France and Spain dominated the English Channel. Large forces of volunteers were raised: within a year Ireland produced 40,000 volunteers. The creation of these volunteer corps changed the political situation. They became, insensibly, political discussion clubs, and the demand for reform gained a new force. The volunteers passed resolutions demanding freedom of trade, and, in imitation of the Americans, threatened to boycott British goods unless their demands were conceded. Under this pressure North obtained from the English Parliament, in 1779 and 1780, sweeping measures for the freeing of Irish trade. Practically all that Scotland had gained through the Union was thus granted to Ireland without a Union. There was, indeed, some talk in these years of proposing an Irish Union; but it was useless, because (as the Lord-Lieutenant reported) “national feeling would not hear of it.” The Irish—Anglicans and Presbyterians even more than Catholics—were aiming at national freedom.

* There is a short Life of Grattan in Lecky's *Leaders of Irish Opinion*.

Demand for Legislative Independence.—Economic freedom having been gained, the next step was legislative independence. In 1780 Grattan introduced into the Irish Parliament what was alarmingly called a Declaration of Independence. Grattan was perfectly loyal to the English connection. But he had set his face towards freeing the Irish Parliament from its subordination. The Declaration was not pressed, but the sentiment of the Irish Parliament was in its favour. And presently the volunteers, whose demands had secured liberty of trade, took up the cry. By 1781 their numbers had risen to 80,000, and they had worked out a national organisation for themselves. So formidable a body could not be disregarded. In 1782 the volunteers of Ulster held a general congress at *Dungannon*, where they met in a Protestant church, passed resolutions asserting the sole right of the Irish Parliament to make laws for Ireland, and appointed a committee to carry on the agitation. They went on—and this, coming from a purely Protestant gathering, was very significant—to declare their sympathy with the Roman Catholics, and their belief in freedom of conscience. Immediately after the *Dungannon* conference, Grattan moved in Parliament an address to the king asserting the legislative independence of Ireland. Almost the whole nation was in agreement. Grand juries even refused to enforce British laws.

Legislative Independence Secured.—Within a month of the *Dungannon* Conference, Lord North's government came to an end in England; and the Whigs, who had proclaimed their sympathy with the Irish movement, were in power. They accepted the situation; and in 1782 the Declaratory Act of 1719 (which asserted the power of the English Parliament to legislate for Ireland) was repealed, and the necessity for previous approval of Irish Bills by the Privy Council, embodied in Poyning's Acts, was done away with. Ireland seemed to have obtained complete legislative independence. Apart from the executive power of the Crown, she was now, in theory, bound by no constitutional link to England, and might (like Scotland before the Union) embark upon a policy wholly incompatible with that of the sister State. Next to the independence of the United States themselves, this was the most remarkable result of the American struggle. It seemed as if not merely the British Empire but the British Islands were dissolving into disunity.

5. THE BREAKDOWN OF GEORGE III'S SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

Besides transforming the situation in Ireland, the American War brought about a great change in British politics. It caused the downfall of George III's system of government, and the restoration of cabinet government. It also led to a marked growth of the demand for constitutional reform.

The Two Oppositions.—There were two distinct wings of the opposition. On the one hand, there were the Old Whigs, whose chief inspirer was Burke, but whose strength had been greatly increased when the brilliant, reckless and beloved Charles Fox joined them in 1774. They had come to be violent supporters of the American cause: Fox even came to the House of Commons dressed in the American colours. In home affairs their supreme aim was to overthrow the power which the king had built up, and to restore the old Whig methods. The other wing consisted of the followers of Chatham, led, after his death, by Lord Shelburne, a very able man, and something of a Radical; the Chathamites, though they sympathised with the Americans, hated the idea of recognising the independence of America, which the Whigs were eager to do. There was no real unity between these two sections, though they acted together.

Growing Opposition.—Until 1777 the king's system seemed to be secure, and the opposition was quiescent. But after the disasters of that year and the intervention of France, the credit of the Government declined, and the opposition became more vigorous. In 1778 and 1779 the Whigs put forth their proposals for destroying the sources of the king's power by taking out of his hands the means of buying a majority in the House of Commons—the means which the Whigs themselves had used in the days of their greatness. One of these was the abolition of needless offices held by the "placemen" in the House: it was known as "economical reform." Another was the disfranchisement of revenue officers, who controlled the elections in some boroughs; a third was the exclusion of contractors from Parliament—giving contracts to members was one of North's methods of bribery.

The Gordon Riots.—The political contest became acute in 1780, which was a year of intense excitement. In that year London was disgraced by anti-Catholic riots, in protest against an Act for the relief of English Catholics which had been passed in 1778. The

leader of the protest was a half-mad fanatic, Lord George Gordon. For some days London was in the hands of the rioters, and the hidden under-world of the great city was stirred up : only the king had the courage needed to suppress this ugly outburst.* The Gordon Riots were unimportant in themselves ; but they were a sign of the general excitement and a proof of the existence of ugly social conditions.

Reform Movements.—More important were the political movements of 1780. There was a general election in that year, and the new House of Commons was much less favourable to the king than its predecessor. Though it would not pass the Whigs' Bills, it adopted a resolution "that the power of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished"—an ominous sign of revolt. And outside Parliament a popular agitation began, the like of which had never been seen before. Great county meetings were held, first in Yorkshire and then in other counties, to demand "economical reform." And they did not stop here. They went on to demand parliamentary reform, though the Whigs disliked this extension of the programme ; and a powerful Society for Constitutional Information was founded to carry on propaganda work for parliamentary reform throughout the country. Thus a remarkable constitutional movement was afoot in England.

The Rockingham Ministry.—When Lord North fell in 1782, the opportunity for overthrowing the king's system of government had arrived. George III had to accept a ministry in which Whigs and Chathamites were combined under the leadership of Lord Rockingham, and Charles Fox and Lord Shelburne, as Secretaries of State, were responsible for the peace negotiations. From the first they found it impossible to work together, and a split between the two sections of the opposition was obviously coming. But before it came, the Whig programme of *Economical Reform* was carried into law, the main Bill being in the charge of Burke. The number of sinecure posts and places was enormously cut down ; revenue officers were disfranchised ; and contractors were excluded from Parliament. The result was that it was no longer possible for any government to obtain a majority by the corrupt methods which had been habitually employed ever since 1714, and, indeed, ever since 1660. This implied a great change, and it cut away the foundations of the personal

* Dickens's *Barnaby Rudge* deals with this episode.

power which George III had built up by using the methods of Walpole. The parliamentary reformers, now numerous throughout the country, hoped that the rotten and pocket boroughs would next be attacked. But this was no part of the Whig programme, though Shelburne and the Chathamites were in favour of it ; for the Whig magnates owned many rotten boroughs.

The Shelburne Ministry.—In 1782 Lord Rockingham died, and at once the Government split in two. Shelburne would not serve under Fox, nor Fox under Shelburne. George III observed the split with satisfaction ; and invited Shelburne to form a ministry. In this new government the Chancellorship of the Exchequer was given to a boy of twenty-three—William Pitt the younger,* son of the great Chatham, who had entered Parliament in 1780. He had already made a name for himself by taking up the cause of parliamentary reform. But Shelburne's ministry had no majority in the House of Commons—especially now that so many "places" had been abolished. He could count on about 140 votes, while Fox had about 90, and some 120 Tories recognised North as their leader.

The Coalition of Fox and North.—It seemed impossible that Fox and North, who had been denouncing one another for nine years, could combine, and incredible that North, who had so long been George III's obedient instrument, would turn against the king. But the unlikely happened. Fox and North formed a Coalition, defeated the Government, and forced the king to accept them as ministers. This was the first occasion upon which a majority of the House of Commons, by a definite vote, compelled the king to accept a particular ministry. The Coalition of Fox and North shocked public opinion, and deeply discredited its authors. It did not last long. Its only important measure was an India Bill, which proposed that all the patronage of the East India Company should in future be administered by a Commission to be appointed in the first instance by the House of Commons. This laid Fox open to the charge that, having destroyed the king's system of corruption, he was creating a new system of corruption under his own control. The House of Lords (stimulated by the king) threw out the Bill ; whereupon the king contemptuously dismissed the ministry, and invited

* There is a very good short Life of Pitt by Lord Rosebery (Twelve English Statesmen).

young Pitt, an untried man of twenty-four, and the darling of the parliamentary reformers, to become Prime Minister.

Pitt's Ministry : the Election of 1784.—With sublime self-confidence, Pitt accepted the charge. He had no majority, and all the most famous orators in the House of Commons were arrayed against him. For three months he carried on single-handed, refusing to resign ; then he obtained a dissolution. In the election which followed, a keener interest was taken by the whole country than in any previous election of the eighteenth century. Pitt's famous name helped him ; the Coalition was a millstone round the necks of its authors ; the enthusiastic parliamentary reformers used every effort to secure a victory for their hero. And the result was that Pitt was returned by an overwhelming majority, supported by a personal vote of confidence from the nation which made him more independent of the borough-mongers, and also more independent of the king, than any previous minister. The election of 1784 was, indeed, the first election in modern history which turned on a vote of confidence or no confidence in a particular political leader. It therefore marked a very important stage in the development of parliamentary government ; and with it a new era opened.

Restoration of the Party System.—George III, at the beginning of his reign, had set out to destroy the party system, and to restore the independent authority of the Crown. He had overthrown the Whig oligarchy by using its own weapons, and had for a time made himself the effective head of Government. He had succeeded, also, in preventing a restoration of Whig power. But the old methods of corruption which both he and the Whigs had used had now been largely destroyed. On the other hand, he had not succeeded in destroying the party system. The Whig party remained, weakened but purified, no longer broken up into cliques, and giving a willing loyalty to an able leader, Charles Fox. On the other side a new party had come into being, partly drawn from the remnants of the old Tories, partly recruited from George III's own adherents, partly composed of the followers of Chatham, who had always called himself a Whig. They also were bound together by personal loyalty to a leader, William Pitt—the founder of what may be called a new Tory party. Pitt and Fox henceforward faced one another as eternal rivals on the two sides of the House. They were the first of the long series of rival leaders whose opposition has played so great a part in British politics. From 1784 onwards the aspect of the House

of Commons, divided between two definite parties, was what it was to be during the course of the nineteenth century. The sharp rivalry of two organised parties, which had scarcely existed since 1714, had become the dominant fact in British politics.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BRITISH POWER IN INDIA (1740-1785)

I. INDIA IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

THE series of wars which have been outlined in the last four chapters had their counterpart in distant India, where they led to the establishment of an amazing and undesigned British empire. But the course of events in India was mainly governed by conditions in India itself ; and for that reason it is best treated as a separate story.

India under the Moguls.—When the traders of the East India Company first came to India at the beginning of the seventeenth century, they found the greater part of that vast sub-continent under the rule of a powerful and consolidated government, that of the Mogul Empire, with its capital at Delhi. Founded by Baber (a contemporary of Henry VIII) and consolidated by Akbar (a contemporary of Elizabeth), the Mogul Empire was at the height of its splendour in the seventeenth century*—the period when the splendid palaces and mosques of Delhi and Agra were erected. It was a Mohammedan power, while the mass of its subjects were Hindus ; Mohammedan rulers had in fact governed the greater part of India since the twelfth century. The Mogul Empire included the whole of the Indus and Ganges valleys. In southern India, which has always had a separate history from the north, there were three minor Mohammedan States, while on the south-east coast (the Carnatic) there were a number of small Hindu principalities. Even under the Moguls India was never united : it had never been united in all its history. Moreover, it had always been governed by foreign conquerors, mostly (like the Moguls) invaders from the north-west.

* There is a map of India under the Moguls in the larger Atlas, Plate 304.

This fact, together with the innumerable varieties of race, language and caste by which the Indian peoples were divided, had prevented the upgrowth in India of any sentiment of nationality or patriotism. This fundamental fact explains the ease with which the Indians accepted foreign rule, and even supplied the soldiery by which this rule was established.

Fall of the Mogul Empire.—So long as India was governed by powerful native States, it was impossible for a body of traders to dream of obtaining political power. But at the beginning of the eighteenth century India fell into a condition of confusion. The Mogul Emperor Aurangzib (who was contemporary with Charles II and William III) had set himself to extend his dominions over the south. He had overthrown the existing powers of the south, and set up a great viceroyalty for the whole of the Deccan (the southern plateau) with its capital at Hyderabad, near the diamond mines of Golconda. But he had overstrained his power. The warlike robber clans of the Marathas (on the west coast, behind Bombay) had proved unconquerable, and their elusive horsemen had raided the whole country. When Aurangzib died, in 1707, the Mogul Empire was already undermined; it collapsed during the next generation. Afghans raided the north through the Khyber Pass, even sacking Delhi in 1739; while the Maratha chieftains extended their raids over every part of the country, and began to build up a formidable empire, or confederacy of States, of which the head was the prince known as the Peshwa, with his capital at Poona. In 1750 it seemed as if the future supremacy of India lay between the Afghans and the Marathas.

India in the Eighteenth Century.—Meanwhile the nominal viceroys of the Mogul made themselves independent in Bengal, in Oudh and in Hyderabad; the Sikhs (a warlike religious sect in the north-west) began to create a separate power in the Punjab; and many petty rajas set up as sovereign princes. The Mogul, still recognised as suzerain, was penned up in impotence in his gorgeous palace at Delhi. In this chaos it was easy for adventurers to carve out States for themselves: one such was Hyder Ali,* an able and ruthless Mohammedan soldier, who made himself master of the Hindu State of Mysore, in the south, in 1761. What Hyder Ali did, it was equally possible for the European traders to do, once the

* There is a short Life of Hyder Ali by L. B. Bowring (Rulers of India).

idea occurred to them. Amid the chaos, they had already fortified their stations, and raised forces of Indian soldiers—*sepoys*—whom they trained in the European fashion; and they had already discovered that small forces of European-trained troops could defeat vastly superior numbers of the ill-organised Indian levies.

2. THE FIRST STAGE: DUPLEIX AND CLIVE IN THE CARNATIC

The Schemes of Dupleix.—The first European to whom the idea of using this opportunity occurred was François Dupleix,* who was governor in succession of the French trading-stations at Chandernagore (Bengal) and Pondicherry (near Madras). The French Company, though active, had nothing like the trade of the English Company. Dupleix conceived the notion that if he could establish his influence at the native courts, the English might be put at a disadvantage, or even driven out. Another enterprising Frenchman was at hand to help—Labourdonnais, Governor of the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean, who had with immense energy built up a fleet in anticipation of the coming struggle with the English. Both Dupleix and Labourdonnais were ready for action in 1740, when the Austrian succession war began; and their opportunity came when, in 1744, formal war was declared between France and Britain.† They made an onslaught on the British station at Madras, and captured it (1746); the British were left with only the little Fort St. David. When a British fleet came out and attacked Pondicherry without success, the prestige of the French rose high in Southern India.

French Influence in Southern India.—In 1748, however, by the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, Madras had to be handed back to the British East India Company. Dupleix was disappointed; but he could still make use of the prestige which he had acquired, and the military strength which he had built up. He resolved to throw himself into Indian politics. He put up a French protégé as a claimant for the throne of the Carnatic—the district in which both Madras and Pondicherry lay—hoping to establish his influence so as to get a monopoly of trade. The British traders, fearing this consequence, were constrained to support a rival claimant, Mohammed

* There is a short Life of Dupleix by G. B. Malleson (Rulers of India).

† For the remainder of this Chapter, see School Atlas, Plate 53a.

Ali. But they were less energetic than Dupleix: the French protégé was soon master of the Carnatic, and by 1750 Mohammed Ali was holding out with difficulty in the fortress of Trichinopoly. Nor was this the end of Dupleix's success. He had also taken up the cause of a claimant to the far greater throne of Hyderabad, of which the Carnatic was a vassal-state. Here also he was successful; and his protégé, now Nizam of Hyderabad, not only heaped honours upon him, but engaged an army, officered by Frenchmen, to defend



FIG. 29.—India under Clive and Warren Hastings.

him. This army, commanded by the Marquis de Bussy, in practice controlled the government of Hyderabad; and a little later (1755) the Nizam transferred to the French an extensive province known as the Northern Circars, to pay for the maintenance of Bussy's army. Thus Dupleix had achieved an extraordinary success. He dominated Southern India, and the British Company seemed to be at his mercy.

Clive at Arcot.—This was the situation in 1751, and it was highly perturbing to the British: they would be ruined unless they were able, at the least, to restore the power of Mohammed Ali;

and Mohammed Ali was locked up in Trichinopoly, besieged by French and Indian forces against which the small available British contingents could do nothing. At this crisis Robert Clive,* an adventurous young clerk in the Company's service who hated his desk, made a daring suggestion, which a new governor, Thomas Saunders, had the courage to adopt. Clive suggested that, while the French and Indian troops were occupied at Trichinopoly, he should make a raid on Arcot, the capital of the Carnatic. He did so with 500 men, captured the city, stood a siege by 10,000 men for fifty days, and then sallied forth and beat them in the open; an incredible achievement, which not only drew off the besiegers from Trichinopoly, but raised British prestige to the highest point. Next year (1752) Trichinopoly was relieved, Mohammed Ali was enthroned at Arcot, and the British side was triumphant, at any rate in the Carnatic. The French, however, still had the best of the position, so long as they were dominant at Hyderabad. But in 1754 the French East India Company, taking alarm at the neglect of trade for costly wars, recalled Dupleix in disgrace, and put a stop to all fighting. By doing so they sacrificed their chance of winning an empire in India.

3. SECOND STAGE : MASTERY IN BENGAL AND THE DEFEAT OF LALLY

The Seven Years' War in India.—In the very next year, 1755, war began between France and Britain in America, and in 1756 the Seven Years' War opened. The French Government sent out a fleet and an army under Count Lally, an exiled Irishman, to co-operate with Bussy in establishing French supremacy. But the British Government, for once taking time by the forelock, had already sent out Clive (who had meanwhile gone home) with a small force and a squadron of six ships under Admiral Watson. Lally did not reach India until 1758. Clive arrived in 1756. He had no sooner reached Madras (which was expected to be the chief scene of fighting) than he was sent hurrying north by terrible news from Bengal.

The Black Hole of Calcutta.—The English station at

* Clive is the subject of one of Macaulay's most brilliant essays. There are also short Lives of him by Sir Charles Wilson (*English Men of Action*) and by G. B. Mallison (*Rulers of India*).

Calcutta, on the Hooghly, had long enjoyed exceptional prosperity : it was already, indeed, the richest trading-station in India. Its wealth invited attack. In 1756 a new Nawab succeeded to the throne of Bengal—a vicious and degenerate youth named Siraj-uddaula. He suddenly attacked Calcutta, drove most of the residents to take refuge on a small island in the Hooghly, shut up 146 who remained in a horrible cell known as the Black Hole, where 123 of them were suffocated during a June night ; and then drove the survivors in chains to his capital of Murshidabad.

The Battle of Plassey.—This outrage had to be avenged. Clive with his little force reached Bengal in December 1756, recaptured Calcutta in January 1757, and forced Siraj-uddaula to promise restitution. But the Nawab had no intention of fulfilling his promise. He started negotiations with the French for a combined attack upon the British ; whereupon Clive seized the French station of Chandernagore. Clive also opened a secret intrigue with some of Siraj-uddaula's discontented subjects, notably his treasurer, Mir Jafar, who agreed to desert the Nawab, and to pay vast sums to the British if he was placed upon the throne. In June 1757, at *Plassey*, Siraj-uddaula's huge undisciplined host was defeated by Clive's army of 3,000 men. Mir Jafar became Nawab ; his treasury was emptied to satisfy his allies ; and henceforth he was a mere puppet, and the Company was the real ruler of Bengal. The district immediately behind Calcutta was handed over to the direct administration of the Company.*

Lally in India.—In the next year—too late—Lally and his French army landed in Southern India, and, calling in Bussy's force, made an attack upon Madras. Madras was saved by the opportune arrival of a British fleet ; and in Bussy's absence Clive sent a force from Bengal to occupy the French province of the Northern Circars (1758). Thereupon the Nizam of Hyderabad deserted his French allies, and came over to the British side. Lally still fought gallantly in a difficult campaign ; but in January 1760, he was decisively defeated at *Wandewash*, by Sir Eyre Coote, one of Clive's men from Bengal. In 1761 Pondicherry was captured, and the dream of a French empire in India was finally dissipated. Meanwhile, in Bengal, an attack upon the British power by the neighbouring State of Oudh had been beaten off at *Patna* (1758). By 1760 the Com-

* School Atlas, plate 53A.

pany's mastery in Bengal was secure, and Clive returned home, having, in three years, created an empire. He took with him an immense fortune, from the Nawab's treasures. He could have taken what he liked ; and, as he afterwards said, he was "surprised at his own moderation."

4. ENGLISH MISGOVERNMENT IN BENGAL : THE AGREEMENT OF 1765

Power without Responsibility.—It was a very anomalous power which had thus been established. The East India Company had not annexed any territory, or assumed any responsibility for government. But in two regions as big as European countries—Bengal and the Carnatic—the native rulers were absolutely dependent upon it, and dared not resist any demands of its servants. The Company's agents—seven thousand miles away from any authority that could control them—enjoyed almost absolute power without any responsibility. Such a situation is always dangerous ; it was doubly dangerous when the power was wielded by men who had no permanent interest in the country they controlled, and whose sole aim was to make fortunes as rapidly as possible in order that they might escape from their banishment and return to England. Under these conditions the British power in Bengal proved, during the next few years, to be nothing but a curse. The Company's servants exacted huge gifts from the Nawab and his officers. They refused to pay dues on their private trade, thus submitting the Indian traders to grossly unfair competition. Everywhere they behaved as masters, but they took none of the responsibility of masters. The Indian system of government was in any case inefficient ; its inefficiency was increased in these conditions.

Mir Jafar and Mir Kasim.—In 1760 the Company's servants deposed Mir Jafar, and enthroned his son-in-law, Mir Kasim, exacting from him immense gifts. He was also made to transfer the three districts of Burdwan, Midnapur, and Chittagong,* to pay the costs of the Company's army ; these were (except the Calcutta district) the first districts brought under direct British administration. Mir Kasim turned out to be a vigorous and able ruler. But the Company's servants were alarmed by his efficiency,

* School Atlas, Plate 536.

especially when he abolished trade dues in order to put the Indian traders on a level with the foreigners. They actually insisted that the duties should be reimposed, in order to preserve their unfair advantage. The Governor, Vansittart, and young Warren Hastings,* who was also a member of the Company's Council, tried to support the reforming Nawab. But they were overridden by their colleagues. Mir Kasim was driven into revolt (1763) and Vansittart and Hastings returned in disgust to England. But the rebellious Nawab was easily defeated. He took refuge with the powerful neighbouring Nawab of Oudh, with whom the impotent Mogul Emperor, banished from Delhi by the Marathas, was then dwelling. The Nawab of Oudh thereupon invaded Bengal. He was utterly defeated at *Buxar* (1764); and now Oudh, as well as Bengal, seemed to lie at the mercy of the Company.

The Settlement of 1765.—Meanwhile the directors of the Company at home had taken alarm at the reports which were reaching them regarding the condition of affairs in India. In 1765 they sent out Clive once more, to restore order and decent government. Clive arrived just after the Battle of Buxar, which gave him an opportunity of making a new settlement. The new arrangements which he made, by treaties with the Mogul and with Oudh, mark a definite stage in the development of British power. He made an alliance with Oudh, which lasted for nearly a hundred years. He took the Mogul under the protection of the Company, providing him with a territory by cutting off certain lands from Oudh, and promising him a large annual tribute from Bengal: the Mogul, powerless as he was, was a useful protégé, because his *firman*s or grants gave a legal colour to whatever his masters wanted to do. In return for these promises, Clive obtained from the Mogul the *Diwani*, or right of collecting the revenue, in Bengal, and this put the Company's position on a new footing. In theory the Nawab of Bengal was now responsible for the conduct of administration, while the Company was responsible for the collection of all the revenues of the country; after paying the Mogul's tribute, and a fixed allowance to the Nawab for the expenses of government, it would be entitled to keep the balance for itself.

* Macaulay's brilliant essay on Warren Hastings is grossly unjust to that great man. It should be corrected by the short Life by L. J. Trotter (*Rulers of India*).

The System of Dual Government.—This arrangement was hailed in England as ensuring to the Company a vast income, quite apart from its trade profits ; and Charles Townshend, Chancellor of the Exchequer in Chatham's non-party government, demanded a share of the plunder, in the form of an annual payment of £400,000 to the British Treasury (1767). In reality all the revenues of Bengal (which had been greatly disorganised by the confusions of the last few years) were needed for the government of Bengal. The Company never made any margin of profit. From the first, Clive's elaborate system of "dual government" did not work. The Company never attempted to collect the revenue itself : it let out the job to Mohammed Reza Khan, an Indian statesman, who was carrying on the government on behalf of the new Nawab, an infant. Mohammed Reza Khan, in fact, carried on the whole work of government, subject always to the dictation of the Company's servants ; and as he had neither power nor prestige, the Government became more and more inefficient, and the revenue steadily shrank.

Disorganisation of the Company.—The misconduct of the Company's servants continued. They grew rich, and returned to England with huge fortunes, and raised the price of pocket boroughs by their eagerness to get into Parliament—greatly to the annoyance of English politicians. Disgust at the conduct of these "nabobs," as they were called, had a good deal to do with awakening the conscience of England about what was going on in Bengal. In 1770 there was a terrible famine in Bengal. One-third of the population died. Yet it was reported in England that the Company's servants were making fortunes out of the sufferings of the starving population by speculating in foodstuffs. And, while the Company's servants gained wealth, the Company itself, despite all its conquests, was on the verge of bankruptcy. In 1769 the adventurer Hyder Ali, of Mysore, invaded the Carnatic, devastating and plundering ; and the cost of sending armies from Bengal to resist him completed the Company's undoing. Instead of paying £400,000 to the British Treasury, they had to borrow money from Government.

5. THE BEGINNING OF REFORM

Parliament Intervenes.—It was by this time obvious that the British Government must take some action, and put the affairs of the Company in order. The British name was being disgraced

in the East, and the empire which Clive had won so easily was being imperilled. Two parliamentary committees investigated the condition of affairs in India, and drew up suggestions for reform. The task of reform fell to Lord North, who thus had to tackle a problem of unprecedented difficulty. In the first instance, to relieve the Company's immediate distress, North allowed them to export their tea direct to America; this did no good, however, because it led to the Boston tea-party. But something much more drastic was necessary; and in the *Regulating Act* (1773) North made the first attempt to define the future government of British India.

North's Regulating Act.—This Act contained four main provisions. The first was that the East India Company must communicate its Indian dispatches to Government: Government did not yet take any definite powers of control, but its influence was bound to have weight. The second was the establishment of a Supreme Court, staffed by English judges, which was to be set up in Calcutta to do justice between the Indians and the high-handed officers of the Company. The third was the conferment upon the Governor of Bengal for the time being of certain powers of control over the Governors of Madras and Bombay, with the title of Governor-General. The fourth, and the most important, was the establishment of a small governing council of five, including the Governor-General; each of the members of the Council to have equal voting rights. Of the five, who were nominated in England, three had seen no service in India, and would therefore (it was hoped) be exempt from the temptations which beset the Company's servants. They were all to be paid high salaries.

It is obvious that this scheme was inspired by the best intentions. But it broke down completely, for reasons which will be seen in the sequel. Nevertheless it was important as the first step towards the assumption of responsibility for the government of the British provinces in India by the Government and Parliament of the home country.

Warren Hastings appointed Governor.—Meanwhile the directors of the Company had taken steps to bring about reform on their own account. In 1771 they had appointed Warren Hastings—who had passed through the most troubled years in Bengal with clean hands—as Governor of Bengal, with instructions to carry out a thorough reform of the whole system. This gave his opportunity to a remarkable man, whose work was to earn for him a place among

the greatest of Englishmen. Fortunately Hastings had two clear years as Governor before the new Councillors appointed under the Act came out ; for they did not reach Calcutta until 1774. In these two years he carried out reforms which transformed the British power from a curse to a blessing. Unlike Clive, Hastings made no conquests, though he was later to be involved in hard fighting. But his constructive work was of such a character as to make him the second founder of the British Empire in India ; it alone saved the empire which Clive had won from utter and complete ruin.

6. THE WORK OF WARREN HASTINGS (1772-1776)

Assumption of Responsibility.—To begin with, Hastings swept away Clive's unreal and unworkable "dual government." He pensioned off the Nawab, and assumed direct responsibility for the government, transferring the administration to Calcutta. He appointed collectors for each of the "districts" (equivalent to large counties) of Bengal, and made them responsible not only for collecting the revenues but for supervising the administration of justice and the maintenance of order. He got Hindu and Mohammedan scholars to define the principles of the two systems of law, and set up district courts and an appeal court. He started a revision of the system of land-revenue (the chief source of revenue in all Indian States), and made a new assessment. All this work had to be done in a hurry, because everything was in chaos ; and it had to be done with the men who were available—the same men who had been abusing their irresponsible power. Nobody knew better than Hastings that he had only made a beginning, and that his first arrangements were full of defects. But he had laid the foundations of a workmanlike system of law and government, and upon these foundations all the later work was built.

Treaty with Oudh.—He also set himself to establish sound relations with the native powers of India. The Marathas were both formidable and aggressive. They had made themselves masters of the Mogul, who had returned to Delhi, and were actually claiming that the tribute for Bengal which Clive had promised to the Mogul should be paid to them. They were also threatening Oudh, the Company's ally, and were in league with the Rohillas, a band of Afghan conquerors who had recently settled to the north of Oudh. If Oudh was conquered, Bengal would be seriously menaced.

Hastings made a new treaty with Oudh which was the model for the long series of later treaties between the Company and the native States. By this treaty, a British force of sepoy's was lent to the Nawab of Oudh, on condition that he paid their cost ; and Hastings allowed these troops to be used to conquer the Rohillas, thus making Oudh safe on the North. The Nawab of Oudh treated the Rohillas cruelly, and this was afterwards made a ground of attack against Hastings. But these arrangements undoubtedly added to the safety of Bengal. Hastings also refused to pay the Mogul's tribute, which would only go to the Marathas—thus saving £260,000 a year which was badly needed for the improvement of the administration of Bengal.

The New Council.—In two years Hastings had worked miracles ; and although his new system was still far from perfect, it was already better than anything Bengal had known. The officers of the Company, when definite responsibilities were imposed upon them under a strict but understanding chief, nearly all rose to the challenge. But all this constructive work was interrupted by the arrival of the new Members of Council, and the new Judges of the Supreme Court. With both, but especially with the Council, Hastings from the first found himself involved in great difficulties.

Attack on Hastings.—The members of the Council—inspired by their junior member, Philip Francis, a venomous person of great ability who was probably the author of the *Letters of Junius*—came out with the notion that all the servants of the Company were scoundrels, and that Hastings as the chief among them must be the worst. On the day of their landing they declared war against him. Having a majority of three to two, they were able to override him in everything. While he laboured to keep the administration going, they condemned all his work since 1772, tried to restore the system of dual government, cancelled his treaty with Oudh, imposed on that State a new treaty which reduced it to bankruptcy, and forced the Vizier of Oudh to allow his mother and grandmother (the Begums) to seize the State treasure on the pretext of a will by the late Vizier which was never produced. They invited charges against the Governor-General, and heard them at his own Council. The most serious charges came from Nuncomar, a Hindu intriguer of bad character whom Hastings had refused to employ. While these charges were under consideration, Nuncomar was charged before the Supreme Court with forgery by an Indian whom he had defrauded, and was found guilty and hanged. This was later made

the ground of a charge that Hastings had conspired with the Chief Justice to commit a judicial murder ; but if so, the other judges and the whole of the jury must have been in the conspiracy. This state of things lasted for two years ; but in 1776 one of the three members died, and Hastings regained power by the use of his casting-vote as chairman.

The Supreme Court.—There were difficulties also with the Supreme Court. Its English judges, administering English law, claimed to override the native courts which Hastings had set up, and which administered Indian law. For a time the whole system was reduced to confusion, until in 1780 Hastings found a way out of the difficulty by appointing the Chief Justice, Sir Elijah Impey, to be also head of the appeal court of the native system, and asking him to draw up rules to govern the relations of all the courts. These rules were the foundation of the later system. Obviously the whole system devised by the Act of 1773 was unworkable.

7. A WAR FOR EXISTENCE

Anti-British League in India.—It was fortunate that Hastings had recovered his power in 1776, which was the year of the American Declaration of Independence ; for the British power in India was now to be subjected to a terrible ordeal. As soon as France entered the war, she resolved to deliver an attack in India as well as in the West Indies, and sent out a fleet under Suffren, the ablest of French sailors ; fortunately the arrival of this fleet was long delayed. She had also done her best to stir up trouble among the native States. During the years when Hastings was reduced to impotence by his Council, the subordinate Presidencies of Madras and Bombay had been allowed to involve themselves in serious troubles with the greatest of the native States : Madras had quarrelled with the formidable Hyder Ali of Mysore, and with the Nizam of Hyderabad ; Bombay had been involved in dangerous complications with the Marathas. The result was that when the war with France broke out, Hastings was faced by an alarming combination of all the great Indian powers—Hyder Ali, the Nizam and the five chief Maratha princes. He had no ally save Oudh, which had been reduced to impotence by the Council. He could expect no help from England, whose resources were all needed for the war in America and on the seas.

The Maratha and Mysore Wars.—Hastings was not a soldier, and his heart was in constructive statesmanship. But his courage and ability were equal to the demands of this crisis. Throughout six years (1779–1784) of desperate and confused fighting, no hostile army was ever able to cross the frontiers of Bengal or of Oudh ; they were almost the only parts of India unravaged by war. Bombay and Madras were wholly dependent upon Hastings' support. He sent one army marching across India to help Bombay, and another by land from Calcutta to Madras. It is impossible here to trace the course of this confused struggle, but it was marked by many brilliant feats of war, such as the storming of the rock-fortress of *Gwalior* by a tiny force under Captain Popham (1780), and the defeat of Hyder Ali by Sir Eyre Coote at *Porto Novo* in 1782. But Hastings' patient diplomacy in breaking up the alliance of his enemies was of even greater value than the valour of the army. By 1782 he had succeeded in making peace with the Marathas. It was not until that year that the French fleet under Suffren arrived in India. It arrived only to find that the Indian confederacy had been already broken up, and that Hastings had seized all the French ports, so that Suffren was left without a base of operations ; and in spite of the brilliant campaign which he carried out against the British admiral Hughes, he was able to achieve nothing.

The Begums and Benares.—This tremendous effort, however, involved a very heavy strain upon the resources of Bengal ; and in order to meet it Hastings was driven to adopt methods of raising funds for which he was subsequently attacked. To enable Oudh to fulfil its obligations as an ally, he empowered the Vizier to reclaim from the Begums the treasure which the majority in Council had permitted them to seize. He also made large demands, in accordance with Indian usage, from the vassal Rajah of Benares. The Rajah broke into revolt, and for a time Hastings, who had gone to visit him, was in grave peril ; but the revolt was crushed. The affair of the Begums and the affair of Benares were later the main grounds of attack against Hastings.

Results of the Struggle.—When the struggle ended in 1784, the British power in India emerged without gain, but also without loss : India was the only part of the world where British prestige was strengthened rather than weakened in these years, and this result had been achieved without any help from home. Hastings did not add a single square mile to British territory in India. But because

he had created, within the existing territory, a system of government so efficient that no revolt took place in this crisis ; because the British territory of Bengal was throughout these troubles unravaged by war ; and because he had succeeded in holding his own against a combination of all the great powers of India, the result of his work was to establish solidly and securely the foundations of the British Empire in India.

End of Hastings' Rule.—While Hastings was fighting desperately to defend the very existence of the British power in India, Philip Francis, who had returned to England in 1780, was doing everything in his power to represent him as a monster of wickedness and tyranny. He succeeded in converting Burke and the leading Whigs to this view. If Fox's India Bill of 1783 had been carried, the first result would have been the recall of Hastings. Even when Pitt came to power, and passed the India Act of 1784 (which will be described in another place *), it was evident that Hastings was regarded with suspicion. In 1785, therefore, he resigned his office, having held it for thirteen years under the Indian sun, without a single break. He had saved the British Empire in India from destruction, and turned it from a curse into a blessing to its subjects : even amid the cruel urgency of war, he had carried on his work of reform. He was the greatest Englishman who ever served in India, and he had carried on his work in face of terrible obstacles, never for a single year enjoying favourable conditions for his work. Yet he was the only Governor-General of India who received no honour from his sovereign.

Impeachment of Hastings.—Three years after his return, in 1788, he was impeached by the Whigs for oppression and corruption, and was tried before the House of Lords in Westminster Hall. The fact of his impeachment was a proof that Britain had now awakened to the magnitude of the Indian problem and was determined to secure good government. But this was a cruel reward for noble service. The impeachment lasted for seven years. In the end, Hastings was acquitted on every charge. But the cost of the trial used up nearly all his savings, and he was left a poor man. He was still young, but Britain had no further use for one of the greatest of her sons. He retired into obscurity, finding his only reward "in the conscious applause of my own mind brightening the decline of my existence."

* Below, p. 452.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING ON BOOK VI

The ground covered in this Book is much more fully dealt with in Book VI and Book VII (Chaps i-viii) of the *Short History of the British Commonwealth* (Vol I, pp. 645-814, and Vol II, pp. 1-115). For more detailed study, Grant Robertson, *England under the Hanoverians*. Mahan's *Influence of Sea-power* is important for this period. Bradley's *Fight with France for North America* is readable and sound. Parkman's *Montcalm and Wolfe* (2 vols) is vividly written. Basil Williams' *Life of Chatham* (2 vols) is the standard work on its subject. Seeley's *Expansion of England* is a stimulating review of the colonial expansion of the period. There is a useful short book on the American Revolution by H. E. Egerton. For further details about India, V. A. Smith's *Oxford History of India*, and Muir's *Making of British India*.

BOOK VII
RECUPERATION AND REVOLUTION
(1783-1815)

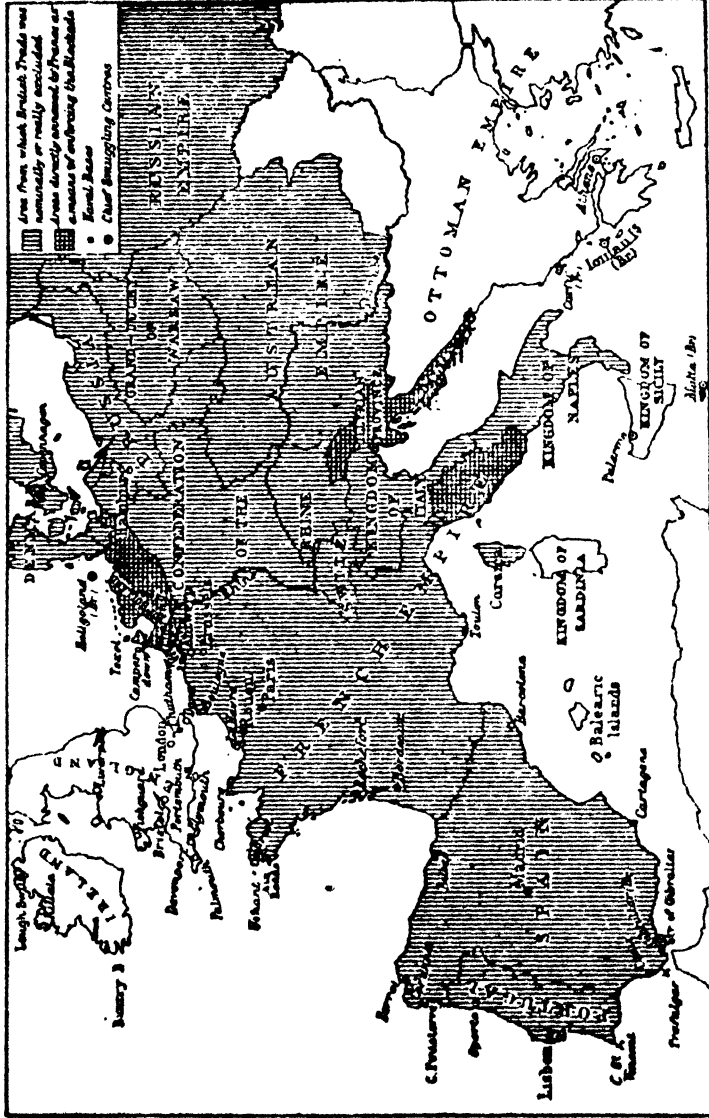


FIG. 30.—The Sea War, 1793-1815, and the Continental Blockade.

BOOK VII
RECUPERATION AND REVOLUTION
(1783-1815)

STRIPPED of her colonial empire and loaded with debt, Britain seemed, in 1783, to have lost the great position which Chatham had won for her twenty years earlier. Nevertheless she was on the eve of one of the greatest periods of her history. She was about to be exposed to an ordeal of war far more terrible than she had ever yet endured. For the third time in her history she was about to play the leading part in resistance to a great military power which threatened to dominate the world. From this desperate conflict she was to emerge as indisputably the greatest power in the world, and as the mistress of an extraordinary empire scattered over every part of the globe.

Her ability to withstand this ordeal, and to draw from it so immense an increase of prestige and power, was due to factors that were already at work in 1783, although they were almost unobserved. The stagnation of the early eighteenth century was over, and new forces and ideas were at work. A spiritual revival, accompanied by an active humanitarian movement, was beginning to transform the character of the nation. New political ideals and new economic doctrines were at work. The immense movement known as the Industrial Revolution, which was to multiply indefinitely the power of creating wealth, and to transform the conditions of human life, was beginning. So important were these changes, and so great was their effect upon the life of the British peoples and of the world, that they must never be forgotten even amid the excitements of the most tremendous war yet fought in the world. Thus the period of revolution, in spite of the sufferings which it brought, was also a period of recuperation.

CHAPTER XXXV

WILLIAM PITT AND THE REVIVAL OF BRITISH
STRENGTH (1784-1793)

I. THE POLITICAL AND FINANCIAL WORK OF PITT

The Younger Pitt.—After the election of 1784 Pitt,* in his twenty-fifth year, held a position of extraordinary strength, because he was at once the choice of the king and the choice of the nation. He remained in power, with one brief interval, for twenty-two years; he was an omnipotent Prime Minister for nearly half of his lifetime. Though young in years, Pitt was not, and had never been, young in spirit. He had no relaxations, and very few friends. His youth was spent in a rather priggish training for greatness, and his manhood in the heavy cares of office. He had an unlimited confidence in himself, and immense industry and capacity. But he lacked his father's flaming enthusiasm, and the uncalculating ardour of his great rival Fox. His eloquence, except at great moments of crisis, was a little frigid, though he was a master of lucid and persuasive statement. He could sympathise with great causes, such as the abolition of the slave trade, but he could not run risks or make sacrifices for them. He is often quoted as one of the greatest examples of hereditary genius. But his genius was utterly unlike that of his father. It came rather from the Grenville side of the family: he had, in a superlative degree, his uncle George Grenville's methodical industry and practical capacity; he had also something of George Grenville's lack of imaginative insight. He was wholly without his father's marvellous gifts of leadership in war; and it was a disaster both for himself and for his country that it should have fallen to him to direct British affairs during the greatest of wars. He was at his best as a peace minister; but too short a time was given him in which to display his powers. Nevertheless, his work during the nine years preceding the outbreak of the French revolutionary war did much to enable Britain to face that ordeal.

The Cabinet System.—It was under Pitt that the British

* There is an excellent short *Life of Pitt* by Lord Rosebery (Twelve English Statesmen).

system of government assumed its modern form. He was genuinely the "Prime Minister," refusing to be merely the king's agent, like North, or the manager for a group of borough-owners, like Newcastle. He ruled through the House of Commons, like Walpole; but unlike Walpole he did not depend upon a purchased majority, for direct corruption had been brought to an end by the legislation of 1782; he depended upon the loyalty of a party. He rewarded his followers largely by a lavish distribution of peerages; under him the House of Lords was rapidly increased in size, and (after being predominantly Whig for a century) became predominantly Tory.

Pitt's Finance.—His most valuable work was done in the field of finance. During the long series of wars since the Revolution, new taxes, mainly upon imports, had been constantly imposed, each tax being assigned for a different purpose. Some commodities paid a number of separate duties, each of which went to a different account. Pitt swept away all this confusion, by the establishment of a single Consolidated Fund. He also revised the whole system of duties, making in many cases enormous reductions; thus the taxes on tea were reduced from 110 per cent. to 12 per cent. One result of this was to make smuggling less worth while; another was to encourage buyers by a reduction of price; and for these reasons, Pitt's lower duties actually yielded a higher revenue, besides greatly stimulating trade. Pitt was a disciple of Adam Smith, the founder of modern political economy, whose great book, *The Wealth of Nations*,* was published in 1776. His sympathies were with the idea of free trade, and in a commercial treaty with France, which he concluded in 1786, he made a substantial step in this direction. Unfortunately the war came within seven years of the conclusion of the treaty, and put a stop to this experiment; to meet the cost of the war, dues on trade were heaped up to a greater extent than ever.

The National Debt.—Finally, Pitt endeavoured to deal with the problem of the National Debt, which now amounted to £240,000,000, by creating a Sinking Fund (1786), into which he paid £1,000,000 per annum, to accumulate at compound interest. So long as the £1,000,000 represented a surplus of income over expenditure, this was excellent. But when the war came, there could be no surplus; on the contrary, new money had to be borrowed on an immense scale. Yet Pitt, deceived by the notion that there

* Smith's *Wealth of Nations* is included in Everyman's Library.

was something magical about compound interest, kept up his sinking-fund, borrowing money at a high rate of interest to pay off debt at a low rate of interest, and thus only adding to the nation's burdens. And because of this foolish idea about the magic of compound interest, he financed the war mainly by loans instead of by taxes, with the result that at the end of the war the nation was annually paying as much, in interest on the Debt, as would have sufficed to pay the whole annual cost of the war at the beginning. This is an illustration of Pitt's limitations. Even in his own special field of finance, everything went wrong with him as soon as he came under the shadow of war.

Parliamentary Reform.—At the beginning of his career Pitt had made his name as an advocate of parliamentary reform, and after the election of 1784 the parliamentary reformers were full of hope. But he betrayed their confidence. He introduced a Bill, indeed, for the buying-out of pocket boroughs. But he made it clear that he would not resign if he was defeated, and, of course, most of his followers (many of whom sat for pocket boroughs) voted against the Bill. He never took up the question again, being afraid to endanger his power. In the same way, while he supported his friend Wilberforce in attacking the slave trade, he would never stake the fortunes of his government upon the abolition of this cruel traffic.

Pitt was no enthusiastic reformer. Nevertheless, the interval of peace, economy, and trade revival which he gave was of great value. But it was of less value than certain other aspects of his work, and certain developments entirely independent of politics, which were meanwhile going on : to these we must next turn.

2. THE BEGINNINGS OF THE SECOND BRITISH EMPIRE

An empire had been lost in 1783, but within the next few years the foundations of a new empire were laid.

The Canadian Colonies.—When the American revolt took place, Canada had been a purely French colony, though there were a few British settlers in *Nova Scotia*, *Newfoundland*, and *Prince Edward Island*,* all of which had obtained representative assemblies before 1775. At the end of the war, Loyalists poured out of the United States to the number of 60,000, and three-quarters of them went to

* See School Atlas, Plate 51.

Canada. The British Government gave them grants of land, stock, tools, and seeds. Many settled in *New Brunswick*, which was organised as a separate colony in 1784. Some thousands of them also went into the region of the Great Lakes, west of the French settlements—the district later known as *Ontario*. While the coastal colonies had obtained self-governing powers, these had not been conferred upon the French colony of Quebec. But the arrival in Upper Canada of English settlers, accustomed to self-government, made a change necessary. Accordingly, in 1791, Pitt passed through Parliament the *Canada Act*, which divided the colony into two provinces, Upper Canada or Ontario, and Lower Canada or Quebec,

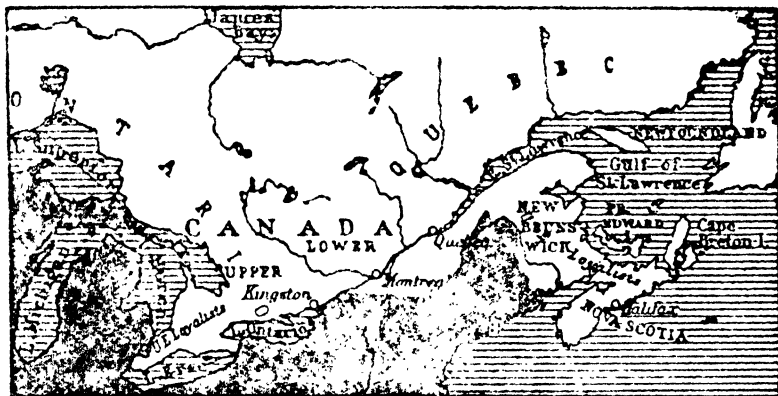


FIG. 31.—The Canadian Colonies.

and endowed both with the normal system of a British colony—a Governor nominated by the Crown, an Executive Council, also nominated, and an elected Legislative Assembly. For the first time in their history the French Canadians thus obtained self-governing powers; they already enjoyed security for their religion, and for their system of law. Within ten years of the loss of the thirteen colonies, a group of six British colonies existed in North America.

Cook's Voyages: Australia.—Meanwhile the greatest of British explorers, Captain James Cook, had been opening out new possibilities in another region of the world.* His three great voyages

* For Cook's voyages, see School Atlas, Plate 44a. There is a good short *Life of Cook* by Sir W. Besant (*English Men of Action*); and *Cook's Voyages* is included in *Everyman's Library*.

(1768-1771, 1772-1775, and 1776-1780) took place during the period of controversy with the American colonies. Cook was the first to map out the Pacific, and to disclose in detail the coast of Australia and New Zealand, although Tasman and other Dutch explorers had discovered parts of them in the seventeenth century. Lying at the farthest antipodes, these lands, fertile as they were, would not easily have attracted settlers; the journey was too long and costly. It was the American Revolution which led to the first settlement. For a century and a half the British Government had been in the habit of sending its convicts to the American colonies, where they had laboured as "indentured servants." That outlet was now closed. It was therefore decided to start a convict settlement in Australia,* at Botany Bay, near the modern Sydney, of which Cook had given a glowing account; and in January 1788, 750 male and female convicts, with cattle, implements and seeds, were sent out under Captain Arthur Phillips. Other contingents followed; and in 1793 the first group of free settlers arrived. Thus the colonisation of Australia began—under the most unfavourable circumstances—within five years of the loss of the American colonies.

Philanthropic Colonisation.—In the same year, 1788, another colony, of a wholly new type, was started in West Africa. A group of English philanthropists, anxious to find a home for freed slaves, bought a strip of land from a native chief at *Sierra Leone*; † and three years later they obtained a charter of incorporation, and started the settlement at *Freetown*. Zachary Macaulay, the historian's father, was the first governor. The colony had not much success. But it represented a very different spirit from the earlier settlements on the West African coast, which had been purely stations for the slave trade. The humanitarian movement, of which we shall have more to say, was beginning to influence imperial policy.

Pitt's India Act.—Thus, in various ways, a fresh beginning was being made in British colonisation. A fresh beginning was also being made in India. Warren Hastings had solidly established the British power. But his experience had shown that the system of government established by North's Act of 1773 would not work. In 1784 Pitt carried an *India Act*, which fixed the main lines of the government of India in the form it retained until 1858. The

* See School Atlas, Plate 55b.

† See School Atlas, Plate 56c.

political power of the Directors was not abolished (as Fox had proposed in his Bill of the previous year), but a Government Board of Control was established which the Directors had to consult upon all questions of policy. Thus the British Government assumed ultimate responsibility for the government of British India, without sacrificing the knowledge and experience of the Directors. The Act also laid it down that there must be no meddling with Indian politics, and no treaties with Indian powers—an impossible provision, which could not be enforced.

Cornwallis in India.—Under this Act Lord Cornwallis* went out as Governor-General (1786–1793). He was the first Governor not drawn from the Company's service, and his high rank raised him above the jealousies of the service. He was able to carry much farther the work of reorganising the system of administration and justice which Hastings had begun. In spite of the India Act, he was drawn into a war with Tipu Sahib, a ferocious tyrant who had succeeded Hyder Ali upon the throne of Mysore. In conjunction with the Marathas and the Nizam, Cornwallis captured Tipu's capital, Seringapatam,† and deprived him of half of his territory, which was divided among the allies. Non-intervention in Indian politics was proved to be impossible. In two ways Cornwallis departed from Hastings' methods. Hastings had worked as much as possible through Indians; Cornwallis laid down the principle that no Indian should be employed in any position of responsibility. Hastings, in fixing the land revenue (which was the chief source of revenue in India), had tried to ensure that the peasants and the Government should share the increased yield due to improved cultivation; Cornwallis preferred to treat the *Zemindars*, or hereditary collectors of land revenue, as if they were landowners like the English squires. He therefore carried out, in 1793, a *Permanent Settlement* of the land revenues of Bengal, whereby the amount payable by each *Zemindar* was fixed for all time. This meant that the peasants were left very much at the mercy of the *Zemindars*, and that the Government derived no advantage from increased prosperity. Later experience has shown that this was a grave blunder, and that the methods of Hastings were far sounder, and more in accord with Indian usage. Nevertheless, the governorship of Cornwallis was

* There is a short Life of Cornwallis by W. S. Seton-Kerr (*Rulers of India*).

† See School Atlas, Plate 53c.

an important epoch in the history of British India. Building on the foundations laid by Hastings, he put an end to corruption and oppression, and made the British provinces models of good government for the rest of India.

3. THE HUMANITARIAN MOVEMENT

The Evangelicals.—If the character of the British Empire was changing, this was partly due to a change of spirit in the mother-country. The religious revival begun by the Wesleys had spread to all the Churches. The Dissenting Churches had regained some of their old fervour, and in the Church of England the Evangelical movement had got the upper hand. Its influence upon national policy became considerable: William Wilberforce, one of its leaders, was Pitt's most intimate friend.

Humanitarianism.—The religious revival led to a humanitarian movement, which expressed itself in many forms. Hospitals were founded in large numbers in every part of the country. The provision of education for the children of the poor began when Robert Raikes of Gloucester started a school for children engaged in industry, on Sunday—their only free day (1780). Soon all the Churches had taken up this work, and before the end of the century many of them had opened schools on weekdays also. These were only makeshift institutions; but they were the beginning of the provision of education for the mass of the people. The cruelty of the penal system was exposed by John Howard, with whom began prison reform: the years from 1773 to 1790 were filled with his activities, and to him must be attributed the beginning of a more humane spirit in the treatment of prisoners.

Anti-Slave-Trade Movement.—But perhaps the most significant feature of the humanitarian movement was the agitation against the slave trade, which began with the foundation of the Abolition Society in 1787 by a group of Evangelicals and Quakers, led by Wilberforce. Hitherto no objection had been taken to this traffic. To obtain supremacy in it had been one of the aims of national policy, and the Asiento Treaty of 1714, which gave to British traders a monopoly of the importation of negro slaves into Spanish America, had been regarded as one of the greatest triumphs of British diplomacy. Vast fortunes had been made out of the slave trade; and it might have seemed a hopeless enterprise to

persuade the nation to forbid so lucrative a traffic. Yet the victory was won in 1807, only twenty years after the movement started. It could not have been so quickly won if a real change had not been taking place in the nation's outlook.

The Somerset Case.—There can be little doubt that the humanitarian temper of the age largely influenced the famous judgment given by the Chief Justice, Lord Mansfield, in the Somerset Case (1772). Somerset was a negro slave who had been brought to England by his master, a ship's captain. On his behalf some of the enemies of slavery applied for a writ of *habeas corpus*; and in giving his judgment on the application, Lord Mansfield laid it down that slavery was so odious and unnatural that unless there was a "positive law" permitting it, it must be held to be illegal. He therefore released the slave; and from this date every slave became free on setting foot in England, or in any English colony in which "positive law" or established usage did not permit of slavery. It was for this reason that Canada later became the refuge of escaped slaves from the United States; and it was because emancipated slaves had become numerous in London that the colony of Sierra Leone was started for them in 1788.

The Missionary Movement.—Ere long the religious and the humanitarian movements were to be blended in the missionary movement. In 1793 William Carey, a Baptist cobbler, started missionary activity in India. Before the end of the century a group of powerful missionary societies had been founded, and soon there were scores of British missionaries scattered over the backward regions of the world, supported by subscriptions at home. Their influence was to contribute very greatly to transform the character of the British Empire in the nineteenth century. Hitherto the attitude of the colonising peoples towards the backward peoples had been one of ruthless exploitation. The change in this attitude which was now coming about, and which was first shown in Grenville's attempt to protect the rights of Red Indians under the proclamation of 1763,* owed its origin to the religious and humanitarian movement, which was one of the most hopeful influences upon the life of the British peoples during this period of recuperation.

* See above, p. 400.

4. THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Economic Changes.—Meanwhile profound changes were taking place in the economic life of the British peoples—changes which were to multiply almost indefinitely their power of creating wealth, and therefore the numbers of the population whom they could maintain. These changes were the beginning of an immense social revolution which was, in course of time, to transform the conditions of life throughout the world, and to render necessary a complete reconstruction of the social system. They had three aspects, which were closely related. There were changes in the methods of agriculture, changes in the methods of industry, and changes in the means of transport and communication.* Because these changes began in Britain, they vastly increased her resources, and enabled her to stand the strain of the coming conflict. But because nobody realised their significance, they created very grave social problems which nearly brought revolution after the strain of war was relieved.

Agricultural Advance.—At the beginning of the eighteenth century British agricultural methods were very much what they had been for centuries. But then began a period of scientific development. The methods of enriching the soil, the best ways of planting and hoeing, the rotation of crops, and the improvement of the breed of cattle and sheep, were all scientifically developed by various reformers. Among these Lord Townshend, Sir Robert Walpole's brother-in-law, earned a high place by the work he did in showing how a crop of turnips restored the soil after wheat, besides providing winter fodder. In the second half of the century scientific farming became a fashionable hobby, in which many great landowners, from the king downwards, took a keen interest; and a school of agricultural writers, such as Arthur Young, did a great deal to spread this useful fashion.

The Enclosures.—But there was one great obstacle in the way of progress. The old open-field system still survived over more than half of the country. Under this system the lands of a township were divided into countless strips, belonging to different owners, which had to be cultivated on a common plan; and a large proportion of the land was wasted, as fallow or in commons or in the "balks"

* For England before and after the Industrial Revolution, see School Atlas, Plate 41.

which separated the strips. The only way to give freedom of action to the progressive farmer was to "enclose" these lands. "Enclosure" was of two kinds, either the division of the open fields into consolidated blocks, which the holders could cultivate as they thought fit; or the apportionment of the untilled waste. Sometimes enclosure took place by agreement; but this was difficult to secure. In the reign of George III the quicker method of passing an Act of Parliament for the enclosure of this parish or that began to be used, and thousands of Enclosure Acts were passed, under the impetus of the agricultural enthusiasm of the period. The result was very greatly to increase the productive power of British land.

Effects of Enclosure.—This was not, however, the only result. The Enclosure Acts were mostly promoted by the big landowners, and were not always fair to the small man. Even when they were quite fair, the small man found it difficult to compete with his bigger neighbours, who had enough capital and knowledge to utilise the modern methods; the cost of fencing his new holding was often so heavy as to ruin him; and a few acres of enclosed land formed a poor substitute for the right of pasture on the waste. The result was that in thousands of cases the small man was forced to sell his land and to become a mere hired labourer. The big estates added field to field. The average size of farms increased. But the number of smallholders rapidly decreased. A wide gap, such as had not previously existed, was opened between the big landowners and the capitalist farmers on the one side, and the wage-earning labourers on the other; and the landowners ceased to be the natural leaders of the rural community, as they had been in the days when nearly all the members of that community had some interest in the land on which they worked.

Spinning Machinery.—In industry the great feature of the period was the introduction of power-driven machinery. This momentous change began in the Lancashire cotton industry, which had hitherto been unimportant because English operatives could neither spin nor weave as finely as the native workers in India, and could not produce a cotton thread firm enough to be used as warp; moreover, it took the work of five spinners to keep a weaver employed; and in these circumstances the industry could not easily expand. About 1764 James Hargreaves invented a "spinning-jenny" which enabled one worker to attend to a number of spindles at once; in 1769 Richard Arkwright patented the water-frame which spun a

hard yarn capable of being used as warp ; and in 1779 Samuel Crompton invented a cross between the spinning-jenny and the water-frame (called a " mule ") which combined many of the merits of both. The weavers could now be kept fully employed ; and they were supplied with yarns so strong, fine, and cheap that they could beat the Indian manufacturer. The result was that the output of Lancashire was increased fourfold between 1775 and 1790, and British foreign trade received a stimulus which more than balanced the whole cost of the American war.

The Factory System.—As yet the weaving side of the industry remained a domestic industry, and the weavers enjoyed a period of very great prosperity. In 1785, indeed, Edmund Cartwright invented a power-loom ; but it did not come into wide use for another twenty years. Spinning—first in cotton, then in wool—monopolised, to begin with, the new mechanical methods. The new machines had to be worked with power—at first water-power, later steam ; they therefore concentrated in the hill-country where water-power could be got. They were most economical when a large number of machines were worked by the same head of water. Hence large factories came into existence, owned by men who possessed enough capital to build and equip them ; and the work-people, instead of being their own masters, had to work for such wages as the employers could be got to pay.

Social Consequences.—The employers were mostly rough and uncultivated men who had risen from the ranks. Wages were generally low, and the hours of work were long. Nobody had yet realised the necessity of regulating the conditions of labour, or of protecting the weak against the strong, nor was there any machinery for doing so. In the Lancashire valleys, where suitable water-power could be got, a new population rapidly gathered. It was nobody's business to see that decent conditions were secured for them, and the new towns which were springing up in a hitherto thinly populated region were from the first ill-designed and unhealthy. As yet, however, these evil results of a great and fruitful development were not obvious. The wealth of the nation was being rapidly increased ; but it was being increased at the cost of the health and well-being of a mass of workers who received a very small share of the wealth they created. The bulk of this wealth went to the new class of factory owners, and to the owners of the land on which the new factories and towns were springing up.

Iron and Coal.—During the same period the iron industries were also, like the textile trades, entering upon a new era. Hitherto the only method of smelting iron was by charcoal ; and the British iron-fields were being almost disused because of the exhaustion of the woods. In 1760 a new method of smelting iron with coal was for the first time successfully applied at the Carron works in Scotland. The result was to give an immense impetus to the iron trade, and, at the same time, to extend enormously the use of coal, hitherto employed only for domestic fires. The first iron bridge—across the Severn—was erected in 1779 : the age of iron had begun.

The Steam Engine.—And meanwhile the steam engine—long known in a crude form—underwent an immense improvement, thanks to the genius of James Watt, who began his work in this field in 1764, and was manufacturing steam engines at Birmingham from 1768. At first the steam engine was only used for pumping mines ; but it soon began to be turned to other purposes. The age of engineering, of steam and of coal had fairly begun. These tremendous new forces, which were to revolutionise the conditions of human life, were at first a British monopoly ; and the long wars which were soon to begin extended the period of this monopoly, because other countries, strained and ravaged by war, could not imitate these British inventions. Moreover, the command of these new and cheap commodities immeasurably increased the resources of Britain for foreign trade.

Roads and Canals.—These remarkable developments could not have taken place unless there had been a very great improvement in the methods of transport. Hitherto Britain had been far behind both France and Holland in the quality of her roads* and her waterways. During this period she began rapidly to make up this leeway. Her road system was immensely improved mainly by the creation of turnpikes, where tolls were collected for the upkeep of the roads. Her very limited navigable waterways were improved by deepening rivers and building locks ; they were extended by the construction of artificial canals.† The first of these was the Duke of Bridgewater's canal between Worsley and Manchester, begun in 1759 and later extended to the Mersey at Runcorn. Its effect may be indicated by the fact that a ton of goods, costing forty shillings to transport by

* For roads before the Industrial Revolution, see School Atlas, Introduction, p. 27, fig. 40.

† For canals and navigable waterways, see School Atlas, Introduction, p. 27, fig. 41.

road from Manchester to Liverpool, could be carried for six shillings by canal. Immense energy was being expended during this generation in the construction of "inland navigations"; and armies of "navigators" or "navvies" were at work, linking up the main centres of industry with the ports. By the end of the century over 2,000 miles of canals had been cut.

Effects of these Changes.—In all these ways the inventive genius and the energy of the British people were enormously increasing their capacity for the production of wealth. They were doubling the yield of their soil; they were finding ways of utilising their mineral wealth on a vastly increased scale; they were producing manufactured goods—textiles, pottery, metal work—in an abundance and at a price which no other country could rival. In comparison with the immense gains thus made, the losses caused by the American War were negligible, and even the terrific strain of the coming war was not too heavy to be borne. Britain was not at the close of her period of greatness, but at the opening of a more splendid period than she had ever known. But at the same time she was creating for herself new social problems of a kind for which human history provided no parallel.

5. THE REVIVAL OF INTELLECTUAL LIFE

Poets and Novelists.—The age which showed so much energy in so many various fields was not less great in the creative arts. English poetry came alive again, after the long stagnation of the early eighteenth century. Gray, Goldsmith and Cowper all had a reality of poetic inspiration which had long been lacking. Burns' *Poems*, published in 1786, and Blake's *Songs of Innocence*, published in 1787, were the harbingers of the Romantic Revival which was to be the glory of the next generation. And a great new imaginative art, that of the novel, had sprung into being for the enrichment of life and the enlargement of human sympathy. The English novel had indeed begun in the first half of the century, with Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding; but the first thirty years of George III were illuminated by the work of Sterne, Smollett, Goldsmith, and Fanny Burney. In all of these alike humour, kindness, and a large human sympathy were the outstanding notes. They were among the characteristics of a great age. Yet the characteristic figure of the age was neither a poet nor a novelist, but a great scholar

and critic, Samuel Johnson. He was yet greater as a man than as a writer ; and his living figure survives, more vividly than that of any other great man of the past, in the best of all biographies, Boswell's *Life of Johnson*.

The Fine Arts.—Not less remarkable was the achievement of the age in the fine arts, in which, hitherto, the British peoples had produced no great names. There has been no period of British art distinguished by greater names than those of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Romney, all of whom were at work in the first part of George III's reign. It was a great age also in the art of the theatre—the age of David Garrick, greatest of British actors, and of the comedies of Sheridan and Goldsmith.

Political Thought.—But perhaps the noblest work of the period was that which it produced in the study of human society. The great name of Burke,* one of the profoundest of political thinkers, would alone be enough to illustrate an era. But the seriousness with which the men of this generation were studying the problems of human society is perhaps best illustrated by the titles of three famous books, all published in the year of the American Declaration of Independence (1776)—Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Jeremy Bentham's *Fragment on Government*, and Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Adam Smith was the true founder of the science of political economy ; Bentham was the apostle of the school of scientific reform which was largely responsible for many of the most notable advances of the nineteenth century ; and these two, between them, did more than any other two men to mould the thinking of the next two generations. As for Gibbon, his book—the only piece of historical writing of that century which is still read and valued—was the first great exemplar of scientific history.

In short, the generation which preceded the French Revolution was full of vitality on every side of national life, and would have produced noble results even if that world-shaking event had never happened.

* There is an admirable short *Life of Burke* by John Morley (*English Men of Letters*).

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION (1789-1801)

I. THE OUTBREAK OF THE REVOLUTION

Suddenness of the Outbreak.—Before Pitt had been five years in office, the French Revolution began (1789). It was not merely to distort his policy, it was to change the course of human history. But at first nobody anticipated these gigantic results, or foresaw that the Revolution was to lead to nearly a quarter of a century of world-wide war. As late as 1792 Pitt himself predicted fifteen years of peace, and showed the sincerity of his belief by cutting down both the army and the navy. Yet at the beginning of 1793 Britain was drawn into the vortex of a war which filled the rest of Pitt's life, and did not reach its close until ten years after his death.

Causes of the Revolution.—The French Revolution was a revolt against absolute monarchy, and still more against the privileges of class and caste which were rooted in the traditions of every European country. It began in France because France was more prosperous and progressive than other European countries; because, since Louis XIV, the French monarchy had become inefficient and had led the nation to humiliation and almost to bankruptcy; and because the educated classes in France were impregnated with the ideas of philosophers like Rousseau, who challenged the whole existing order and taught that well-being and liberty could be secured by political changes. But it had echoes in almost every European country. Everywhere peoples were ready to throw off the shackling relics of feudalism. This was why the Revolution was not merely an event in French history; but marked an epoch in the history of the world.

The States-General.—The finances of France were in hopeless confusion, especially since the American War; and in the hope of getting help to put them right, King Louis XVI summoned the States-General—a sort of Parliament of three Houses: Nobles, Clergy, and Commons—which had not met since 1614. The summons of the States-General stirred all the grievances and all the aspirations which had been fermenting in the minds of the French people, and during the months before its meeting all classes in every

part of the country were drawing up statements of grievances and projects of redress. Practically the whole nation was united in the resolve to create a new and better order. No assembly in history has ever met with higher hopes or more generous aspirations than filled the States-General when its sessions were opened at Versailles in May 1789. And in all countries this inspiring spectacle of a whole nation setting forth to achieve freedom and justice awakened warm sympathy. The watching world was thrilled. "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, but to be young was very heaven"—so Wordsworth wrote as he looked back upon this great moment long afterwards. The great adventure went wrong. But even the horrors which followed, and the long ravages of war, did not destroy the influence of the Revolution upon the minds and hearts of men.

Rapid Development.—Once the Revolution was launched, its progress was extremely rapid. First the Third Estate, declining to be limited by the other two, declared itself a National Assembly and swore not to break up until it had made a new constitution. The king had to assent, and the destruction of all the old institutions of France and the creation of new ones occupied the next two years : beginning with an exalted Declaration of the Rights of Man. The most remarkable moment in this work came on August 4th, 1789, when, amid scenes of fervent emotion, the old privileges of class were swept away, with the assent of the privileged classes. This was the greatest, and the most permanent, achievement of the Revolution. It was won without violence. Meanwhile, on July 14th, the Paris mob, alarmed because the king was collecting troops, had stormed the frowning fortress of the Bastille. The fall of the Bastille was universally recognised as a symbol of the end of absolutism ; but it was also the beginning of mob-rule. In October the Paris mob forced the king and the Assembly to move from Versailles to Paris ; and thereafter the excitable mob, swayed by fanatical orators, controlled everything. But France was rapidly falling into chaos. The old authorities were destroyed or discredited ; the new elected bodies, lacking experience, were unable to govern. There were sporadic peasant risings, and burnings of châteaux. Discipline was destroyed in the army and the navy. Things got so bad that in June 1791, the poor, weak, well-meaning king tried to run away, as many of the nobles had already done ; but he was stopped at Varennes, and brought back as a prisoner.

Violence and War.—In September 1791, the new constitution

was completed. It was an experiment in complete democracy. Everybody was to be elected. But from the first it would not work. The confusion became worse and worse. The new Legislative Assembly, which took the place of the National Assembly, could not govern. In the hope of pulling things together, and arousing national patriotism, the revolutionary government plunged into war against Austria and Prussia (1792). But when foreign armies crossed the frontiers, a wild panic broke out in Paris. It was used for their own purpose by the extremist leaders. A hideous and cold-blooded massacre of royalists and others in the Paris prisons was organised (September 1792) : it shocked the friends of the Revolution in other countries. The extremists had now got the upper hand. All hope of a peaceful reconstruction was at an end. Meanwhile the war was going surprisingly well for the infant republic. Belgium and Western Germany, being as ripe for revolution as France itself, welcomed the undisciplined French levies. The revolutionary leaders persuaded themselves that the armies of liberty were unconquerable. In their enthusiasm they resolved to rouse the whole world for democracy, and in November 1792 they declared war "against all kings and on behalf of all peoples." In January 1793, the unhappy King Louis XVI was sent to the guillotine. Not content with the existing war against Austria and Prussia, France declared war against Britain and Holland in February, and against Spain in March. All the powers of Europe were challenged either to destroy the Republic or to imitate its methods.

Britain Drawn In.—Thus a sudden change had come over the situation. Until the summer of 1792 it had seemed that the chief result of the Revolution would be to reduce France to anarchy, so that she would no longer count in European affairs. But the September massacres, the spread of the Revolution into Belgium and Western Germany, and the deposition and execution of the king, put a graver complexion upon the situation. A fiery challenge had been thrown down to the whole existing order of things. It had to be accepted. Pitt had been very loth to contemplate the possibility of war. His hand was forced when the French, being at the moment masters of Belgium, declared the Scheldt an open river in defiance of treaties, and prepared to attack Holland. War would have come on this issue in any event. But it was France, not Britain, that actually declared war. It has been sometimes said that the monarchies of Europe were responsible for the long wars, because

they would not leave the Revolution to work itself out. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The most gigantic struggle that the world had yet seen was deliberately precipitated by the revolutionary leaders.

2. THE INFLUENCE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION IN BRITAIN

The British Reformers.—The beginnings of the French Revolution were almost universally welcomed in Britain. Among the advocates of parliamentary reform, in particular, who had been damped by Pitt's easy abandonment of their cause, it aroused a genuine enthusiasm, and for a while the democratic agitation became more vigorous than ever in Britain. Societies for constitutional reform sprang up all over the country, the most remarkable being the London Corresponding Society, founded by a London bootmaker with a subscription of a penny a week. Many of those societies started correspondence with the political clubs which had sprung into being in every French town. The correspondence was perfectly innocent—full of vague enthusiasm about the advance of two great nations to liberty. It came to an end with the September massacres. Later all this interchange of letters was regarded as proof that there had been a widespread conspiracy for the reproduction of all the excesses of the French Revolution in England, but there was no justification for this charge.

Burke and Paine.—The current of opinion began to turn when mob-violence got the upper hand in Paris. At the end of 1790 Burke published his *Reflections on the French Revolution*,* and the appearance of this profound and eloquent book was a political event of the greatest importance. Hitherto all the enthusiasm had been on the side of the advocates of revolution; Burke awakened an equal enthusiasm for the protection of old and hallowed institutions. There were many replies to Burke; but the most important was the *Rights of Man* (1791), by Tom Paine, a clear, cocksure, trenchant exposition of the revolutionary creed. It had a wide circulation in Britain, but the extreme character of the views which it expressed alarmed many, and hastened the reaction. After the September massacres of 1792 and the execution of Louis XVI, opinion in Britain swung violently round, against the revolution, and even the

* There are many editions of this great book. It is included in Everyman's Library and in the World's Classics.

most ardent of parliamentary reformers ceased to have any dealings with the French.

Persecution of Reformers.—This change of opinion had important results. It brought about a split in the Whig party; many of the Whigs, led by Burke, joined Pitt, while Fox, who still believed in the Revolution, though he deplored its excesses, was left with only a handful of followers. More important, the Government, sharing in the popular panic, persuaded itself that the advocates of reform were revolutionaries and seditious in disguise, and began a ferocious persecution of them. In 1793 a convention was held by the Scottish reformers in Edinburgh, to consider how reform could be forwarded "by rational and lawful means." Some of the leaders of this movement—moderate and public-spirited men—were actually prosecuted for treason, and four of them were transported as convicts to Australia. In England similar prosecutions were started against a dozen leading advocates of reform. One of them (Horne Tooke) subpoenaed Pitt, to prove that the Prime Minister himself had advocated, ten years earlier, the very measures for advocating which his victims were now being tried for their lives (1794). London juries refused to find verdicts against the accused, and the prosecutions broke down. But in the next year (1795) very severe Acts were passed restricting the liberty of speech and of the Press, and in 1799 all the societies for the forwarding of parliamentary reform were suppressed by law. It is a shadow upon the reputation of Pitt that he should have lent himself to so grave a restriction of the traditional liberties of his country. Nevertheless, there is little doubt that the sentiment of the country supported him in this policy of repression. Thus, for Britain, the chief result of the French Revolution was a serious reaction, and a great setback to the promising movement for political reform which had been gradually growing in strength.

3. THE FIRST COALITION AND ITS DOWNFALL (1793-1795)

Opening of the War.—The first phase of the French Revolutionary War, which extended from 1793 to 1795, saw the Republic surrounded by a ring of enemies, while within her own borders a formidable royalist rebellion raged in the province of La Vendée, on the coast of the Bay of Biscay, and other revolts against the revolutionary government broke out in various parts of the country. Toulon even admitted a British and Spanish fleet, which took

possession of that great arsenal. On any reasonable calculation, the Republic ought to have been overwhelmed in the first campaigns. And this nearly happened. The complete disorganisation of the French army was revealed. Austrian and British forces drove the French pell-mell out of Belgium, and the road to Paris seemed to lie open, while other enemy forces crossed the frontier in every direction.

French Triumphs in 1793-1794.—But by an extraordinary effort the Republic held its own, and beat back its enemies: in all history there is nothing of its kind that surpasses the French effort of 1793 and 1794. A Committee of Public Safety was set up, with powers more absolute than Louis XIV had ever wielded. A Reign of Terror was instituted, which lasted from March 1793, to June 1794; droves of victims were sent to the scaffold, and every element of resistance was crushed out. A man of genius, Carnot, "the Organiser of Victory," took the army in hand, and moulded it into a superb fighting instrument. France became one great arsenal, and compulsory military service was instituted. By the end of the year the invaders had everywhere been driven over the frontier. In 1794 the triumphant republicans pursued them, reconquered Belgium, overran Holland, captured the Dutch fleet by sending a cavalry force across the frozen waters, and drove both the British and the Austrian armies into ignominious retreat.

Defective Naval Policy.—This amazing reversal of fortune was mainly due to the irresistible *elan* of the French. But it was made easy by the quarrels of the allies, and by the futility with which their affairs were managed. For this Pitt must share the blame. He had nothing of his father's genius for war. He failed to use the British navy—which, in combination with the Dutch and the Spanish fleets, was quite irresistible—to the best advantage. Instead of closely blockading the French ports, he too readily allowed exit to the French fleet. The only important naval battle of this period of the war—the "glorious *First of June*" (1794)*—was a result of this neglect. A convoy of corn-ships was coming from America to France. The French fleet came out from Brest to guard it. Admiral Howe severely defeated the French fleet, but during the fighting the corn-ships got safely to harbour. If Brest had been

* For the naval battles of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, see School Atlas, Introduction, p. 28, fig. 42.

effectively blockaded there would have been no battle, but the cornships would have been captured. Again, Pitt failed to use the power which naval supremacy gave to Britain, of landing troops at any point on the coast where they might be useful. A force landed in this way might have made a vast difference to the rising in La Vendée, but no aid was sent until too late. An adequate force might have held the great arsenal of Toulon; but the troops sent were too few, and a French army (which included a young French artillery officer, Napoleon Buonaparte, who now made his first appearance on the pages of history), was able to recapture the place with little difficulty. Finally, the British military forces were dissipated in too many directions. The biggest forces were sent to the West Indies, where they were decimated by yellow fever in a useless campaign in San Domingo.

Breakdown of the Coalition.—By 1795 the triumphs of the Republic were so great that the formidable coalition against her was broken up. Holland became a subject-ally of France, under a republican government, and declared war against Britain. Spain also made peace with France, and in 1796 concluded an offensive and defensive alliance against Britain. Prussia concluded a humiliating peace at Basel, whereby she recognised French possession of all Western Germany up to the Rhine; * she deserted her allies because she was anxious to share in the last partition of Poland, † which took place in that year. Thanks to the gross mismanagement of overwhelming superiority, the most powerful coalition of European powers that had ever been formed had been broken up in less than three years. Only Britain, Austria, and the little Italian States remained in arms against the triumphant Republic, and the preponderance of power was now on the side of France. Even on the seas, a combination of France, Spain, and Holland menaced British naval supremacy. Pitt himself strove to make peace. But France would not listen. Her first enthusiasm for liberty had waned. She was now under the control of a knot of corrupt and cynical politicians, the Directory, who inherited much of the power of the Committee of Public Safety. She had tasted the glory and profit of conquest.

* For France, Central and Western Europe after the Treaty of Basel, see the larger Atlas, Plate 57; and also for Germany, see School Atlas, Introduction, p. 21, fig. 22.

† See School Atlas, Plate 196.

She now entered upon a new stage of her development, in which not liberty but dominion was the aim of her rulers. And as her chief foe she had marked down Britain, who had beaten her in the wars of the eighteenth century.

4. THE DARK YEARS (1795-1798)

Efforts for Peace.—The three years from 1795 to 1798 were among the most anxious and critical in the history of the British peoples. Three times, during these years, Pitt offered peace to France. He was willing to recognise the Republic's continental conquests, and to restore the islands which had been conquered from her in the West Indies. These offers were refused by the militant republic, whose appetite for conquest had become insatiable.

The Danger of Invasion.—In 1796 France planned an invasion, with an army of 15,000 veterans led by Lazare Hoche, the ablest of the republican generals. Ireland was at that moment on the verge of rebellion (see p. 479), and if the French army had landed, Ireland would almost certainly have been lost. A French fleet, with the army aboard, got out from Brest, and even reached the coast of Ireland in safety (December 1796). Only the accident of a fog and a storm prevented a landing. Luck rather than skill preserved Britain on this occasion. And in February 1797, a small French force actually landed at Fishguard in South Wales. It was easily dispersed, but the fact that it was able to land at all was alarming: it meant that the shield of the navy was not being rightly employed. Meanwhile (1796) the British fleet had to evacuate the Mediterranean, because it was not strong enough to face the combined French and Spanish fleets.

Napoleon in Italy.—During 1796 and the early part of 1797, however, the main strength of France was thrown not against Britain but against Austria. In 1796 the conquering career of Napoleon began. He was given command, at the age of twenty-seven, of an army which was to invade Italy, while two other French armies were sent to attack Austria across Southern Germany. Napoleon's dazzling campaign in Italy marked him as one of the greatest soldiers of all time, and gave to France the mastery of Northern Italy.* In the spring of 1797 he pressed on towards

* See School Atlas, Introduction, p. 19, fig. 19.

Vienna, and forced Austria to accept a humiliating peace, which left France practically mistress of Italy.*

Britain's Danger.—Britain now stood alone, exposed to all the strength of the formidable Republic. Ireland was ready for revolt, with 200,000 men secretly drilling. The victorious armies of France were free for an invasion of England or Ireland. Like the armies of Philip II two centuries before, they needed only to have the sea safely held until they could be ferried over. And for this purpose the fleets of Spain and Holland could now be added to those of France. If they could make a junction they might be strong enough to sweep the Channel fleet aside.

Cape St. Vincent.—In February 1797, the Mediterranean fleet of Spain came out through the Straits of Gibraltar. Watching the exit was Admiral Jervis, with fifteen battleships against the Spaniard's twenty-five. Second in command to Jervis was a young admiral, Horatio Nelson,† who was now to get his first great opportunity: it is a dramatic coincidence that the supreme genius of sea-warfare should have emerged almost at the same moment as the supreme genius of land warfare, whom he was to baffle. Off Cape St. Vincent, Jervis attacked the Spanish fleet, and broke the line. But the main body would have escaped if Nelson, disregarding orders, had not thrown himself against the head of the Spanish line and prevented its escape. Four Spanish ships were captured; the rest retreated tamely to Cadiz, where they were watched by a blockading squadron. The Battle of Cape St. Vincent checkmated the first move of the enemy.

Naval Mutinies.—But the French and the Dutch fleets had still to be dealt with, and it was they which were charged with the duty of transporting the invading army. The Channel fleet was watching the French; the North Sea fleet, under Duncan, was watching the Dutch. The very existence of Britain seemed to depend upon these fleets. And at this moment mutiny broke out in both—first in the Channel fleet, at Spithead; later, and more seriously, in the North Sea fleet, at the Nore. The sailors had very good reasons for discontent. They were largely recruited by the brutal methods of the press-gang; and they were badly paid and often

* See School Atlas, Introduction, p. 19, fig. 18.

† Southey's *Life of Nelson* is a sort of classic; it is included in Everyman's Library. There is a short modern Life by J. K. Laughton (*English Men of Action*). Mahan's *Life of Nelson* is the standard authority.

very badly treated. At Spithead they put forward reasonable demands, which were granted after unreasonable delay, and they returned readily to duty on the appeal of "Black Dick" Howe, the most popular of Nelson's predecessors. But at the Nore the mutiny, led by a midshipman named Parker, had a revolutionary character. For a time the mutineers actually blockaded the Thames.

Camperdown.—The whole of Duncan's fleet, except two vessels, left their station, where they were blockading the Dutch fleet, and Duncan was reduced to desperate devices to avoid betraying his weakness to the enemy. Only the fortunate accident that adverse winds kept the Dutch in the Texel prevented them from coming out to make a junction with the French and transport an army to Ireland. Happily the mutineers had returned to duty before the Dutch set sail (October); and in the hard-fought battle of *Camperdown* they won so decisive a victory that the Dutch fleet never put out to sea again.

St. Vincent and Camperdown between them removed the danger of invasion, and definitely re-established British naval supremacy. The project of invasion was not, indeed, abandoned; the French government appointed Napoleon to the command of the "army of England." But when Napoleon surveyed the situation, he felt that there was no glory to be won in this field, and advised that the best point at which to attack the British power was the East.

Napoleon in Egypt.—In May 1798, therefore, Napoleon set sail from Toulon, with a fine army and a great fleet, upon an expedition to Egypt. He seized Malta (which belonged to the Knights of St. John) and, landing at Alexandria, rapidly made himself master of Egypt—with whose rulers France had no quarrel. Egypt was to be the base for a later attack upon India, and this threat, as we shall see (p. 483 below), had a very important influence upon the development of the British Empire in India.

The Nile and Acre.—After the naval victories of 1797 the British Government had once more sent a fleet into the Mediterranean, and given the command to Nelson—his first independent command. He had missed the French fleet on its way to Egypt. But he descended upon it where it lay at anchor in *Aboukir Bay* (August 1798),* while Napoleon was lording it at Cairo, and completely annihilated the whole fleet in what was popularly known as

* See School Atlas, Introduction, p. 29, fig. 43.

"the Battle of the Nile." The result was that Napoleon was imprisoned in Egypt, where he was certain to be attacked by the Turks. To forestall this attack, he advanced into Syria, but was checked at *Acra*, largely by the aid of a British squadron under Sir Sydney Smith (1799). A little later he had to defend himself against a Turkish attack. Having done that, he slipped back to France, leaving the imprisoned army behind him.

The First French Disaster.—In 1801 the deserted army, and the French power in Egypt, were destroyed by a British force landed from the sea, which defeated the French at *Aboukir*, while another force from India co-operated with a Turkish army in the reconquest of Egypt. This was the first serious disaster which the French had had to endure. It was made possible by sea-power. Napoleon had received his first experience of the force that was to destroy him.

5. THE SECOND COALITION (1798–1801)

Formation of the Coalition.—During Napoleon's absence in Egypt, Pitt was able to organise a new coalition against France. In 1798 the French Directory occupied Switzerland without a shadow of justification, and extended its power over the whole of Italy by annexing Piedmont and creating dependent republics in Rome and Naples : * only Sicily remained free, because it was an island, and (thanks to the power of the British navy) French aggression could nowhere extend beyond low-water mark. These high-handed acts challenged resistance ; and the absence of Napoleon encouraged it. Austria and Russia made an alliance with Britain, who once more took up the rôle of pay-mistress.

Early Successes.—A joint plan of attack was devised. A combined British and Russian force was to reconquer Holland, and a combined Austrian and Russian force was to reconquer Italy, while the Austrians drove back the French in Germany. The campaign in Holland, under the Duke of York, was a humiliating failure, like every other British expedition sent out by Pitt : its only useful result was the destruction of the remnants of the Dutch fleet. But the campaigns in Germany and (still more) in Italy were much more successful. The French were driven out of Italy, and were being

* See School Atlas, Introduction, p. 19, fig. 18.

beaten back through the mountains of Switzerland, when they succeeded in checking the Russian advance at Zürich (September 1799).

Napoleon in Power.—At this moment Napoleon slipped back from Egypt. The Directory had long been unpopular in France, and the disasters of 1799 had still further undermined its power. In this situation Napoleon saw the chance of securing his own power. By a *coup d'état*, in November 1799, he overthrew the directorate and set up a new constitution, under which executive power was entrusted to three Consuls. Napoleon himself became First Consul and practically dictator; and France willingly accepted his rule, and abandoned her dreams of political liberty.

Collapse of the Coalition.—Next year, 1800, Napoleon threw himself at the Austrians in Italy,* crossing the Great St. Bernard Pass, which no army had ever crossed before, and thus getting to the rear of the main Austrian army, which he defeated at Marengo. A little later another French army won a crushing victory over the Austrians in Germany, at Hohenlinden; and Austria, beaten to her knees, was forced to accept the humiliating Treaty of Lunéville (1801). Meanwhile the eccentric Tsar Paul of Russia, who had conceived a warm admiration for Napoleon, had not only concluded peace, but had made an alliance with France against Britain.

New Danger to Britain.—Once again, therefore, a powerful European coalition had been shattered; and once again Britain was left to withstand the might of France alone. Napoleon made plans for the invasion of England. But for this purpose he needed additional naval strength. He saw a chance of getting it by stirring up again the anger of the neutral powers against the restrictions on their trade imposed by Britain. Under the leadership of Tsar Paul, the Armed Neutrality of 1780 (above, p. 417) was reconstituted; Denmark and Sweden joined it, and threatened to exclude British trade from the Baltic; and there was a chance of using their fleets, as well as that of Russia, to reinforce the French fleets.

Copenhagen.—The British Government, however, struck promptly and hard. A fleet was sent to Copenhagen, under Sir Hyde Parker, with Nelson second in command, to demand that Denmark should withdraw her threat. The Danish Government refused; whereupon Nelson, disregarding the dilatory methods of

* See School Atlas, Introduction, p. 19, fig. 19.

his chief, attacked the Danish fleet, which was anchored under the guns of Copenhagen,* sank or took most of the ships, silenced the batteries, and threatened to bombard the city. The Danish Government yielded, and abandoned the Armed Neutrality (April 1801). A little later Tsar Paul of Russia was assassinated; his successor, Alexander I, promptly made terms with Britain, and the Armed Neutrality ceased to exist.

The Treaty of Amlens.—Thus baffled, a second time, by sea-power, Napoleon decided to make peace. He wanted time to organise his power and to consolidate his empire. The British Government had always been eager for peace. Pitt had just gone out of office, for reasons which will be noted in the next chapter. His successor, Addington, negotiated the *Treaty of Amiens*, whereby each side undertook to restore its conquests. This meant that Britain gave back to France her West Indian islands; France had nothing to give back, for she had conquered nothing from Britain. There were many who hoped that France had now settled down after her revolutionary frenzy, and that the peace might be a lasting one. It was to prove no more than a truce: war was soon to be resumed, no longer against revolution, but against the ambition of the greatest conqueror who has ever played a part in history. But the close of the first phase of this long and desperate struggle affords a stopping-place at which it will be possible to consider what effects had been produced upon the life of the British people by the first eight years of war.

CHAPTER XXXVII

EFFECTS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTIONARY WAR UPON THE BRITISH PEOPLES

I. SOCIAL EFFECTS IN BRITAIN

ALL great wars deeply affect the life of the peoples who take part in them. But the influence of the French Revolutionary War upon the British peoples was especially deep, because it came upon them at a very critical stage in their development.

* See School Atlas, Introduction, p. 29, fig. 44.

Financial Crisis.—We have already seen (p. 466) how the war stopped a promising movement of constitutional reform in Britain. By persuading the ruling classes to identify all change with revolution, it caused the postponement of necessary changes for forty years. The social effects of the war were equally serious. In the first place it caused a financial crisis. In the critical year 1797 there was so much insecurity that there was a run on the Bank of England, which would have failed if Pitt had not, in a single night, rushed through an Act cancelling the obligation to make cash payments, and making the notes of the Bank legal tender. It was not until 1819 that cash payments were resumed. The result was that the value of money (not being fixed in relation to gold) fell, or, in other words, prices rose. This was advantageous to a small class, who made rapid fortunes. But it inflicted great hardships upon the mass of the people, for wages did not rise in proportion to the rise of prices.

Shortage of Food.—A second result of the war was even more serious. Owing to the rapid increase of the population of Britain since 1750, the country was unable to feed itself: it needed to import about one-fifth of its foodstuffs, mainly from Poland and eastern Europe. But the war made these supplies more difficult to get, and more expensive; and in some years, when there were bad harvests at home, there was a serious shortage of food. The price of wheat rose very rapidly: by the end of the century a loaf of bread cost three times as much as it had cost fifty years before; and this inflicted great suffering upon the poorer classes, whose wages did not rise in proportion. The Government tried to meet the difficulty by encouraging the production of more food at home. For this purpose it passed Corn Laws, forbidding the importation of corn until the price of home-grown corn had reached a certain level. These had very little effect; but they created the belief that the price of food was being artificially raised.

Rapid Enclosures.—More important, the urgency of the need, and the high prices obtainable for corn, gave an immense stimulus to the enclosure movement and the development of scientific agriculture. Landowners and farmers were generally exceedingly prosperous. But, as we have seen, the result of wholesale enclosures was to crush out of existence the small farmer and the cottager with a little land. They sank to be merely wage-earning labourers, and because the competition for work was very keen, wages ruled very

low. At the same time, the growth of spinning machinery was depriving the cottager's wife and daughters of the chance of adding to the family income by their spinning-wheels. The result was that the general diffusion of comfort which had been one of the features of English life in the early part of the eighteenth century disappeared ; and a great gulf was opened between the prosperous landowners and farmers, who were richer than they had ever been, and the labouring class, who were generally worse off than they had ever been.

Poor Law Policy.—The distress was so great, and the level of wages was so inadequate to support life, that the Poor Law authorities began to make grants from the rates to supplement wages in proportion to the number of the labourer's children. This practice was begun, in 1795, by the magistrates of Berkshire after a meeting at Speenhamland ; it spread so rapidly that people spoke of the "Speenhamland Act," as if the practice had been enforced by Parliament. However well intended, this practice was wholly mischievous in its effects. It discouraged a rise of wages : why should the farmer pay more when the ratepayer would meet part of his wages bill for him ? It encouraged large families : the more children a labourer had the more money he got. It pauperised the working population wherever it was applied. It was cruelly unfair to the smallholder, who had to contribute in rates towards the wages of the big farmer whose competition was ruining him. Worst of all, it practically enslaved part of the population. The Poor Law Authorities had power to put recipients of relief to work. Often they hired them out in gangs, at a low price, to the farmers, supplementing this inadequate payment from the rates. But the cruellest aspect of this practice was that under it thousands of children were "apprenticed" to distant factories—taken from their poor homes at eight or even five years of age to work for long hours in the ugly northern towns, friendless, hopeless, and without tendance. -

Restriction of Markets.—The war also had an unhappy effect upon the new industrial system which was growing up. For one thing, it prevented any attempt to ensure that the new towns which were springing up were properly governed, decently built, and made fit to be the homes of a great people. And it also increased the sufferings which were in any case bound to be caused by the introduction of mechanical production. The quantity of goods produced was being rapidly increased—so rapidly that enlarged markets were needed if the machines were not to be the cause of

serious unemployment ; and the war prevented the natural expansion of markets which would have taken place in time of peace.

Prohibition of Trade Unions.—Finally, there was no supervision of the conditions under which labour was employed, and no means of ensuring that adequate wages were paid. The workers soon began to form themselves into little clubs, or embryo Trade Unions, to gain strength in dealing with their employers. But because of the atmosphere created by the French Revolution, these combinations were regarded as dangerous and revolutionary. In 1799 and 1800 Parliament passed two Acts, known as the *Combination Acts*, which forbade all trade combinations under severe penalties, and treated them as unlawful conspiracies. Thus while the State refused to protect the working class against unfair treatment, it also refused to allow them to protect themselves.

In many ways, then, the War of the French Revolution brought great suffering to the mass of the British people, and greatly increased the difficulties which would in any case have resulted from the profound economic changes that were taking place. Things were not by any means as bad, during the first part of the war, as they became later, during the crisis of the grim struggle against Napoleon. But they were already bad enough. The fathers and mothers of the men who fought at Trafalgar and Waterloo—who themselves were often very harshly used—were undergoing an ordeal as bitter as that which their sons had to endure. And the struggle against revolution was bringing about a cleavage between the rich and prosperous classes and the poor and suffering classes in Britain which was later to make a British Revolution seem almost as inevitable as the French Revolution had been.

2. IRELAND : '98 AND THE UNION

Ireland since 1782.—The effects of the French Revolution and the war were most cruelly felt in Ireland, where everything turns to tragedy. Since the last years of the American War, Ireland had enjoyed freedom of trade and legislative independence. She was more prosperous than she had ever been. The old religious bitterness was dying down. The cruel social disabilities of the Catholics had been swept away ; and although they were still excluded from political rights, there was a large body of opinion among the Protestants which was in favour of equal rights. This improved temper, however,

had not spread to the peasantry. From 1784 onwards there were frequent faction-fights between rival gangs, the (Protestant) Peep o' Day Boys and the (Catholic) Defenders; and agrarian outrages were frequent. Great reforms were needed in the economic system. But the now independent Parliament was not likely to carry them out, nor was it likely to do justice to the Catholics. It was still controlled by a little group of corrupt borough-owners, who were not in the least likely to destroy their own power. And because of this, Ireland was still—in spite of legislative independence—under the effective control of the British Government. For the British Government still disposed of all posts, pensions, and peerages, and by these means was able, as a rule, to buy the support of the Irish oligarchy.

The United Irishmen.—The coming of the French Revolution profoundly affected this situation. At first, revolutionary ideas had no welcome among the Catholics. But they were eagerly taken up by the Protestants of Ulster. It was in Ulster that the revolutionary and anti-English movement had its start. In 1791 a young Belfast lawyer, Wolfe Tone, published a vigorous pamphlet in which he argued that the British Government was the main obstacle to all reform in Ireland, and that Irishmen of both faiths should unite to throw off the British yoke. The Society of United Irishmen was founded for this purpose, in Belfast; and it got into secret relations with the French revolutionary leaders: in 1794 Wolfe Tone had to flee the country. Meanwhile the Defender movement was spreading among the Irish peasantry. Midnight outrages, and affrays between Catholics and Protestants, were becoming more common: in 1795 this ugly violence was raging over half of Ireland. It had nothing to do, as yet, with the United Irishmen, but it frightened the Protestants and prevented most of them from joining the United Irish movement.

Imperfect Conciliation.—Pitt believed that the Catholics might prove to be the best safeguard against revolution. To win their favour, in 1793, he compelled the controlling oligarchy in the Irish Parliament to confer the franchise upon Catholics. He thus showed that the British Government did in fact control the Irish Parliament. The Act, however, while it gave Catholics the right to vote, did not give them the right to sit in Parliament. It therefore alienated the Catholic gentry, and prevented their influence from being felt. In the next year, 1794, Lord Fitzwilliam (one of the

Burke section of Whigs) was sent over as Lord-Lieutenant. He was known to be an advocate of complete Catholic emancipation, and his coming awakened high hopes. But six weeks after his arrival he was suddenly recalled. This undid all the good that had been done. It drove the Catholics into the arms of the United Irishmen, who themselves admitted that their cause had made no progress until the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam. This was one of the most disastrous of Pitt's blunders. Just at the moment when the first coalition had failed, and when Britain was about to be left to face France alone, a stimulus was given to the revolutionary movement in Ireland.

Preparations for Revolt.—In 1795 the United Irishmen began to join forces with the Defenders. United Irish Lodges sprang up in great numbers in southern Ireland. The conspirators began secret arming and drilling. Government passed an Insurrection Act, and suspended *Habeas Corpus*, but it was of no avail. There were secret negotiations with France for an invasion, and in December 1796 (see p. 469), a great French fleet nearly succeeded in landing a large army on the south coast of Ireland. During 1797 the drilling went on; it was estimated that there were 200,000 men in arms in that year. That was the year when the French, Spanish, and Dutch fleets were available to transport a new French army to Ireland. It was the year of the naval mutinies. It was the most anxious year in British history.

Disarmament of Ulster.—To guard against the impending peril, the Irish government commissioned General Lake to disarm Ulster, where the United Irish movement had been strongest. The work was largely done by Protestant yeomanry, recruited in the district, who had had their experience of faction-fights, and were almost frantic with fear and hate. Grim and cruel deeds were done, but Ulster was disarmed. The rest of Ireland heard the story; it did not lose in the telling. The United Irish leaders decided that a rising must take place before it was too late. They fixed it for 1798, still hoping for French aid; but St. Vincent and Camperdown had made French aid on a large scale impossible, and Napoleon had reached that conclusion and gone off to Egypt before the rising broke out.

United Irish Organisation.—The organisation of the United Irishmen was by this time very elaborate. A network of Lodges covered the country; they were directed by secret "barony"

committees, and these in their turn by secret "provincial" committees, with a national executive at the head of all, whose membership was not even known to the rank and file. All this was very impressive; but the worst of it was that if the secret controlling body disappeared, nobody would know that it had gone. In March 1798, Government, well posted by its spies, seized the Leinster executive, proclaimed martial law in Leinster, and started disarming that province. Even worse cruelties than those of Ulster took place. The result was that the revolt was precipitated in May 1798. But it was leaderless, because the leaders had been seized—among them Lord Edward Fitzgerald, son of the premier peer of Ireland, a very generous-minded but reckless young man.

The Rebellion of '98.—The rebellion of 1798 was a pitiful business—a blind rising of ignorant and terrified peasants, who perpetrated horrible outrages where they got the upper hand. But it was serious only in south-eastern Leinster, and especially in Wexford. In June, at *Vinegar Hill*, where they had formed an entrenched camp, the bewildered and desperate rebels were scattered and decimated. Savage repression followed; and Ireland was again subjugated. In August and September, when all was over, French forces at last reached Ireland. A little force landed at Killala, on the west coast, and routed a force of militia at Castlebar; but it was surrounded and forced to surrender by Lord Cornwallis, now Lord-Lieutenant. A French fleet, with an army, also came to Lough Swilly; but it could do nothing. Wolfe Tone, who came with it, was captured and committed suicide; that was the epilogue of the tragic story of '98.*

The Problem of Settlement.—The difficulty of reaching a settlement after all these miseries was very great. If the Protestant ascendancy was left to wield uncontrolled power, it was likely to misuse its power as it had done after the revolution of 1689. For the sake of the Catholics, in a large degree, Pitt and Cornwallis came to the conclusion that the only possible solution was a legislative union with England, and they hoped—and, indeed, promised—that it would be followed by a measure of complete Catholic emancipation. But the Union had to be adopted by the Irish Parliament; and neither the Irish borough-owners, who found their power profitable, nor the reformers like Grattan, who had hoped to use the

* For Ireland, see School Atlas, Plate 396.

Parliament as a means of reform, would willingly agree to terminate its existence. The thing had to be done by the grossest bribery ; £1,200,000 in money and a vast number of peerages and places had to be distributed among the members. " I despise and hate myself every hour," Cornwallis wrote, " for engaging in such dirty work ; and am only supported by the reflection that without a Union the British Empire must be dissolved."

The Union and its Failure.—The Union gave to Ireland 100 members in the House of Commons, and, in the House of Lords, 28 representative peers and 4 bishops. But almost all Irishmen—Protestants even more than Catholics—hated the necessity of giving up the symbol of national life. What did they get in return ? The Scots had received freedom of trade throughout the British Empire, and this had reconciled them, and made the Union seem worth while ; but Ireland had already received freedom of trade, in 1780. One thing alone, if it had been granted as a result of Union, might have reconciled the Irish people—religious equality. Pitt had realised this, and had practically promised that a measure of Catholic Emancipation should be promptly passed by the United Parliament. But when he came to propose it, he found that George III had a rooted objection, and was convinced that to concede such a measure would be a violation of his coronation oath. The king's reason was tottering, and the excitement might have overturned it. Pitt, therefore, did not insist, but resigned his post to preserve his personal honour. It may perhaps be doubted whether the reason of a king was more important than the peace of a nation.

3. EFFECTS OF THE WAR UPON THE BRITISH EMPIRE

The French Revolutionary War had a very direct effect upon the development of the British Empire, and led to considerable acquisitions of territory.

The West Indies.—In the West Indies there was hard fighting during the first years. The ideas of the revolution created great excitement among the negro slaves in some of the islands. Large military and naval forces were employed in suppressing these troubles, notably in Jamaica, and in conquering the French islands.* For five years British forces were engaged on a futile struggle in the

* Marryat's rattling yarns, especially *Peter Simple* and *Midshipman Easy*, deal largely with the West Indies, as well as with the general naval warfare of the period.

French island of San Domingo, where the negroes had revolted and overwhelmed their white masters ; the losses in this resultless war were heavier than those in Europe ; yet in the end a remarkable negro leader, Toussaint l'Ouverture, succeeded in driving out the British army (1798).

Conquests in the West.—When the Dutch joined the French (1795) an expedition was sent to Dutch Guiana (1796), and Demerara was conquered : this was the beginning of *British Guiana*. When Spain also came in (1796), the fine Spanish island of *Trinidad* was conquered. There was also hard fighting on the coast of Honduras, where Spain tried to expel the British traders who had long resorted to this coast to cut logwood. The " Baymen " held their own ; and thereafter *British Honduras* was regularly organised as a colony. In spite of all this fighting, the West Indies enjoyed during the war a period of great prosperity : they were accounted the most valuable of all the British possessions.

Conquests from the Dutch.—More important conquests were made from the Dutch in the East. In 1796, after the Dutch declaration of war, a fleet and an army were dispatched to the Cape of Good Hope, for it seemed important not to leave in enemy hands that vital port of call on the way to India. There had been a modest Dutch colony at the Cape since 1652, and the settlers, spreading outwards, had already spread over a great part of the modern *Cape Colony*,* which now for the first time became a British possession. Finally, the Island of *Ceylon* had long been controlled by the Dutch. In 1795 it was occupied by a detachment of troops from India ; and in 1798 it was organised as a separate colony under the direct authority of the British Crown. Thus the involvement of Britain in war with the other colonising powers led to an easy and almost automatic expansion of the new British Empire, whose foundations had been laid so soon after the loss of the American colonies.

4. WELLESLEY AND PARAMOUNT POWER IN INDIA (1798—1805)

But all other imperial developments were dwarfed by the extraordinary expansion of the British power in India † which directly resulted from the French revolutionary war.

* See School Atlas, Plate 56b.

† See School Atlas, Plate 53c.

Situation in India.—When the war broke out in 1793, Lord Cornwallis's governorship was just coming to an end. His successor, Sir John Shore (1793–1798) felt himself bound by his instructions from home to avoid all interventions in native politics. The result was that the greater native states learned to distrust the British power, and fell an easy prey to the intrigues of the French. Tipu Sahib, of Mysore, whom Cornwallis had recently defeated, was burning for revenge. He engaged French officers to reorganise his army, and made a secret treaty with the French at Mauritius: this ferocious tyrant was known in Paris as *citoyen Tipou*, and was regarded as an invaluable ally against Britain. The greatest of the Maratha princes, notably Sindhia, also had French officers to train their armies. And the Nizam of Hyderabad, who was in a dangerous position between Tipu and the Marathas, and who suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Marathas in 1795, felt that his French-officered army was his only protection, since the British power refused to have anything to do with him. Thus the result of the policy of non-intervention, laid down in the Act of 1784, was that the Company was left without allies, and that all the native powers were under French influence.

Wellesley in India.—This was the situation in 1798, when Napoleon set forth upon his Egyptian campaign, meaning to make Egypt the base for an attack upon India. At this moment, in April 1798—just three months before Napoleon landed in Egypt—a new Governor-General arrived in India: Lord Mornington, later Marquis of Wellesley,* and elder brother of the Duke of Wellington, whose great career started in India under his brother's ægis. Wellesley at once saw that it was necessary to abandon the policy of non-intervention, and to return to the policy of Warren Hastings, who had striven to maintain peace in India by means of a system of alliances with the native powers. But Wellesley's aims went far beyond those of Hastings. He believed that peace in India could only be maintained under the control of a supreme power; and he had made up his mind that that supreme power should be Britain.

Overthrow of Mysore.—The most immediate danger came from Tipu, who was manifestly preparing to attack. Wellesley first offered to Tipu's neighbour, the Nizam, a guarantee of his territories

* There is a good short Life of Wellesley by W. H. Hutton (*Rulers of India*).

on condition that he dismissed his French officers. He then launched against Tipu a carefully prepared attack; *Seringapatam*, Tipu's capital, was taken by storm, and the Sultan himself fell. The State of Mysore was deprived of half of its territories, all its lands on the west coast being annexed by the Company. The throne of what remained was given to the heir of the old Hindu rajas whom Tipu's father Hyder Ali had displaced; but a treaty which put him in a position of definite subordination was imposed upon him. He was to be protected by a British force, the cost of which he was to pay; and he was to have no independent relations with any external power. This treaty of "subsidiary alliance" was the model for the future relations of the Company with the Indian States.

Organisation of Southern India.—Wellesley next made a new permanent treaty with the Nizam (1800), whereby he also became a "subsidiary ally" contributing the cost of the army which was to defend him. A little later (1801) the Nawab of the Carnatic and the Raja of Tanjore, whose territories had been misgoverned, were pensioned off, and their States were taken under direct administration. Thus in three years the whole of southern India was brought under British supremacy; the area directly governed by British officials was vastly increased, and all the native States had been reduced to direct subordination.

The North-West Provinces.—Wellesley also turned his attention to the north. Here the extensive State of Oudh, which had been an ally of the Company since 1765, had fallen into a condition of complete confusion and misgovernment; Shore had tried in vain to reform it. Wellesley persuaded the Vizier of Oudh to accept a new treaty of "subsidiary alliance," on the familiar model, and at the same time to cede to the Company about half of his territories. These ceded lands, from Rohilkhand to Allahabad, included the whole of the region between the Ganges and the Jumna, and curved round the diminished State of Oudh, lying like a barrier between it and the Marathas. It became the "North-West Provinces," attached to Bengal. Warren Hastings had conceived of Oudh as a barrier against the Marathas; Wellesley, having reduced Oudh to complete subordination, had interposed a long line of British territory between that State and the Marathas. Thus the whole of the Ganges valley, as well as the whole of southern India, had now been brought under British control. The organisation of these new provinces was a great undertaking. The ability with which it was

carried out was not the least of Wellesley's achievements. He got together a group of men of great capacity, who did much to fix the traditions and methods of British rule in India.

This was as far as Wellesley's work had been carried when the Peace of Amiens was concluded. But it will be convenient to carry on here the story of his administration down to 1805, when he was recalled.

The Treaty of Bassein.—The formidable Maratha con-

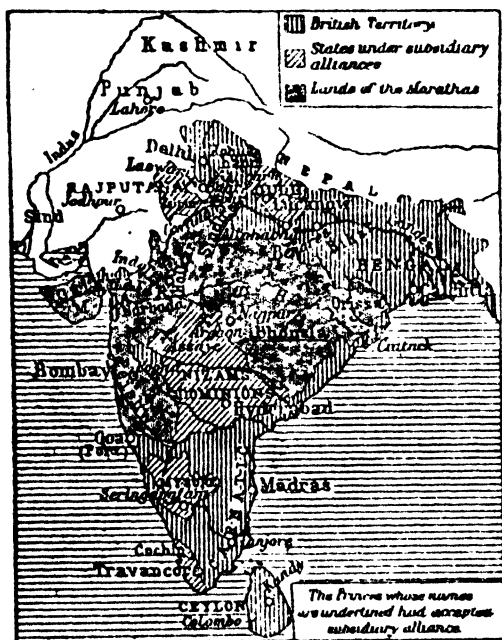


FIG. 32.—India in 1805.

federacy of princes now found itself hemmed in between the two great blocks of the British Indian Empire—the Ganges valley in the north, and the Deccan in the south. To complete Wellesley's grandiose conception of a British supremacy extending over all India, the Maratha princes also had to be brought into a condition of dependence. An opportunity of achieving this end presented itself in 1802, when an intestine war was raging among the Maratha princes, and the Peshwa—the head of the confederacy—

was dethroned by Holkar, Raja of Indore. Wellesley offered to restore the Peshwa to his throne at Poona on condition that he accepted a "subsidiary alliance." He did so by the *Treaty of Bassein* (1802); was restored by a British army under Arthur Wellesley; and reascended his throne as a vassal of the East India Company.

War with the Marathas.—But the Marathas, who had so recently dominated India, were not likely to submit to this arrangement, which destroyed all possibility of a Maratha supremacy. The directors of the East India Company at home were equally alarmed by the far-reaching ambitions which this policy revealed. Their condemnation of the Treaty of Bassein, however, did not reach India until the two most powerful of the Maratha princes, Sindhia of Gwalior and Bhonsla of Nagpur, had declared war (1803). Three months sufficed for the war. In the south, Arthur Wellesley made his name by the brilliant victories of *Assaye* and *Argaon*; in the north, General Lake stormed the fortress of *Aligarh*, defeated the army of Sindhia under its French officers at *Delhi*, and finally shattered it at *Laswari*. The result of this series of crushing blows was that Bhonsla had to cede the coast-province of Orissa, which linked up Bengal with Madras; that both he and Sindhia had to accept subsidiary alliances; and that the blind old Mogul Emperor and his historic capital of Delhi—symbols of Indian supremacy—passed from the protection of the Marathas to the protection of the East India Company (1803).

Recall of Wellesley.—One powerful Maratha prince, however—Holkar—was still unconquered; he had taken no part in the war. He now declared war on his own account. He had not Europeanised his army, but still clung to the old Maratha fashion of fighting with clouds of elusive horsemen. He was able to inflict a serious reverse upon a British force under Colonel Monson (1804), while his ally, the Raja of Bharatpur, repelled an attack upon his capital. These were only momentary checks; it is beyond doubt that Wellesley would have achieved his ends, and established the paramount power of the Company over all the Maratha princes and their vassals. But these checks gave to the Directors the excuse which they wanted. They recalled Wellesley when his work was on the verge of completion; and the Marathas were allowed to resume almost all their old independence.

Effects of Wellesley's Rule.—Nevertheless, Wellesley had achieved amazing results in an incredibly short time. He had

practically turned the British Empire *in* India into the British Empire *of* India. Henceforward the East India Company, acting under the control of the British Government, was the paramount power in a sub-continent as large and as populous as the whole of Europe excluding Russia. This was less than fifty years after Clive won the battle of Plassey. It was an achievement essentially more remarkable, and destined to be far more lasting, than all the conquests of Napoleon. Wellesley was not only a great conqueror, he was a great administrator. The men whom he chose to organise his new provinces, and to perform the delicate work of Residents at the courts of the dependent princes, did remarkable work. Wellesley himself carried out a separation of judicial from administrative work which was of high value; and he had other bold projects of re-organisation which the timidity of the Directors did not allow him to carry out. After Clive and Warren Hastings, he was the third great founder of the British Empire in India.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST NAPOLEON (1803-1815)

1. THE CONFLICT OF THE ELEPHANT AND THE WHALE

Renewal of War.—When Napoleon concluded the Treaty of Amiens, he had no intention of making peace permanent. He wanted a breathing-space in which to organise his power in France, to consolidate his position in Europe, to build up a fleet, and to reconstruct a French colonial empire. Fortunately for the British peoples and the world, he did not give himself time enough. The peace had lasted only eighteen months (October 1801–May 1803) when it was terminated by Napoleon's own eager impatience to strike down the power of Britain, which seemed to be—and was—the only obstacle in the way of his grandiose designs. But in this short time he achieved marvellous results.

Napoleon's Empire.—By the new constitution of 1799, which was ratified by a plebiscite of the French nation, Napoleon had become First Consul for ten years. He had nominally to work with two other consuls, and an elaborate series of legislative bodies; but

these had very little power, and from the beginning the First Consul was practically a dictator. This did not satisfy him. In 1802, again with the support of a plebiscite, he became Consul for life; and in 1804 he became Emperor, and the title was made hereditary. Meanwhile the powers of the various legislative bodies were whittled away till they amounted to nothing. Napoleon was in fact a despot; but his was a popular despotism, resting upon repeated popular votes; it was also a military despotism, supported by the enthusiastic devotion of the army. It was popular because it was efficient. Both by his wonderful codes of law, and by the firm hand which he kept over his local representatives, Napoleon gave to France better government than she had ever known, though there was not a trace of democracy in it. It was supported by a very elaborate system of secret police; and freedom of speech and of the Press was suppressed. The whole of the resources of the most powerful country in Europe were absolutely at Napoleon's disposal. France already included all Belgium, and Germany as far as the Rhine, and in 1802 Piedmont, in Northern Italy, was annexed.

Napoleon's Vassals.—Round France lay a ring of dependent States, conquered by the Republic, upon which Napoleon imposed constitutions modelled on the new constitution of France. Northern Italy became (1805) the Kingdom of Italy,* and Napoleon assumed its crown. Holland was forced to accept a dictated constitution (1801). In Germany (1801) Napoleon intervened as mediator, and built up out of the innumerable German States a few stronger ones which were bound to him in alliance. † Spain dared not resist his orders. He was effectively master of Western Europe. ‡

His Colonial Aims.—Europe was not enough. He was reviving great schemes of oversea dominion. An army of 25,000 men was sent during the peace to reconquer San Domingo in the West Indies. Spain was forced to give back to France the vast region of Louisiana, west of the Mississippi: a new French empire was to be created in America. A mission was sent to Egypt, and its report (which was published during the peace) stated that 6,000 men would be enough to hold that country for France. A

* For the Napoleonic Reconstruction of Italy, see School Atlas, Introduction, p. 19, fig. 18.

† For the German mediatisation, see School Atlas, Introduction, p. 21, fig. 22, and also the larger Atlas, Plate 724.

‡ School Atlas, Plate 18.

small army was also sent out to garrison the French trading stations in India—where French officers, as we have seen, were in command of the armies of the Maratha princes, soon to make war against the Company.

The Outbreak of War.—Evidently the hopes of lasting peace which were entertained in Britain were doomed to disappointment. Napoleon clearly thought he was strong enough to deal with Britain. He made many complaints, demanding the expulsion of French exiles, and the suppression of newspapers which criticised him. Finally, he demanded the immediate evacuation of Malta (as promised by the Treaty of Amiens) and the recognition of his annexations in Italy and Switzerland, which were in defiance of treaties. In May 1803, Addington's Cabinet declared war. Napoleon replied by imprisoning 10,000 British travellers who had gone to France.

This was the opening of the most desperate conflict in which Britain had ever been engaged.* At the outset she stood alone; but in the course of the twelve years of fighting which followed, all Europe was drawn in. This was not a war against revolutionary ideas; it was a war to resist the subjugation of Europe and the world by the mightiest military despotism that had ever existed. Napoleon himself realised the nature of the conflict. "England is the enemy," he said, "and the struggle will be between her and ME. All Europe will be our instruments, sometimes serving one, sometimes the other."

2. THE ATTEMPT TO INVADE BRITAIN (1803-1805)

The Plan of Invasion.—Napoleon's first object was to bring the war to a rapid conclusion by an invasion of England. A magnificent army of 100,000 veterans, known as "the Army of England," was assembled on the shores of the Straits of Dover, with its headquarters at Boulogne. Two thousand flat-bottomed boats were constructed to ferry them across, and they were constantly practised in rapid embarkation. Here they remained, from June 1803 to September 1805, waiting for a chance of getting across without being intercepted by the British fleet. But the chance of their doing so was very small: Nelson was in charge of the scheme of naval defence. Meanwhile a vast number of volunteers were enrolled in Britain,

* Thomas Hardy's great chronicle-play, *The Dynasts*, deals imaginatively with the whole titanic conflict. Read also Wordsworth's patriotic sonnets, which nobly expressed the spirit of Britain in these years.

some 300,000 in all, drawn from all classes.* The dockyards were working at full pressure, adding new vessels to the navy; while strong blockading squadrons watched all the French and Dutch naval ports.

Pitt's Return to Power.—In Ireland Napoleon tried to stir up a rising. It was led by a gallant lad, Robert Emmet (1803); but it came to nothing beyond a riot in the streets of Dublin, in which the Chief Justice was killed. In England the sense of national danger led to a demand for the return of Pitt to power. Pitt would have liked to form a national ministry, including the Whigs under Fox; but George III's hatred of Fox was still so strong that this was impossible; the more extreme Tories also stood out; and it was with a very weak government that Pitt faced the second great war peril with which he had had to deal. From the moment of his taking office, he strove to build up a new European coalition to ward off the danger of invasion; once more he offered to pay the cost of European armies, and he succeeded in stimulating Austria and Russia, Sweden and Naples, to take up arms. But the Third Coalition was not formed until 1805, and until then the peril of invasion continued.

Naval Strategy.—Napoleon soon realised that invasion was impossible unless the Channel could be held, if only for a short time, by naval power. In 1804 he forced Spain to declare war once more against Britain. But the problem was, how to bring about a concentration of the scattered French and Spanish fleets, so as to control the Channel; for the British blockading squadrons (especially that off Brest, under Cornwallis) hung on very persistently. In 1805 he worked out a very ingenious plan. The various fleets, or as many of them as possible, were to slip out from port and *rendezvous* in the West Indies. This, it was expected, would draw off the British fleets for the defence of these valuable islands. Then the fleets were to make straight back to Europe, release any blockaded squadrons left behind, and hold the Channel while the army of invasion crossed.

Villeneuve and Nelson.—In March 1805, Villeneuve, with the French Mediterranean fleet, got out from Toulon, and, picking up a Spanish squadron at Cadiz, made for the West Indies.† Nelson, though outnumbered by almost two to one, pursued him, and reached

* Scott's novel, *The Antiquary*, which deals with this period, gives an amusing account of the volunteers and their occasional alarms.

† School Atlas, Introduction, p. 28, Fig. 4a.

the West Indies not long after him. When the news came that Villeneuve had been seen making from the islands for the open sea, the West Indian authorities, convinced that this was only a ruse, insisted that Nelson must remain to defend them. But he saw through the device; and sending his swiftest ship to warn the Admiralty, set sail once more across the Atlantic. The result was that when Villeneuve returned, he was met off *Ferrol* by a squadron under Sir Robert Calder, with whom he fought an indecisive battle. Instead of pressing on, and trying to relieve the blockaded fleet at Brest, he fell back first upon Corunna, and later upon Cadiz. The danger of a naval concentration in the Channel was at an end. The coalition of European Powers had been completed just when Nelson's return checkmated Napoleon's scheme; and the Army of England had to break up its camp at Boulogne.

Trafalgar.—But the big naval concentration under Villeneuve still lay at Cadiz. Nelson was given the task of dealing with it. With twenty-seven ships he sailed from Portsmouth on September 28th, 1805. Stung by Napoleon's taunts, Villeneuve came out to meet him with his thirty-three; and on October 21st, off Cape Trafalgar, the most decisive naval battle in history was fought.* Between noon and 5 p.m. on a grey autumn day, the enemy fleet was shattered: eighteen of its ships were sunk or captured, and four more were subsequently taken. The sovereignty of the seas remained unchallengeably in British hands; and however great the power of Napoleon might become, it stopped at the sea-shore. Nelson, mortally wounded early in the fight, had the supreme felicity that, as he gave up his life, he knew that his life-work was triumphantly finished.

3. NAPOLEON MASTER OF EUROPE (1805-1807)

Third Coalition Shattered.—The day before the battle of Trafalgar, the French army, hurled swiftly across Europe, forced an Austrian army to capitulate at *Ulm*. In November Napoleon occupied Vienna. At the beginning of December he won, at *Austerlitz*, † the most dazzling of all his victories, over a combined Austrian and Russian army. Before the end of the year Austria

* For the battle of Trafalgar, see School Atlas, Introduction, p. 29, fig. 43.

† For the battle of Austerlitz, see School Atlas, Introduction, p. 15, fig. 11.

was out of the war, and had submitted to the humiliating Treaty of Pressburg.

Reorganisation of Europe.—Napoleon was free to reorganise Central Europe (1806). He annexed Venetia and Dalmatia, taken from Austria, to his Italian kingdom. He conquered Naples, and turned it into a kingdom for his brother Joseph. He turned Holland into a kingdom for his brother Louis. He swept away the Holy Roman Empire, which had existed for a thousand years, rearranged the whole political geography of Germany,* and grouped the consolidated States which he had created into a Confederation of the Rhine, bound to permanent alliance with France, and required to supply an army for every fresh war.

Jena and Tilsit.—In October 1806, Prussia, which had enjoyed a profitable neutrality for ten years (since 1795), found it impossible any longer to endure Napoleon's contemptuous treatment, and declared war. In a week's campaign her army was routed at *Jena* † and *Auerstadt*; Berlin was occupied; and the king of Prussia fell back upon the protection of Russia. But (after a check at *Eylau*) Napoleon decisively defeated the Russians also, at *Friedland* (1807). The Tsar, fascinated by the conqueror's genius, resolved to make peace with him. They met on a raft in the River Niemen, at *Tilsit* (1807), made alliance against Britain, and settled (or so it seemed) the fate of Europe. Prussia had to submit to the loss of two-thirds of her territories, to the payment of an indemnity, to the limitation of her army, and to the maintenance of a large French army on her soil. Part of her territory went to form a kingdom of Westphalia for Napoleon's brother Jerome. Another part (her spoil from the partitions of Poland) went to form a grand Duchy of Warsaw, in dependent alliance with France.‡

Britain v. Europe.—In two years the geography of Europe had been reconstructed; and Napoleon was master of the Continent. There was no power in the world capable of resisting him—except the sea-power of Britain. Once more Britain stood alone. Supreme land-power threatened supreme sea-power. Was there any means by which either could overcome the other? That was the great problem of the years following 1806. It deeply exercised the

* See School Atlas, Introduction, p. 21, fig. 22.

† For the battle of Jena, see School Atlas, Introduction, p. 15, fig. 12.

‡ For all this, see School Atlas, Plates 18 and 19c.

powerful mind of Napoleon. It was never very clearly faced in Britain, which rather drifted into the right solution than found it by deliberate thought; because the men who guided British affairs during these years were mostly of second-rate quality. They had an admirable bull-dog tenacity; but they showed no great strategic instinct, and even when Fate gave them a superlative opportunity in Spain, and a very able leader in Wellington, they were slow to realise the possibilities of either.

War Ministries in Britain.—Pitt died in 1806. He was killed by the cataclysm of Austerlitz, and by the strain of responsibility. After him, for a few months, there was a Ministry of All the Talents, under Pitt's cousin, Lord Grenville, which included Fox and the Whigs. Fox tried to make peace with Napoleon, and found it impossible: the strain killed him also, in 1807,* and the ministry broke up, being split on the question of Catholic Emancipation. Then followed a succession of stolid Tory ministries, under Portland (1807), Perceval (1809), and Liverpool (1812), whose only virtue was their tenacity. The two ablest men in the Portland ministry, George Canning and Lord Castlereagh, were bitter enemies, and actually fought a duel in 1809: this kept Castlereagh out of office until 1812, when he assumed the main direction of foreign affairs; it kept Canning out of office for the remainder of the war. Between 1809 and 1812, Lord Wellesley, now back from India, played an important part as Foreign Secretary, and did good service by supporting his brother's policy in Spain; but Wellesley was too much of a proconsul to be a successful politician. In the main, the war was carried on by a group of unimaginative Tory politicians, who showed no brilliance, but also showed no weakness. They carried their country through the most terrible ordeal it had ever undergone.

4. THE CONTINENTAL SYSTEM

Failure of Naval Plans.—In the phase of his war against Britain which opened in 1807, Napoleon did not wholly abandon the idea of rebuilding his naval strength. The Brest fleet was still intact, and additions were made to it. In 1807 he ordered Denmark to join in the war against Britain, partly with a view to using her fleet; and a similar demand was made upon Portugal, while a

* Scott has some good verses on the deaths of Pitt and Fox.

Russian squadron was brought round from the Black Sea to Lisbon. But these plans were checkmated. In 1807 a British fleet was sent to Denmark, and the Danish Government was forced to hand over its fleet into British safekeeping for the period of the war—a high-handed act which aroused much criticism even in Britain. The Portuguese fleet escaped to Brazil, with British help, when Napoleon tried to occupy Portugal (1808), and the Russian squadron was captured when Wellesley won the battle of Vimeiro (p. 498 below). With the outbreak of the Peninsular War, what remained of the Spanish fleet also passed to the British side. Finally, in 1809, the main French fleet came out from Brest, and was destroyed in *Aix Roads*. Thus the naval supremacy of Britain was made impregnable.

The Continental System.—Napoleon was therefore thrown back upon his second, and more important, method of attack ; which was an attempt to ruin Britain by excluding her trade from the Continent of Europe. This was not a new idea : the republican government had tried it in 1796, and the British Government had responded by declaring a blockade of the whole French coast, to the great inconvenience of neutral traders. But Napoleon was able, as the Republic had never been, to impose his commands upon the whole of Europe except Turkey. This plan was begun, in November 1806, by the issue of the *Berlin Decree*, which declared a blockade of the whole of the British Islands, and announced that any vessel which brought British goods to Europe would be seized. Britain replied with an *Order in Council* (1807), whereby a blockade was declared of all ports from which British goods were excluded. Napoleon rejoined with the *Milan Decree* (1807), in which he announced that any neutral vessel calling at a British port was liable to seizure. Further Orders in Council followed on the British side. Both sides were thus trying to force the neutrals to side with them ; and both sides were making neutral trade extremely difficult. But Britain was in a far better position than Napoleon to enforce her edicts, and for that reason her measures, though essentially measures of self-defence, were more resented than Napoleon's more arbitrary decrees by the only important neutral which now survived—the United States of America. There was trouble between Britain and America throughout the years of this fierce trade war ; and it led to the unhappy American War of 1812 (p. 502).

Effects of the Continental System.—If Napoleon could have carried out his "Continental System" completely, and her-

metically sealed Europe against British trade, unquestionably Britain would have been ruined and brought to her knees. As it was, the system inflicted terrible sufferings upon her people, because the markets for her rapidly growing machine-production were seriously restricted just when it was necessary that they should be expanded if her people were to be kept employed. But, in fact, the system could not be fully carried out, because Britain commanded a practical monopoly of two classes of goods with which Europe could not easily dispense—the products of the new machine-production, especially cotton and woollen goods; and the products of the tropics, especially sugar and tobacco. The extraction of sugar from beet-root was developed by French chemists as a substitute for colonial sugar, but its production could not be expanded quickly enough to meet the need. Napoleon himself had to defy his own regulations in order to clothe his armies: the Russian army of 1812 was largely clothed with woollens from Yorkshire.

Organised Smuggling.—In spite of all prohibitions, a vast smuggling trade was carried on, and immense energy and resource were shown by British traders in organising it. Its chief centres were *Heligoland*, an island off the mouth of the Elbe which Britain occupied for this purpose in 1807, and from which a great stream of goods passed up the German rivers; *Gibraltar*, whence goods passed into Spain until the whole of Spain was thrown open by the Peninsular War in 1808; *Malta* and *Sicily*, whence Italy was supplied; the *Ionian Islands*, which were annexed for this purpose in 1809, and from which a stream of traffic passed up the Adriatic; and *Greece* and *Turkey*, whence a steady traffic passed to Central Europe up the Danube. Moreover, some of Napoleon's dependent allies were anything but strict in carrying out his decrees, and trade passed, for some years, pretty openly through Holland, Denmark, and the Papal States. It was, in fact, impossible to enforce the system, because the whole population of Europe was eager to buy the goods which British merchants were now alone able to supply. This aspect of the war was carried on by the whole trading community of Britain; and they beat the Dictator, though not without much suffering.

Napoleon's Tyranny.—In the attempt to make his project effective, Napoleon was driven to adopt methods which roused against him the anger of his subjects. Finding that the smuggling of colonial goods and British manufactures could not be stopped, he imposed, by the *Trianon Tariff* of 1810, a duty of 50 per cent. on all

colonial goods, thus greatly increasing their already high prices; and by the *Fontainebleau Decrees* of the same year he actually ordained that British manufactures, wherever found, should be seized and destroyed. Nothing did more to make his rule intolerable than the wanton destruction of much-needed supplies. All the peoples of Europe were forced to realise that he was the cause of their sufferings.

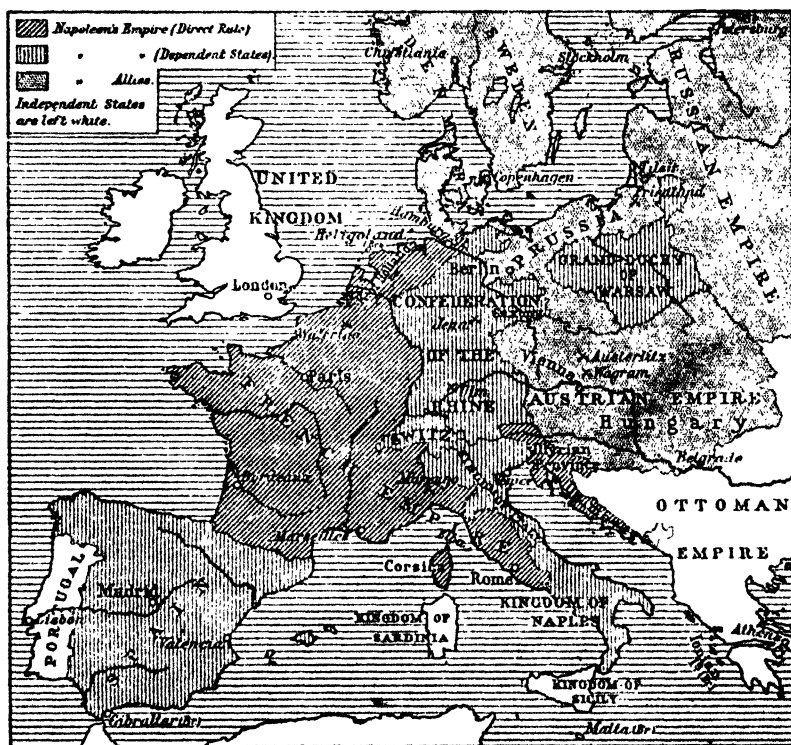


FIG. 33.—Napoleon's Empire.

Napoleon's Annexations.—Moreover, in order to stop the growing volume of smuggled trade, he was driven to high-handed annexations of territory.* His treatment of Spain and Portugal in 1808, which began the Peninsular War, was in part due to this cause. When the Pope refused to close his ports to British ships,

* These are shown on the map of Napoleon's Empire, School Atlas, Plate 18.

Napoleon first occupied (1808) and then annexed (1809) the Papal States, and sent the aged Pope into captivity, thus outraging Catholic opinion, which he had previously tried to placate. In 1809 he brought the Dalmatian coast and a stretch of Austrian territory behind it under direct French rule, in order to stop that great leak. In 1810 he suppressed the Kingdom of Holland and annexed it to France; he also occupied the German coast-line as far as Lübeck—including the territories of the Duke of Oldenburg, a cousin of his ally the Tsar. All these annexations, which aroused a growing feeling against him, were due to his desperate resolve to make his Continental System effective. They were among the causes of his downfall. They helped to arouse against him the national sentiment which was to be his undoing, and which was greatly strengthened by resentment against the suffering caused by his policy.

5. THE PENINSULAR WAR (FIRST PHASE) (1808-1811)

New Methods of War.—In the struggle against Napoleon's new methods of warfare, Britain found her way to a new method of utilising her command of the seas. There were no more naval battles to be fought. But the navy could enable armies to be landed at any point where they could be of service, and could afford to them, in case of need, a safe retreat across the seas. There were several minor examples of this method during these years. An early instance was provided in 1806, when a small British force was landed in southern Italy, and won at *Maida* a brilliant little victory over the French forces which had just occupied the kingdom of Italy; but it could not maintain its ground, and was safely withdrawn. But the supreme example was given in the Spanish Peninsula,* where Napoleon's overweening insolence opened a great opportunity.

Annexation of Spain and Portugal.—At the end of 1807, with the concurrence of Spain, Napoleon sent an army under Junot across Spain to occupy Portugal. It was followed by other French armies, which occupied the main strategic points in northern Spain. Then the king of Spain and his son were inveigled to Bayonne, and forced to abdicate. Napoleon bestowed the crown of Spain upon his

* For the Peninsular War, see School Atlas, Plate 266, and the larger Atlas, Plate 70.

brother Joseph, and Madrid was occupied. But he had counted without Spanish patriotism. The whole country rose, and organised itself under provincial "Juntas." The city of Saragossa repelled a French army. Another French army was forced to capitulate at *Baylen* in Andalusia (July 1808). This successful resistance caused immense excitement throughout Europe, and stimulated patriotism everywhere. In August a small British army, under Arthur Wellesley, was landed in Portugal to help the Portuguese. Wellesley defeated Junot at *Vimeiro*, and would have destroyed his force if his superior officer, arriving after the battle, had not stopped the pursuit and accepted the *Convention of Cintra*, whereby Junot was allowed to withdraw his army. For this the British commanders were recalled to face a court-martial, and the command of the army in Portugal was given to Sir John Moore.

The Retreat to Corunna.—These checks had to be redressed; and in October 1808, Napoleon himself entered Spain, with a superb army of 200,000 men. The Spanish forces were swept aside; Madrid was occupied; and the complete subjugation of Spain seemed to be at hand. But Sir John Moore, with his little army of 27,000 men, made a bold stroke to redeem the situation. Marching from Portugal into the heart of Spain, he threatened the French lines of communication. Napoleon turned back, hoping to capture the British army. Then came a gallant fighting retreat, not to Portugal (for the road was closed) but towards the north-west where it reached Corunna and the sea. The last stage of the pursuit was left to Marshal Soult, who had to submit to a severe defeat at *Corunna*, January 1809, before the British army was withdrawn across the sea by the waiting fleet. Moore was killed in the battle, but he had saved Spain.*

Wagram and Walcheren.—Napoleon himself never again visited Spain. He was drawn off by the news that Austria, encouraged by the Spanish rising, had declared war again. He had hard fighting—harder fighting than he had yet experienced—in the summer of 1809 before he defeated the Austrians at Wagram (July); and it was not until October that they were forced to accept the Treaty of Vienna by which they made large cessions of territory to France and her dependent allies. To help the Austrians, the British Government resolved to attack the Netherlands, and a substantial

* Read Wolfe's famous verses, *The Burial of Sir John Moore*.

army (which would have been very useful in the Peninsula) was sent to the island of *Walcheren*, off the mouth of the Scheldt. This expedition was a complete failure.

Wellesley Advances.—Nevertheless Wellesley,* who had now resumed command of the British army in the Peninsula, achieved great things during 1809. He captured *Oporto* (May), and drove Soult out of Portugal. Then, turning south, he marched into Spain, to co-operate with the Spanish armies, and won a brilliant victory at *Talavera* (July). But new French armies were coming up, and the Spaniards were impracticable and untrustworthy. He had to fall



FIG. 34.—The Peninsular War.

back upon Portugal, and to look on while the French—reinforced after the defeat of Austria—crushed the Spanish resistance in Andalusia, the only province where organised Spanish armies held out.

Torres Vedras.—In 1810 Napoleon hoped to bring this dragging war—so unlike his usual thunderbolt triumphs—to an end by destroying the British Army, which was the backbone of the resistance. For this purpose he entrusted a fine army of 130,000 men to his best general, Masséna, while other armies, numbering in

* There is a good short Life of Wellington by George Hooper (*English Men of Action*).

all some 300,000, held down the provinces of Spain. Wellesley (now Lord Wellington), who had only 30,000 British troops and an equal number of untried Portuguese, prepared for the storm by fortifying the lines of *Torres Vedras*,* across the peninsula between the Tagus and the sea. He cleared the country along the French line of advance of all foodstuffs, and removed the population, partly behind his fortifications, where they could be fed from the sea. He inflicted a sharp check upon Masséna's advancing army at *Busaco*; and then fell back upon *Torres Vedras*. Masséna found himself, in a foodless country, faced by impregnable fortifications. He could do nothing but retreat; and in the retreat he lost 25,000 men. No French force ever again entered Portugal.

Apparent Deadlock.—This was the real turning-point of the war, but at home there was impatience, because no progress seemed to be made. The impatience grew when the whole year 1811 was spent in fighting round the fortresses which guarded the main roads into Spain—*Ciudad Rodrigo* in the north, *Badajoz* in the south. Neither was captured, though two bloody battles were fought—*Fuentes d'Onoro* near *Ciudad Rodrigo*, and *Albuera* near *Badajoz*. Meanwhile, in Spain, no Spanish army dared to measure swords with the French; but in every part of the country daring guerilla bands made the French occupation insecure. In fact, during these years, Wellington was holding the fort, and inflicting upon the French an incessant and intolerable strain.† Napoleon spoke of the war in the Peninsula as a "running sore"; and his failure to heal it was a constant encouragement to the underground movements which were elsewhere at work, especially in Germany.

6. THE PENINSULAR WAR (SECOND PHASE) AND THE DOWNFALL OF NAPOLEON (1812-1814)

The Russian Campaign.—In 1812 the tide at last turned. Irritation with the Continental System brought a breach between Napoleon and his most valued ally, Alexander of Russia. In 1810 and 1811 Alexander had gradually relaxed the restrictions upon British trade. The Continental System was failing. Unless Russia could be forced to come into line again, other countries would follow

* For the Lines of *Torres Vedras*, see School Atlas, Introduction, p. 20, fig. 20.

† *Lever's Charles O'Malley* is a rollicking tale of the Peninsular War.

suit : Sweden was already beginning to do so. Napoleon resolved to teach Alexander a lesson. From France and from her subject allies he collected a vast army for the invasion of Russia. In point of numbers it was the greatest army that Europe had yet seen ; but it consisted largely of raw and unwilling conscripts. The Russian campaign held Europe spell-bound during the summer of 1812. Napoleon defeated the Russians at *Borodino*, and occupied Moscow. But he could not hold the city, a large part of which was burnt by patriotic Russians. He had to retreat. Winter caught him. The snows, aided by Russian attacks, destroyed the great army, and the spell of the invincible Emperor was broken. In the meanwhile, the Russian campaign had drawn off troops from Spain, and given Wellington his chance.

Advance into Spain.—In the campaign of 1812, Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz were stormed, and Wellington, advancing far into Spain, inflicted a crushing defeat on the French under Marmont at *Salamanca*. For a moment Madrid was occupied, and King Joseph had to flee. And although it was regained by a concentration of French forces, this involved the evacuation of southern Spain. The clearing of Spain had begun. And, for the next and decisive campaign, Wellington was given the supreme command of all the Spanish forces as well as of the British and Portuguese.

Leipzig.—In 1813 Napoleon, back from Russia, was fighting desperately with improvised armies to maintain his hold over Central Europe. Prussia, which had been secretly preparing for vengeance ever since 1806, had been encouraged to revolt by the Russian disaster ; and presently Austria and Sweden joined. At first Napoleon held his own ; but in the later part of the summer of 1813, the ring of foes closed round him at *Leipzig* : * he had to admit defeat, and his power over all Europe east of the Rhine crumbled away.

The Clearing of Spain.—To meet this terrible ordeal, large forces had to be withdrawn from Spain, though, even so, the French armies in Spain still outnumbered those of Wellington. Wellington's task was made easier ; but, on the other hand, if he had not exercised steady pressure—still more if he had been cleared out of the way in 1809 or 1810—Napoleon would almost certainly have been victorious in Central Europe. The defeat of Napoleon was achieved as much in Spain as on the field of Leipzig. Wellington's campaign

* For the battles of Leipzig, see School Atlas, Introduction, p. 15, fig. 13.

of 1813 was perhaps the most masterly of the series. He manœuvred the French steadily backwards until they were against the Pyrenees. Then he inflicted upon them a crushing defeat at *Vittoria* (June) : it was the news of *Vittoria* that encouraged the European allies to their final attack at *Leipzig*. By the end of the campaign Wellington had crossed the frontier of France, forcing two successive lines of defence, on the *Nive* and the *Nivelle*. His was the first hostile army to encamp on French soil since 1793.

The Downfall of Napoleon.—In 1814 Napoleon was forced back into France, and was fighting desperately against a ring of enemies, striking fiercely this way and that, but steadily borne down until, on April 11th, he was forced to abdicate at *Fontainebleau*. Even in this last stage, he might have held his own if he had been able to use the army with which Marshal *Soult* was striving to withstand Wellington's continued attacks. *Soult* had to submit to defeats at *Orthez* (February) and at *Toulouse* (April) ; this final battle of the Peninsular War was actually fought after Napoleon had abdicated, though before the news could reach the combatants.

The Whale becomes Amphibious.—The last long phase of the war, from 1806 to 1814, had been essentially a duel between land-power and sea-power. Land-power had struck its blow, and it had returned like a boomerang. The Continental System was the cause of Napoleon's downfall ; but his fall was quickened by the fact that, in the Spanish Peninsula, sea-power had found an ideal field for the operation of armies supported from the sea.

7. THE AMERICAN WAR OF 1812

During the last three years of the Peninsular War an unhappy conflict had been raging between Britain and the United States of America. This was one of the most unfortunate consequences of the Continental System.

America and the Revolution.—Bad feeling already existed between Britain and the States before the French Revolution came to embitter it still further. The States had refused to carry out the terms of the Treaty of 1783 in regard to the compensation of the *Loyalists*, and Britain had consequently refused to hand over certain fortresses on the American side of the Great Lakes. When the Revolution began in France, American opinion was strongly in sympathy with it ; and when the war between France and Britain

began, American feeling was so bitter against Britain that the States nearly came into the war on the French side. A new cause of quarrel arose when British warships began to stop American trading vessels to search for deserters from the navy. Washington (now President) succeeded in preserving neutrality, and even negotiated, in 1794, the *Jay Treaty*, whereby a joint commission was set up to settle the boundary between Canada and the United States—perhaps the earliest example of arbitration on such a matter. But Washington belonged to the more conservative “Federalist Party” in American politics. The rival party of “Republicans,” led by Thomas Jefferson, was violently anti-British. Nevertheless, the force of circumstances almost drove the States on to the English side. From 1798 to 1801 there was almost open war between America and France, because the French Government seized and confiscated American ships for taking British goods into French harbours.

The Louisiana Purchase.—In 1801 the situation changed, because Napoleon was trying to make friends with the neutrals. Meanwhile, however (1800), he had bought Louisiana from Spain, with the idea of creating a new colonial empire—which would have been an unpleasant neighbour for the United States. But the outbreak of war with Britain made it impracticable to develop this idea; and in 1803 he sold Louisiana and its 60,000 inhabitants to the United States for something over £5,000,000.

America and the Blockade.—During the first years of the Napoleonic war, the Americans enjoyed immense prosperity, trading as neutrals freely with both sides. But when the struggle over the Continental System began (1806), the position was changed. Both sides were making things impossible for neutrals; but while Napoleon's restrictions were the more unjust, Britain's were the more effective, because they were enforced by the power of the navy, and it was against Britain that American anger was chiefly turned. Jefferson, now President, tried to force the hands of the combatants by forbidding American exports (1807); but this would merely have ruined American trade, and the embargo was withdrawn in 1809. In 1810 President Madison adopted a new device. He threw American trade open, but announced that if one of the belligerents should withdraw its restrictions, he would impose an embargo on trade with the other.

British-American War.—Napoleon saw in this a chance of enlisting the States on his side. He announced that he would

withdraw his decrees, so far as concerned America, if before a fixed date Britain cancelled her Orders in Council. That is to say, British trade was still to be excluded from Europe, but free access was to be given to American ships to import the needed goods. Naturally Britain would not agree to this one-sided arrangement. President Madison, after three months' notice, laid an embargo on British trade; and in June 1812, he declared war against Britain. By a stroke of irony, the declaration of war took place in the very month in which Napoleon started his march to Moscow. The Continental System had broken down; and—five days after the opening of the American war—Britain withdrew the Orders in Council, because they had served their purpose. Yet the war went on, largely because the States hoped to be able to conquer Canada while Britain was engaged in the death-grapple with Napoleon.

The War in Canada.—The war thus needlessly begun lasted for three years. In 1812 and 1813 its main feature was an attack by the Americans upon Canada, in which large forces were employed: some 500,000 troops were raised by the States during the war. But the Canadians defended themselves with great staunchness. The chief battle-ground was the Niagara peninsula, where the hard-fought but indecisive battle of *Lundy's Lane** was fought in 1814. The American armies failed to make any advance into Canada. They were held at bay; and the struggle did much to strengthen Canadian patriotism.

Naval War.—Meanwhile there were a good many single-ship actions at sea, in which the Americans had many successes. And a swarm of American privateers crossed the Atlantic to prey upon British trade, using French ports as their bases. This went on throughout the three years when Europe was desperately struggling to throw off Napoleon's yoke. About 1,700 British ships were thus captured.

Invasion of the States.—In 1814, the Peninsular War being over, Britain was at last able to send troops to America. An army was taken by sea up the Potomac: it defeated the American army defending Washington, and the Capitol and the President's house were burned: an indefensible act of vandalism. At the beginning of 1815 a similar attack was directed against New Orleans: it was driven off with heavy loss. Before this battle was fought,

* See the larger Atlas, Plate 79d.

negotiators sitting at Ghent, in Belgium, had concluded a treaty of peace, which made no change whatsoever.

This was the most futile and wasteful of wars. Its only result was to embitter the relations between the two main groups of English-speaking peoples. To most Englishmen at the time it seemed to be a stab in the back, delivered when Britain was fighting for her life and for the freedom of the world. To most Americans it appeared to be a war in defence of the freedom of traffic on the seas, against the naval tyranny of Britain.

8. THE HUNDRED DAYS

The Year of Peace.—When Napoleon had abdicated, and been sent to the little Mediterranean isle of Elba, all Europe believed that the nightmare of twenty years' war was at an end. Troops were disbanded; ships returned from their endless vigil; and (November 1814) the diplomats gathered at Vienna to re-settle the affairs of Europe and the world after the upheaval. Eleven months passed; the diplomats had reached the point of quarrelling over the spoils, and were beginning to range themselves in hostile groups, when startling news made them patch up their differences. Napoleon had returned.

Napoleon's Return.—He landed on the shore of France on March 4th, 1815. As he advanced towards Paris the nation gave him a hero's welcome and his veterans flocked to join him. The restored Bourbon king fled. On March 20th Napoleon was again master of Paris. But the Allies had made a new league for his overthrow. Before their armies were upon him he must achieve some great stroke. He took less than three months for preparation; then (June 12th) started for Belgium, where the nearest enemy forces were. In the west of Belgium was an army under Wellington—half British, half Belgian, Dutch and German; when all its reinforcements had come in it numbered 67,000. In the east of Belgium and the Rhine provinces was Blücher, with a Prussian army of over 100,000. Napoleon could dispose of 125,000. His plan was to strike at these two armies in turn, and prevent their joining. They had moved towards the frontier as he advanced, and were close together—Wellington's van at *Quatre Bras*, Blücher at *Ligny*. But their bases lay in different directions—Wellington's to the north-west, Blücher's to the north-east.

Waterloo Campaign.—Napoleon first struck hard at Blücher, and beat him back, while Marshal Ney held the British at Quatre Bras (June 16th). But Ney was too hard pressed to be able to detach troops to complete the victory over the Prussians, who made good their retreat. Wellington fell back in sympathy, and took up his position across the Brussels road, on low rising ground at *Waterloo*. Half of his army being untrustworthy, he would not have ventured to fight a pitched battle against Napoleon's superior force of veterans, but that Blücher had promised to be with him by midday on the 18th.

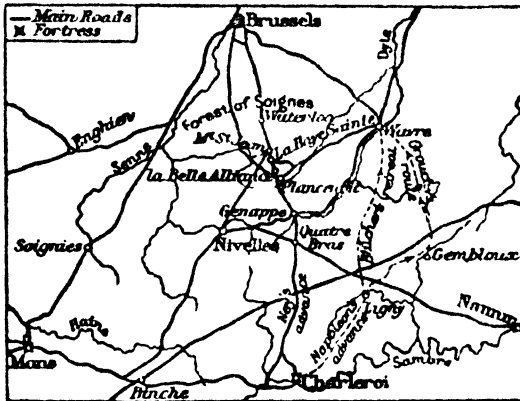


FIG. 35.—The Waterloo Campaign.

The Crowning Victory.—On the morning of the 18th, soon after eleven o'clock, Napoleon deployed his troops for his last battle.* He hurled charge after charge at the British lines along the slope. For five hours these hammer-blows went on, and still Blücher had not come. It was four o'clock before the Prussians were on the field, and half-past six before they made contact with the British left. But they came in the nick of time. The British troops were almost exhausted. All the reserves were in the line. Blücher's arrival made it possible to withdraw troops from the left to meet the final desperate attack of the Old Guard. It was repulsed, and then routed by a charge of the long-enduring infantry: "Up, Guards, and at

* For the campaign of Waterloo, see School Atlas, Plate 216; for the battle, School Atlas, Introduction, p. 15, fig. 14. There is a moving impression of the battle in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*.

'em !" British and Prussian troops reached the headquarters of the French army almost at the same moment : the victory was complete.

Napoleon's Surrender.—Napoleon fled to Paris, and talked wildly of a levy *en masse* for further resistance. Even his marshals knew that further resistance was impossible. He fled from Paris, a fugitive. Blücher had announced a reward for his capture, and promised that he should be shot. He betook himself to Rochefort. There, out at sea, was a squadron of the British navy, still on guard. He surrendered to the navy which had from the beginning been the unconquerable obstacle to his ambitions ; and Captain Maitland of the *Bellerophon* received his sword. Then he was sent as a captive to St. Helena, amid the limitless seas which had always baffled him. Thus ended, at the age of forty-six, the most dazzling career in human history.

CHAPTER XXXIX

AFTER THE WAR

I. THE SETTLEMENT OF EUROPE

THE vast upheaval of the French Revolution and the long wars which followed it deeply affected the life of every people in Europe, and made, as it were, a fresh starting-point in history. It is necessary to understand the nature of the changes which this upheaval brought, because the future history both of the British peoples and of the world depended upon them.

An Unrestful Century.—Ancient landmarks which had seemed to be almost part of the order of Nature, such as the Holy Roman Empire and the Republic of Venice, had been swept away ; long-established boundaries had been changed ; time-honoured institutions and systems of government had been scrapped and remodelled. The habit of taking for granted, which had kept people content with the old ways during long centuries, had been disturbed ; and the result was that the next century, the nineteenth, was to be a period of greater and more rapid changes than any previous century.

Liberalism and Nationalism.—Great new ideas were fermenting in men's minds. One was the idea that men had a right to be consulted about the way in which they were governed : the

theory of the Divine Right of Kings, which had held sway since the sixteenth century, was dead, and the theory of the Divine Right of Peoples was taking its place ; it was gradually to conquer Europe during the nineteenth century. Another was the idea that the limits of States ought not to be fixed by the accidents of conquest or dynastic inheritance, but by the natural affinities and desires of the population : this was the idea of Nationality, and the aspirations of divided nations to be united and of subject nations to be free were to be among the moulding forces of the next era. National aspirations had long been vaguely at work in Europe, but the teachings of the French Revolution, and still more the fight of peoples for freedom from the sway of Napoleon, had given to them a new force. And there was also a third idea, to which the Revolution had given fresh potency : the idea that it was wrong that a small class should enjoy all the material goods of life without labour, while the mass of men and women toiled for little reward ; from this were to spring Socialism, and many other movements of social reform. Finally, there had already begun in Britain the profound change in the methods of wealth-making which is known as the Industrial Revolution : with the coming of peace it was soon to spread to other countries, and to bring about immense changes in the structure of society.

The Temper of Vienna.—When the long wars ceased, therefore, the world was only at the beginning, not at the end, of a period of great change. But the statesmen who gathered at Vienna in the Autumn of 1814, and resumed their sessions after Napoleon had been disposed of at Waterloo, had no appreciation of these great forces that were at work. They thought they had beaten down the revolutionary movement, and could get back to the old ways. They could not do so completely, but they did their best, and then endeavoured to make sure that there should never be any more change or disturbance. The result was that all their arrangements were overturned during the next hundred years. The history of the nineteenth century is largely the history of the destruction of the Vienna settlement.

The Big Three.—The Congress of Vienna was a scramble of competing interests. But three personalities dominated it. One was Alexander I of Russia, who, though he was a despot and very jealous of his power, had a shallow, sentimental sympathy with liberal ideas. The second was the Chancellor of Austria, Prince Metternich, who was the supreme representative of hidebound

reactionism. As the Austrian Empire was a medley of discordant nationalities, only held together by a despotic government, both the national movement and the demand for self-government seemed to be hostile to its interests. Metternich, therefore, did everything in his power to check and discourage these movements, especially in Germany and Italy, in which Austria was interested. The third leading figure was the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Castlereagh.* He was essentially a man of moderation. He shared the dislike of his class and his party for all revolutionary movements; but, being an Englishman, he had some sympathy with national feeling, and hated despotism. The influence of Britain in these discussions was naturally very great, seeing that she alone had carried on the struggle from the beginning to the end; moreover, she was the most disinterested of the Great Powers, because she wanted nothing in Europe.

Treatment of France.—In the settlement with France, the Powers showed a wise moderation, for which the credit was mainly due to Castlereagh. The contrast between the treatment of France in 1815 and the treatment of Germany in 1919 is very marked. France was allowed to keep (roughly) the boundary which had existed when the revolution broke out. Britain restored to her most of her conquered colonies. An indemnity was imposed upon her, and an army of occupation was planted on her territory until it should be paid; but the indemnity was so moderate that France was able to pay it off in three years. Though the Bourbon line was restored, there was no attempt to restore the old feudal order, or the legal system, which the Revolution had destroyed; and a parliamentary system, modelled on that of Britain, was established under a charter granted by the restored King Louis XVIII.

The Netherlands and the Rhine.—To guard against future danger from France, the Austrian Netherlands (Belgium) were united with Holland, which became a kingdom.† This arrangement, which was made without consulting the Belgian people, lasted only fifteen years before it was destroyed by a revolt of the Belgians (1830). The lands in West Germany which Napoleon had turned into vassal States were, for the same reason, given to Prussia, ‡ instead of being

* There is a short Life of Castlereagh by J. A. R. Marriott, and a good essay on him by Lord Salisbury.

† For Europe after the Congress of Vienna, see School Atlas, Plate 19.

‡ For the re-settlement of Prussia after the Congress of Vienna, see School Atlas, Plate 19b.

restored to their original owners : thus Prussia became the watchdog against France instead of Austria, and in the long run this was to give Prussia the chance of seizing the leadership of Germany.

British Acquisitions.—With the exception of Britain, the Great Powers all rewarded themselves for their efforts by large acquisitions of territory in Europe, and the claims of "legitimacy" went by the board when they came in conflict with their ambitions. Britain kept the islands which she had taken as naval or smuggling bases during the war—Heligoland, Malta, and the Ionian Islands. Hanover also was enlarged and turned into a kingdom ; it was linked with the British Crown until 1837. But the main gains made by Britain were those she had made by her own efforts beyond the seas.

Russian Gains.—Russia kept Finland, which she had taken from Sweden in 1808 ; but as Sweden had fought against Napoleon, she had to be compensated, and Norway (separated from Denmark without any consultation with the people) was added to Sweden. This arrangement lasted until 1905, when the union of Sweden and Norway was peacefully dissolved. The Tsar also showed his devotion to the idea of nationality by insisting that Poland—dis-membered by the three partitions of the eighteenth century*—should be re-established as a separate State. Accordingly, Napoleon's Grand Duchy of Warsaw was turned into a Kingdom of Poland, with a constitution. But the Crown was united with that of Russia, and the constitution was not long allowed to survive. Poland did not become an independent State until 1919.

Prussian Gains.—Prussia had to be compensated for the Polish lands she had given up. She got, besides wide and rich territories in western Germany, a great part of Saxony, which had foolishly been loyal to Napoleon. This made her much the greatest of the German States, the destined leader of Germany, and the inevitable rival of Austria.

Austria and Italy.—Austria rewarded herself for giving up the Netherlands by taking Dalmatia and the richest part of northern Italy †—Venetia and Lombardy ; while the lesser States of Italy, all restored as they had been in 1789, were all under Austrian influence. But the Italian people had begun to conceive the idea of

* School Atlas, Plate 296.

† For the Austrian gains see School Atlas, Plates 196 and 254.

Italian unity. They could not forget that Napoleon had created a Kingdom of Italy. These arrangements made Austria the inevitable foe of Italian nationalism, and exposed her to the wars by which Italian unity was created.

Germany.—In Germany the national idea was even more strongly at work than in Italy. But the Vienna arrangements seemed to deny it any chance of satisfaction. Though it was impossible to undo the simplification which Napoleon had carried out, there were still twenty-six separate States. In place of the old Holy Roman Empire they were linked together in a Germanic Confederation,* under Austrian presidency, the main purpose of which was to prevent any change. This arrangement lasted for half a century.

The Eastern Question.—No attempt was made to deal with the Turkish Empire, where national aspirations were already fermenting among the Christian peoples of the Balkan Peninsula—Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians, Rumanians. This was to be the source of frequent disturbance during the nineteenth century, and the direct cause of the next general European war—that of 1914.

The Holy Alliance.—Thus the opportunity of reorganising the European system which was open in 1815 was used by the Great Powers partly to aggrandise themselves, and partly to erect futile barriers against inevitable changes. The architects of this system had a sincere desire to secure permanent peace. They hoped to do so partly by making the Vienna settlement unalterable, and pledging all nations to regard it as sacred; partly by holding frequent conferences of representatives of the Great Powers to deal with each dangerous question as it arose. This was the origin of the "Concert of Europe," which played an important part in the affairs of Europe throughout the nineteenth century, and often averted war. But the Concert was limited to the Great Powers, who thus asserted a right of dictating to the world; and as, during the next thirty years, a majority among them were hostile to all liberal movements, their union was not lasting, and came to be regarded as the enemy of progress. In the emotion of the moment, Alexander of Russia asked his fellow-monarchs to join in a Holy Alliance, in which they pledged themselves to be guided in all their work by "the sacred principles of the Christian religion." The name of the Holy Alliance—which was pure sentimentalism and had no practical effect

* See School Atlas, Plate 284.

—was popularly attached to the Concert of the Powers, and became a synonym for tyranny.

The Organisation of Peace.—Yet it ought not to be forgotten that these arrangements were inspired by a desire to make peace lasting and safe. They were a sort of crude anticipation of the League of Nations, a recognition that Europe needed some common authority if her civilisation was not to be ruined by war. In 1818 the Powers were so confident that their scheme would work that they announced, in the protocol of the Conference of Aix-la-Chapelle, that “the era of permanent peace had arrived.” In fact, their arrangements made many wars inevitable; and it was not an era of fixed and settled order, but of rapid change, largely brought about by wars and revolutions, which was now beginning.

2. THE BRITISH EMPIRE IN 1815

The years of war had brought great changes not only in Europe, but in the non-European world.* The colonising and trade activities of the Continental States had perforce been brought to an end; and Britain had become the one supreme colonising and trading nation.

Disappearance of Colonial Empires.—During the war Britain had conquered all the colonial possessions of France, save San Domingo (Hayti), which had become an independent negro republic: Martinique, Guadeloupe, and St. Lucia in the West Indies; Bourbon, Mauritius, Rodriguez, and the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean; Pondicherry and Chandernagore in India. All these were restored at the peace except St. Lucia, Mauritius, and the Seychelles; but, in fact, the French colonial empire was now negligible. Britain had conquered Ceylon and Cape Colony from the Dutch in the first period of the war, and although Cape Colony was restored at the Peace of Amiens, it was reoccupied in 1806 and retained in 1815. In the second period of the war she had taken from the Dutch part of Dutch Guiana (which was retained), and the rich island of Java—the centre of the Dutch East Indian Empire—which was restored. Henceforward Dutch activity was limited to the Malay archipelago, and even here Britain was soon (1819) to acquire, in Singapore, the most valuable trade centre. At one moment Britain had even begun to conquer the Spanish American

* For the changes in the non-European world, see School Atlas, Plate 454.

Empire, which lay at her mercy : an unsuccessful attack was made upon the Argentine in 1806, and an attack on Chile was designed. But these plans, if they were ever seriously conceived, were stopped by the outbreak of the Peninsular War, when Spain became the ally instead of the enemy of Britain.

Revolt of Spanish America.—During this period, however, the Spanish American colonies, having refused to recognise Joseph Bonaparte as their sovereign, became in practice independent.* They threw open their trade to Britain, and British merchants rapidly obtained almost a complete monopoly of South American trade. When the Bourbon monarchy was restored in Spain in 1815, it tried in vain to impose its authority upon the colonists. After some years of trouble, they established their independence ; and nothing remained of the Spanish colonial empire save Cuba and Porto Rico in the West Indies, and the Philippines in the far east. It was already pretty clear, in 1815, that this was going to happen.

British Monopoly.—Thus all the historic colonial empires of the European Powers had shrunk to the smallest dimensions. Everywhere the belief was current that colonies were not worth acquiring, because sooner or later they must be lost. For more than sixty years to come, the European nations, engrossed by their own problems, disregarded the non-European world almost completely, and left a practical monopoly of oversea trade and empire in the hands of Britain.

The New British Empire.—In 1815, thanks very largely to the war, the British Empire had already become the most amazing series of possessions that had ever been brought under a single government in the history of the world ; and this was less than a generation after the loss of the first British Empire by the revolt of the American colonies. The emergence of this gigantic structure was perhaps the most remarkable outcome of the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. But each part of it presented problems of great and varied difficulty—problems far more difficult than those which had caused the revolt of the United States—and it remained to be seen whether any means of holding all these territories together could be devised.

(1) **Canada.**—The six self-governing colonies of Canada had just repelled the attacks of the United States, and were full of loyalty. But they were economically stagnant ; their progress could not

compare with that of the United States. Moreover, bad feeling was growing up between the French and the English settlers ; and there was already a good deal of friction between the nominated governors and their elected assemblies.

(2) **The West Indies.**—The West Indian group of colonies—Jamaica, the Bahamas, the Leeward and Windward Islands, Barbados, British Guiana, and British Honduras—had enjoyed a period of very great prosperity during the war. But they depended upon slave-labour, and the movement against slavery was very strong in Britain, where the stoppage of the slave trade in 1807 was promptly followed by an agitation for the emancipation of all slaves within the Empire. British feeling against slavery was now so strong that Lord Castlereagh had to make it one of his chief aims, both in 1815 and later, to persuade all the powers to prohibit the slave trade. If the dominant power insisted upon abolition, there was bound to be trouble in the West Indies.

(3) **Australia.**—The distant settlements in Australia were as yet little more than convict-stations, though sheep-breeding had been introduced during the war, and had shown how immense were the possibilities of that vast, empty land. But a whole continent could not be left unpeopled, or reserved for convicts, and the journey was so long and costly that the problem of peopling it seemed to be almost insoluble.

(4) **South Africa.**—In South Africa Britain had recently acquired a very rich and fertile land, suitable for white settlers. But the existing white population consisted of Dutch Boers, who not only resented foreign domination, but held views about the treatment of the natives widely different from those to which the humanitarian movement had given birth in England. Moreover, hordes of warlike Kaffirs, the advance-guard of the great Bantu race, were pressing down upon the colony. Thus a double racial problem, of great acuteness, had to be solved.

(5) **India.**—In India Britain had recently and suddenly become the paramount power over a thickly populated country as big as Europe, leaving out Russia. This empire presented a problem of government to which there has been no parallel in human history ; and not the least difficult part of it was the question whether it was not necessary to complete the subjugation of the still unconquered princes (notably the Marathas) before settled peace and justice could be made secure in India.

Links of Empire.—Besides these five main blocks of territory, each of which constituted a gigantic empire, and which were distributed over every continent, the British Empire also already included a large number of islands and trading-posts, scattered over all the seas of the world : Heligoland, Gibraltar, Malta, and the Ionian Islands in Europe, St. Helena, Ascension and Tristan d'Acunha in the Atlantic, the Falkland Islands off the coast of South America, Mauritius and the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean. These were the links of an empire that rested on sea-power.

This mighty fabric had mainly been built up during the lifetime of men who were alive in 1815. Its existence placed Britain in a unique position among the nations of the world, and made her the greatest of them all. But was there in the British people a sufficient stock of wisdom and character to find the means of keeping together and ruling efficiently this amazing empire? Nine out of ten observers abroad, if not at home, reflecting upon what had already happened to all the other colonial empires, would in 1815 have answered this question in the negative.

3. THE STATE OF BRITAIN IN 1815

British Wealth.—On a superficial view, the position of Britain was as splendid as the oversea empire she had acquired. She was the unchallengeable mistress of the seas. Her trading vessels were to be seen in every port of the world. She had a monopoly of the new processes of manufacture, and they were yielding her immense wealth. She, alone among the nations, could command a supply of capital sufficient for the greatest undertakings. She had become the world's workshop and market. Her nobles and merchants were as rich as princes. Nowhere in the world was such luxury to be seen as in London : "What a city to loot!" said Blücher, when he visited it after the peace.

British Poverty.—But beneath the surface a very different state of things was revealed. A great proportion of the British people were sunk in a squalid poverty such as their fathers had not known in modern times. The towns in which her wealth was created, the new manufacturing towns of the north and midlands, were incredibly mean, ugly, and unhealthy. Her population was increasing by leaps and bounds—it had grown 35 per cent. since the war began, while the population of France had increased only 11 per

cent. But most of this growing population were living in conditions which promised to turn them into a stunted and unhealthy race. They were working incredibly long hours for incredibly low wages—so low that some 10 per cent. of the population had to receive allowances from the Poor Law in supplement of their wages if they were to keep body and soul together. Even their children, infants of eight years old, were in many cases working fourteen hours a day to earn a pittance of a few pence. Yet there were tens of thousands who could get no work at all. The vast wealth which Britain had learnt how to make was not bringing well-being to the mass of her people. It was going into the pockets of a small rich class. And there was a horrible gulf fixed between the prosperous classes and the labouring mass. The widely diffused comfort which had been a feature of "Merry England" had vanished. Cobbett,* that vivid journalist, complained that the well-fed peasantry he had known in his youth had been replaced by a population of starvelings, living in hovels and feeding on slops and tea.

Causes of Distress.—This had been the result of the agrarian and industrial revolutions, complicated by Napoleon's Continental System. The agrarian revolution had increased the supply of food grown from English soil, but not sufficiently to balance the rapid increase of population; and it had at the same time reduced the peasantry to the level of a wage-earning proletariat living on subsistence wages, which were kept down by the influence of the poor-law system. Meanwhile the Continental blockade had increased the difficulty of importing foodstuffs, and prices had soared up. The Industrial Revolution had immensely increased the amount of goods that could be produced by a given amount of labour. During the blockade the power-loom had come into wide use alongside of the spinning-jenny and the mule, while the use of the steam-engine and the development of improved methods of iron working had made giant strides. These changes alone had enabled British traders to face the risks and cost of running the blockade, and still to undersell all competitors. They had made it possible for the volume of British exports to be kept fairly level in spite of the blockade. But when the machines were enabling one man to do the work of two, it was not enough to keep sales at a steady level. They must grow.

* There is a good Life of Cobbett by E. I. Carlile. Cobbett's *Advice to Young Men* is a racy little book well worth reading, and largely autobiographical.

The blockade prevented them from growing. It consequently created a large surplus of unemployed labour, whose pitiful competition for jobs kept wages very low. And as the State would not endeavour to protect the workers itself, and prohibited them by the Combination Acts from trying to protect themselves by forming trade unions, there seemed to be no remedy.

Menace of Revolution.—In this wealthy and victorious nation, which held sway over so large a part of the world, mere misery was driving many of the working-class into a sort of blind revolt. During the years of the Continental blockade there were risings to destroy the machinery which seemed to be ruining the workers—the Luddite riots of 1811 and 1812. In fact, the condition of a great number of the British people in 1815 was probably worse than the condition of the French peasantry before the Revolution. And at any time during the quarter of a century after 1815 a violent revolution seemed not only possible but probable in Britain. It would have come if the British people had not been incredibly steady, patient, and enduring.

The Landowning Oligarchy.—Over this mass of wealth and misery ruled a self-complacent oligarchy of landowners who had been immensely enriched by the rising price of food, and by the squalid towns which had grown up on their land. Every cry of discontent seemed to them an expression of that “revolutionary spirit” against which they had fought with such admirable tenacity. Because the nation was ceasing to be mainly agricultural, and because the mass of even the agricultural population had been severed from all rights in the land, the landowners were no longer the natural leaders of the nation, as they had been until the middle of the eighteenth century. They no longer represented its main interests, or understood its new and great problems. Yet their power seemed to be solidly entrenched. They ruled through a Parliament whose hereditary house was entirely composed of great landowners, and whose nominally representative house was not in any true sense representative at all, a large proportion of its constituencies being “pocket” boroughs or “rotten” boroughs. This system ought to have been reformed long before. It would have been reformed but for the coming of the French Revolution. Now all talk of the necessity for reform was regarded as evidence of a “revolutionary spirit,” to be sternly repressed. Yet the only hope of reform without revolution was that this unrepresentative Parliament should consent

to reform itself. It is no wonder that many thought revolution inevitable.

Radical Movements.—The demand for reform had been silenced during the first period of the war. But during the Napoleonic struggle it had come alive again. There was an active "Radical" movement afoot. It even had one or two members in the House of Commons, notably Sir Francis Burdett. All over the country the indefatigable "Orator Hunt" and other speakers were demanding radical reform and the introduction of democracy; and innumerable "Hampden Clubs" to forward this end were being formed. In 1802 the eccentric William Cobbett, most trenchant of writers, had turned Radical, and in his vigorous *Weekly Political Register*, which from 1816 was published at twopence, was denouncing the evils of the existing system and the crimes of the borough-mongers. Throughout the country his influence was immense: more than any other man, he stimulated and expressed the angry discontents of the time. Meanwhile, the philosopher Bentham and a group of disciples were working out elaborate plans of reform: they had no great popular audience, but they did more than any other group to indicate practical methods of redress. A powerful school of economic thinkers were also at work, demanding great changes in the fiscal system of the country, and especially the substitution of free trade for the elaborate protectionist system which, in their view, was preventing the expansion of British trade. And soon a more sweeping demand for change was to become prominent. Thomas Spence, a Newcastle workman, had long been preaching land nationalisation as a cure for the nation's ills, and there were many Spencean Societies up and down the country. In 1815 Robert Owen, a Lanarkshire manufacturer who had done his best to create improved conditions for his own workpeople, began to preach the necessity for a social revolution as the only means of ensuring that the wealth created by the industry of the whole nation should be diffused over the whole nation. He was the father of "Socialism," though the word had not yet been coined.

The Need for Reform.—Thus a formidable ferment was already at work among the British people when the war came to an end. It was not only the sufferings of the working-class, the wretched conditions of the industrial towns, the grossly unrepresentative character of the system of government, that needed amendment. Every part of the legal and social system of the country needed to be overhauled: not least the hideous penal code, which (inspired by the

fear of revolution) imposed the penalty of death for innumerable petty offences such as stealing linen from a bleaching-ground or being seen at night with one's face blacked ; or the game laws, which had been made more and more ferocious as the landowners spent more of their growing wealth upon game preservation, and the starving peasantry netted the game for food ; or the exclusive privileges of the Established Church, with its richly endowed episcopate and its impoverished lower clergy ; or the monstrous imperfections of the police system, which allowed crime to breed unchecked in the festering alleys of the towns. Almost every aspect of the nation's life demanded reconstruction.

The defeat of Napoleon, therefore, did not mean the end of the revolutionary movement in Britain any more than in Europe. On the contrary, a revolution had to come. The only question was, whether it would come peacefully or by violence. And that depended upon whether the ruling class would open its eyes, or would display the same unyielding tenacity in resisting change at home that it had displayed in resisting the might of Napoleon.

The End of the Old Regime.—In truth, the close of the Napoleonic War may be said to mark, in England as in Europe, the end of the old regime of hereditary class ascendancy. The governing class in England had been less exclusive, more public-spirited, and more liberal in its outlook than the ruling classes in other countries ; and for that reason its power, exercised through Parliament, had been more willingly accepted than in any other country. Indeed, the power of the landowning aristocracy had never been more complete nor its pride greater than in these last days of its supremacy, when it led the nation's resistance to the menace of foreign conquest. But it had already been seriously undermined, by the ideas of the French Revolution, by the teaching of many schools of reformers in England, and, above all, by the great social changes which the Industrial Revolution was bringing about. It was bound to come to an end. The gradual transition from aristocracy to democracy is the main interest of the nineteenth century, and gives to it its distinctive character.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING ON BOOK VII

The ground covered by this Book is dealt with, much more fully, in the *Short History of the British Commonwealth*, Vol. II, pp. 147 to 324. See also Grant Robertson, *England under the Hanoverians*. For Indian

affairs, V. A. Smith, *Oxford History of India*, and Muir, *Making of British India*. The best general account of the Industrial Revolution is by a Frenchman, P. Mantoux (English trans.). On the changes in agriculture, Lord Ernle's *English Farming, Past and Present*. There are good summaries of European history during the period in Morse Stephens' *Revolutionary Europe*, and Holland Rose's *Revolutionary and Napoleonic Epoch*. Holland Rose's *Life of Napoleon* (2 vols.), and his two volumes on Pitt are full and useful. A stimulating book on the period is Fortescue's *British Statesmen of the Great War*. J. L. and B. Hammond's *Village Labourer* and *Town Labourer* are full of vivid detail on social conditions. The best general account of the French Revolution in one volume is by Madelin (English translation).

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